

# RESEARCH COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITY

Research Collaboration Opportunity Ref No.: RCO-CUGE-2020-03

**Project Title:** Social Research Study on Management of Cats

## 1. Key Challenges and Objectives

Today, cats are not licensed, nor are they permitted to be kept as pets in HDB flats. There are an estimated 60,000 community cats in Singapore (estimated by Cat Welfare Society (CWS), cited in a 2016 Vol. 1 publication of CWS' newsletter, 'Mews'). Presence of community cats maybe cause disamenity to residents and result in human-animal conflict. Further, feedback data from the Animal & Veterinary Service (AVS), a cluster of the National Parks Board (NParks), reported 1-2 cases on stray cat attack per month. Feedback received by AVS on feeding of community cats was on the rise every month from close to 20 cases in January to over 40 in March 2020. An average of 17 cases received per month in 2020 was on dis-amenity caused by community cats (e.g. soiling). Thus there is a need to understand societal psyche, attitudes and behaviours people have towards community cats so that such information and data gathered through the Study could help inform AVS' work and policy related to management of cats, as well as to fine tune operations and community outreach efforts.

The scope of study is as follows:

### Community Cats

- a. To assess people's societal psyche (such as values, beliefs, assumptions, sentiments, and perceptions on man-cat relationship) toward community cats. The Researcher should analyse how people's societal psyche translates into attitudes and responses/behaviours displayed towards community cats and various management strategies practised by the AVS. The Study should identify which are the most salient considerations and mental trade-offs which give rise to such attitudes, responses and behaviours.
- b. To establish the extent of the various types of concerns held by the public directly or indirectly attributable to community cats. Examples of such concerns include:
  - i. Cultural and religious beliefs on community cats;
  - ii. Cat-related nuisance, e.g. excessive caterwauling, soiling in common areas etc;
  - iii. Environmental sanitation problems caused by irresponsible community cat feeding; and
  - iv. Health and welfare issues faced by community cats.

### Stray Feeding

- c. To assess the profile of the stray feeders and analyse their psychology and their motivation to feed community cats.
- d. Assess stray feeders' reception to take ownership of cats/cat issues.
- e. Assess the public perception of and degree of public receptiveness to the feeding of community cats by stray feeders. E.g. their concerns if stray feeding was being carried out near their place of residence or work; and
- f. Level of public awareness that improper disposal of food and/or poor food waste management can attract community cats and result in an increase in community cat population.

### Cat Ownership

- g. To assess social perception towards and motivational factors on cat ownership in flats (including rental flats).
- h. Assess the level of knowledge and awareness of cat owners on animal welfare and responsible cat keeping standards.
- i. To investigate the extent pet cat owners go to cat-proof their homes from cat behaviours such as scratching, hunting, and escaping.
- j. To establish the extent of hoarding of cats in more susceptible segments of the population (e.g. low-income families living in rental blocks).
- k. Identify social factors that could correlate to higher cat population in hotspot areas.
- l. Assess public perception on ability of cats to survive in the community without being reared as pets.

### Perception of Non-Pet Owners in HDB estates

- m. Assess their level of knowledge and perception towards cats.
- n. Assess perception of non-pet owners towards cat owners in general.
- o. Assess level of receptiveness and tolerance towards neighbours who keep cats as pets.
- p. Assess the level of knowledge and awareness on animal welfare and responsible cat keeping standards.
- q. Assess the level of knowledge and awareness on the relevant authorities overseeing varying cat-related feedback.

## Management of Cat Issues

- r. To assess the public's perception of and receptiveness towards the strategies, measures and programmes implemented by the AVS on community cat management.
- s. To propose recommendations on management strategies and community initiatives that the AVS can adopt to address the findings of the study. Recommendations should draw relevant best practices in other countries and build on the AVS' current strategies and measures.

## **Minimum Project Deliverables**

- 1.1 Pre- and Post-fieldwork focus group discussions to be conducted as formative research to identify the issues of concern and to gain insight on the findings from the responses.
- 1.2 Fieldwork: A complete set of data from respondents across Singapore and staying in at least 2 specific areas (i.e. hotspot and non-hotspot areas of cat activity) identified by the AVS. The sample should take reference from the following segments of the population to the extent that the sample size allows for statistically significant conclusions to be drawn:
  - a) Age, gender and race;
  - b) Educational level and income bracket;
  - c) Religion;
  - d) Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents;
  - e) Composition of household – Whether they are staying with young children and elderly or not;
  - f) Type of dwelling (i.e. public housing or rental housing);
  - g) Proximity of respondent's place of residence to community cat hotspot areas;
  - h) Pet cat ownership vis-à-vis non-pet cat ownerships.
- 1.3 Interim Analysis Report should address the scope of study with preliminary recommendations on cat management strategies and community initiatives for discussion with AVS;
- 1.4 Final Report should contain detailed recommendations addressing key findings in the Study to address Study scope, and an Executive Summary with the Study overview, key findings, concise analysis and assessments.
- 1.5 Presentations: The Researcher will be asked to deliver formal presentations to AVS/NParks and Ministry during the course of the Study and if required, after the Study has been completed, and to verify or supply any data requested.

1.6 The methodology adopted on data collection and analysis must be sufficiently robust and can stand up to academic and public scrutiny. The Study must also be supported by academically and scientifically robust sampling and well-established statistical/data analysis methodologies. The methodology comprises quantitative (e.g. questionnaire surveys) and qualitative (e.g. interviews, site observation at hotspot areas, and focus group discussions) approaches.

1.7 The Researcher may propose additional, complementary means of eliciting empirical data and insights in line with the aims of the Study to enrich study takeaways.

## **2. Budget Limits**

2.1 The proposed budget, including GST, cannot exceed **\$ 400,000.00**. Proposals that exceed this limit will not be considered. Please note that this amount is simply an indication of budget availability, not an estimate of expected project cost.

2.2 The project duration should also not exceed **18 months**.

2.3 Please note that NParks' decision on the funding support to be awarded for the project is final.

## **3. Submission Instructions**

Proposals for the Research Collaboration Opportunity as stated above must be submitted to AVS\_Engage@nparks.gov.sg by 14 August 2020, 2359hrs.

## **4. Enquiries**

For transparency, all enquiries and associated clarifications will be published (without details on the identity of the person making the enquiry) on the Research Collaboration Opportunity page on the CUGE website. We regret that phone enquiries will not be entertained.

For enquiries, please contact AVS\_Engage@nparks.gov.sg for enquiries.