

Project 1/2006 – Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' advice on funding the captioned application for ECF made by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Background

2. The funding requested by this application is \$142,000.00 to support the participation fees for 25 local students (\$30,000.00), 20 high school teachers/young scientists/environmental groups representatives (\$48,000.00), 10 Mainland Chinese students (\$12,000.00) and 5 Mainland Chinese participants (\$12,000.00); and the publications of the conference proceedings (\$40,000.00).

3. The First Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium will be held on 18 to 24 June 2006. This is an international meeting with the theme "Coral Reefs: Cooperation and Collaboration for Better Conservation". It is hoped that this meeting will be the beginning of a series of regular meetings for reef workers in the Asia Pacific region. The meeting will be a venue in which experiences on reef studies and conservation will be shared and collaborative efforts of all parties concerned to help protect this delicate ecosystem will be strengthened. This is the first time that reef workers from the Asia Pacific region are getting together with the hope of formalizing a framework for better collaboration and cooperation. This meeting will also serve as the founding meeting of the Asian Coral Reef Society.

4. The applicant considers that this Symposium will provide an opportunity for students, high school teachers or young scientists from Hong Kong as well as from mainland China to meet some of the world greatest scientists working on coral reef. The registration fee is HK\$1,200.00 per head for student and HK\$2,400.00 per head for non-student participants. The applicant also applies funding for subsidizing publication of the conference proceedings which is scheduled for December 2006.

5. The Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department (AFCD) is one of the co-organisers of the symposium. Representative of AFCD attended the Local Organizing Committee meetings to provide advice and suggestions in organizing the symposium, delivering talks upon requests and examining the abstracts. There is no direct funding support from AFCD towards the symposium.

6. The Research Project Vetting Subcommittee (RPVSC) had previously approved funding to support student participation of locally organized international conference in ECF Projects 27/2003 and 12/2004. The sponsorship level was capped at \$800.00 for each student who would actively participate at the conference. The grant was disbursed on a reimbursement basis and participating students were required to submit a report after the Conference. The extract of the minutes of meetings of the RPSVC held on 3 June 2004 and 2 December 2004 which remarked the approval to the ECF Projects 27/2003 and 12/2004 are attached at the Annex A and B respectively for Members' reference.

Advice sought

7. Members are invited to advise whether the application for ECF as detailed in paragraphs 2 to 4 above should be supported. If supported, members are invited to consider the exact amount of grant approved to support local students' participation in international conferences, i.e. \$800 sponsorship or a revised level of sponsorship for each participant in the conference.

**Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee
May 2006**