

Project 16/2005 – Recycling of waste wood into a useful wood composite building product

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' advice on funding the captioned application for ECF submitted by The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST).

Background

2. The funding requested by this project is \$3,449,364 for the staff cost of employing four Research Assistants for 36 months (\$2,456,064), the equipment cost for the waste wood shredder and mixer (\$193,300), general expenses for the materials and consumables (\$300,000), and the expenses for the industrial size trial in Hangzhou (\$500,000). The project is expected to last for 36 months.

3. The objectives of the proposal project are to recycle waste wood and turn the waste wood into a value-added composite building product that is sustainable to the benefit of the local and surrounding societies.

4. The Architectural Services Department (ASD), the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and two external expert assessors have reviewed the proposal. The ASD considers the project worthy of support on the grounds of sustainability and the deliverables carry practical values. EPD considers the proposal worthy of support, but considers that the industrial trial should be proceeded only if the results of the prototype development are promising.

5. Assessor 1 supports the proposal and opines that the successful implementation of the project would provide a viable recycling outlet for wood and timber waste in Hong Kong. The developed technology may be commercially applied. Assessor 1 comments on the high side of the budget, in particular he is not convinced that there is a need to employ 4 research assistants and considers employing 2 assistants is more appropriate. He also questions the role of the sponsor. The principal investigator (PI) states that the sponsor would work with HKUST during industrial trial stage to try the products and build up production lines in Hong Kong. According to the PI, the sponsor has

not confirmed to sponsor the project. Assessor 2 also supports the proposal and comments that the industry partner might adopt the technology if it is profitable.

6. Regarding the industrial trial of the project, Members should note that the ECF primarily funded research and technology demonstration projects in the past, but not production trial of research products.

Advice sought

7. Members are invited to advise whether the application for ECF should be supported as detailed in paragraphs 2 to 3 above and if supported, the exact amount of fund to be recommended to the ECF Committee for approval.

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