

**Public Education Programme of the
“Policy Framework for the
Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)”**

**Funding Application by
Office of Service-Learning, Lingnan University:
“Waste Management Project for Promoting Green Leaders
in Tuen Mun District 2010-2011”**

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' support to a funding application from Office of Service-Learning, Lingnan University ("Lingnan"), namely "Waste Management Project for Promoting Green Leaders in Tuen Mun District 2010-2011" (Annex), for funding under the Public Education Programme of the "Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)" as recommended by the Waste Management Subcommittee of the Advisory Council on the Environment (WMSC).

The Funding Application

2. The project proposed under the funding application carries the following objectives –

- (a) to train university-based, secondary school-based and community-based Green Leaders;
- (b) to practice green actions through various programmes;
- (c) to expose participants (being students and the elderly) to a holistic and realistic view towards waste problems; and
- (d) to arouse public awareness of waste management.

The funding application involves a budget of \$901,390. Activities under the project would be organized between January 2010 and January 2011. It is intended that 120 green leaders would be trained to promote environmental

protection messages in Tuen Mun District. Lingnan would work together with four secondary schools, six public housing estates and six local NGOs to jointly build a green district. The project is expected to reach at some 10,000 citizens in the target housing estates and target schools.

WMSC Vetting

3. The funding application was considered twice by the WMSC, at its meetings on 5 June 2009 and 27 November 2009.

4. On the Public Education Programme (PEP) generally, the WMSC held the view that public support was important in developing the various initiatives in the “Policy Framework” and should be carefully cultivated through publicity and public education. Funded PEP projects adopting a public engagement approach might be able to serve this purpose more effectively than other campaign-based programmes. To this, the WMSC appreciated that the current funding application from Lingnan does promote public engagement because local residents and students are recruited for promulgation of better solid waste management in their community.

5. Separately, the WMSC opined that the project should focus more on the community, and particularly community leaders should be involved in the early stage of the programmes. Such views have been duly reflected in the funding application. More specifically, community leaders have been involved in the project at the early stage. They would act as mentors and help provide guidance to the students and elderly joining this project. Such role would trigger them to be more environmentally conscious and to develop a more comprehensive perspective on waste management.

6. The WMSC also examined the budget. While noting that resources allocated to individual expenditure items are considerably high when compared with other PEP projects, the WMSC acknowledged that it is acceptable given the larger scale of the project.

7. Having satisfied with the merits, the WMSC agreed at its meeting on 27 November 2009 to recommend the funding application for consideration by the Committee.

Guide to Application

8. Members may wish to note the following concerning the funding application –

- (a) the application amounts to \$901,390, which exceeds the normal funding limit of \$500,000; and
- (b) an overseas study tour (to Taiwan) has been proposed but is not normally supported by the Environmental and Conservation Fund.

9. There are precedents of this Committee endorsing applications with funding request exceeding the \$500,000 cap. For example, this Committee endorsed an application named “Plastic Shopping Bags Levy, You should know” submitted by Greeners Action with a project sum of \$698,826. The consideration is whether the project proponent could justify the case. As the current application involves a project of significant scale, there is a genuine need of more resources to support its proposed activity to achieve its intended public education purpose. The WMSC suggested that Members favourably consider its proposed budget given the scale of the project. The overseas visit, if supported, is also relevant because no other PEP projects bear the same component and the necessary resources comprise about 16% of the total budget.

10. As regards the proposed overseas visit, Lingnan justifies that this is an integral part of its proposal for reason that it would help broaden the exposure and horizon of the participants on the prevailing mode of waste management in international dimensions. Moreover, it would give a good opportunity for the participants to discuss with overseas authority and relevant units on waste management. Such knowledge and exposure would be very useful in shaping them to be waste management leaders and would provide them with the inspiration for spreading the waste management messages to the local community. In this case, the Administration concurs with the WMSC about the importance of public engagement (cf. paragraph 4 above) in cultivating public support. At the WMSC meeting of 27 November 2009, Members present unanimously agreed that there is a strong case for pursuing the overseas visit as proposed. Members supported the choice of Taiwan as the destination. In addition, Members agreed with the arrangement for participants to bear part of the trip costs (i.e. \$1000 each).

11. On the whole, the WMSC agreed that given that the importance of public engagement under the Public Education Programme, there is a case for more flexibility in applying the Guide to Application. This flexible approach would not only facilitate meritorious projects to obtain funding but also allow us to accumulate experience on how the Guide could in future be suitably adjusted to promote public engagement.

12. In recommending the funding application, the WMSC specifically

requested that we convey its detailed considerations on the proposed budget and the proposed overseas visit, as set out now in paragraphs 8 to 11.

Background

13. Having regards to the latest development of various initiatives in the “Policy Framework”, the Administration believes that a comprehensive public education campaign conducted by a local institute could greatly enhance the community's understanding of the magnitude of our waste problem and promote the adoption of a more positive attitude towards the problem. The Administration has contributed to the process during which the applicant came up with the proposal, which includes a series of programmes not only to arouse the public's awareness on waste management, but also to turn awareness into action.

Advice sought

14. Members are invited to advise whether the recommended funding application should be supported.

**Environmental Protection Department
December 2009**