

Minutes of 22nd Meeting of Environment and Conservation Fund Waste Recovery Projects Vetting Sub-Committee

Date : 20 May 2009 (Wed)
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room (Rm 2825), 28/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wanchai

Present

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| Prof. Jonathan WONG | (Chairman) |
| Mr. CHAN Chi-kwong, Charles | |
| Mr. James LEONG | |
| Mr. LEUNG Wai-on | |
| Ms NG Chui-jiu, Jennifer | |
| Mr. LO Yan-lai | |
| Mr. TSANG Kam-lam | |
| Dr. YAU Wing-kwong | |
| Mr. Francis WONG | Environmental Protection Department (EPD) |
| Ms Elaine CHUNG | EPD (Secretary) |
| Mr. Brian LEE | EPD (Assistant Secretary) |

Absent with apologies

Mr. LUI Tung-ming, MH

In attendance

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| Ms Anissa WONG, JP | EPD |
| Dr. Ellen CHAN | EPD |
| Dr. Lawrence WONG | EPD |
| Ms. Betty CHEUNG | EPD |

Welcoming Remarks

The **Chairman** welcomed all Members and representatives of the EPD to the second meeting of the Waste Recovery Projects Vetting Sub-committee (WRPVSC). He expressed special thanks to the Director of Environmental Protection, Ms Anissa WONG, for attending the meeting and giving advice on the agenda item 1.

Agenda Item 1: Discussion paper on “Funding to Support Non-governmental Organisations to Operate Plastic Waste and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Processing Centres at EcoPark Phase II in Tuen Mun”

2. **Dr. Lawrence WONG** briefed Members on the WRPVSC Paper 02/2009-10. In order to maintain local recovery of plastic waste so that the source separation of waste programme can be sustained, and to recycle more waste electric and electronic equipment (WEEE) to pave the way for the Producer Responsibility Scheme, the EPD planned to set up at EcoPark Phase II in Tuen Mun two processing centres respectively for waste plastics and WEEE recycling. It was proposed that socially/environmentally oriented and charitable non-governmental organisations (NGOs) be engaged in the form of a partnership with the EPD to operate the centres with ECF funding support on a time-limited basis.

3. EPD would provide the required land and infrastructures, design and build the processing centres, as well as provide technical support for the operation of the centres. It was proposed that interested NGOs would apply for ECF funding to support the operating costs of the centres. The selected NGO would oversee project planning and implementation, hire and manage the necessary manpower, operate the processing centre, oversee project accounts, and submit regular progress reports and audited accounts to the ECF Secretariat.

4. He remarked that the centres would complement the local recycling trade. For example, the flakes/chips and the baled plastics processed by the waste plastics recycling centre would be sold to local recyclers/dealers through open tendering. He added that the waste plastics collected in the past was mainly baled and exported; in contrast, the proposed project could serve as a pilot to provide relevant experience and operational data for future development of local processing of waste plastics.

5. **Ms Anissa WONG** further elaborated on the objectives of the two processing centres and the rationale behind the proposed collaboration between the Government and the NGOs. Collection and recycling of plastic waste and WEEE were subject to major challenges due to the fluctuating market situations. The involvement of the Government would enhance the stability of the recycling industry under the current economic downturn and the setup of processing centres at EcoPark Phase II could help the industry to further develop. Comparing the modes of Government operating the centres on its own and hiring NGOs for the service, collaboration with NGOs was the preferred option as this could foster community participation in source separation and recovery of waste drawing on the NGOs' extensive community networks with housing estates, schools and other community organisations. It could also help to gain social recognition and bring about synergy under the close cooperation between the Government and the NGOs.

6. **Mr. Tsang Kam-lam** indicated support to the proposal taking into consideration that the Government was taking the leading role to help the recycling industry. On the other hand, he asked for clarification on whether the proposed WEEE processing centre will cause competition to the existing WEEE centre at Kowloon Bay. **Dr. Lawrence WONG** replied that the two WEEE processing centres would not compete with each other because they aimed to process different types of WEEE. While the existing WEEE centre at Kowloon Bay would continue to process waste computers

and related equipments, the new centre at EcoPark Phase II will process mainly waste electrical appliances.

7. **Dr. YAU Wing-kwong** expressed appreciation to the proposal as it could set up a good model for the industry concerned. He asked about the way to sustain the source of plastic recyclables from the community. **Dr. Lawrence WONG** stated that before the economic downturn, the recovery rate of plastic waste was relatively high; however, it had recently dropped sharply because the market value of the waste plastics could hardly cover the collection and labour cost. From the economic point of view, this project could offer some relief to the recycling industry as the ECF funding support to NGO would facilitate the recyclers to collect waste plastics and it was expected that a minimum amount of 20 tonnes of plastic recyclable per day could be collected for processing at EcoPark.

8. **Ms Jennifer NG** welcomed the proposal and agreed that collaboration with NGOs was an effective way to execute the projects as NGOs had well-established community networks and were experienced in cooperating with the Government. Noting that the NGOs might lack experience in complying green office practices, she suggested drawing up guidelines, including those on the usage of office paper and energy audit, for the NGOs to follow. In addition, she advised to impose tight control over the expenditure on labour cost and ensure that the spending was reasonable and well-monitored.

9. **Mr. Charles CHAN** agreed to support the proposal but he questioned on the threats that might be introduced to the business sector. **Dr. Lawrence WONG** replied that this proposal would actually give support and confidence to the local recycling business by sustaining the source recovery of recyclables and facilitating local processing of the recovered recyclables. The provision of necessary hardwares would also serve as a model for other waste processing plants to be established locally. **Mr. Charles CHAN** also suggested the EPD could arrange field visits to places like Taiwan and the USA for NGOs to acquire knowledge on running environmental protection related social businesses.

10. In response to the query by **Mr. LEUNG Wai-on** regarding the logistics of the two processing centres, **Dr. Lawrence WONG** explained that baling of plastic waste could be done at various collection locations and within the participating housing estates in order to significantly reduce the volume for bulk transportation. The NGOs would also be advised to line up with local collectors and recyclers at different districts to build up networks for enhancing the transportation efficiency.

11. As a concluding remark, the **Chairman** stated that the proposal was endorsed by the meeting as it would provide the opportunities for the local recycling industry to further develop and it could also revitalise the market by the injection of \$500/tonne of recyclables. Furthermore, he summarised the opinions from Members that the EPD could launch publicity campaigns to educate the public on the environmental protection related social business, and to promote to them the concept and benefits of the proposed projects.

12. **Ms Anissa WONG** acknowledged all Members for their invaluable opinions and appealed for their help in promoting the new projects to the community. After the discussion, Ms Anissa WONG and Dr. Lawrence WONG left the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Agenda Item 2: Confirmation of Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 March 2009

13. The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 6 March 2009 were confirmed without any amendment.

Agenda Item 3: Progress report on Source Separation of Waste (SSW) Programme

14. **Mr. Francis WONG** reported that up to April 2009, 1,094 housing estates/buildings covering some 1.32 million households had signed up to join the SSW programme. Out of these participating housing estates/buildings, 102 had received subsidies from the ECF through WRPVSC's approval. The approved funding amounted to \$4.3 million to support the purchase and installation of waste separation facilities on each floor of the buildings, and facilitate residents to participate in waste recycling. Moreover, 498 commercial & industrial (C&I) buildings had signed up to join the SSW programme but no applications for the installation of waste separation facilities had been received from the C&I buildings so far.

15. For supplementary information, **Mr. Francis WONG** reported to Members on the status of waste separation bin applications under the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC)'s programme. As at April 2009, 262 and 87 applications had been received from residential buildings and C&I buildings respectively for the free provision of waste separation bins.

Agenda Item 4: Vetting of New Waste Recovery Projects (WRP) Applications

16. **Ms Elaine CHUNG** briefed Members on the 3 new WRP applications, i.e. project 148, 151 and 152 respectively. After discussion, the Meeting supported project 151 in principle and rejected project 148 and 152. Details of the decision were given at the *Appendix*.

Proposed variations to Project 103 - Women Green Collar "Community 3R" Project

17. **Ms Elaine CHUNG** reported that after the completion of the project, the applicant found that the actual expenditure was greater than the approved budget by \$5,953.30 due to the difference in expected and actual income from the sale of recyclables. Therefore, they had applied for a revision of budget aiming to increase the approved budget by the same amount to cover the shortfall.

18. After a short discussion, the **Meeting** approved the budget revision. With an increase of \$5,953.30, the revised total of the approval amount became \$354,753.30.

Agenda Item 5: Discussion paper on “Funding Support to Schools for Green Lunch”

19. **Mr. Francis WONG** briefed Members on the WRPVSC Paper 03/2009-10. At present, an estimated 550,000 primary and secondary students were provided with lunch at schools. It was noted that some 50% of the meals were still served in disposable containers out of which about 20% were non-recyclable. To protect the environment, schools could help by drawing up and adopting an appropriate green lunch policy, including implementing central portioning at schools.

20. To encourage more schools to switch over to central portioning, it was proposed to provide funding support from the ECF for part of the minor works required for the implementation of central portioning. Items to be funded would cover facilities/equipment and works related to re-heating/distribution of cooked food and washing of containers/cutlery, as well as cookers/heaters for rice and vegetables.

21. **Dr Ellen CHAN** stated that the EPD had been communicating with the Education Bureau on the subject of enhancing the design of new schools to provide enough space and facilities for the implementation of on-site central portioning in future. However, before the accomplishment of such new design which would take time, funding support from the ECF could serve as an interim measure helping existing schools interested in switching over to central portioning to implement the arrangement earlier.

22. **Ms Betty CHEUNG** added that the Department of Health (D of H) had also been advocating the concept of green and healthy lunch by holding talks and making regular visits to schools. The D of H had suggested the EPD to provide a list of ECF fundable items for helping schools to implement green lunch policy. With such a list, the D of H could further help in promoting the establishment of central portioning at schools.

23. In response to **Mr. LEUNG Wai-on**’s question on whether the funding for green lunch would cause too many schools to rush for the application, **Ms Betty CHEUNG** explained that since the applicants would have to bear the expenditures for part of the minor works concerned, the number of schools was expected to be manageable.

24. **Mr. Charles CHAN** asked and **Mr. Francis WONG** replied that it was not necessary for schools to apply for all items as listed in the paper. Schools could apply for funding for items/works selectively subject to their individual’s need.

25. **Mr. TSANG Kam-lam** expressed appreciation to the proposal in view of helping to reduce food waste. On the other hand, he suggested that participating schools and caterers should sign some sort of commitment form, making sure they would reduce food waste and using less disposable dining wares.

26. After discussion, the **Chairman** concluded that the Meeting supported the proposed green lunch funding arrangement to schools in general and he remarked that new applications regarding green school lunch would be vetted by the WRPVSC in future.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

27. No other businesses were raised by Members.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

28. The Chairman announced that the next meeting was proposed to be held at the end of July and the Secretariat would inform the exact date and venue in due course. The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m. (PMN: The next meeting will be held at the beginning of September 2009.)

**Waste Recovery Projects Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat
July 2009**

**Summary on New WRP Applications Vetted at 22nd Meeting of
Waste Recovery Projects Vetting Sub-Committee on 20 May 2009**

| No. | Proponent | Project Title | Proposed Budget (\$) | Approved Amount (\$) | Decision | Remarks |
|-----|--|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|---|
| 148 | Take Tech Limited | Bokashi Composting: reduce waste, create jobs | \$8,625,320 | - | Rejected | <p>The <u>Meeting</u> rejected the application for the following reasons:</p> <p>(1) The project is considered not cost-effective as the proposed budget amounted to some \$8 million would be spent mainly on promotional and educational aspects.</p> <p>(2) The involvement by students from the participating schools would be insufficient since not the whole composting process would take place on-site at the schools.</p> <p>(3) There are doubts on the degree of contribution and involvement from the applicant as a relatively large portion of the project would be contracted out to other parties.</p> |
| 151 | The Hong Kong Down Syndrome Association 香港唐氏綜合症協會 | Bring your Bag 袋袋平安 | \$481,200 | \$477,700 | Supported | <p>The <u>Meeting</u> supported the application taking into account of the following –</p> <p>(1) The project is considered to be value-adding as it targets at newspaper retailers which are difficult for the EPD to mobilise in the plastic bag reduction campaign. It can serve as a trial to change their habit and encourage them not to give out plastic bags to customers upon the purchase of newspaper.</p> <p>(2) The project is supported by the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) under the ECF – DC collaboration scheme. The applicant can make use of the network from STDC to maximise the effectiveness of the project.</p> |

| No. | Proponent | Project Title | Proposed Budget (\$) | Approved Amount (\$) | Decision | Remarks |
|-----|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|---|
| | | | | | | <p>(3) This project can also act as a model for spreading similar messages to other districts.</p> <p>The Meeting also made notes on the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Budget for the production of leaflets amounted to \$7,500 needs to be trimmed down to \$4,000. (2) The applicant should be encouraged to recruit chain stores and convenient stores to participate in the project in order to increase the target population. (3) The participating stalls should be asked not to give out plastic bags for a certain period. (4) The applicant should include more educational elements, for example: posting notices at the stalls and assigning ambassadors to stand nearby for disseminating the message of using fewer plastic bags, and giving out free bags only when needed. |
| 152 | Evergreen Association Limited 綠長青環保協進會有限公司 | Green Community Project 綠色社區計劃 | \$8,015,116 | - | Rejected | <p>The Meeting rejected the application for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) For the proposed programmes on recycling and promotion of glass, existing outlets of the material in Hong Kong is limited. (2) For the other proposed programmes (such as energy saving competition in housing estates, visit to renewable energy facilities and publishing a quarterly green living magazine etc), there are already a number of existing publicity and education activities by various organisations to promote messages similar to those proposed by the applicant, and the proposed activities involve about \$6 million which is relatively high when compared to other similar activities. |