

**Environment and Conservation Fund Committee  
Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee**

**Standing Orders, Procedures for Vetting Funding Applications  
and Code of Conduct**

**Purpose**

This paper informs members of the standing orders of the Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee (RPVSC) of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Committee and the procedures for vetting funding applications, and the Code of Conduct for compliance by members.

**Standing Orders**

2. The following standing orders have been adopted by the RPVSC for the purpose of maintaining good order at meetings -

(a) Meetings

The Vetting Subcommittee shall meet as frequently as necessary to discharge its duties.

(b) Presiding at Meetings

(i) The Chairman of the Vetting Subcommittee shall preside at all meetings of the Subcommittee.

(ii) In the absence of the Chairman from a meeting or part of a meeting, members present shall elect among themselves a member to preside.

(c) Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Vetting Subcommittee shall be half of the total number of members of the Vetting Subcommittee.

(d) Voting

- (i) All questions put to the Vetting Subcommittee shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting.
- (ii) The Chairman or a member presiding shall, if the votes be equally divided, have a casting vote in addition to his original vote.

(e) Disclosure of Interests

- (i) If a member is directly or indirectly related to a project or to the applicant/sponsoring/co-organizing organizations, or belongs to the same institution (including from departments of a university/company/organization), he shall disclose it to the Vetting Subcommittee.
- (ii) A member who has disclosed a direct personal interest shall withdraw from participating in the discussion of the relevant application.

### **Procedures for Vetting Funding Applications**

3. The ECF Guide to Application for Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects (R&TD projects) (copy at [Appendix 1](#)) provides guidance for application for funding R&TD projects and describes the basic requirements and responsibilities for recipient organizations. The broad criteria used in assessing the merits of individual applications are that the projects must contribute to the overall environment of Hong Kong, or raise environmental awareness of the local community, or mobilise the community to take action to improve the environment. The benefits must accrue to the local community as a whole, and not just to individuals, a single private organisation or a consortium of private companies. The projects must be non-profit making in nature. In considering a project proposal, due consideration will be given to:-

- (a) the benefits that it will bring to Hong Kong's environment, ecology, flora and fauna etc., or the extent to which it will enhance the environmental awareness of local community;
- (b) whether there is a demonstrable need for the proposed project;
- (c) the technical and project management capability of the applicant, as well as the past performance of the applicant, including the effectiveness of past projects, and the applicant's ability to comply with the funding conditions;
- (d) whether the proposed project's schedule of implementation is well-planned and practicable, and the duration is reasonable;
- (e) whether the proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with full justification for every expenditure item;
- (f) whether the proposed project has alternative sources of funding support;
- (g) whether the proposed project should more appropriately be funded by other sources;
- (h) whether there is or likely to be a duplication of the work already or currently carried out by other groups; and
- (i) if recurrent expenditure is incurred, whether the proposed project has potential to become self-sufficient after a certain period of time.

4. Since March 2010, RPVSC has identified a number of research priority themes, with the objective of focusing resources for building knowledge and talents on areas of priority that would also cope with government policy initiatives. The list of priority research themes will be updated on a bi-yearly basis. The list for 2012 to 2014 is at Appendix 2.

## **Code of Conduct**

5. As government funds are public money, it is imperative for all parties involved, including members of the ECF Committee and its various Vetting Subcommittees who are responsible for the vetting and approval of funding applications, to commit to ethical practices in the allocation and uses of the funds. A Code of Conduct setting out the guidelines and standards of integrity expected for members of the ECF Committee and its Vetting Subcommittees is at Appendix 3.

## **Advice Sought**

6. Members are invited to note the standing orders of the RPVSC and the procedures for vetting funding applications, and to observe the Code of Conduct.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee  
December 2012