

**Confirmed Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the
Environment and Conservation Fund Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee
held on 2 September 2008 at 2:30 p.m.
in the Conference Room, 46/F., Revenue Tower, Wanchai**

Present

Mr. Joseph Lee, SBS, JP	(Chairman)
Prof. Jonathan Wong Woon-chung	
Dr. Kenneth Leung Mei-yee	
Ms Emba Leung Wun-man	
Dr. Alain Lam Kwok-lun	ENB
Mr. Richard Chan Ping-kwong	AFCDD
Mr. Lawrence Cheung Shing-hsi	EPD
Mr. Francis Wong	EPD (Secretary)
Ms Winifred Chan	EPD (Assistant Secretary)

Absent with Apologies

Prof. Chan Chak-keung
Prof. Chau Kwai-cheong
Mr. Man Mo-leung

Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the seventh meeting of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee (RPVSC).

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 10.6.2008 were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Para. 3 ECF Project 04/2002 – a terminated project

3. Ms Winifred Chan reported that the Secretariat had, after consulting internal legal advice, written to the Principal Investigator (PI), Mr. Suen Kai-yuen, again on 5.6.2008 with the attachment of the discussion notes taken on 20.12.2007, in which his agreement to “no counter-claim” was recorded. As Mr. Suen did not make any reply by 19.6.2008, his agreement to the discussion notes was assumed, and the project should be closed. Dr. Alain Lam remarked that Members agreed at the meeting held on 25.2.2008 to remove the name of the PI and his company from the blacklist six months afterwards. As such, the PI and his company would no longer be blacklisted. Members noted and made no further comment on the issue.

Progress Report of ECF funded research and technology demonstration projects [ECF Paper 14/2008-09]

4. Ms Winifred Chan briefed Members on the ECF Paper 14/2008-09 on the progress of 18 on-going research projects (including 2 projects being terminated) and two completed research projects as at 30.6.2008. Among the 18 on-going projects, the PI of ECF Project 6/2006 would like to seek approval from the RPSVSC for the variation of project details. Details of the variation were set out in ECF Paper 15/2008-09 for further discussion. Two research projects were completed during the period of 1 January to 30 June 2008. The research findings were summarized in Appendices 19 and 20 of ECF Paper 14/2008-09 for Members’ information.

Proposed variations to details of ECF funded projects

ECF Project 6/2006 To establish a three dimensional real-time marine environment monitoring system in Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park with connection to the internet

[ECF Paper 15/2008-09]

5. As a member of the Council of the City University of Hong Kong, the Chairman declared interest and requested Dr. Alain Lam to chair the discussion of this project.

6. Ms Winifred Chan reported that the PI of the project would like to seek approval for extension of the project period for three months, i.e. up to 30.9.2008. The PI explained that owing to bad weather in June to July, the data and web server computers were affected by electrical surges due to lightning strikes, causing failure of data transmission. The system needed a few weeks' time to resume full operation. The delay in the delivery of cameras and video server also affected the installation of the mimic panel system. Completion of the project would thus be deferred to end of September 2008. No additional fund would be requested for the whole project.

7. Members approved the extension of project period for ECF Project 6/2006 up to 30.9.2008 without additional funding.

ECF Project 08/2007 Environmental education on river remediation and ecological restoration : A case study on Shing Mun River and Lam Tsuen River

[ECF Paper 16/2008-09]

8. To avoid conflict of interest, Prof. Jonathan Wong of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) declared interest as the PI for the Project 8/2007 also came from the Department of Biology of HKBU, and withdrew himself from the Conference Room. As a member of the Court of the HKBU, the Chairman also declared interest and Dr Alain Lam continued to chair the discussion of this project.

9. Mr. Francis Wong reported that, in response to Members' comments made at the last meeting, the PI revised the proposal accordingly. The PI provided further details on sample collection and treatment. The target fish species with a similar size would be collected at all sites in both wet (June to August) and dry (November to January) seasons. With the revision, the duration of project period and the budget remain unchanged. In addition, the PI advised that the RGC had not approved funding to the PI's proposal namely "Use of sediment quality and biodiversity to evaluate the effectiveness of stream restoration".

10. Note

11. After discussion, Members agreed to support the revised proposal with a grant of \$149,400 on the condition that the PI must consult a qualified statistician so as to ensure that all data analyses would be carried out in a correct manner.

ECF Project 10/2007 Recycling of CRT glass from discarded computer monitor and TV sets

[ECF Paper 17/2008-09]

12. The Chairman took the lead of the discussion of the project and Prof. Jonathan Wong rejoined the meeting. Mr. Francis Wong briefed Members on the revised proposal with supplementary information that the PI had submitted in response to Members' comments made at the last meeting. The duration of project period and the budget remain unchanged. The PI explained that the proposed study would focus on the feasibility of reusing the leaded funnel glass instead of almost lead free panel glass in past studies. The PI also stated that if the technology, in particular the radiation shielding ability of the concrete products produced with the incorporation of the leaded glass, can be demonstrated by the research results, ready mixed concrete producers and concrete block manufacturers would be approached to use the technology for specialized concrete production. Besides research reports and papers, the deliverable of the project would also include practical guidelines for recycling CRT glass in the local construction industry. Towards the end of the project period, a seminar would be organised to disseminate information to concerned parties, including interested construction product manufactures.

13. Note

14. The Chairman stated that the objective of ECF was to promote worthwhile environmental research. In view of the value of the project deliverables, Members agreed to support the proposal with a grant of \$441,400 including the staff cost of one senior research assistant and the approved project period should be 12 months.

ECF Project 11/2007 Developing a fully automated Close-Proximity vehicle for measuring tyre/road noise

[ECF Paper 18/2008-09]

15. Mr. Francis Wong briefed Members on the further reply given by EPD and Highways Department (HyD). EPD advised that there would be likely more new low noise materials or quieter tyres developed in future, CPX trailer would be an essential equipment to gauge and compare the noise reduction effectiveness of such new materials. As EPD did not have the resources to keep and maintain the vehicle, it would be the best approach to utilize the vehicle through hire of service after completion of the vehicle by the recipient organisation. HyD pointed out that ISO/CD 11819-2 was still in draft form. Hence further researches might be required to update the vehicle, the sophisticated measuring equipment and the computer processing software as the draft ISO standard would evolve. In addition, much expertise was required to calibrate the equipment, process the raw data and generate results to make the noise data meaningful to pavement engineers in HyD. These services require a wide range of expertise that was not available within HyD, but readily available in a research institute. It was clearly more cost effective for the recipient organisation to own and operate the CPX vehicle in the long term, whereas HyD could hire the services as a user of the data the vehicle would provide.

16. Note

17. After deliberation, Members agreed that the proposal would be supported on the condition that the recipient organization would make it available free of charge for EPD and HyD to carry out various tests with the CPX vehicle for a period of three years upon completion of the project. As the funding amount was over \$500,000, the RPVSC would recommend the proposal with a grant of \$1,768,380 to the ECF Committee for formal endorsement.

ECF Project 1/2008 Current Status and Direction for Green Purchasing in Hong Kong

[ECF Paper 19/2008-09]

18. Mr. Francis Wong briefed Members on the revised proposal. The

survey would be conducted in two phases. At least 1,500 copies of the questionnaire would be sent out at Phase I. The project team would then contact the recipient one-by-one in order to enhance the response rate of the survey. An expected number of 200 to 300 completed questionnaires would be received. At Phase II, 30% of the respondents would be selected randomly for an arrangement of a face-to-face/telephone interview (using a set of more comprehensive questionnaire). The Project Team would contact the person-in-charge of purchasing in the company so as to gather more in-depth information on the current status. The duration of project period and the budget remain unchanged. The PI explained that in view of the labour intensive work in liaising with the various private companies and conducting in-depth interviews at the Phase II, the requirement of one full-time research assistant was considered more economical, practical and fruitful. The PI had also invited quotation from local university on setting questionnaire and conducting survey but there was no guaranteed response rate. The PI also produced the written confirmation from the United Nations Environment Programme, the Green Purchasing Network and the Hong Kong Waste Management Association.

19. Note

20. After discussion, Members agreed to support the proposal with a grant of \$239,700 on the condition that 50% of the in-depth interviews to be conducted at Phase II should be face-to-face interviews. Moreover, as the overhead administrative cost was supported, the amount of \$10,000 for the notebook computer was not supported.

Agenda Item 3: New Applications

ECF Project 04/2008 Studying landbirds in important birds habitats of Hong Kong, especially in the Important Birds Areas (IBAs)

(ECF Paper 20/2008-09)

21. Mr. Francis Wong briefed Members on the proposal and the assessments given by AFCD and two external assessors. The PI proposed to conduct a systematic and scientific landbird survey in important bird habitats to

understand the real picture of bird trends in the important bird habitats. AFCD supported the proposal in general. Upon AFCD's advice, the PI supplemented the frequency and duration of the bird survey in the proposal. The PI also provided maps for the details of the six proposed transects. Both external assessors supported the proposal as well.

22. Note

23. Members discussed further about the proposal after the representatives left the conference room. The Chairman concluded that the meeting agreed to support the project with a grant of \$490,750. Also, the project team would be required to record the change of habitat and take advice from the AFCD on the details of such record as the information would assist monitoring the general health of the habitat for birds. The PI would also be required to organise public lecture and press conference to publicise the research result upon completion of the study.

ECF Project 05/2008 Development of Intelligent Electrical Vehicle (EV)
(ECF Paper 21/2008-09)

24. Mr. Francis Wong briefed Members on the proposal and the assessments given by EPD and two external assessors. The objective of the project was to develop a new electric light bus for use as public transportation. EPD considered the project worthy of support and the project deliverables carry practical values, which could help improve the performance of electric light buses and encourage more people to use them in Hong Kong. However, both External Assessor 1 and 2 did not support the project. They opined that the project should be supported from the industry or involving manufacturers. External Assessor 1 considered the technology described was a common and typical method for EV development which had not involved new element. As most of the work would not be done locally, it was not worthy to be supported by ECF. External Assessor 2 stated that the real developments should be the battery controller and the motor, instead of the vehicle. Both external assessors pointed out that there were local studies developing EV for smaller cars for 2 to 4 passengers.

25. Note

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Business

26. As the current term of the RPVSC would expire on 15.10.2008, the Chairman and Dr Alain Lam expressed gratitude to all members for their contribution in the past two years.

27. The meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee October 2008

Note: The paragraph will not be included in the version of notes to be uploaded to the webpage of ECFC according to the standing practice of not disclosing the detailed reasons for supporting or rejecting an application. The ECFC webpage contains a general disclaimer that “Reasons for supporting/rejecting an application had been made known to the project proponents concerned, and the public could ask the project proponents direct for such information.”