

**Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Environment and
Conservation Fund Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee
held on 18 July 2012 at 9:30 a.m.
in Room 502, 5/F., Southorn Centre, Wanchai**

Present

Mr Joseph LEE, SBS, JP	(Chairman)
Dr Kenneth MY LEUNG	
Mr Barry MC KWONG	
Ms Agnes NG	
Dr SHUM Ho-cheung, Anderson	
Prof Jonathan WC WONG, MH	
Mr Luther LT WONG	
Mr Conrad PK LAM	ENB
Mr KW CHEUNG	AFCD
Mr Patrick LIU	EPD
Ms Anita SW TSUI	Secretary (EPD)
Miss Sharon TSAI	Assistant Secretary (EPD)
Mr Steve KS TSOI	Assistant Secretary (EPD)

Absent with Apologies

Prof CHAU Kwai-cheong, JP
Dr Arthur PS LAU
Mr Paul KC CHAN

Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the sixth 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 previous meeting held on 29 February 2012 were circulated to Members on 25 May 2012. The minutes were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

ECF Project 09/2011 Dosing of Ferric Iron for the Control of Odour Problems in Typhoon Shelters [RPVSC Paper 04/2012-13]

3. Dr Kenneth LEUNG declared interest for this item and withdrew from the meeting as the application was submitted by the University of Hong Kong (HKU).

4. Ms Anita SW TSUI said that at the previous meeting, Members had discussed an application submitted by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) for a project on using ferric iron for control of odour problems in typhoon shelters, and decided to request the principal investigator (PI) for further information, viz., possible side effects of the proposed method on the biological diversity at the typhoon shelter, operation details for application of the method, and results of application of the method to the Shenzhen Bay. Miss Sharon TSAI reported that the PI had since furnished the required information, which was circulated to Members vide RPVSC Paper 04/2012-13.

5. Note

6. After deliberation, the Chairman concluded that the project should be supported, but that funding support for the Postdoctoral Research Fellow should be reduced from the proposed 24 months to 18 months. Accordingly, the budget for the proposal would be adjusted to \$1,058,500.

[Dr Kenneth LEUNG re-joined the meeting.]

**Agenda Item 3: Eligibility Criteria for Technology Demonstration Projects
on Waste Minimization and Recycling [RPVSC paper
05/2012-13]**

7. Ms Anita SW TSUI briefed Members that under the prevailing funding guidelines, applicants seeking funding support under the ECF should generally be local non-profit making organizations. For technology demonstration projects on waste minimisation and recycling, local companies incorporated under the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 32) might also apply. The rationale for this being that members of the trade were the ones who would possess the necessary expertise, equipment, venue setup and materials etc. for demonstration of technologies in areas of waste minimization and recycling. However, the suitability of this particular eligibility criterion was recently questioned by an applicant, whose applications could not be further processed for reason that the organization did not meet the eligibility of either a local non-profit-making organization or a local incorporated company.
8. Ms Anita SW TSUI indicated that the Secretariat had since consulted EPD which, after review, considered that the existing eligibility criteria were suitable and should be maintained. In particular, the requirement for applicants to be incorporated under the Companies Ordinance would help ascertain their identity. This requirement was also commonly adopted by other funding schemes administered by various government departments, such as the Film Development Fund, Innovation and Technology Fund, CreateSmart Initiative, etc. Nevertheless, it was considered that the relevant provisions in the Guide to Application could be textually amended to set out the eligibility requirements more clearly.
9. After deliberations, the meeting agreed that the existing eligibility criteria for technology demonstration projects should be maintained, and supported the textual amendments proposed in Appendix 3 to RPVSC paper 05/2012-13.

Agenda Item 4: New Applications

10. Dr. Kenneth LEUNG declared interest for the following two applications submitted by HKU and withdrew from the meeting.

ECF Project 30/2011 Demonstration of an efficient air pollutants scrubbing device for marine applications [RPVSC Paper 06/2012-13]

11. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on the proposal by HKU seeking funding support of \$1,998,200 for a project to demonstrate an air pollutants scrubbing device for marine applications. She reported that EPD had given support for the application as the proposed device could substantially reduce air pollutant emission from ferries and other harbour craft, thereby improving Hong Kong's air quality especially in districts around the harbour areas. Both of the two external assessors (EAs) also expressed support in view of the practical value of the study in cutting down NO₂ generation.

12. ^{Note}

13. ^{Note}

14. ^{Note}

15. After deliberation, the Chairman concluded that while the project was supported in principle, the PI should be required to seek the written consent of the Star Ferry for using the technology and all related data owned by the company for the purposes of the present proposal, including the future dissemination and technology transfer required under the ECF's funding procedures. In addition, the PI should explore the feasibility of trying out the technology in marine vessels owned by other ferry operators.

ECF Project 29/2011 Recycling Sludge Incineration Ash for Ceramic Products:
Texture Design and Metal Immobility [RPVSC Paper 07/2012-13]

16. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on the proposal by HKU for funding support of \$497,422 for an 18-month project on the recycling of sludge incineration ash for ceramic products. Miss TSAI added that HKU had received funding from the Research Grants Council (RGC) for a related project on the subject, which focused on the basic research of sludge-induced metal stabilization mechanism. The present application involved an applied research of using chemically enhanced primary treatment sludge incineration ash to perform ceramic texture design and ensure an effective metal immobilization. EPD considered the proposal worthy of support as it would be useful to investigate alternative means to handle the sewage sludge incineration ash than disposal at landfills.

17. ^{Note}

18. ^{Note}

19. After deliberation, the Chairman concluded that the application should not be supported.

[*Dr Kenneth LEUNG re-joined the meeting.*]

20. Prof Jonathan WONG declared interest for the following application from the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGH) for which he was a Co-PI, and withdrew himself from the meeting. Dr Anderson SHUM joined the meeting.

ECF Project 33/2011 Composting of Food Waste with Chinese Medicinal Herb Residues as a Bulking Agent to Produce a High-end Organic Fertilizer [RPVSC Paper 08/2012-13]

21. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on the proposal by TWGH for a project to demonstrate the feasibility of using Chinese medicinal herb residues collected from local Chinese medicine clinics as bulking agents for food waste composting. Funding support of \$1,086,480 was sought for this 18-month project. EPD opined that if the feasibility and suitability of using Chinese

medicinal herb residues as bulking agents for food waste composting were established, it could reduce the amount of Chinese medicinal herb residues to be disposed of at landfills, and its application as bulking agents could improve the quality of compost produced. For these reasons, EPD considered the project as worth supporting. Both EAs supported the proposal as it would help divert the organic fraction of municipal solid waste from landfilling and incineration.

22. ^{Note}

23. ^{Note}

24. The Chairman concluded that the application was supported. For the sake of completeness, the PIs should include detailed justifications for each budget item, in particular details on the proposed manpower and its deployment in their proposal.

[Prof Jonathan WONG re-joined the meeting.]

ECF Project 32/2011 Persistent Organic Pollutants in Human Breast Milk
[RPVSC Paper 09/2012-13]

25. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on the proposal by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) seeking funding support of \$645,300 for a 12-month project which aimed to determine the average levels of the "new" Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in milk samples of new mothers in Hong Kong, and investigate whether the mothers' dietary habits had any effects on these levels. The proposed project would be a continuation of an earlier study commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) in 2009 which focused on new POPs, for which local primary data were scanty. Both EPD and DH considered the proposal worthy of support, as it could provide useful information to facilitate the Government in developing strategies for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. The two EAs also opined that the results of the project would be useful. However, one of the EAs had doubts over the contributions of the study to environmental conservation, for reason that the project seemed more related to environmental health and food hygiene.

26. ^{Note}

27.^{Note}

28. After deliberation, the Chairman concluded that the PI should be requested to seek local partnership for the laboratory testing for the study, as a means to help build up local capacity. In case this was not viable, then competitive tendering should be resorted to. The PI should be requested to consider the meeting's above suggestions and provide his response for Members' further consideration.

ECF Project 37/2011 Incorporating Air Pollution Impact into Traffic Impact Assessment in Hong Kong [RPVSC Paper 10/2012-13]

29. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members about the proposal by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) for funding support of \$473,000 for an 18-month project to explore the possibility of integrating air pollution assessment in the current framework of the Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) in Hong Kong. EPD had reservations about supporting the application as the existing framework under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) had already covered air quality impact assessment for designated projects including road works, and hence there might not be a practical need to further include air quality assessment in TIA for these projects. The Transport Department (TD) pointed out that the TIA was not dependent on EIA, and that putting the TIA as part of the EIA might be misleading and confusing.

30.^{Note}

31. After discussion, the meeting decided that the project should not be supported.

ECF Project 23/2011 Green Features for Sustainable Daylighting Design in Buildings [RPVSC Paper 11/2012-13]

32. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members about PolyU's application for funding support of \$426,240 for a 24-month project to study, demonstrate and promote the usefulness of two types of building green features, namely sunshade & reflectors and balconies, for optimizing daylighting and energy

saving performance. The Housing Department, Architectural Services Department, and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) considered the application worthy of support.

33. ^{Note}

34. The meeting decided that the project should be supported. Nevertheless, in order that the results of the proposed project could be usefully applied, the PI should, during the dissemination of the study's results, include relevant government departments as well as other stakeholders in his targeted participants.

35. As a member of the Council of the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) and a member of the Court of HKBU, the Chairman declared interest on the remaining six applications [i.e. ECF Projects 25/2011 and 40/2011 from CityU, and ECF Projects 8/2011, 24/2011, 36/2011 and 28/2011 from HKBU]. He invited Mr. Conrad LAM to chair the discussion and left the meeting.

ECF Project 25/2011 Marine Energy: Preliminary Resource Assessment of Hong Kong Coastal Waters and Performance Testing of a Prototype Device [RPVSC Paper 16/2012-13]

36. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed the meeting about CityU's proposal for funding support of \$1,915,000 for a 24-month project. The project aimed to perform a preliminary investigation of marine energy potential in Hong Kong coastal waters and to test the applicability of a prototype device for electricity generation by harnessing marine energy. EMSD considered that the project could provide additional reference on the marine energy potential of Hong Kong waters, and was worthy of support from the point of view of promotion of renewable energy technology. Both EAs considered the project worthy of support as it should at least generate local interest in marine energy, and provide some basic data for other follow-up projects in the area which finally should contribute to environmental protection in Hong Kong.

37. ^{Note}

38. After discussion, the meeting agreed that the application should not

be supported. The meeting pointed out that the use of marine energy was a subject worth exploring. In the event the PI would like to re-submit an application on the subject, the proposal should include a detailed implementation plan, comparing possible alternative technologies available in the market, and identifying suitable options for Hong Kong.

ECF Project 40/2011 Study the Energy Saving Opportunities and Potentials of Using Wireless Sensor Network to Monitor the Indoor Climate of Large-scale Rooms in Hong Kong [RPVSC Paper 17/2012-13]

39. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on CityU's proposal which involved the use of a wireless sensor network for monitoring the indoor climate of large-scale rooms. Funding application of \$442,000 was sought for this proposed 18-month project. EMSD considered the project worthy of support as it could provide additional reference on Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning performance.

40. ^{Note}

41. After deliberations, Members concluded that the application should be supported.

42. Prof Jonathan WONG declared interest for the remaining four applications submitted by HKBU and left the meeting.

ECF Project 08/2011 Erosion and growth of massive corals in Hong Kong [RPVSC Paper 12/2012-13]

43. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members about HKBU's proposal for funding support of \$1,864,020 for a 42-month project to quantify the erosion and growth of massive corals in local waters through field surveys and field experiments. EPD and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) considered the project worth supporting, as it would provide useful information on the erosion and growth of corals in Hong Kong. One of the EAs was highly supportive of the project as it aimed to provide management insights for Hong Kong's valued coral communities. However, the other EA had reservations about giving strong support for reason that the proposed study was more a basic research, and it was not clear as to how the

study's results would be transferred to a management and conservation plan. This EA indicated that the worthiness of the project would depend on whether the results would be used by relevant government departments for the management and conservation of coral ecosystems in Hong Kong. Based on the EA's comments, the Secretariat had consulted AFCD, which confirmed that the results of the study would be useful for the purpose.

44. ^{Note}

45. ^{Note}

46. After discussion, the meeting concluded that the PI should consider conducting the proposed study in two phases, and submitting an application for the first phase research for Members' consideration. In his first phase application, if submitted, he should provide written confirmation from the two Co-Is on their continued involvement in the study.

ECF Project 24/2011 Probing the Environmental Fate of UV Filters: Occurrence, Bioaccumulation and Degradation [RPVSC Paper 13/2012-13]

47. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members about the proposal by HKBU seeking funding support of \$868,320 for a 24-month project for developing analytical methods to identify and quantify 12 UV filters in water and sediment, and studying the occurrence of target UV filters in Hong Kong aquatic environments. EPD considered the project worthy of support, since there were evidences to show that UV filter chemicals could be a new group of potential chemicals of concern in Hong Kong. The two EAs supported the project as it would contribute to future risk assessments of organic UV filer compounds in water and sediments.

48. ^{Note}

49. ^{Note}

50. After deliberations, the meeting agreed that the proposed study should be supported. The PI should, however, suitably adjust Phase III of the proposed method of implementation to take into account Members' views.

ECF Project 36/2011 Development of a Bioluminescence-based Biosensor for Fast Screening and Detection of Plasticizer Phthalate Contaminants [RPVSC Paper 14/2012-13]

51. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on the proposal from HKBU for funding support of \$500,000 for an 18-month project to develop a fast method to screen and detect Plasticizer. EPD considered that the project was worthy of support as the proposed method might offer a more efficient and economic approach in a broad screening of aquatic samples which required further analytical investigation.

52. ^{Note}

53. The meeting agreed that discussion on the application should be deferred pending receipt of expert views on the subject under study.

ECF Project 28/2011 Conserving Hong Kong through Partnership: Enhancing Communication between the Government, the Green Groups and Major Stakeholders [RPVSC Paper 15/2012-13]

54. Miss Sharon TSAI briefed Members on the proposal by HKBU for a study to raise public and community awareness of environmental issues through better communication between the government, green groups and major stakeholders in Hong Kong. EPD had reservations about supporting the project as the application value of the deliverables was not demonstrated.

55. ^{Note}

56. After deliberation, the meeting agreed that the proposal should not be supported.

Agenda Item 5: Date of Next Meeting

57. The next meeting would normally be held in about 2 to 3 months. The Secretariat would inform Members of details of the next meeting nearer the time.

58. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:50 p.m.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee

July 2012

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."