

Minutes of 19th Meeting of ECF Waste Recovery Projects Vetting Sub-Committee

Date : 25 March 2008 (Tuesday)
Time : 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Venue : Conference Room 33/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present

The Honourable CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairperson)
Mr Ricky FAN
Mr HO Siu-ping, Peter
Mr Barry KWONG
Dr Arthur LAU
Mr LEUNG Wai-on
Mr LUI Tung-ming
Ms LEUNG Oi-mui, Amy
Ms Edith NGAN
Dr YAU Wing-kwong
Professor POON Chi-sun
Professor Jonathan WONG
Mr Francis WONG Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Ms Sonia LO EPD (Secretary)
Miss Brenda LAM EPD (Assistant Secretary)
Miss Angie WAN EPD (Assistant Secretary)

Absent with apologies

Ms Goretti LAU
Mr LAM Kwok-hing, Wilfred, JP
Dr TSANG Po-keung, Eric
Mr CHUNG Kong-mo

In attendance

Dr Michael CHIU EPD
Dr Ellen CHAN EPD
Ms Betty CHEUNG EPD
Mr C S LAI EPD

Welcoming Remark

The Chairperson welcomed all Members and representatives of the EPD.

I. Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting

2. The Chairperson requested Mr C S LAI, in response to paragraph 9 of the minutes of the last meeting, to provide more information about the effectiveness of the Source Separation of Domestic Waste (SSW) projects funded by the ECF.

3. Mr C S LAI reported that 89 projects had been subsidized to implement SSW since the scheme was launched in August 2005. An evaluation on the monthly recovery figures provided by 44 estates/buildings showed an average increase of 150% in the quantity of recyclables recovered. Among the different collection modes, the “door-to-door collection” mode (i.e. recycling bags were provided to individual households) collected the highest quantity of recyclables. The evaluation, however, had not taken into account the promotion efforts of property management companies and the residents’ level of participation, as well as the amount of waste taken away by cleansing staff. Members were requested to refer to *Annex A* for details.

4. Mr C S LAI revealed that at present 855 estates/buildings had joined SSW, of which over 200 had set up floor-based separation facilities. The target for 2008 was to sign up a total of 920 estates/buildings. To keep Members in view of the updated position of the scheme since the last meeting, the Chairperson requested Mr C S LAI to provide supplementary information such as –

- no. of estates/buildings approached by the EPD
- no. of estates/buildings joined SSW
- no. of applications for ECF subsidy
- no. of projects approved

5. Pending the provision of supplementary information, the minutes of the 18th meeting held on 21 December 2007 were confirmed without amendment.

II. Brainstorming

(a) **Ways forward to promote waste reduction and recovery**

6. The Chairperson introduced that the objective of the brainstorming session was to come up with new ideas that could help promote waste reduction and recovery in Hong Kong. Mr Francis WONG referred Members to *Annex B* which listed out the major issues for discussion.

7. In view of the prevailing increase in the disposal of commercial and industrial (C&I) waste at the landfills, Prof POON Chi-sun opined to extend the SSW programme to C&I buildings. Dr Arthur LAU agreed and suggested the presentation of special awards to the property management companies of C&I buildings as an incentive. Dr Ellen CHAN advised that some 350 C&I buildings had joined the SSW scheme and a certificate presentation ceremony was held in February 2008 to compliment participants of the programme. To encourage more C&I buildings to join SSW, she suggested Members to consider extending the subsidy programme to C&I buildings.

8. Dr Arthur LAU suggested that cross-sectoral waste reduction and recycling programmes among schools, community groups, housing estates and government departments could be encouraged.

9. Mr LEUNG Wai-on said that, with reference to overseas experience, the effectiveness of waste recovery had been significantly enhanced as a result of synergy effect brought by partnership among enterprises, green groups and community groups. Through partnership, the collection of a consumed product for re-use or recycling could be well-planned prior to the

production of the product.

10. Dr YAU Wing-kwong considered that the habit of waste recycling could be fostered through a personalized octopus card score-earning system. The data collected by the system would be useful for analysis purpose.

11. The Chairperson put forward that an incentive, either in the form of reward (e.g. award schemes) or penalty (e.g. charging schemes), was considered the most effective means to encourage waste reduction and recovery. She requested Members to express views on whether charging schemes should be adopted.

12. Mr Barry KWONG believed that charging schemes would definitely create incentive for small- and medium-sized enterprises to implement waste reduction measures. More sharing of good practices in the business sector should be promoted. He suggested that social enterprises could be set up alongside the property management companies to offer dedicated waste collection and separation services in individual housing estates and C&I buildings.

13. While agreeing that charging schemes might serve as a good incentive for waste recovery, Prof Jonathon WONG revealed that, with reference to the Un Chau Estate case, recycling rate could be increased significantly by providing easy access to recycling facilities and door-to-door collection service. Dr Ellen CHAN added that the promotion efforts by property management companies and people's awareness were also important success factors.

14. Ms Edith NGAN opined that a strategic objective should be set before choosing the appropriate type of incentive scheme (i.e. a reward or a penalty scheme or a combined one) to be adopted.

15. Mr Ricky FAN expressed that waste recovery rate was maintained at a relatively high level in C&I buildings because the waste collected there could be separated easily. He favoured the Wet-Dry separation mode which would encourage waste separation (in particular food waste) by residents on one hand and facilitate waste collection by recyclers on the other.

16. Ms LEUNG Oi-mui, Amy was of the view that studies or surveys would help identify factors affecting people's behaviour and participation in waste reduction and recycling, thus facilitating the formulation of appropriate measures or incentive schemes.

17. In response to the Chairperson's enquiry on the reason for withholding the charging scheme, Dr Michael CHIU advised that further study was necessary to work out a practicable charging scheme for Hong Kong. Dr Ellen CHAN added that given Hong Kong's residential setting, a variable rate charging scheme using designated garbage bags would entail difficulties in ascertaining the amount and sources of waste on an individual household basis.

18. The Chairperson opined that the high transportation cost in waste collection arising from dispersed locations of buildings had hampered the profitability of recycling business. The current operating mode of refuse collection by FEHD could be reviewed so as to facilitate waste collection by recyclers.

19. Members in general agreed that a charging scheme would be an effective means to further reduce waste generation and increase recovery. Prof Jonathon WONG and Dr YAU Wing-kwong added that efforts should be continued in parallel to enhance people's awareness

and involvement in waste reduction even upon the implementation of a charging scheme.

20. Prof POON Chi-sun informed Members that the Waste Management Sub-committee under the Advisory Council on the Environment had discussed actively with the Government on the introduction of a charging scheme. Members' views would be conveyed to the Sub-committee for consideration.

(b) Revised Guide to Application and future directions in vetting applications

21. The Chairperson referred Members to *Annex C* which summarized the revisions to the "Guide to Application" for Community Waste Recovery Projects under the enhanced funding scope of the ECF.

22. Members discussed on the future directions in vetting new applications and their views were summarized below :

- in view of the increase in the disposal of C&I waste at the landfills, priority could be accorded to projects which aimed at recovering waste in specific C&I sectors with an upward trend in waste generation;
- as food waste accounted for a high proportion of domestic waste in Hong Kong, such kind of recovery projects might be encouraged;
- to encourage public participation in waste recycling, projects offering souvenirs for participants in exchange for recyclables could be considered on a case-by-case basis, except for repeated applications;
- with the lifting of funding cap to \$500,000 for procurement of equipment, more incubation projects would be expected. Projects that could achieve self-financing after a certain period of time could be considered;
- to encourage the sharing of successful experience in promoting waste recovery, projects which had made reference to similar overseas projects should be supported.

23. The Secretariat was requested to remind applicants that unsatisfactory performance in the delivery of projects would adversely affect the organization's future chance of getting funding support.

III. Any Other Business

24. There being no other business, the Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Members were invited to proceed to Luk Kwok Hotel for lunch.

Waste Recovery Projects Vetting Sub-Committee Secretariat
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