

**Project 2/2005 – Research Priorities for Reducing Particulate Pollution in  
Hong Kong**

**Purpose**

This paper seeks Members' advice on funding the captioned application for ECF submitted by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

**Background**

2. The funding requested by this project is \$635,850.00 for the staff cost of employing one Postdoctoral Associate and one Research Assistant for a period of 15 months. The project is expected to last for 15 months.

3. The proposed study involves three objectives/steps:

- (i) A comprehensive literature review of research publications (including EPD reports available in the public domain) on the state of particulate pollution research in Hong Kong.
- (ii) An analysis of the adequacy of scientific information required for reducing particulate pollution in Hong Kong. Areas with available sufficient information will be summarized and areas needing further research will be identified.
- (iii) The areas that need further research will be prioritized in terms of the impact on predicting the concentration and composition of particulate pollutants in Hong Kong. Relevant research studies will be proposed with a suggested schedule.

4. The proposal has been examined by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and two overseas expert assessors. EPD considers the project worthy of support as it will help establish the research priorities to improve the air quality in this region. However, the proposed budget is considered on the high side and the project mainly focuses on information research, synthesis and analysis for the prioritization of particular pollution reduction in Hong Kong. The staff arrangement and the suggested duration seems to be overrated. The principal investigator (PI) has explained that summarizing and analyzing the information to find out which are the missing links in reducing particulate pollution in Hong Kong is demanding and

time-consuming task.

5. In respect of the assessment by two external assessors, Assessor 1 considers that a critical review of air quality publications and reports would be useful for Hong Kong scientists and decision-makers but the potential outcome of the project is unclear. Assessor 2 considers that conducting a literature survey will be helpful to the scientific community as a whole but will not lead to a better understanding of air quality and control strategies in the Pearl River Delta region. Assessor 2 also comments that the proposal is not a research proposal in that it is not posing hypotheses and testing them using state-of-the-art techniques. In this aspect, the PI explains that the implicit hypothesis is that all air quality research is of equal importance without a priority list by default.

**Advice sought**

6. Members are invited to advise whether the application for ECF should be supported as detailed in paragraphs 2 to 3 above and if supported, the exact amount of fund to be approved.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee  
December 2005