



ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION FUND

環境及自然保育基金



Guide to Application



Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects

(Revised on 1.4.2010)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) and the Woo Wheelock Green Fund (WWGF) has been set up by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Wheelock & Co. (Wheelock) respectively. The purpose is to provide funding support for educational, research, technology demonstration and other projects and activities in relation to environmental and conservation matters, as well as community waste recovery projects.

1.1 Purpose of this Guide

This Guide provides guidance on application for funding ***Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects*** and describes the basic requirements and responsibilities for recipient organisations. Upon approval of funds by the ECF Committee¹, recipient organisations will sign an agreement with the Government undertaking to observe the conditions of using the allocated grant and the approved budget.

1.2 Objective of ECF/WWGF

The objective of the ECF/WWGF is to promote individual behavioural and life style changes to protect the environment and achieve sustainable development. More specifically, the WWGF aims to support action projects, which are result-oriented and will make a real difference to the environment in Hong Kong. These changes should lead to *but not limited to*:

- conservation of biological diversity with particular reference to marine conservation;
- improvement in air quality;
- reduction in noise pollution;
- improvement in water quality;
- minimization of waste generation and promotion of the 3R (reduce, re-use and recycle) concept; and
- sustainable use of energy.

¹ A statutory body, which comprises mainly non-officials, was set up in 1994 under the Environment and Conservation Fund Ordinance to advise Secretary for the Environment on the use of funds. Under the Ordinance, the Secretary is the trustee responsible for the administration of the Fund.

1.3 Nature of Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects

Environmental Research and Technology Demonstration projects should have contribution in a direct and practical way towards the environmental improvement and conservation of the local environment and should not be too theoretical in nature. They include the introduction and development of new technologies, such as the technology on waste minimization and recycling.

For technology demonstration projects in particular, projects should promote and encourage the adoption of technologies by different sectors in Hong Kong. The benefits must accrue to one or more industries, and not just to individual companies. Successful projects should be publicised so as to disseminate the results of completed projects and to ensure widespread adoption of the technologies by relevant sectors.

International conferences should facilitate exchange of best practices, expertise and experience on environmental and conservation issues and raise Hong Kong's profile as a leading green city.

1.4 Priority Research Themes

The ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee will identify priority research themes on a bi-yearly basis so as to focus resources to build knowledge and talents on areas of priority. The priority research areas for 2010 and 2011 are given in *Appendix I*. The priority themes aim to be indicative of research themes whose merits have been affirmed by the ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee. Applications for research projects outside the scope of priority research themes would still be considered on individual merits.

Priority will be given to projects or studies whose outcome will have potential for general application in the fields concerned to enhance performance in environmental protection as well as contribute to environmental protection and nature conservation.

In this regard, the project applicant, particularly those involving large project sum, should engage the relevant stakeholders (e.g. potential users or beneficiaries of study results) to solicit their input and support for the project. For example, if the project involves technology that may be adopted in environmental industries, the project proponent should preferably obtain an expression of interest from the relevant trade/industrial groups that technologies under study may likely be adopted in their operations if the project confirms the viability and feasibility of the technology. Where possible, the project proponent should have in place a continuing engagement and regular dialogues with the stakeholders during the projects to ensure the application of study results.

1.5 Administration

Administration of grants for Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects is undertaken by the ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee Secretariat.

2. GUIDE TO APPLICATION

2.1 Who may apply?

Local non-profit making organisations (e.g. universities, green groups, community bodies, schools) are eligible to apply. For technology demonstration projects on waste minimisation and recycling, local incorporated companies may also apply.

2.2 What are the funding limits?

There are no funding limits for research and technology demonstration projects. Funds may be granted for full or partial support of projects. There are three levels of application and the respective vetting procedures are specified under 2.5:

Level of Application	Total Project Value
1	Up to HK\$500,000
2	Over HK\$500,000 and up to HK\$2,000,000
3	Over HK\$2,000,000

The ceiling of an international conference to be held in Hong Kong is normally HK\$500,000 or 70% of the total actual expenditure, whichever is the less.

2.3 What is the duration of each project?

Duration of each funded project will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 How to apply?

Applicants have to fill out an application form attached to this Guide, which can be obtained from -

- ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat
5/F Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Tel: 2835 1050 and Fax: 2838 2155
E-mail : ecfc@epd.gov.hk
- Softcopy can be downloaded from the Internet homepage of
 1. Environment and Conservation Fund Committee
<http://www.ecf.gov.hk>
 2. Environmental Campaign Committee
<http://www.ecc.org.hk>

The application form should be endorsed by the applicant organisation with signature of the Person-in-charge of the organisation and official chop of the organisation.

Completed Application Form should be returned to the ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat *at least four months* before the proposed commencement of project.

Applications on organising international conferences in Hong Kong should be submitted *at least six months* before the first day of the conference.

2.5 What are the vetting procedures?

ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee (the Vetting Sub-committee) has been established under the ECF Committee to consider Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Other Projects. The Vetting Sub-committee comprises ECF Committee members, government representatives and co-opted members from various sectors of the community. It can approve grants up to HK\$2,000,000 for a project. For applications exceeding HK\$2,000,000, the recommendations of the Vetting Sub-committee have to be endorsed by the ECF Committee.

The following steps will be taken after a Research and Technology Demonstration application is received –

Step 1: Upon receipt of an application, the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat will send an interim reply to the applicant acknowledging receipt of the application. A project reference number will be given to each application for identification purpose. The project reference number should be quoted in all future correspondence. Where necessary, the applicant will be requested to provide clarification or supplementary information.

Step 2: Before the Vetting Sub-committee considers the application, the Secretariat will seek views from relevant government departments and/or external assessors on the project proposal as appropriate:

Level 1 Application:

1. Relevant government departments will be invited to comment on the project proposal.
2. The principal investigator will be invited to provide response to the comments. The principal investigator may take the opportunity to revise the proposal if he considers appropriate.
3. The comments and responses and the project proposal will be considered by the Vetting Subcommittee.

Level 2 Application:

1. Relevant government departments will be invited to comment on the project proposal.
2. At least two external assessors will be invited to assess the project

proposal.

3. A “**double-blind**” system (i.e. identity of both assessors and applicants will not be disclosed to each other) for external assessment of funding applications is adopted.
4. The principal investigator will be invited to provide response to the comments. The principal investigator may take the opportunity to revise the proposal if he considers appropriate.
5. All the comments (from relevant government department and external assessors) and responses and the project proposal will be considered by the Vetting Subcommittee.

Level 3 Application:

1. Relevant government departments will be invited to comment on the project proposal.
2. At least two external assessors will be invited to assess the project proposal.
3. In view of the project scale, the identity and experience of the principal investigator and co-investigator will be presented to the external assessors to facilitate assessment of capability of the project team. However, the identity of the external assessors will not be disclosed.
4. The principal investigator will be invited to provide response to the comments. The principal investigator may take the opportunity to revise the proposal if he considers appropriate.
5. All the comments (from relevant government department and external assessors) and responses and the latest version of project proposal will be considered by the Vetting Subcommittee.
6. The principal investigator will be invited to make a presentation of the proposal to the Vetting Subcommittee for consideration.

Step 3: When the application is considered by the Vetting Sub-committee, the project team will be given the opportunity to answer queries if there are questions from the Vetting Sub-committee. This is not a compulsory requirement and the project team may decide whether to stand by for the meeting or not.

Step 4: For Level 1 & Level 2 Applications:

The Vetting Sub-committee will either approve the application, reject it or request the applicant to provide further information. The Vetting Sub-committee will also consider the budget, and where necessary, amend the budget details and set ceilings for individual expenditure items. The Secretariat will inform the applicant of the Vetting Sub-committee’s decision.

For Level 3 Application:

The Vetting Sub-committee will either recommend the application for consideration by the ECF Committee, reject it or request the applicant to provide further information. The Vetting Sub-committee will also consider the budget, and where necessary, amend the budget details and set ceilings for individual expenditure items. The Secretariat will inform the applicant of the Vetting Sub-committee's decision.

- Step 5: For projects that further information is required from the applicant, the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat will circulate the applicant's responses to the Vetting Sub-committee members. Members will make final decision either at the forthcoming meeting or by sending in their views to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will inform the applicant of the Vetting Sub-committee's decision as soon as practicable.
- Step 6: The ECF Committee will consider Level 3 Applications, i.e. those above HK\$2,000,000. The ECF Committee Secretariat will inform the applicant of the ECF Committee's decision.
- Step 7: The Secretariat will upload information of the approved projects on the ECF website.

The following steps will be taken after a Conference project application is received –

- Step 1: Upon receipt of an application, the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat will send an interim reply to the applicant acknowledging receipt of the application. A project reference number will be given to each application for identification purpose. The project reference number should be quoted in all future correspondence. Where necessary, the applicant will be requested to provide clarification or supplementary information.
- Step 2: Before the Vetting Sub-committee considers the application, the Secretariat will seek views from relevant government departments on the project proposal.
- Step 3: When the application is considered by the Vetting Sub-committee, the project team will be given the opportunity to answer queries if there are questions from the Vetting Sub-committee. This is not a compulsory requirement and the project team may decide whether to stand by for the meeting or not.
- Step 4: The Vetting Sub-committee will either approve the application, reject it or request the applicant to provide further information. The Vetting Sub-committee will also consider the budget, and where necessary, amend the budget details and set ceilings for individual expenditure items. The Secretariat will inform the applicant of the Vetting Sub-committee's decision.

- Step 5: For projects that further information is required from the applicant, the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat will circulate the applicant's responses to the Vetting Sub-committee members. Members will make final decision either at the forthcoming meeting or by sending in their views to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will inform the applicant of the Vetting Sub-committee's decision as soon as practicable.
- Step 6: The Secretariat will upload information of the approved projects on the ECF website.

2.6 What are the vetting criteria?

The following broad criteria are used in assessing the merits of individual applications:

- (1) Projects must contribute to the overall environment of Hong Kong, to raise environmental awareness of the local community, or to mobilise the community to take action to improve the environment.
- (2) 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.
- (3) Projects must be non-profit making in nature.
- (4) 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.

2.7 Avoidance of Conflict of Interests

To avoid conflict of interest, members of the Vetting Sub-committee and ECF Committee who have any connection with an applicant, such as belonging to the same organisation, should declare interest and refrain from taking part in the discussion and approval of the relevant application. Moreover, members who are themselves part of the team submitting an application; or belong to the same department to which an applicant belongs in an organisation; or have close relationship with an applicant should withdraw himself from the meeting venue when the deliberation takes place, apart from declaring interest.

2.8 When will I know the results?

It normally takes about 2 to 3 months to process a Level 1 Application of research or technology demonstration project for grants of or below HK\$500,000 after receipt of the application. If no additional information is required, the applicant will be informed of the outcome shortly after the Vetting Sub-committee meeting, which is normally held once every three months. For Level 2 and Level 3 Applications over HK\$500,000, it normally takes about 5 months to process an application. If no additional information is required, the applicant will be informed of the outcome shortly after the Vetting Sub-committee or ECF Committee meeting as appropriate.

It normally takes about 2 to 3 months to process an application on organising international conferences for grants of or below HK\$500,000 after receipt of the application. If no additional information is required, the applicant will be informed of the outcome shortly after the Vetting Sub-committee meeting.

2.9 Withdrawal of application

The applicant can write to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat to withdraw an application at any time before an agreement is signed with the Government.

To avoid undue delay in processing applications, when feedback/response from a principal investigator is not received within 3 months, the Secretariat will consider the principal investigator withdraw the application and terminate the processing of the application.

2.10 Can I resubmit my application?

A declined application may be resubmitted only if it has been revised substantially or if it has been able to produce new evidence to address the comments made by the Vetting Sub-committee in its earlier review. In completing the application form for a resubmitted application, the applicant should set out clearly the differences of the resubmitted application vis-à-vis the previous one. The revised application will be treated as a new application, and will be subject to the same assessment procedures.

3. APPLICATION FORM

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 All sections of the application form should be completed with supporting documents wherever required. Where the information sought is not applicable or not available, please fill in “NA”.
- 3.1.2 The application form must be typed or printed on both sides of a paper and submitted in both hard and soft copies.
- 3.1.3 Please give clear and concise information. Additional pages may be attached to the form if such is necessary.
- 3.1.4 Acknowledgment will be sent to the applicant after receipt of an application by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat.

3.2 Sections of the Project Proposal

3.2.1 Data Sheet

This section serves as a summary of an application. Once approval is granted to an application, the information given by the applicant in this section will be put on ECF’s homepage for public access. If the organisation does not wish certain information to be released, please forward its request and justifications upon submission of the application to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat.

The application form should be endorsed by the applicant organisation with signature of the Person-in-charge of the organisation and official chop of the organisation.

Applications from universities should be made through the Research Offices of the universities, i.e. there should be a covering letter from the Research Offices to the Secretariat of the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat. The Research Offices should inform the Secretariat of the Vetting Sub-committee as soon as the principal investigator ceases to be a full-time employee with the universities.

The Person-in-charge should either be the principal investigator of the project who would provide responses to the comments on the application or head of relevant academic department/office. There should be the official chop of the relevant academic department/service units of the universities.

3.2.2 Content of Project Proposal

3.2.2.1 *Project Title*

A project title, in both English and Chinese, has to be provided for each application.

3.2.2.2 *Duration of Project*

Give the commencement and completion date and duration of project.

3.2.2.3 *Nature and Purpose of Project*

In clear and specific terms, state how the project will make a clear and positive contribution to environmental protection, environmental improvement, or conserving the environment in Hong Kong. For technology demonstration project, clear indication should be made regarding how the specific environmental-related technologies could be promoted or demonstrated to the relevant sector in Hong Kong for adoption.

For conference projects, state clearly the purpose of the international conference and how it could raise Hong Kong's profile as a leading green city.

3.2.2.4 *Demonstrable Need for the Project*

Give details on whether there is a demonstrable need for the project and whether similar projects have been undertaken in the past or at present. Also provide a list of all related researches (both planned and completed).

3.2.2.5 *Name of Recipient Organisation*

Give the name of recipient organisation in Chinese and English, which must be a local non-profit making organisation or a group formed under a registered non-profit making organisation in Hong Kong. For technology demonstration projects, the applicant may be either a non-profit organisation or a local company incorporated under the Companies Ordinance of Hong Kong.

3.2.2.6 *Details of Team Members*

Give details of the Principal Investigator or Project Team Leaders and records in undertaking similar projects. The attached C.V. of the principal investigator or project team leaders should not be more than 2 pages long. Also provide details of co-investigators and other supporting staff to be involved and give full justifications.

3.2.2.7 *Role of the recipient organisation*

State the role the recipient organisation will play in organizing and implementing the project. Projects in which the recipient organisation does not make a major contribution will not be eligible for funding support.

3.2.2.8 *Details of other co-organizing/ assisting/ supporting/ sponsoring bodies for the proposed project*

Give details of other co-organizing/ assisting/ supporting/ sponsoring bodies.

3.2.2.9 *Project Details*

State the target group, the anticipated number of participants, and record of applicant in implementing similar or other environmental projects. For technology demonstration projects, state the target sector in Hong Kong and the estimated size of the sector.

3.2.2.10 *Method of implementation of project*

State clearly the implementation method to be employed and show how this could help achieve the purpose of the project.

3.2.2.11 *The Workplan and Timetable*

- (a) Workplan - Give a detailed workplan describing the various activities that will be carried out under the project.
- (b) Timetable - Give a timetable showing the length and sequence of the various activities in the project.

3.2.2.12 *Expected Benefits of the Project*

- (a) Deliverables – Give quantitative and qualitative results of the project
- (b) Publicity/technology transfer plan - Give detailed plan on publicity/technology transfer of the project deliverables.

Upon completion of project, evaluation should be made to assess the effectiveness of the project, where applicable, against performance indicators including, but not limited to –

- (a) number of headcounts, schools, students, companies, buildings or households participating in the programmes;
- (b) number of volunteers recruited or trained;
- (c) number of local community organisations involved;
- (d) types and quantities of recyclables collected;
- (e) quantities of refuse reduced or electricity saved;
- (f) number of research papers published;
- (g) technologies transferred to practitioners;
- (h) media coverage on the programmes; and
- (i) increase in environmental awareness (by conducting pre- and post- project questionnaire survey with participants).

3.2.2.13 *Budget for the Project*

The application should provide a detailed budget for the project. Each income and expenditure item should be reasonable, realistic and sufficiently broken down. All expenditure items must be incurred between the commencement and completion dates of the project with supporting receipts (original). Please also study carefully the following funding criteria when preparing the budget.

(a) Manpower

- (i) The recipient organisation is expected to have the ability to supervise and the expertise to undertake a proposed project. Hence, no funding support will be given for additional supervisory/administrative staff, the hire of professional advisor or training course for staff of the recipient organisation for undertaking the project.
- (ii) Funding for research assistants/project supporting staff may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (iii) Environmental Research and Technology Demonstration Projects
 - Funding will *not* be given for remunerating the principal investigator(s).
 - Funding for research supporting staff may be considered. (*Please refer to the Appendix 2 for funding scale for research support staff.*)

- Applicants should take into account universities' prevailing entry pay level and provide sufficient justifications if they wish to offer research supporting staff a pay level higher than the entry level.
- Funding support for one representative of the research team to attend one overseas conference will be considered. (*Please refer to the Appendix 3 for the funding scale, coverage and reporting requirement.*)

(b) Minor Works and Equipment

- (i) Funding for minor works (such as installation of green roofs, waste recycling facilities and demonstration set-up on renewable energy, etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (ii) Funding for purchase of equipment (e.g. composting machinery, waste recycling and energy-saving equipments, etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (iii) Maintenance costs of the approved minor works and equipment up to the initial two years upon installation/purchase will be considered.
- (iv) For projects of minor works, the recipient organisations are required to complete a post-implementation review upon completion of the project.
- (v) For conference projects, funding for purchase of equipment will normally not be supported.

(c) Production of Publications and Website

- (i) Funding for production of practical and promotional guides such as that on green lifestyle, energy efficiency, eco-tours and nature conservation will be considered. Details of publication arrangements and relevant budget should be provided in the application proposal for overall assessment.
- (ii) Funding for website design and maintenance costs will be considered

(d) Purchase of Educational Materials and Computer Softwares

- (i) Expenses on educational materials and computer softwares will be considered on the condition that the educational materials and computer softwares are essential.

(e) International conferences to be held in Hong Kong

- (i) Funding support for airfare (economy class) for invited speakers will be considered.
- (ii) Funding for general expenses to organise an international conference in Hong Kong will be considered. *(Please refer to the Appendix 4 for the acceptable expenditure items.)*

(f) Others

- (i) All essential elements of an application will be considered in an integral manner. All applications are considered on their individual merits. For projects involving recurrent expenditure, the recipient organisation has to demonstrate that such expenses will be of a specified finite duration or that the project will become self-financing after a certain period of time.
- (ii) For applications from NGOs (including green groups) without receiving government subventions, general administrative and overhead costs incurred from the project will be considered, subject to a cap of 10% of the total approved grant or actual expenditure, whichever is the less. (note: the applicant organisation should declare in the application form whether it receives government subventions or not)
- (iii) Requests for funding support for contingency items will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (iv) Funding for reprinting of existing leaflets or education materials will **not** be supported, unless they form an essential part of the project.

3.2.2.14 *Other sources of funds (both confirmed and being applied for)*

The availability of alternative funds will be taken into account when your application is considered. Applicants are encouraged to also seek private sector sponsorship for the proposed projects. Any efforts to seek private sector sponsorship for the proposed projects should be highlighted.

3.2.2.15 *Estimated revenue generated from the project*

Estimated revenue gains from the project, e.g. sales of publications and registration fees for conferences, should normally be deducted from the amount of grant applied for. State how this will be used to offset the project's cost. If this is not possible, full explanation should be given.

3.2.2.16 *Recurrent income of project (if applicable)*

State how income derived will be used to further the project's aims.

3.2.2.17 *Procurement of Capital Items, Goods and Services*

In case of an applicant organisation intends to procure capital items (including minor works and equipment), goods or services from a company/organisation/individual without following the open procurement process stated in paragraph 4.9.1 below, please provide details, justifications and its relationship with the company/organisation/individual.

3.2.2.18 *Record of previous applications*

State record of previous applications which are either supported or rejected by ECF, and the amount approved and received for the successful applications.

3.2.2.19 *Other relevant information in support of the application.*

3.2.3 Nomination of External Assessors

Principal investigators of **Level 2 and Level 3 Applications** are required to nominate at least **5 external assessors** in the proposal for consideration by the Vetting Sub-committee. The nominated list of external assessors will be helpful in assisting the Vetting Subcommittee Secretariat to identify independent experts to evaluate the proposals. In nominating external assessors, the principal investigators and co-investigators are required to declare their full relationship with the nominated assessors, for fairness and transparency. Any undeclared relationships that have existed between the principal investigators and co-investigators and the external assessors, and subsequently come to the attention of the Vetting Sub-committee will be treated seriously and will affect the principal investigators' and co-investigators' future chance of getting financial support from ECF.

3.2.4 Details of first-time applicants (if applicable)

For applicant organisation which applies to the ECF for the first time, please provide the following information –

- (a) background information of the organisation;
- (b) information about key members of the organisation and the person-in-charge of the project;
- (c) experience in conducting environmental researches; and
- (d) documentary proof of the organisation's non-profit making status, e.g. registration under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance that qualifies the organisation for tax exemption.

4 CONDITIONS FOR THE USE AND ALLOCATION OF FUND

4.1 Contractual Requirements

For each project for which funds have been approved, the recipient organisation has to sign an agreement with the Government and comply with all the terms of the agreement.

4.2 Use of Funds

4.2.1 The allocated funds shall not be used as payments to individual members of the public as a financial reward for their participation in the activities associated with the project. For research projects, Research Assistant may be hired.

4.2.2 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.

4.3 Disbursement and Reimbursement of Funds

4.3.1 The recipient organisation will receive between 25-50% of the grant upon approval depending on the cash flow requirement and nature of the project. The recipient organisation may apply for a further disbursement if it proves that the previous payment has been fully spent and that further expenditure is required for undertaking the project as scheduled. The last 10% of the grant will normally only be released after completion of project subject to submission of a completion report and a final research report (stipulating the project objectives, research methodology and summarising all the research work and findings of the project) together with a statement of accounts for the project endorsed by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat and/or Wheelock, as appropriate, in accordance with the requirement specified in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 below. The Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat will agree with the recipient organisation a schedule of payment.

4.3.2 All revenue received, irrespective of whether it has been declared in the proposal, must be defrayed against the actual expenditure before calculating the amount to be reimbursed as final payment.

4.3.3 Amount to be reimbursed for individual items of the budget will not exceed the approved amount for that item. However, the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat may increase the approved amount of an individual item by up to 20% or up to \$5,000, if the original approved budget for that individual item did not exceed \$5,000. The Secretariat

should ensure that sufficient justifications are provided by the principal investigator/project team leader on the proposed increase, and provided that the total amount to be paid would not exceed the total approved grant.

- 4.3.4 The grant could be reduced on a pro-rata basis in the following circumstances:
 - 4.3.4.1 the scope and/or activities of the project are changed;
 - 4.3.4.2 the actual frequency of activities (e.g. seminars) is less than proposed;
 - 4.3.4.3 the number of participants is less than proposed and the grant allocated is according to the number of participants;
 - 4.3.4.4 the number of publications (e.g. leaflets) is less than that proposed; or
 - 4.3.4.5 the duration of project is reduced.
- 4.3.5 Any item not on the approved list of budget items will not be reimbursed.
- 4.3.6 Income derived from the project during the project period, including sales of output and interest income generated from cash in hand for the project, should be ploughed back into the project account.
- 4.3.7 Any unspent balance of the grant shall be returned to the ECF and/or WWGF within two months after the completion of the project.
- 4.3.8 Income derived from the project after the project period, including sales of output, should be returned to ECF and/or WWGF for offsetting part or whole of the project's cost. Failure to report and return such income to ECF and/or WWGF will render the organisation ineligible for future funding support.

4.4 Project Interest

- 4.4.1 The ECF and/or WWGF funds shall be paid into a risk-free interest-bearing account opened with a licensed bank.
- 4.4.2 Interest incomes generated from the ECF and/or WWGF funds and other receipts for a project have to be reasonably apportioned to the project and no negative interest should be charged to the project. The use of interest is subject to the approval of the Vetting Subcommittee and/or Wheelock, and in no circumstances should the interest earned be applied for other uses outside the project.
- 4.4.3 The recipient organisation may be required to compensate the Government for loss of interest income if the ECF and/or WWGF

fund is not properly handled. Where necessary, the Government and/or Wheelock will initiate legal action for suitable remedies.

4.5 Progress and Completion Reports and Independent Evaluation

- 4.5.1 Ongoing projects are monitored and completed projects are reviewed by the Vetting Sub-committee. For projects last more than six months, project teams have to submit half-yearly progress reports with information on financial position of their projects together with receipts for the expenses to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat. For projects receiving a grant over HK\$150,000 and lasting more than 18 months, recipient organisations are required to submit, once every 12 months, a statement of accounts audited by certified public accountants (practising) within the meaning of section 2 of the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Cap 50) to the Secretariat and/or Wheelock. Except for the first disbursement, all disbursements will be subject to satisfactory performance and progress of the project.
- 4.5.2 Within two months of completion of the project or before the date specified in the agreement, recipient organisations have to submit a completion report with attachment of a statement of accounts to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat (for projects over HK\$150,000, the statement of accounts should be audited by certified public accountants (practising) within the meaning of section 2 of the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Cap 50)). If an extension of the submission deadline is required, approval should be obtained from the Secretariat.
- 4.5.3 All progress reports and completion reports should be submitted in such format as prescribed in the Progress/Completion Report Form.
- 4.5.4 For Level 2 and Level 3 research and technology demonstration projects receiving a grant over HK\$500,000, the principal investigator should submit a final research report for **independent evaluation**. The Secretariat would invite one independent evaluation on completion of the project. The independent evaluator will be provided with the final report and the original approved project for evaluation on the overall effectiveness of the project. After that, the principal investigator will be invited to present the project findings to the Vetting Sub-committee or the ECF Committee as appropriate. The Vetting Sub-committee or the ECF Committee will assess the success or effectiveness of the project by comparing the project results against its original objectives and targets as set out in the project proposal. Project teams may also be required to complete post-implementation review on the effectiveness of the projects.

- 4.5.5 Unsatisfactory performance will affect the organisation's future chance of getting funding support, and the organisation's management will be informed.

4.6 Statement of accounts

- 4.6.1 Within two months of completion of the project or before the date specified in the agreement, project teams have to submit a complete statement of accounts, attached to the completion report, to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat. If an extension of the submission deadline is required, approval should be obtained from the Secretariat.
- 4.6.2 For projects receiving a grant under HK\$150,000, the grant received must be shown in a complete statement of accounts, together with the original copy of invoices and receipts. Auditing will not be required, but the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat and/or Wheelock, as appropriate, reserves the right to check all financial records kept by the recipient organisation relating to the use of the grant.
- 4.6.3 For projects receiving a grant of HK\$150,000 or more, the following should be noted –
- 4.6.3.1 The funds should be kept in a separate account opened with a licensed bank to facilitate the checking of all financial record by the government and auditor as and when necessary;
- 4.6.3.2 The statement of accounts attached to the completion report must be audited by certified public accountants (practising) within the meaning of section 2 of the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Cap 50), providing assurance that the audited accounts properly presented the financial position and that the conditions of grants are met;
- 4.6.3.3 For projects lasting more than 18 months, recipient organisations are also required to submit a statement of accounts audited by certified public accountants (practising) to the Secretariat once every 12 months.
- 4.6.4 For universities, the funds should be kept by the finance offices and there is no need to open a separate account with a licensed bank. Regardless of the amount of the grant involved in a project, a statement of accounts certified by the finance office of the university will be acceptable.

4.7 Intellectual Property Rights Arising from Projects and the Use of Project Results

- 4.7.1 Unless negotiated otherwise between the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat and/or Wheelock and the recipient organisation, the recipient organisation will solely own all intellectual property rights arising from the research and technology demonstration project.
- 4.7.2 The recipient organisation is required to grant unconditionally and irrevocably to the Government and/or Wheelock the right to publish results, findings and any other information provided in the application form, progress report, completion report and other publications or publicity material.

4.8 Publicity of Project Events & Results

- 4.8.1 Project teams should try to publicize the project results or any events related to the project through publications, seminars, workshops, conferences and exhibitions etc. Project teams should also provide information about the events such that the Secretariat might conduct spot checks on the proposed activities.
- 4.8.2 Project teams should notify the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat of the project results before publicizing them. Copies of publications or publicity material produced under the project must be made available to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat within one month after the completion of the project.

4.9 Procurement of Capital Items, Goods and Services

- 4.9.1 The recipient organisation should exercise utmost prudence in procuring capital items (including minor works and equipment), goods or services for the project and must adhere to the following procedures unless the Vetting Sub-committee agrees otherwise –
- (a) For every procurement the aggregate value of which is HK\$5,000 or below, quotations from suppliers are not required
 - (b) For every procurement the aggregate value of which is more than HK\$5,000 but less than HK\$10,000, quotations from at least two suppliers should be obtained.
 - (c) For every procurement the aggregate value of which is HK\$10,000 or more, but less than HK\$500,000, quotations from at least three suppliers should be obtained.
 - (d) For every procurement the aggregate value of which is HK\$500,000 or more, open tendering should be used.

- 4.9.2 The recipient organisation should select the supplier that has submitted the lowest bid. If the lowest bid is not selected, full justifications must be given and prior agreement must be obtained from the Vetting Sub-committee.
- 4.9.3 In case of an applicant organisation intends to procure the items from a company/organisation/individual without following the open procurement process in paragraph 4.9.1 above, it has to provide details, justifications and its relationship with the company/organisation/ individual in the application form. If the application is approved, subsequent approval from the Vetting Sub-committee will not be required.
- 4.9.4 In the case of universities, they may adhere to their established/current standard procurement procedures.
- 4.9.5 All quotations and tendering documents should be kept for inspection by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat and/or Wheelock.

4.10 Title of Capital Items, Education Materials and Computer Softwares

The title of capital items (including minor works and equipments), education materials and computer softwares procured with the fund will remain with the Government and/or WWGF during the project period. Upon satisfactory completion of the project, the title of the items may be changed to the recipient organisation on a case-by-case basis.

4.11 Acknowledgement of Support and Disclaimer

- 4.11.1 The source of funding (both the name and logo of the ECF and/or WWGF) must be acknowledged in all publicity material resulting from the project.
- 4.11.2 The logo of ECF and/or WWGF may be used and printed onto the following categories of publicity material with a view to promulgating the contribution of the funds. Examples of publicity materials include publicity leaflets/posters/banners; reports and publications of project outcome; and advertisements on paper and electronic media.
- 4.11.3 Use of the name and logo for other purposes is subject to the prior approval of Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat and/or Wheelock.
- 4.11.4 In no circumstances shall the name and logo of ECF and/or WWGF be used for publicity for commercial interest or other purposes which may damage the image and/or cause any liability to ECF and/or WWGF.

4.12 Suspension/Termination of Funding Support

- 4.12.1 The Vetting Sub-committee and/or Wheelock may suspend/terminate support for a project under the following circumstances -
- (a) if the project does not commence within one year of the approval of the grant and no reasonable explanation has been given;
 - (b) the Vetting Sub-committee and/or Wheelock consider that the project has not progressed satisfactorily and no reasonable explanation has been given;
 - (c) the principal investigator or project team leader leaves the recipient organisation prior to the completion of the project and there is no one available who has been involved in the project and considered suitable by the Vetting Sub-committee and/or Wheelock to take over the role of principal investigator or project team leader; or
 - (d) if the recipient organisation fails to comply with the funding conditions as set out in this Guide and/or in the agreement and no reasonable explanation has been given.
- 4.12.2 In each of the above cases of suspension/termination, the Vetting Sub-committee shall give one month notice to the recipient organisation, stating the reasons for the suspension/termination. In cases of suspension, the recipient organisation should demonstrate that measures have been taken to rectify the problems and change the unsatisfactory situation before the Vetting Sub-committee will lift the suspension. In cases of termination, the balance of the grant or any funding given in advance shall be returned to the ECF and/or WWGF. The Vetting Sub-committee and/or Wheelock will consider possible redeployment of the capital items, education materials and computer softwares acquired for the project.
- 4.12.3 Any suspension or termination of a project will affect the organisation's future chance of getting financial support from ECF and/or WWGF, and the organisation's management will be informed.
- 4.12.4 The ECF and/or WWGF shall be entitled to be refunded by the recipient organisation of some or all of a grant which has been used other than in accordance with the terms of the approved project.
- 4.12.5 Any major changes to the project must be approved by the Vetting Sub-committee and/or Wheelock. Such major changes include:-

- (a) revision to the objectives and/or content;
- (b) change of team leader/principal investigator;
- (c) transfer of project to another organisation; or
- (d) deferral of project completion date.

4.12.6 The Vetting Sub-committee and/or Wheelock may suspend/terminate funding support for the project if the project is being carried out under any of the above circumstances without prior approval.

4.12.7 Any proposed minor changes to a project should be submitted to the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat for approval.

4.13 Others

4.13.1 The ECF Committee, ECC, their sub-committees and secretariats, Wheelock, and Government shall have no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or other liabilities arising from the projects.

4.13.2 The Secretary for the Environment may at any time, if he considers fit, amend or add to the above conditions, without prior notice to recipient organisations.

Priority Research Areas (Section 1.4)

Priority Research Areas (for 2010 and 2011)

- (a) Climate Change Impact, Assessment and Implication, Adaption and Mitigation, as well as Carbon Footprint Analysis
- (b) Green Transport Technologies, Application and Performance
- (c) Ecological and Geo Conservation

Other Possible Themes (non-exhaustive)

- (d) Regional/Local Air Quality
- (e) Improvement of Indoor Air Quality
- (f) Wastewater Treatment Processes/Systems for Ecosystem Enhancement, or Pollution Reduction or Conservation
- (g) Risk-based Approach for Toxic Chemicals/Priority Pollutants
- (h) Waste Separation, Reduction, Reuse and Recycling
- (i) Local Biodiversity, such as Impact of Invasive Species

Appendix 2

Funding Scale for Research Supporting Staff (Section 3.2.2.13 (a) (iii))

Student Research Assistant (Undergraduate)	<u>Maximum</u> HK\$50 per hour
Research Assistant II (Recent graduate with little or no work experience)	<u>Maximum</u> HK\$14,330 per month
Research Assistant I (First degree graduate with some experience or master's degree holder with no working experience)	<u>Maximum</u> HK\$17,760 per month
Senior Research Assistant (Master's degree holder with working experience or above)	<u>Maximum</u> HK\$28,450 per month

Remarks: The funding scale may be adjusted by the Environment and Conservation Fund Committee as and when necessary. Please refer to the Internet homepage of -
Environment and Conservation Fund Committee (<http://www.ecf.gov.hk>); and
Environmental Campaign Committee (<http://www.ecc.org.hk>).

Coverage and eligibility for Researcher's Attendance to Overseas International Conference (Section 3.2.2.13 (a) (iii))

1. **Eligibility** – For each ECF supported research or technology demonstration project, only **one person** would be funded to attend **one** overseas international conference for presenting the results of the project throughout the whole project period irrespective of the duration of the research project.
2. **Coverage** – A ceiling of **HK\$15,000 per head per project** would cover airfare (economy class) direct to and from the conference held outside Hong Kong (including airport taxes), conference registration fee, subsistence allowance including accommodation (for a period beginning one day before the start of the conference and ending one day after the end of the conference for up to a maximum number of 7 days) and public means of transport between the nearest international airport and the place of conference.
3. **Principle of no double-benefit** – Academics with conference grants from local universities or research institutes or conferences organizers/sponsors would not be funded by ECF for attending the same conference.
4. **Application procedures** – The proposed attendance to overseas international conferences should be included in the funding proposals when the project proponents submitted the ECF projects application forms to the ECF Secretariat.
5. **Interim measure for on-going research projects** – Principal investigators of ECF-sponsored on-going research projects that were completed on or after 1.4.2009 may also submit separate applications for the above conference grants. The RPVSC will consider such applications on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the merits of individual projects and supporting documents for funds disbursement. Such applications must be made at least **6** months in advance of the proposed conference date.
6. **Disbursement of funds** – Funds will be granted only on **reimbursement basis** according to actual payment made. Expenses claims, accompanied by original receipts and supporting documents, must be submitted not more than 60 days after the end of the conference.

7. **Supporting documents for funds disbursement** – Documentary evidence issued by the conference organizer(s) confirming that the acceptance of paper or poster for presentation at the conference; official conference announcement or invitation letter indicating the dates and venue of the conference and amount of the registration fee.
8. **Reporting** – A brief report on the conference and a copy of the paper or poster (with the title clearly stated) which has been presented at the conference must be submitted to the ECF Secretariat within 30 days of the end of the conference.
9. **Applications from Non-ECF-supported research projects** – The RPSVC may consider such applications on an exceptional case-by-case basis, taking into account the merits of individual cases and their contribution to Hong Kong. Such applications must be made at least 6 months in advance of the proposed conference date together with supporting letter from the applicant organisation stating full justifications on the presentation of the research projects results and significance of the proposed representative.
10. **Absence from funded conference trips** – Grant holders who are subsequently unable to attend the conference due to change of personal circumstances (except for medical reasons with medical certificates) or visa delay/denial will not be reimbursed for the pre-paid conference fees or other associated cancellation charges.

Appendix 4

Funding cap and list of acceptable expenditure items for International Conferences to be held in Hong Kong (Section 3.2.2.13 (e) (ii))

1. **Funding cap** – normally \$500,000 per conference or 70% of the total actual expenditure, whichever is the less. The RPSVC will consider applications above the ceiling on a case-by-case basis.
2. **Themes and scope** – To be decided by the ECF Committee or the RPSVC from time to time. Applicants should seek prior endorsement of the ECF Committee or the RPSVC on the topic of the conferences concerned for applications above \$500,000.
3. **Application Period** – Applications must be made at least **6** months before the first day of the conference.
4. **Other sources of funds** – Applicants must state in the application form other sources of funds including sponsorship from other organisations or government departments, registration fees and/or private sponsorship.
5. **Acceptable expenditure items:**
 - (a) **Venue Setup** – including rental payment (for all activities other than opening/closing ceremony), set up and decoration, backdrop, rental payment of venue, PA system, etc.
 - (b) **Subsidy to Invited Speakers** – Full airfare (economy class) to invited speakers. In exceptional circumstances where a higher class of air passage is proposed, the applicant should provide full justifications in his application.
 - (c) **Registration Fees** – Full subsidy may be considered for local post-graduates/students presenters.
 - (d) **Production of Conference Materials** – including brochures, conference booklets and publications.
 - (e) **Production of Exhibition Panels**
 - (f) **Engagement of Project Coordinators/Assistants for the conference**
 - (g) **Publicity** – including items such as banners, posters, leaflets, postage, etc.

- (h) **Opening/Closing Ceremony** – including invitation cards, set up and decoration, backdrop, rental payment of venue, PA system, etc.
- (i) **Transportation** – including hire of coach, hire of van/lorry for transportation of materials.
- (j) **Insurance for Third Party Liabilities** – Funding support will be based on the basic requirements.
- (k) **General Expenses** – including engagement of event management consultant, stationery, films and film development, video tapes, website development and maintenance, simultaneous interpretation/translation, light refreshment for ceremonies and conferences, etc.