

Project 21/2004 – Feasibility Study of setting up an Ecotourism Accreditation and Certification System (EACS) in Hong Kong

Purpose

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

Background

2. The funding requested by this project is \$145,000.00 for the staff cost of employing one Project Assistant (\$90,000.00) and some student research assistants (\$25,000.00); the traveling allowance for questionnaire surveys (\$5,000.00), and other expenses (\$25,000.00) on web design, reference materials, printing, stationery, films and postage. The project is expected to last for 12 months.

3. The study evaluates the rationales, difficulties, solutions and procedures of setting up an Ecotourism Accreditation and Certification System (EACS) with a view to evaluating its suitability for implementation in Hong Kong. The study reviews critical literature of overseas experiences and best practices and conduct comprehensive opinion surveys of stakeholders and concerned parties. The EACS aims at establishing a benchmark for appropriate activities and behaviours at the initial stage of ecotourism development in Hong Kong. It also helps promote healthy development of ecotourism through participation of local residents and overseas visitors in minimum-impact and non-consumptive ecotourism pursuits.

4. The proposal has been examined by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Tourism Commission (TC). Both AFCD and TC considered the project worthy of support. AFCD pointed out that adopting the correct ecotourism practices would help promote the public understanding and awareness of nature conservation and ascertain sustainable use of our valuable natural resources. TC commented that given the emerging international interest in the EACS, and there is a lack of representative research reference on this subject in Hong Kong, the proposed study might provide credible reference to facilitate international research on sustainable tourism as

well as local promotion of ecotourism and green tourism.

Advice sought

5. 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
May 2005