Minutes of the Ninth Meeting of the Environment and Conservation Fund Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee held on 25 August 2014 at 2:30 p.m. in Room 502, 5/F., Southorn Centre, Wanchai

Present

Mr Kenneth CHAN	(Chairman)
Miss Jane HUI	
Mr Victor KWONG	
Mr Barry MC KWONG	
Mr LAM Chiu-ying	
Dr Arthur PS LAU	
Prof Kenneth MY LEUNG	
Mr Victor C LI	
Prof Irene LO	
Dr SHUM Ho-cheung, Anderson	
Dr Daniel TSANG	
Mr Conrad PK LAM	Environment Bureau
Dr YIP Yin	Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department
Dr Samuel CHUI	Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Ms Anita SW TSUI	Secretary (EPD)
Ms Shirley WL FONG	Assistant Secretary (EPD)

Absent with Apologies

Mr Luther LT WONG

Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Members, and Dr Samuel CHUI, Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Community Relations) of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), attending the meeting of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee (RPVSC).

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2. Draft minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to Members on 12 June 2014. No suggestion for amendments was received. Since Members had no other comment, the draft minutes were confirmed.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous Meetings

Project 26/2013 Incense Smoke & Odour Collection & Filtering System and Incense Ash Regeneration *(RPVSC Paper 16/2014-2015)*

3. As agreed at the previous meeting held on 29 May 2014, although Dr Arthur LAU belonged to the same organization as that of the consultants (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)) for the present application, since Dr Arthur LAU was not associated with the applicant organization (Sik Sik Yuen), he should stay on for the discussion.

4. Ms Shirley FONG recapitulated that the application submitted by SSY under the Green Non-government Organization Scheme for demonstration of an incense smoke & odour collection system and of incense ash regeneration was examined by Members at the previous meeting held on 29 May 2014. After discussion, Members agreed that the idea to develop an incense smoke removal system for the Wong Tai Sin Temple should be supported in principle. However, considering the constraints of the proposed system in effectively reducing air pollutants notably PM2.5 in incense smoke, Members decided at that time that the project team should be invited to take into account Members' views for improving the proposal for resubmission, viz., to address public health concerns over air pollution, and considering that one of the objectives of the study was to tackle public health hazards arising from incense smoke, PM2.5 should be covered in the study, which should also demonstrate how the proposed system could help bring about a reduction in the level of PM2.5. In addition, the study should also consider further devices to reduce air pollutants not only arising from incense burning at the main altar, and also incense smoke emitted by the burning of remaining joss sticks at the incense burner. The study should also explore further means to increase the percentage of incense smoke that could be collected by the system, and explore how to enhance the system's effectiveness in filtering PM2.5 when compared with other technologies available in the market. Members also agreed that no further assessment by EAs on SSY's revised proposal would be required.

5. Ms Shirley FONG reported that in response to Members' suggestions, the PI had since revised the project proposal. Under the revised proposal, the total budget sought was increased to $5,258,000, which exceeded the funding cap of $4,344,000 approved in-principle by the ECF Committee under SSY's greening programme. To cover the shortfall in budget, the PI proposed to seek the ECF Committee's approval for reallocation of $914,000 from the surplus fund in other projects under the greening programme, in case the revised project proposal would be supported by RPVSC.

6. Note

7. Note

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9. After discussion, the Chairman concluded Members' views that the application should be recommended to the ECF Committee for consideration. In addition, the ECF Committee's attention should also be drawn to Members' concern over whether SSY's proposed budget reallocation might defeat the purpose of the greening programme in launching a variety of projects of different nature to engage different sectors of the community in environmental protection.

Agenda Item 3: New Applications - Conference Projects

10. Ms Anita SW TSUI reported that under the current round of invitation for applications of the Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects funding scheme closed on 26 June 2014, a total of 99 applications were received, including 92 applications for research and/or technology demonstration (RTD) projects and 7 applications for conference projects, with the total budget sought amounting to $80.7 million and $2.94 million respectively. As agreed by Members previously, out of the funding scheme's total allocation of $20 million for 2014, 10% should be reserved for conference applications, which would be considered first on a competition basis.

11. Before proceeding to the assessment of conference applications, Members discussed various procedural arrangements and agreed on the following:

(a) Declaration of interests

The meeting agreed that there was a need to ensure continuity in the deliberation and assessment of applications. Considering the many different circumstances under which conflict of interests might arise, after careful review, the meeting agreed that before proceeding to the discussion on funding applications each time, Members should declare any actual or potential conflict of interests in relation to the applications, so that the meeting could consider in detail whether particular Members should abstain from the discussion on individual applications on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the circumstances of each case, and the possible conflicts involved. However, as a general rule, a Member who had submitted an application in the capacity of Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator (Co-I) must withdraw from the discussion on his own application.

(b) Limit on the number of applications each PI could submit

Considering the different nature and work involved in RTD projects on the

one hand, and conference projects on the other, the meeting clarified and confirmed that in each round of invitation for applications, each individual person could only serve as PI in no more than one RTD project and one conference project. The maximum number of projects which each PI could hold currently should remain as two.

(c) Doubtful / unacceptable applications

Note

12. Ms Anita SW TSUI reported to the meeting that altogether 7 conference applications were received under the present round of invitation. Since one of these applications was an incomplete application which should not be accepted as agreed by Members, only 6 applications would be assessed at the present meeting.

13. The following Members declared their direct and indirect associations with the applicant organizations / PIs of the 6 conference applications under consideration:

Member	Declaration
Prof Kenneth LEUNG	• Prof LEUNG was the PI of application ECF 61/2014.
Mr Barry KWONG	• Mr KWONG was a member of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Steering Committee, Sino-Forest Applied Research Centre for Pearl River Delta Environment of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the applicant organization of ECF 24/2013. He was not involved in the project under application. • The Co-I (Prof KC HO) of ECF 01/2014 was supporting one of HSBC's partnership programme. • Mr KWONG was a graduate of HKUST, the applicant organization of ECF 70/2014.
Mr LAM Chiu-ying	• Mr LAM was adviser to the applicant organization (Hong Kong Climate Change Forum) of ECF 01/2014.
Dr Anderson SHUM	• Dr SHUM worked at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), the applicant organization of ECF 61/2014.
Mr Victor C LI	• Mr LI was an Executive Committee member of the Hong Kong Waste Management Association, and member of the Hong Kong Institute of Industrial Engineers, both of which were supporting organizations of ECF 24/2013. • He was a graduate of HKUST, the applicant organization of ECF 70/2014.

Member	Declaration
Prof Irene LO	• Prof LO was a member of the Local Organizing Committee of ECF 24/2013. • She was the Chairman of the Environmental Division, Hong Kong Institute of Engineers, which was one of the supporting organizations of ECF 24/2013. • She worked at HKUST, and belonged to the same department as the PI (Prof CHEN Guanghao) of ECF 70/2014. The PI (Dr AN Kyong-jin) of ECF 22/2014 was also a graduate of the same department of HKUST.
Dr Samuel CHUI	• Dr CHUI was a part-time researcher at HKUST, belonging to the same department as the PI (Prof CHEN Guanghao) of ECF 70/2014. He had worked with the PI in a number of projects. • Dr CHUI was personally acquainted with the PI (Dr AN Kyong-jin) of ECF 22/2014.
Dr Daniel TSANG	• PI (Ir Dr Otto POON) of ECF 01/2014 belonged to the Advisory Board of the same faculty at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) in which Dr TSANG worked. • Dr TSANG and the PI (Dr AN Kyong-jin) of ECF 22/2014 were both graduates of HKUST, with overlapping period of attendance in the same department. • The Co-I of ECF 61/2014 belonged to the same department in PolyU as Dr TSANG, with whom he had also collaborated on some on-going researches. • Dr TSANG, being a graduate of HKUST, was acquainted with the PI (Prof CHEN Guanghao) of ECF 70/2014. • Dr TSANG was not involved in the applications for the above mentioned projects.
Mr Conrad LAM	• EPD, to which Mr LAM belonged, was a supporting organization of ECF 24/2013 and ECF 70/2014.

[Dr Samuel CHUI withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.]

14. The meeting proceeded to examine the 6 conference applications.

(a) *Project 24/2013 International conference on solid waste 2015: Knowledge transfer for sustainable resource management* *[RPVSC Paper 17/2014-2015]*

15. Ms Shirley FONG said that the project proposed by the Sino-Forest

Applied Research Centre for Pearl River Delta Environment, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), aimed to deliberate various issues related to integrating the sustainability in waste treatment technologies, waste management strategies and policy issues with the purpose of combating environmental deterioration from the waste perspective. The application sought funding support at $500,000, and the PI was Prof Jonathan WC WONG.

16.[Note]
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19.[Note]

20. The meeting agreed that the application should be eligible for funding support, but that ECF support and hence the approved project duration should commence from the date of approval.

(b) Project 01/2014 3rd international conference on climate change [RPVSC Paper 18/2014-15

21. Ms Shirley FONG informed the meeting that the application proposed by the Hong Kong Climate Change Forum Limited sought funding support at $500,000 for a project which aimed to provide a timely and informative platform to share knowledge with policy makers, academics, professionals and business leaders, and their regional and international counterparts on the needs, challenges and opportunities of urban adaptation and resilience in Hong Kong and Asia. The PI was Ir Dr. Otto POON.

22.[Note]
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25. The meeting agreed that the application should be eligible for funding support.

(c) Project 22/2014 International conference on food waste 2015: Policy into action [RPVSC Paper 19/2014-2015]

26. Ms Shirley FONG informed the meeting that the application proposed by the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) sought funding support at $499,268 for a project which aimed to facilitate in-depth sharing on the latest experiences and technology for reduction and handling of food waste. The project was expected to demonstrate to different stakeholders how to boost the sustainable use of resources in the urban setting. The PI of the project was Dr AN Kyoung-jin.

27.[Note]

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30. The meeting agreed that the application should be eligible for funding support. However, the budget for registration fees should be used only for sponsoring local students.

[As agreed by the meeting, Prof Kenneth LEUNG and Dr Daniel TSANG withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.]

(d) Project 61/2014 International conference on biodiversity, ecology and conservation of marine ecosystems 2015 (BECoME 2015) [RPVSC Paper 20/2014-2015]

31. Ms Shirley FONG informed the meeting that the application proposed by the University of Hong Kong sought funding support at $331,600 for a project which aimed to bring in internationally renowned and regional experts to Hong Kong where they would share their knowledge and expertise on the latest development in the field of biodiversity, ecology and conservation of marine ecosystems with local experts and environmental practitioners from academia, government, NGOs and private sector. The PI of the project was Prof Kenneth Mei Yee LEUNG.

32.[Note]

33.[Note]
34.[Note]

35. The meeting agreed that the application should be eligible for funding support.

[Prof Kenneth LEUNG and Dr Daniel TSANG re-joined the meeting. As agreed by the meeting, Prof Irene LO withdrew from the discussion at this juncture.]

(e) Project 70/2014 The 12th International Water Association (IWA) leading-edge conference on water and wastewater technologies [RPVSC Paper 21/2014-2015]

36. Ms Shirley FONG informed the meeting that the application proposed by HKUST sought funding support at $500,000 for a project which aimed to bring together leading researchers, technologists and water experts from all over the globe to enhance co-operation and contribute to the goal of providing safe water for everyone. The conference was expected to facilitate the exchange of best practices,

expertise and experience on the emerging issue of waste reduction and recycling. The PI of the project was Prof Guanghao CHEN.

37.[Note]
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40. The meeting agreed that the application should be eligible for funding support, but ECF support and hence the approved project duration should only commence from the date of approval.

[Prof Irene LO re-joined the meeting.]

(f) Project 84/2014 Shipping dialogue 2: Working towards a ship emission control area in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta region [RPVSC Paper 22/2014-2015]

41. Ms Shirley FONG informed the meeting that the application proposed by the Civic Exchange sought funding support at $498,398 for a project which aimed to showcase the progress which Hong Kong had made in ship emissions control over the past few years, and to plot the next effective steps in further reducing air pollutant emissions contributed by ships and port activities in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta, which were harmful to human health. The PI of the project was Mr Simon NG.

42.[Note]

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45.[Note]

46. The meeting agreed that the application should be eligible for funding support.

[Dr Samuel CHUI re-joined the meeting.]

Funding allocation for eligible applications

47. The meeting proceeded to discuss the funding to be granted for applications eligible for funding support.

48.[Note]

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Business

49. The meeting had no other business to discuss.

Agenda Item 5: Date of Next Meeting

50. The next meeting would be held around late November 2014. The Secretariat would inform Members of the details once available.

51. The meeting ended at 4:50 pm.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee
September 2014

Note: The paragraph will not be included in the version of notes to be uploaded to the webpage of ECF according to the standing practice of not disclosing the detailed reasons for supporting or rejecting an application and / or the performance and other matters related to a specific organization or person. The ECF 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".