



ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION FUND

環境及自然保育基金



Guide to Application



Environmental Education and Community Action Projects (General Projects)

(August 2016)

Secretariat,
Environmental Campaign Committee
Environmental Education and
Community Action Projects Vetting Sub-committee
5/F Southorn Centre,
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF)¹ has been set up by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. 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.

This Guide provides guidance on application for funding *Environmental Education and Community Action (EE&CA) General 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

The objective of the ECF is to promote individual behavioural and life style changes to protect the environment and achieve sustainable development. These changes should lead to, *but not be limited to* -

- conservation of biological diversity with particular reference to marine conservation
- improvement in air quality
- reduction in noise pollution
- improvement in water quality
- minimisation of waste generation and promotion of the 3R (reduce, re-use and recycle) concept
- 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 for the Environment is the trustee responsible for the administration of the Fund.

1.3 Nature and Objectives of EE&CA Projects

1.3.1 Nature of EE&CA Projects -

- Educational programmes or activities to enhance community awareness and knowledge of environmental issue
- Environmental projects that mobilise individuals to take direct and positive action to improve and conserve the environment and induce behavioural change towards a green lifestyle

1.3.2 All EE&CA Projects should target at enhancing the environmental awareness and knowledge of the participants, mobilising action and inducing behavioural changes to improve the environmental problems, with positive impact on the environment and measurable and tangible outcomes against the objectives set for the projects. Projects should identify effective, and where possible, innovative, means to achieve the objectives and should take into account the environmental impact of project implementation (such as waste generation and material consumption).

1.3.3 Thematic programme areas would be specified and announced during the invitation for funding applications as appropriate. Priority would be given to fund those applications related to the prescribed thematic programme areas (“priority applications”). Notwithstanding the above, other applications that are generally consistent with the overall EE&CA project nature and objectives would be considered should there be unallocated funding after the priority applications are considered.

1.4 Administration

Administration of grants for EE&CA projects is undertaken by the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC)² Secretariat.

² The ECC, which comprises mainly non-officials, was set up in 1990 to promote awareness of environmental issues so as to encourage and mobilise the public to contribute actively towards a better environment.

2. GUIDE TO APPLICATION

2.1 Who may apply?

Local non-profit making organisations (e.g. green groups, community bodies, schools) are eligible to apply.

2.2 What is the duration of each project?

The project duration for each project should normally be **not more than 2 years**, unless with justifications.

2.3 How to apply?

Normally applications will be invited twice a year. Start and closing dates for receiving applications for each round of invitation will be announced. Applicants have to fill out an application form attached to this Guide, which can be obtained from -

- EE&CA Projects Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat
5/F Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Tel: 2840 1771
Fax: 2827 8138
E-mail: eeca@epd.gov.hk
- Environmental Campaign Committee Secretariat
5/F Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Tel: 2519 9173
Fax: 2827 8138
E-mail: ecc@epd.gov.hk
- Softcopy can be downloaded from the Internet homepage of
 1. Environment and Conservation Fund Committee
<http://www.ecf.gov.hk/en/application/index.html>
 2. Environmental Campaign Committee - Environmental Education and Community Action Projects
<http://eeca.ecc.org.hk/english/guide/guide.html>

The person-in-charge of the proposed project should be **the head or deputy head of the applicant organisation**. Completed Application Form **must be signed personally by the person-in-charge and affixed with an original seal of the applicant organisation** and returned to the EE&CA Projects Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat (General Projects) at 5/F Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong **before 6:00 pm** on the invitation closing date as specified in each round of the invitation exercise. If the applications are submitted by mail, the postmark should be dated on or before the invitation closing date. In case a Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is in force for any duration

between 12:00 noon and 6:00 pm on the invitation closing date, the invitation closing time will be extended to 6:00 pm on the next working day.

Late or incomplete applications or applications not submitted in accordance with the format prescribed above, including an application submitted by facsimile or e-mail or without submission of the original hard copy, or the application form is not personally signed by the person-in-charge of the proposed project and affixed with an original seal of the applicant organisation, will **not** be processed.

2.4 What are the funding limits?

There are funding caps for projects of different scales:

- (1) For **small scale** projects, there is a funding cap of **\$50,000**.
- (2) For **medium scale** projects, there is a funding cap of **\$500,000**.
- (3) For **large scale** projects, there is no specific funding cap and the amount of funding support will be assessed and determined on the merits of individual funding applications.

Funds may be granted for full or partial support of projects. Projects with reference budget exceeding HK\$2,000,000 will need to be approved by the ECF Committee.

Unless otherwise specified in the call for invitation, about 75% of the annual allocation for general projects will be assigned for large-scale projects whilst 25% will be assigned for medium and small scale projects. Applicants should take into account the amount of funding allocation available for different scales of projects when preparing budget proposals for their projects.

2.5 What are the vetting procedures?

ECC has been entrusted with the vetting of EE&CA projects. An EE&CA Projects Vetting Sub-committee (the Vetting Sub-committee) has been established under ECC to consider EE&CA projects. The Vetting Sub-committee comprises ECC members and Government representatives.

The following steps will be taken after an application is received –

- Step 1: Upon receipt of an application, the ECC Secretariat will send an interim reply to the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the application. Where necessary, the applicant will be requested to provide clarification or supplementary information. However, it should be noted that applicants should provide the best and fullest information in their applications, and the Vetting Sub-committee is not obliged to request for additional information from applicants.
- Step 2: The application will be considered at the Vetting Sub-committee meeting **and the Vetting Sub-committee may request the applicant to make a presentation if necessary.**

Step 3: For funding applications with reference budget up to HK\$2,000,000, the Vetting Sub-committee will either approve the application or reject it. 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. The Secretariat will also upload information of the approved projects on the ECC – EE&CA Projects website.

For funding applications with reference budget above HK\$2,000,000, the Vetting Sub-committee will either recommend the application for consideration by the ECF Committee or reject it.

Step 4: The ECF Committee will consider funding applications with reference budget above HK\$2,000,000 recommended by the Vetting Sub-committee. The ECC Secretariat will inform applicants of the ECF Committee's decision. The Secretariat will also upload information of the approved projects on the ECC – EE&CA Projects website.

Note for Applicants: Decisions of the ECF Committee / the Vetting Sub-committee in respect of project approvals and conditions of grants will be final.

2.6 What are the vetting criteria?

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

- 2.6.1 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.
- 2.6.2 The benefits must accrue to the district/local community as a whole, and not just to individuals, a single private organisation or a consortium of private companies.
- 2.6.3 Projects must be non-profit making in nature.
- 2.6.4 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) whether the programmes of the project proposal can bring about positive impacts in the longer run;
 - (d) 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;

- (e) the track records of the applicant organisations will be considered in vetting the applications and normally only a smaller scale project will be considered for first-time applicants without proven records of project implementation;
- (f) whether the proposed project's schedule of implementation is well-planned and practicable, and the duration is reasonable;
- (g) whether the proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with full justification for every expenditure item;
- (h) whether the proposed activities will generate a lot of waste;
- (i) whether the proposed project has alternative sources of funding support;
- (j) whether the proposed project should more appropriately be funded by other sources;
- (k) whether there is or likely to be a duplication of the work already or currently carried out by other groups; and
- (l) if recurrent expenditure is incurred, whether the proposed project has potential to become self-sufficient after a certain period of time.

2.6.5 Corresponding to the competition-based vetting mechanism and in addition to the broad assessment criteria mentioned in (a) to (l) above for vetting and evaluation of the merits of individual applications, a merit-based ranking system is implemented to assess and select the most meritorious applications for funding support. Under the merit-based ranking system, applications will be assessed against the following aspects-

- (a) Programmes
 - (i) Programme Approach: A focused project which fully meets priority theme.
 - (ii) Creativity: A creative project to effectively instill behavior changes towards a green life style.
 - (iii) Sustainability: Programmes of the project can bring about positive impacts in the long run and can be self-sustained.
 - (iv) Measurable Results: The project has very clear indicators for measuring output and outcome, and can maximize outreach rate.
- (b) Project Management Capability

- (i) Track Record: For applicant which has past experience in ECF projects, its track record would be taken into consideration.
 - (ii) Ability to Manage Application Procedures: Applicant presents strong ability to manage application procedures.
 - (iii) Project Planning: Proposed schedule of implementation is well-planned and practicable.
- (c) Budgetary Management
- (i) Proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with full justification for every expenditure item.

2.7 Avoidance of Conflict of Interests

To avoid conflict of interest, members of the Vetting Sub-committee and ECF Committee who are directly or indirectly related to an application will be required to declare interest and refrain from taking part in the discussion of that application by leaving the venue where the deliberation takes place. This will apply to members who are part of the project team and/or members who belong to the same organisation.

2.8 Invitation for Funding Applications

Invitation for applications of projects of all scales would be arranged periodically and details will be announced through ECC – EE&CA Projects website <http://eeca.ecc.org.hk/english/index.html>.

2.9 Can I withdraw my application?

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

2.10 Can I resubmit my application?

For unsuccessful applications, the applicants may always revise and modify their applications for re-submission in subsequent invitation exercise. These applications, together with other new applications, will be considered on equal footing at the next round of invitation. In completing the application form for a resubmitted application, the applicant should set out clearly the differences of the resubmitted applications vis-à-vis the previous one.

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 should be typed or printed on both sides of a paper, and shall be personally signed by the person-in-charge of the proposed project (i.e. the head or deputy head of the applicant organisation) and affixed with an original seal of the applicant organisation. The completed application form should be submitted in both hard and soft copies (in word format).
- 3.1.3 Applicants should read the “Guide to Application” carefully, and provide all details of the proposed project in a clear and concise manner. Additional pages may be attached to the form if necessary. Please ensure that all required information is submitted with the application form.
- 3.1.4 Applicants are required to provide additional or supplementary information in relation to their applications upon request. It should be noted that applicants should provide the best and fullest information in their applications, and the Vetting Sub-committee is not obliged to request for additional information from applicants.
- 3.1.5 Acknowledgment will be sent to the applicant after duly receipt of an application by the ECC 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 ECC – EE&CA Projects website 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 ECC Secretariat.

3.2.2 Content of Project Proposal

3.2.2.1 *Project Title*

State the project title, which should start with “ECF”, in both English and Chinese.

3.2.2.2 *Project Theme*

Indicate the theme of the project.

3.2.2.3 *Project Period*

Give the commencement and completion date and duration of project.

3.2.2.4 *Objectives of Project*

In clear and specific terms, state how the project will enhance public awareness of the environment, promote understanding of ways to improve and protect it, or mobilise the community to take action.

3.2.2.5 *Brief Description of Project*

Briefly describe how the proposed activities would be conducive to achieving the project objectives, and how the applicant organisation would evaluate the effectiveness of the activities in achieving the project objectives as well as the impact of activities. Briefly describe how the proposed activities would mitigate potential environmental impact of project implementation (such as waste generation and material consumption).

3.2.2.6 *Details of Other Assisting/Supporting/Sponsoring Bodies for the Proposed Project*

Give details of other assisting/ supporting/ sponsoring bodies.

3.2.2.7 *Work Schedule and Activity Summary*

State the following –

- (a) date, time, venue and content of activities; and
- (b) the anticipated number of participants of each activity.

Note for Applicants: Normally, no funding will be supported for activities which start before approval is given by the Vetting Sub-committee.

3.2.2.8 *Target Group, Target District of Project and Anticipated Number of Participants of Whole Project*

Give details of target group, target district of project and anticipated number of participants of whole project.

3.2.2.9 *Method in Selecting Participants and Selection Criteria*

State clearly the methods in selecting participants and the selection criteria.

3.2.2.10 *Other Information*

- (a) Methods in promoting the activities – specify types and quantities of publicity materials required.
- (b) Publication and production of educational materials – applicants are encouraged to upload materials to the internet to avoid printing and photocopying.
- (c) Seminars/Workshops – theme and details of proposed speakers/ tutors.
- (d) Production of video – applicants are encouraged to upload the video to the internet and avoid production and distribution of DVD.
- (e) Production of website – purpose, content, production and hosting period, and anticipated number of visitors.

3.2.2.11 *Expected Output and Outcomes of the Project and Evaluation*

Set out both output and outcome performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The performance indicators will become one of the key considerations in vetting projects. Applicants are required to complete the **Appendix of the application form**.

3.2.2.12 *Budget of Project*

The application should provide a detailed budget for the project. Each income and expenditure item should be reasonable, realistic and with detailed breakdown. All expenditure items must be incurred between the commencement and completion date of the project with supporting invoices and receipts (original).

Note for Applicants: Any increase in cost arising from inflation or unforeseen requirements will be the responsibility of the recipient organisation. Request of budget variation for additional funding after project approval will normally not be considered.

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, the costs brought about by the deployment of the existing staff of the recipient organisation for miscellaneous duties relating to the project such as research, editorial and translation work for the project, etc.
 - (ii) Funding for project staff may be supported, the salary of which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The total amount for covering the cost of project staff should normally be below 50% of the total approved amount or the total actual expenditure, whichever is the less.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Purchase of Educational Materials and Computer Softwares
- (i) Expenses on educational materials and computer softwares will be considered on the condition that the education materials and computer softwares are essential.
- (d) Items that are **Not Supported**
- (i) renovation fee
 - (ii) contingency and uniform (including, but not limited to, items such as cap, T-shirt, badges)
 - (iii) capital items such as computer, camera, furniture, etc.
 - (iv) souvenirs to participants, except Certificate of Attendance
 - (v) merely form-based or school-based visits will *not* generally be supported

- (vi) funding for reprinting of existing leaflets or education materials will **not** be supported, unless they form an essential part of the project
 - (vii) non-local travel will **not** normally be supported. Non-local participants in a local function are normally expected to pay for their own travelling and living expenses
 - (viii) payments to individuals as a reward for their participation in the project will **not** be given. Subsidy for volunteer involvement in organising the project may be considered in accordance with point (e) below
 - (ix) honoraria for speakers who are staff employed for the project will **not** normally be supported
- (e) Funding support may be considered for the following expenses –
- (i) hire of transport
 - (ii) meal allowance and travelling expenses on public transport for volunteers
 - (iii) hire of temporary/casual workers on a one-off basis
 - (iv) hire and decoration of venue, hire of lighting and public address facilities
 - (v) procurement of postage, stationery, etc.
 - (vi) printing work including publicity materials
 - (vii) light refreshments for ceremonies
 - (viii) purchase of souvenirs and gifts of a token nature
 - (ix) under exceptional circumstances, payment of reasonable fees to hire experienced and professional speakers/trainers
 - (x) procurement of services such as production of design and artwork
 - (xi) premium for public liability insurance
 - (xii) a modest amount for contest/participation prizes. Cash or cashable items must not be given

- (xiii) for admission fee and hire of package tour, 40% of the charge should be paid by the participants

(Please refer to Appendix I for existing level of funding support for expenses.)

(f) Others

- (i) 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.)

3.2.2.13 *Other Sources of Funds (both confirmed and being applied for)*

The availability of alternative funds will be taken into account when an application is considered. In case the applicant organisations have sought / obtained private sponsorship to cover the budget items not to be funded by the ECF, the organisations should include details of the sponsorship in the Application Form (Section A Item 3 under Declaration and Section B Item 13) for Vetting Sub-committee's consideration. In case there are any changes to the sponsorship after the project approval, for example when the recipient organisation has sought / obtained private sponsorship to support items not funded by the ECF or to top up items that are partly funded by the ECF, the changes have to be submitted to the Vetting Sub-committee for consideration.

The Vetting Sub-committee would consider whether the sponsorship would constitute any conflict of interest, and whether the sponsorship might cause any potential liability or damage to the image of the ECF and etc. It would be up to the organisations to agree with their sponsor(s) on how to use the sponsorship and how to handle the unspent balance of the sponsorship.

3.2.2.14 *Estimated Revenue Generated from the Project*

Estimated revenue gains from the project 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.

3.2.2.15 *Recurrent Income of Project*

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

3.2.2.16 *Manpower for the Project*

State the following –

- (a) Details of project leader and team leaders, and the project team structure / organisation chart;
- (b) Details of the Project Team – Composition and number of staff involved in the proposed project, their positions in the organisation, their role in the project and the amount of time to be contributed to the project (in terms of number of days per month);
- (c) Details of Voluntary Workers involved in the project; and
- (d) Number and positions of the other staff who are involved but not funded under the project.

3.2.2.17 *Record of previous applications which are either supported or rejected by ECC or ECF, and the amount approved and received for the successful applications*

3.2.2.18 *Experience and record of application organisations in organising related activities other than projects under the ECF*

3.2.2.19 *Details of Applicants*

Applicant organisation is required to provide the following information in the Supplementary Sheet –

- (a) background information of the organisation;
- (b) registration status of organisation;
- (c) whether organisation is charitable;
- (d) whether organisation receives Government subvention;
- (e) information about the key members of organisation and person-in-charge of the project; and

- (f) documentary proof, to the satisfaction of the Vetting Subcommittee, of the organisation's registration and non-profit making status.

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.

4.2.2 The benefits must accrue to the local community as a whole, and not just an individual, a single private organisation or a consortium of private companies.

4.3 Disbursement and Reimbursement of Funds

4.3.1 Depending on the cash flow requirement and nature of the project, the recipient organisation will normally receive between 25-50% of the grant upon approval of the application. Upon the submission of half-yearly progress reports, the recipient organisation may apply for a further disbursement if it proves that the previous payment has been mostly spent or that further disbursement is required for undertaking the project as scheduled. The last 10% of the grant will normally only be released after completion of project and subject to submission of a completion report together with a statement of accounts for the project endorsed by the ECC Secretariat, in accordance with the requirement specified in paragraph 4.5.2 and 4.6 below.

The ECC Secretariat will agree with the recipient organisation a schedule of payment. For projects with approved budget of more than \$500,000, recipient organisations are required to set out the key milestones for major programmes of the project. The key milestones will be linked with the payment schedule.

Note for Applicants: The final payment will normally be released within three months upon receipt of ALL original invoices and receipts and ALL subsequent necessary clarifications as requested by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat are settled.

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 ECC Secretariat may increase the approved amount of an individual item (except project staff) by up to 20% provided that the total amount to be paid will 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 (count by heads) 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
- 4.3.4.5 the duration of project is reduced
- 4.3.5 Any items 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, fees generated from activities 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 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 for offsetting part or whole of the project's cost. Failure to report and return such income to ECF will render the organisation ineligible for future funding support.

4.4 Project Interest

- 4.4.1 The ECF 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 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 Sub-committee 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 fund is not properly handled. Where necessary, the Government will initiate legal action for suitable remedies.

4.5 Progress and Completion Reports

4.5.1 Ongoing projects are monitored and completed projects are reviewed by the Vetting Sub-committee.

- For projects lasting more than six months, recipient organisations have to submit half-yearly progress reports with information on financial position of their projects together with original invoices and receipts for the expenses to the ECC Secretariat within one month following the end date of the corresponding reporting period.
- For projects receiving a grant more than HK\$300,000 and lasting more than 18 months, recipient organisations are also 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 ECC Secretariat. Except for the first disbursement, all disbursements will be subject to satisfactory performance and progress of the project. The ECC Secretariat may conduct on-site inspections and surprise checks to examine the progress of a project at any time.

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, together with the original invoices and receipts, to the ECC Secretariat (for projects more than HK\$300,000, 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)). The Vetting Sub-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.

4.5.3 Progress reports and completion reports should be signed off personally by the person-in-charge of the recipient organisation and submitted in such format as prescribed in the relevant forms.

4.5.4 If an extension of the submission deadline for the progress reports / completion reports is required, approval should be obtained from the ECC Secretariat.

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

- 4.5.6 The statement of accounts as required above must be submitted in prescribed format as specified by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat. Essentially the actual expenses, reference numbers of individual invoices and receipts and elaborations on individual transactions under each approved budget item should be clearly indicated.

4.6 Statement of accounts

- 4.6.1 Within two months of completion of the project or before the date specified in the agreement, recipient organisations have to submit a complete statement of accounts, attached to the completion report, to the ECC 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 of or below HK\$300,000, 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 ECC Secretariat, 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 more than HK\$300,000, the following should be noted –
- 4.6.3.1 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;
- 4.6.3.2 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 ECC Secretariat once every 12 months.
- 4.6.4 For projects receiving a grant more than HK\$150,000, the funds should be kept in a separate account opened with a licensed bank to facilitate the checking of all financial records by the Government and auditors as and when necessary;
- 4.6.5 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.
- 4.6.6 The statement of accounts as required above must be submitted in prescribed format as specified by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat. Essentially the actual expenses, reference numbers of

individual invoices and receipts and elaborations on individual transactions under each approved budget item should be clearly indicated.

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

- 4.7.1 Unless negotiated otherwise between the ECC Secretariat and the recipient organisation, the recipient organisation will solely own all intellectual property rights arising from the project.
- 4.7.2 The recipient organisation is required to grant unconditionally and irrevocably to the Government 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 and Results

- 4.8.1 Recipient organisations should try to publicise the project results or any events related to the project through publications, seminars, workshops, conferences and exhibitions etc. Recipient organisations should also provide information about the events such that the ECC Secretariat might conduct spot checks on the proposed activities.
- 4.8.2 Recipient organisations should notify the ECC Secretariat of the project results before publicising them. Copies of publications or publicity material produced under the project must be made available to the ECC Secretariat within one month after the completion of the project.
- 4.8.3 Projects which receive funding support from the ECF, including the activities, publicity and other events organised under the projects, as well as their related educational, publicity and other related materials, should not be used for purposes of personal, political, commercial or religious publicity of any individuals or organisations. Nor should any such activities, events or materials arising from an ECF-funded project be presented in a way as to induce public perception of any personal, political, commercial or religious publicity of any kind, or misrepresent any association of any individuals or organisations with the ECF. In addition, activities and events organised and materials produced under the projects should not be implemented or distributed in a way which may adversely affect ECF's image, or cause any liability to ECF.
- 4.8.4 The recipient organisation is obliged to submit a copy / sample / artwork of all publicity materials proposed, produced or used for the project or its activities for review by the Secretariat as and when required, and should follow the advice of the Secretariat on the format and presentation of such materials whenever required.
- 4.8.5 When considering the location and arrangements for displaying publicity materials, the recipient organisation should comply with the relevant legislation and regulations, and obtain the endorsement of all

relevant authorities, Government departments and other relevant parties, including consultation of parties affected as appropriate. ECF's funding support for the project should in no way be construed as support for the proposed location and arrangements for the display of such publicity materials.

- 4.8.6 Apart from the names and logos of the ECF and ECC, project proponent and supporting organisations as approved by the ECF, prior approval should be obtained from the EE&CA Projects Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat for any additional names, logos and photos of other individual, single private organisation or a consortium of private companies to be published in any publicity materials and promotional items relating to the project.

4.9 Acknowledgement of Support and Disclaimer

- 4.9.1 To acknowledge the source of funding, “ECF” should be added at the beginning of the project title which should be used in all publicity materials and activities under the project. Both the names and logos of the ECF and ECC must also be acknowledged in all publicity materials resulting from the project. Failure in making proper acknowledgment may result in suspension or termination of funding support and affect the future applications.
- 4.9.2 The logos of ECF and ECC may be used and printed onto the following categories of publicity material with a view to promulgating the contribution of the fund. Examples of publicity material include publicity leaflets/posters/banners; backdrops, press release, webpage; reports and publications of project outcome; and advertisements on newspaper and electronic media.
- 4.9.3 For publicity materials produced under ECF-funded projects or activities, the size of the name and / or logo of the organisers / assisting / supporting / sponsoring bodies should not be larger, or placed in a more prominent position, than those of the ECF. For example:

Order from top to bottom:

ECF ECC Organisers

Assisting / supporting / sponsoring bodies

Order from left to right:

ECF ECC Organisers

**Assisting / supporting
/ sponsoring bodies**

- 4.9.4 Use of the names and logos for other purposes is subject to the prior approval of ECC Secretariat.

- 4.9.5 In no circumstances shall the names and logos of ECF and ECC be used for publicity for commercial interest or other purposes which may damage the image and / or cause any liability to ECF and ECC. A disclaimer should be added to all publications and media briefs relating to ECC / ECF-funded projects: *"Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material/event do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Environment and Conservation Fund and the Environmental Campaign Committee."*

4.10 Procurement of Capital Items, Goods and Services

Important Notice: The recipient organisation is obliged to adhere to a high standard of integrity and spend the funds in an open, fair and accountable manner. Recipient organisation is advised to observe the Best Practice Checklist issued by the Corruption Prevention Department of the ICAC namely "Strengthening Integrity and Accountability – Government Funding Schemes Grantee's Guidebook" as well as the "Integrity and Corruption Prevention Guide on Managing Relationship with Public Servants" which can be downloaded from the following hyperlinks of the ICAC website -

http://www.icac.org.hk/filemanager/en/Content_1031/GranteeBPC.pdf

http://www.icac.org.hk/filemanager/en/Content_1031/ps.pdf

http://www.icac.org.hk/filemanager/en/Content_1031/quick-ps.pdf

- 4.10.1 The recipient organisation should exercise utmost prudence in procuring capital items, goods and 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 for most items unless specified in **Appendix I**.
 - (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.
- 4.10.2 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.

- 4.10.3 In case an applicant organisation intends to procure the items from a specified company/organisation/individual without following the open procurement process in paragraph 4.10.1 above, it has to provide details of the proposed procurement, justifications for the special procurement arrangement, and its relationship with the company/organisation/individual concerned in the application form. If such application including the proposed special procurement arrangement is approved, subsequent approval from the Vetting Sub-committee will not be required.
- 4.10.4 In the case of universities, they may adhere to their established/current standard procurement procedures.
- 4.10.5 All quotations and tendering documents should be kept for inspection by the Vetting Sub-committee Secretariat.
- 4.10.6 Recruitment of staff and procurement of goods/services must be conducted in an open and fair manner. A mechanism should be put in place for staff/workers to declare any conflict of interest and to prohibit staff/workers from soliciting or accepting any advantage when handling the ECF funded projects. All records of declaration of interest should be properly documented and submitted with the completion report to the Secretariat of the Sub-committee for inspection. Please refer to *Appendix II* for the probity requirements for recipient organisations of grants from the ECF.

4.11 Title of Capital Items, Educational Materials and Computer Softwares

- 4.11.1 The title of capital items (including minor works and equipments), educational materials and computer softwares procured with the fund will remain with the Government during the project period. Upon satisfactory completion of the project and subject to the approval of the Vetting Sub-committee, the title of the items may be changed to the recipient organisation on a case-by-case basis.

4.12 Suspension/Termination of Funding Support

- 4.12.1 The Vetting Sub-committee may suspend/terminate support for a project under the following circumstances -
- (a) if the project does not commence within six months of the approval of the grant and no reasonable explanation has been given;
 - (b) the Vetting Sub-committee consider that the project has not progressed satisfactorily and no reasonable explanation has been given;
 - (c) the project 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 to take over the role of 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 improve the unsatisfactory situation before the Vetting Sub-committee lifts the suspension. In cases of termination, the balance of the grant or any funding given in advance shall be returned to the ECF. The Vetting Sub-committee will consider possible redeployment of the capital items, educational 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 the organisation's management will be informed.

4.12.4 The ECF 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. Such major changes include -

- (a) revision to the objectives and/or content;
- (b) change of project leader/principal investigator;
- (c) transfer of project to another organisation;
- (d) deferral of progress/completion reports/statement of accounts submission date; or
- (e) change in sponsorship.

Any other changes, such as changes of the activity date and place, etc., must also be submitted to the Secretariat for approval in advance.

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

4.12.7 Any proposed changes to a project should be submitted to the ECC Secretariat for approval/follow-up.

4.13 Others

- 4.13.1 The ECF Committee, ECC, their sub-committees and secretariats, 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.
- 4.13.3 For the purpose of identification, the recipient organisation should issue suitable work identity cards for staff and/or volunteers carrying out activities under approved projects. Staff and/or volunteers should not wear other uniforms apart from those of the recipient organisation. Where other means of identification is proposed, prior approval should be obtained from the Secretariat of the Vetting Subcommittee.
- 4.13.4 If personal information of participants was to be collected for purpose of the project, the information should be properly handled according to the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. If in doubt, advice from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Personal Data should be sought.
- 4.13.5 The applicant organisation must ensure that the proposed project/activity names are not the same/similar to project/activities held by other organisations; The Vetting Sub-committee reserves the right to request applicant/recipient organisations to change the project/activity names as deemed necessary to avoid confusion on the source of funding.

**Environmental Education and Community Action Projects
Reference Level of Funding Support for Expenses**

Items	Reference Level of Funding Support (HK\$)
1. Publicity – including items such as banners, posters, leaflets, postage, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ceiling is capped at 20% of the approved total budget. • The applicant is free to manoeuvre with the grant among the various approved ‘publicity’ items.
2. Opening/ Closing Ceremony – including invitation, souvenirs for officiating guests, set up and decoration, backdrop, rental payment of venue, PA system, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ceiling is capped at 20% of the approved total budget. • The applicant is free to manoeuvre with the grant among the various approved ‘opening/ closing ceremony’ items.
3. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ceiling is capped at 30% of the approved total budget. • Quotations must be provided. • Request of funding to cover charges for use of in-house equipment/facilities of the applicant organisation is normally not supported. If such support is necessary due to special reasons, prior agreement of the Vetting Sub-committee must be secured and the expenditure for rental is set at 20% of the current market price.
4. Booths – including rental payments, decoration and prizes for game booths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ceiling is capped at \$650 per booth.
5. Production of Exhibition Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum \$2,100 per panel. • The ceiling is capped at \$21,000 per application. • Applicant is encouraged to borrow exhibition panels from Environmental Protection Department (Hotline: 2835 1012).
6. Prizes for Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum \$1,500 per set of trophies and prizes for each sub-category of competition. Cash or cashable items must not be given.

Items	Reference Level of Funding Support (HK\$)
7. Hire of Speakers/ Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum \$500 for a speaker/ instructor for each function lasting 3 hours or more. For function lasting less than 3 hours, maximum \$160 per hour for a speaker/ instructor. • For speaker / instructor requiring professional qualification: maximum \$250 per hour for a speaker/instructor (qualification should be supported by certificates issued by relevant authorities). • The funding support may be adjusted upwards on the merit of each case. • Honoraria for speakers who are staff employed for the project are normally not supported.
8. Insurance for Third Party Liabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding support will be based on the basic requirements. • Quotations must be provided.
9. Transportation – including hire of coach, hire of van for transportation of materials and hire of launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum \$2,000 per coach (round trip). • The amount of funding support is based on the actual expenditure with the proof of receipts. • Quotations must be provided for hire of coach/ launch. • For hire of launch, 40% of the charge should be paid by the participants. • Maximum \$300 per journey for hire of van.
10. Admission Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are required to pay 40% of the admission fee.
11. Package Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For hire of package tour, 40% of the charge should be paid by the participants.
12. Souvenirs (for officiating guests and judges only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum unit price: \$50.
13. General Expenses – including stationery, films and film development, video tapes and etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ceiling is capped at 10% of the approved total budget or actual expenditure, whichever is the less. • Detailed breakdown on items to be charged to general expenses must be provided in the application for assessment.
14. Travel Allowance (for staff and volunteers) Note: for staff, only allowed for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum \$45 for each event/ activity (excluding daily duty travelling of staff employed by the project).

Items	Reference Level of Funding Support (HK\$)
travelling from workplace to workplace, both under the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The funding support may be adjusted upwards on the merit of each case.
15. Meal Allowance (for volunteers only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum \$40 per volunteer for activities lasting 3-5 hours (excluding preparation/ travelling time). Maximum \$70 per volunteer for activities lasting more than 5 hours (excluding preparation/ travelling time).
16. Light Refreshment for ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum \$10 per head. The ceiling is capped at \$10,000 per project.
17. Project Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ceiling of expenditure should normally be below 50% of the approved total budget or actual expenditure for the project, whichever is the less.
18. Administrative and Overhead Costs Note : only applicable to NGOs (including greens groups) without Government subventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ceiling is capped at 10% of the approved total budget or actual expenditure, whichever is the less. Detailed breakdown on items to be charged to the administrative and overhead costs must be provided in the application for assessment.
19. Contingency Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not supported.

Remarks: The level of funding support may be adjusted by the Environmental Education and Community Action Projects Vetting Sub-committee as and when necessary. For the latest version, please refer to the Internet homepage of –

Environment and Conservation Fund Committee

<http://www.ecf.gov.hk/en/application/index.html>

Environmental Campaign Committee - Environmental Education and Community Action Projects

<http://eeca.ecc.org.hk/english/guide/guide.html>

Probity Requirements for Recipient Organisations of Grants from the Environment and Conservation Fund

1. Introduction

As Government funds involve public money, there is high public expectation on the recipient organisations of grants from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) to adhere to a high standard of integrity and spend the funds in an open, fair and accountable manner.

2. Probity Provisions

To uphold the integrity of staff members and agents of the recipient organisation in relation to the funded project, the recipient organisation shall:

- require its staff members, subcontractors, agents, assisting/sponsoring organisers and other personnel who are in any way involved in the ECF-funded project, not to offer, solicit or accept from any person any money, gifts or advantages as defined in the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201) in relation to the project;
- be liable for any loss or damage to the ECF, or its trustee, or the Secretariat of the ECF Committee or its Vetting Subcommittees arising from the termination of the funding agreement, where the termination is attributed to the commission of any offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance in relation to the funded project by the recipient organisation or its staff members, subcontractors, agents, assisting/sponsoring organisers or other personnel who are in any way involved in the project;
- ensure, during the period of the project, that it (including its staff members, subcontractors, agents or other personnel) shall not undertake any service, task or job or do anything whatsoever for or on behalf of the recipient organisation or any third party (other than in the performance of the funding agreement) which conflicts, or which may be seen to conflict, with the recipient organisation's duties to the ECF (or its trustee, or the ECF Committee or its Vetting Subcommittees, or the Secretariat to the ECF Committee or its Vetting Subcommittees) under the funding agreement, unless and to the extent the Secretariat of the ECF Committee or the relevant Vetting Subcommittee has been fully informed, and whose permission has been obtained, by the recipient organisation in a timely fashion of all the circumstances in which the permission is sought; and
- notify the Secretariat of the ECF Committee or the relevant Vetting Subcommittee in writing of all or any facts which may reasonably be considered to give rise to a situation where the financial, professional, commercial, personal, or other interests of the recipient organisation or any of its directors, staff members, agents, assisting/sponsoring organisers and contractors, or any of their respective associates or associated persons, conflict or compete, or may conflict or compete, with the recipient organisation's duties to the ECF (or its trustee, or the ECF Committee or its Vetting Committees, or the Secretariat to the ECF Committee or its Vetting Subcommittees) under the funding agreement.

3. Staff Recruitment

- The recipient organisation or the Person-in-charge (PIC) should maintain fairness and transparency in recruiting staff for the ECF-funded project, and ensure that all such staff members recruited with ECF grants are well qualified, suitably deployed, and properly remunerated.

4. Procurement

- In procuring goods and services in relation to the ECF-funded project and implementation of activities under the project, the recipient organisation or the PIC should:
 - adopt a set of standard procurement procedures to procure all goods and services in an open, fair and competitive basis, which should be no less stringent than the requirements set out in the ECF's Guide to Application, Terms & Conditions for the Allocation and Use of Fund, and other relevant conditions prescribed for the grant of fund, to ensure consistency in practice.
 - segregate the duties in the procurement process as far as possible, e.g. assign different staff members to source suppliers/contractors for invitation of quotations/tenders, approve quotations/tenders, and certify the goods/services received.
 - specify the approving authorities and the procurement methods for purchases of different values (e.g. open tendering for purchases of significant value or restricted tendering for minor purchases of a specified amount), which should be no less stringent than the requirements set out in the ECF's Guide to Application, Terms & Conditions for the Allocation and Use of Fund, and other relevant conditions prescribed for the grant of fund.
 - state the approving authorities for purchases by single source quotation or tender (preferably by a panel in case of high value purchases) and require the staff concerned to give justifications in writing.
 - include in the tender/quotation invitation documents probity clauses to prohibit all bidders from offering or soliciting bribes in relation to the bidding exercise.
 - incorporate anti-collusion clauses in the tender/quotation invitation document, and require the bidders to submit, together with their bids, a declaration pledging compliance with the anti-collusion clause.
 - add probity clauses to prohibit all contractors'/service providers' staff from offering, soliciting or accepting bribes, in the contracts to be awarded.
 - Seek ICAC's tailor-made advice, if necessary, on procurement in relation to the ECF-funded projects.
- In sourcing suppliers and service providers, the recipient organisation should:
 - compile lists of suppliers/service providers for approval by the designated authority in the recipient organisation to facilitate sourcing of suppliers/service providers for the goods or services that are required frequently.

- invite the required number of suitable suppliers/service providers on the respective approved lists to bid on a fair-share basis (e.g. by rotation).
- add other suppliers nominated, with justifications for their nominations and approval by designated authority, by the users or other staff.
- source, for those without any approved list, suitable suppliers/service providers for invitations to bid, taking into account their company size, experience and past performance records, if any, through the Internet and nominations by the users and other staff, and include the current supplier/service provider as appropriate.

5. Handling of Project Assets

- The PIC should be responsible for the overall control and management of project assets (i.e. all capital items and equipment, minor works installations, educational materials and computer software procured with ECF grant for use of the project), including any movements or transfers of these items among users. He should keep a register to record the movements of each item, such as the date of issue and the recipient, date and cost of acquisition, detailed description of the equipment and its physical location. He should also mark on each item to show that it is an asset of ECF.
- The PIC should conduct and record random and regular (e.g. yearly) physical checks on these assets.
- The PIC should report on any loss or damages to these assets, or any unserviceable assets, to the management of the recipient organisation for necessary action. He should also report to the police and the Secretariat for all assets which are lost or stolen.

6. Record Keeping

- The recipient organisation should maintain, for a minimum period of 7 years after the completion of the project, full and proper books of accounts and records in respect of the project.
- The recipient organisation should allow the Secretariat and its authorised representatives to access to all or any of the books and records for conducting audit, inspection, and verification whenever required.

*Secretariat, Environmental Education and Community Action Projects Vetting
Subcommittee
August 2016*