

**Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the
Environment and Conservation Fund Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee
held on 7 September 2005 at 9:30 a.m.**

Present

Mr. Joseph Lee, BBS, JP	(Chairman)
Ms Lau Ka-shi	
Mr. Man Mo-leung	
Prof. Chan Chak-keung	
Prof. Chu Lee-man	
Ms Emba Leung WM	
Ms Edith Ngan Man-ling	
Mr. Frankie Yick Chi-ming	
Mr. Eric Chan	EPD
Mr. Richard Chan	AFCD
Mr. Lawrence Cheung	EPD
Miss Christina Chong	EPD (Secretary)
Ms Winifred Chan	EPD (Assistant Secretary)

Absent with Apologies

Prof. Chan Chi-ming
Dr. Richard Cheung
Mr. Richard W Lee
Dr. John Leung Kon-chong
Prof. Jonathan Wong

Agenda Item 1: Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the fourth meeting of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee (RPVSC).

Agenda Item 2 : Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The revised draft minutes of the last meeting held on 25 May 2005 were confirmed without any amendment.

Agenda Item 3 : Matters Arising

Para. 3 Report on progress of the on-going ECF funded research projects
[ECF Paper 13/2005]

3. Ms Winifred Chan briefed members on ECF Paper 13/2005 on the progress of 17 on-going research projects. Members' attention was drawn to the progress of the ECF Project 4/2002 on Diversity and Conservation of Bats. The Secretariat had urged the principal investigator (PI) a number of times to submit completion report, audited statement of account and independent evaluation report since February this year but in vain. Upon enquiry on the reasons of late submission, the recipient organization informed the Secretariat that change of staff had caused the delay of submission of reports. The Secretariat would continue to liaise with the PI on the submission of these reports.

Proposed variations to details of ECF funded projects
[ECF Paper 14/2005]

4. Ms Winifred Chan also reported to the meeting that among the 17 on-going projects, the PIs of two projects, namely ECF Projects 1/2003 and 2/2004 applied for extension of project duration. Details were set out in ECF Paper 14/2005. Members discussed the progress of ECF Project 1/2003 and noted that EPD had provided advice to the PI to facilitate his research work. Members agreed to the proposed extension of project duration as requested by the PIs.

Para. 9 ECF Project 22/2004

5. Ms Winifred Chan reported that upon Members' enquiry, the PI had submitted the reference materials proving the effective operation of the SMPS. After consulting Dr John Leung, the proposal was circulated to all members vide ECF Paper 10/2005 for approval. In June, Members approved by circulation a grant of \$149,752 to the PI. The Woo Wheelock Green Fund (WWGF) subsequently agreed to support this project with ECF on an equal-share basis. The project commenced on 1 August 2005.

ECF Project 23/2004 Towards developing an engineering strategy to reduce tire-pavement noise

[ECF Paper 15/2005]

6. Ms Winifred Chan reported that upon Members' enquiry, the PI submitted additional information on the methodology of the trailer-based device to measure the tire-pavement noise. The Secretariat also obtained confirmation from the Highways Department that the department would apply the proposed Close Proximity Method to measure the tire-pavement noise of certain road sections to assess the noise reduction performance of various types of existing surfacing materials and the new low noise surfacing material.

7. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the proposal was worthy of support and the RPVSC would recommend it to the ECF Committee for endorsement. As the Guide to Application stipulated that overhead administrative cost would normally not supported, the meeting agreed not to support the request of \$52,650 for the overhead administrative charges. Therefore, the amount of fund recommended for the project would be \$351,000.

ECF Project 25/2004 Atmospheric Deposition of Mercury in Hong Kong

[ECF Paper 16/2005]

8. The Chairman declared interests in this application as the PI came from the same university the Court of which he was a member. Mr. Eric Chan chaired this part of the meeting.

9. Miss Christina Chong reported that the PI of ECF Project 25/2004 had submitted additional information and revised the proposed sites for collecting rain sample. She also relayed Dr. Richard Cheung's comments to Members as Dr Cheung was not able to attend the meeting due to other prior commitments. Dr Cheung opined that the application should not be supported if the PI could not use an internationally recognized standard sampler to collect the samples for the project. Mr. Lawrence Cheung said that passive sampling was a commonly adopted approach but there was no internationally recognized sampler specifically designed for this approach. Scientists of EPD normally used different pre-fabricated samplers for active sampling work. In addition, the data collected by EPD was normally used to measure particles but not atmospheric mercury. Two representatives of the project team then joined the meeting to give a short briefing and answer questions in relation to the proposal.

10. Note

11. Note

12. After discussion, the meeting concluded that the project was worthy of support and the budget was reasonable. The study findings would enhance the understanding of the effect of mercury deposition in Hong Kong. Members appreciated the expertise of the PI in the related field and expected that she would lead the project team throughout the whole project period. Members also suggested the PI to reconsider an alternative sampling site in the western part of Hong Kong to replace Sai Kung site.

Agenda Item 4 : New Application

ECF Project 1/2005 Production of lunch boxes using bamboo and aloe vera

[ECF Paper 17/2005]

13. Miss Christina Chong briefed Members on the project proposal and the assessments given by the EPD as summarized in ECF Paper 17/2005. The main objectives of the project were to produce lunch boxes using bamboo and aloe

vera in the Mainland China and to sell the product in Hong Kong for profit. The project applicant claimed that he would return the grant to the ECF Committee when the business became profitable. However, the project applicant did not provide any details on the qualifications of the project team, implementation plan and project budget.

14. Note

15. Members endorsed the conclusion of the Secretariat and did not support the application.

Agenda Item 5 : Any Other Business

16. Mr. Frankie Yick proposed and Members agreed that the Secretariat would provide a summary on the completed research projects in the next regular progress report to the RPSVC.

17. Prof. Chan Chak-keung proposed the RPSVC to consider adopting the practice of Research Grant Council (RGC) in inviting overseas assessors to assess proposals applying for more than \$150,000.00. He opined that there would be potential conflict of interests when local assessors are invited to assess the proposals. The Secretariat of the RGC had a database of international reviewers on environmental research. The Secretariat of RPSVC might consider using the RGC's database and invite overseas assessors to assess ECF projects. Prof. Chu Lee-man, however, opined that overseas assessors might not be able to provide accurate assessment on proposals with local implications. Miss Christina Chong informed that EPD had a database of both local and overseas assessors and invitations to overseas experts would be made as and when required. Prof Chan Chak-keung suggested that in order to avoid any potential conflict of interests of local assessors, EPD might consider expanding their database by incorporating those international reviewers from the RGC's database.

18. The Chairman concluded that the Secretariat would examine with the Secretariat of RGC the possibility of using their database of international reviewers

in inviting external expert assessors for the ECF applications.

Agenda Item 6 : Date of Next Meeting

19. The RPVSC was scheduled to meet bi-monthly and the Secretariat would inform Members of the date of the next meeting in due course.

20. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee

October 2005

Note: The paragraph will not be included in the version of notes to be uploaded to the webpage of ECFC according to the standing practice of not disclosing the detailed reasons for supporting or rejecting an application. The ECFC 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.”