

**Minutes of the First Meeting of the
Environment and Conservation Fund Committee
held on 13 November 2014 at 9:30 a.m.**

Present

Dr Joseph LEE, GBS, JP	(Chairman)
Ir Dr CHAN Fuk-cheung	
Ms FUNG Dun-mi, Amy	
Dr KaChun HUI	
Mr LAM Chiu-ying, SBS	
Ms LI Chun-chau	
Mr TSE Chin-wan, JP	DDEP(1), EPD
Dr CHUI Ho-Kwong, Samuel	P(CR), EPD
Mr KWAN Pak-keong	Chief Curriculum Development Officer, EDB
Dr Jackie YIP	Senior Conservation Officer, AFCD

In Attendance

Ms Anita SW TSUI	CEO(CR)1, EPD (Secretary)
Mr TSOI Kwan-sang, Steve	SEO(CR)1, EPD
Mr KAM Ka-lung, Simon	EM(CR), EPD

Absent with Apologies

Ms CHAN Sui-kuen, Agnes
Ir CHAN Wing-hong, Cary
Mr Douglas WOO



Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Members to the first meeting of the new term of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Committee from 2014 to 2016.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting held on 25.9.2014

2. The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2014 were circulated to Members on 28 October 2014. The meeting confirmed the draft minutes without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Para. 3 Financial Position of the ECF

3. Ms Anita SW TSUI reported that as at 30 September 2014, ECF's balance in bank was \$1,010.29 million which included an uncommitted balance of \$85.06 million. Taking into account the seed money of \$4,700 million and investment return of \$98 million for 2013 kept at the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, ECF had an overall uncommitted balance of \$4,883 million as at 30 September 2014.

Agenda Item 3: The Environment and Conservation Fund Committee – Terms of Reference, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct (ECF Paper 34/2014-15)

4. Dr Samuel CHUI conducted a Powerpoint presentation to provide Members with an overview of the operation of the ECF and briefed them about the background, the terms of reference and the Standing Orders of the ECF Committee as set out in the ECF Paper 34/2014-15. The Standing Orders had been adopted since 1994 with revision from time to time. The quorum for the meeting shall be seven members. As government funds were public money, it was imperative for all parties involved, including Members of the ECF Committee and its various Vetting Subcommittees, to commit to ethical practices in the allocation and uses of the funds.

5. Dr Samuel CHUI said that a Code of Conduct setting out the guidelines and standards of integrity for Members and co-opted Members was prepared at Appendix to ECF Paper 34/2014-15 for compliance. Members were invited to register their personal interests by completing the declaration form at the Attachment to ECF Paper 34/2014-15, and returning it to the Secretariat in two weeks' time. Further registering of personal interests had to be made on an annual basis. In addition, if a Member has any direct personal or pecuniary interest in any matter under consideration by the Committee, he must, as soon as practicable after he had become aware of it, disclose to the Committee prior to the discussion of the item, for consideration of whether he should withdraw from the discussion.

6. Dr Samuel CHUI also briefed Members about the Green Non-government Organization (NGO) Scheme. Through this Scheme, the ECF Committee granted funding support to seven well-established local NGOs [viz. Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGH), Po Leung Kuk (PLK), Pok Oi Hospital (POH), Yan Chai Hospital (YCH), Sik Sik Yuen (SSY), Yan Oi Tong (YOT) and the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG)] with a view to assisting them to transform into green organizations and to leveraging their extensive service networks to spread green messages and raise the public's environmental awareness. The Chairman added that the Green NGO Scheme had provided an effective channel for promoting environmental and conservation knowledge to the wider community

through the implementation of diversified projects and activities carried out by the seven Green NGOs.

**Agenda Item 4: Procedures for Vetting Funding Applications
(ECF Paper 35/2014-15)**

7. Dr Samuel CHUI briefed Members about the current criteria and procedures for vetting funding applications set out in ECF Paper 35/2014-15. To maintain continuity in the vetting of funding applications for different categories of projects, the following Vetting Subcommittees were set up under the present term of the ECF Committee –

- (a) The Energy Conservation Projects Vetting Subcommittee to vet and approve projects to promote energy efficiency and conservation that cost \$2 million or less;
- (b) The Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee to vet and approve research, technology demonstration and conference projects that cost \$2 million or less;
- (c) The Waste Reduction Projects Vetting Subcommittee to vet and approve community waste reduction projects, on-site meal portioning projects in schools, food waste recycling projects for housing estates and applications under the Source Separation of Waste Programme that cost \$2 million or less; and
- (d) Authorizing the Environmental Education and Community Action (EE&CA) Projects Vetting Subcommittee under the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) to vet and approve educational / promotional and community involvement projects including demonstration projects that cost \$2 million or less.

Projects seeking funds above the limits of the respective Vetting Subcommittee's designated approval ceiling would continue to be vetted by the respective Subcommittees and submitted to the ECF Committee with recommendations for consideration.

8. Dr Samuel CHUI further briefed Members on the formation and chairmanships of the Vetting Subcommittees. The Secretariat had sent an email to invite interested members to join the Vetting Subcommittees. Based on Members' replies, consolidated membership lists were prepared at the Annexes to ECF Paper 35/2014-15. Members agreed to the following proposed chairmanships of the Vetting Subcommittees:

- (a) Ir Dr CHAN Fuk-cheung to take up the Chairmanships of the Energy Conservation Projects Vetting Subcommittee and the Waste Reduction Projects Vetting Subcommittee; and
- (b) Dr KaChun HUI to take up the Chairmanship of the Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee.

9. After deliberation, the Chairman concluded the meeting's views that the criteria and procedures for vetting funding applications, including the setting up of the various Vetting Subcommittees and their memberships proposed in ECF Paper 35/2014-15 should be endorsed.

Agenda Item 5: Environment and Conservation Fund Proposed Strategic Plan, Budget and Arrangement for 2015/16 (ECF Paper 36/2014-15)

10. Dr Samuel CHUI briefed the meeting about the activities of the ECF Committee and the various Vetting Subcommittees in 2014, and the proposed strategic plan, budget allocation and related arrangements of ECF for 2015/16 as set out in ECF Paper 36/2014-15.

11. Dr Samuel CHUI said that with the agreement of the ECF Committee at its meeting on 5 March 2014, an amount of \$300 million was reserved for the ECF budget for 2014/15, which comprised \$90 million for meeting the requirements of outstanding applications received under the Energy Conservation Projects for Non-government Organizations (ECPNGO) Scheme and Minor Works Projects under the EE&CA, and \$210 million for new projects and support for the operation of the ECC. For 2014, a total of nine rounds of invitations for applications under various funding schemes were arranged. To help applicant and recipient organizations to better understand the expectations and requirements of the ECF, seven experience / knowledge sharing sessions and three detailed briefings on the community waste reduction projects were organized. To enable applicant and recipient organizations to appreciate the importance of proper use of funding granted, representatives of the Independent Commission Against Corruption were invited to brief participants about corruption prevention practices during the General Briefing on ECF Applications conducted on 22 January 2014. Given the concerns over food safety aspects in implementing surplus food recovery projects, the Centre for Food Safety was invited to give two briefing sessions for Waste Reduction Project Vetting Subcommittee and recipient organizations to introduce the food safety guidelines relevant to the operation of such projects. Dr CHUI further said that the ECF would continue to organize various briefings for prospective applicant organizations to build up their capacity for applying for funding support and in project implementation. In addition, in accordance with the requirement of the Environment and Conservation Fund Ordinance, the Trustee Report 2013-2014 was submitted to the Legislative Council in October 2014.

12. On the ECF strategic plan and budget for 2015/16, Dr Samuel CHUI

said that as waste management was still the key environmental challenge of Hong Kong, waste reduction and minimization projects were proposed to be given funding priority. The proposed budget of \$200 million for 2015/16 as set out in Table 1 in ECF Paper 36/2014-15 included \$110 million for various community waste reduction projects. The remaining \$90 million would be allocated for projects of EE&CA, Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference, Nature Conservation Management Agreement, and activities organized by the ECC. Dr CHUI further said that under the new competition-based application arrangements, the proposed plan for inviting applications was presented in Table 2 in ECF Paper 36/2014-15, which had taken into account the nature of individual funding schemes. The Chairman supplemented that as the Buildings Energy Conservation Funding Schemes and the ECPNGO Scheme under the purview of the Energy Conservation Projects Vetting Subcommittee were already closed, no further allocation for these schemes was required. The Secretariat would continue to monitor the progress of approved projects through to their completion.

13. In response to a Member's enquiry, Dr Samuel CHUI advised that as large-scale General Education Projects (with applied budget exceeding \$500,000) usually involved more in-depth planning and longer lead time in implementation, the frequency of invitation for such applications was proposed to be once a year so as to enable the best use of fund to support the worthy and more meritorious projects.

14. After deliberation, the Chairman concluded the meeting's views that the proposed ECF strategic plan, budget and arrangement for 2015/16 as set out in ECF Paper 36/2014-15 should be endorsed.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

Representatives of ECF Committee Members on the Steering Committees of Green NGOs

15. Dr Samuel CHUI briefed Members on the existing arrangements for ECF Committee Members to attend meetings of the Steering Committees of the Green NGOs. With a view to enhancing cooperation between the ECF Committee and the Green NGOs, and monitoring the progress of their greening programmes, the ECF Committee had previously agreed to send an ECF Committee representative to sit on the meetings of the Steering Committee of each Green NGO which was formed to oversee the implementation of the greening programme. Dr CHUI said that Mr LAM Chiu-ying had been presenting the ECF Committee on the Steering Committee of TWGH, Ms Amy FUNG as representative to SSY, whereas Ms Agnes CHAN was representative to POH. As the ECF Committee's representatives to PLK, YCH, YOT and the HKFYG had retired upon their departure from the ECF Committee, the Chairman invited interested Members to serve as ECF Committee's representatives to the Steering Committees of these four Green NGOs. The Secretariat would make arrangements for each Member to join the Steering Committee of one Green NGO in due course.

Update on the Task Force on the Review of the Performance of the ECF

16. Dr Samuel CHUI briefed Members that according to the decision of the ECF Committee reached at its meeting held on 26 June 2014, a Task Force chaired by the Chairman of the Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee and comprising Members from the ECF Committee and various Vetting Subcommittees was formed to review the performance of the ECF. At the ECF Committee's meeting held on 25 September 2014, Members endorsed the proposed arrangements of the review study set out in ECF Paper 31/2014-15. The relevant ECF Paper had been distributed to members of the Task Force for information.

17. Dr Samuel CHUI further said that with the retirement of Mr Kenneth CHAN, ex-Convenor of the Task Force from the ECF Committee, Dr KaChun HUI, the new Chairman of the Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee had kindly agreed to take up the role of Convener of the Task Force. Other ECF Committee Members interested in taking part in the review were also welcomed to join the Task Force. As many members of the Task Force had retired, Dr CHUI proposed to organize a meeting for the Task Force members with a view to brief the new members on the background and to discuss the project brief before inviting the tertiary institutes to carry out the study.

Agenda Item 7: Date of Next Meeting

18. The next Meeting would be held in early February 2015. The Secretariat would inform Members about the details in due course.

19. The meeting ended at 10:45 a.m.

Secretariat, Environment and Conservation Fund Committee November 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. 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."