

**Confirmed Minutes of the Second Meeting of the
Environment and Conservation Fund Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee
held on 9 May 2007 at 2:30 p.m.**

Present

Mr. Joseph Lee, BBS, JP	(Chairman)
Prof Chan Chak-keung	
Mr. Man Mo-leung	
Dr. Kenneth Leung MY	
Ms Emba Leung WM	
Miss Florence Chan	EPD
Mr. Richard Chan	AFCDD
Mr. Lawrence Cheung	EPD
Ms Winifred Chan	EPD (Assistant Secretary)

In-attendance for Agenda Item 3

Mr. Joseph Chan	EMSD
Mr. Stephen Lai	AFCDD

Absent with Apologies

Prof Jonathan Wong WC
Prof Chau Kwai-cheong

Welcoming Remarks

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

Agenda Item 1 : Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 6.2.2007 were confirmed subject to the amendment of adding the word “fully” in front of the word “justified”

in line 9 of paragraph 20 so that the sentence should read “However, the engagement of a full-time researcher for the last two months on data analysis and report writing was not fully justified”.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Para. 4 Standing Orders and Guidelines on Declaration of Interests

3. Ms Winifred Chan briefed Members on last term’s practice. Members of the RPVSC who belonged to the same organisation of the project applicant were required to declare interest and leave the venue where the deliberation takes place. Members agreed to follow last term’s practice with immediate effect.

Para. 8 ECF Project 4/2002 – a terminated project

4. Ms Winifred Chan reported that the Secretariat had engaged a private lawyer to issue a demand letter to the recipient organisation requesting for a refund of \$211,901.

Para. 13-16 ECF Project 6/2006 To establish a three dimensional, real-time marine environment monitoring system in Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park with connection to the internet

[ECF Paper 01/2007-08]

5. Ms Winifred Chan reported that subsequent to the discussion at the last meeting, the Secretariat invited the principal investigator (PI) to provide additional information on data analysis and undertaking of maintenance responsibilities. The PI provided some prototype web page showing how the data would be analysed and displayed as attached to the ECF Paper 01/2007-08 for Members’ consideration.

6. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the proposal was worthy of support. The proposed expenditure of \$21,203 being the overhead

administrative cost should not be supported in accordance with the “Guide to Application for the Fund”. Therefore, the total amount of grant supported would be \$128,500.

Para. 20-23 ECF Project 10/2006 Association of other waterbird species with wintering Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor* in Hong Kong

[ECF Paper 02/2007-08]

7. Ms Winifred Chan reported that upon Members’ suggestion, the Secretariat invited the PI to revise the proposal by incorporating the additional information namely the study methodology, the objectives and parameters to be studied and measured. Such information was provided on pages 10 to 12 and Appendices 6 to 8 of the revised proposal as attached to the ECF Paper 02/2007-08.

8. Note

9. After further deliberation and adjustment to the funding for staffing requirement, the Chairman concluded that the project should be supported with a total sum of \$91,650.

Para. 24-27 ECF Project 8/2006 A Study of the Impact of Apple Snails on Macrophytes, Nutrients and Chlorophyll in Local Wetlands

[ECF Paper 03/2007-08]

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

11. Ms Winifred Chan reported that upon Members’ suggestion, an external assessor was invited to evaluate the possible overlap of work and study scope between the new proposal and the on-going project 3/2005. The assessment from the external assessor was summarized in the ECF Paper 03/2007-08. The on-going project focused on the basic biology of apple snails while the new proposal examined their impacts. There would be some degree of

overlapping but generally the two studies on dietary preferences complementary to each other.

12. After further discussion, Members concluded that the proposal was worthy of support with a total grant of \$477,280. The proposal would be forwarded to the ECF Committee for formal approval accordingly.

Agenda Item 3: New Applications

ECF Project 5/2006 Mutagenicity of airborne particulates in mosquito coil smoke
[ECF Paper 04/2007-08]

13. Miss Florence Chan briefed Members on the proposal and the assessments given by various government departments and two external assessors as summarized in Paper 04/2007-08. The objectives of the proposal were to characterize the physico-chemical properties of airborne particulates from burning mosquito coils containing S-2 (octochlorodipropyl ether) insecticide and to evaluate the mutagenic effects of these particulates from coils with or without S-2. The total budget of the project was \$544,000 and the project was expected to last for 24 months. EPD considered that there was no strong reason to support the project from the air pollution angle. From the pesticide regulatory angle, AFCD supported the proposal as the outcome of the project would carry useful information on the potential health risk associated with the use of such products. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Department of Health (DH) opined that the proposal would facilitate future evaluation of any registration of S-2 mosquito coils. For external assessment, Assessor 1 supported and Assessor 2 considered it useful. But Assessor 2 was doubtful about the local relevance of the project because mosquito coils containing S-2 was at present not registered to be used in Hong Kong.

14. Mr. Stephen Lai supplemented that S2 could release BCME (bis chloromethyl ether) which was classified by the World Health Organisation as a potential carcinogen to humans. As mosquito coils containing S-2 had not been registered in Hong Kong, AFCD thus warned against the use and sale of such mosquito coils in local market. He considered that the research findings would

provide useful reference on evaluation of any registration of coil containing S2.

15. Note

16. Note

17. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the proposal should not be supported.

ECF Project 15/2006 GIS-based structural analysis for mapping Hong Kong traffic: accidents, pollution and volume

[ECF Paper 15/2007-08]

18. Miss Florence Chan briefed Members on the proposal and the assessments given by EPD and the Transport Department (TD) as summarized in Paper 05/2007-08. The objectives of the proposal were to develop the concepts of flow dimension and capacity, and apply the concepts to Hong Kong street networks; to verify the structural analysis model using both Hong Kong and London traffic datasets; and to map Hong Kong traffic accidents, pollution and volume using both 2D and 3D visualizations. The total budget of the project was \$321,800 but the PI asked for funding of \$150,000 and the project was expected to last for 24 months. Both EPD and TD did not support the proposal. EPD had reservation on supporting the project as only very minor part of the proposal was related to environment. TD considered it innovative but a bit immature to apply GIS in predicting traffic flow and accidents.

19. Note

20. After further discussion, the Chairman concluded that the proposal should not be supported.

ECF Project 13/2006 Sustainable energy: Survey on electricity consumption habits and energy saving perception of Hong Kong residential users

[ECF Paper 06/2007-08]

21. Miss Florence Chan briefed Members on the proposal and the assessments given by the Electrical & Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) as summarized in Paper 06/2007-08. The objectives of the project were to investigate the awareness and behaviour pattern of Hong Kong residential users towards energy consumption by means of telephone interview; and to promote and examine possible ways of energy saving which in turn reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. The funding requested by the project was \$142,960 and the project was expected to last for 6 months. EMSD considered it worthy of support as the survey may provide useful information which can be used as reference materials to promote energy efficiency in the domestic sector. However, the success of the project and the practicality of the survey result would hinge on careful drafting of the questions.

22. Note

23. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the proposal should be supported in principle but the PI should discuss with EMSD and EPD on the content of the survey to ensure that the information gathered would be useful reference materials for the promotion of energy efficiency.

ECF Project 12/2006 Development of modular systems for green roofs and living walls in Hong Kong

[ECF Paper 07/2007-08]

24. As the PI of this application also came from the same university of which the Chairman was a Court member, Miss Florence Chan chaired this part of the meeting. Dr Kenneth Leung also declared interest and left the meeting.

25. Miss Florence Chan briefed Members on the project proposal and the assessments given by the EMSD, the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and two external assessors as summarized in Paper 07/2007-08. The objectives of the proposal were to develop light weight modular systems for green roofs and living walls; to evaluate their thermal and environmental effects as well as social and economic impacts; and to demonstrate and promote green roof research,

education and technology transfer. The funding requested by this project was \$289,040 and the project was expected to last for 13 months. EMSD supported the project as it would help improve the environment and conserve natural resources. ArchSD supported the proposal as the research could contribute positively to satisfy the diverse design and environmental requirements in building projects and the deliverables carry practical values. Both external assessors also supported the project proposal. The Secretariat remarked that the proposed budget included a sum of \$43,000 being the overhead administrative cost which should not be supported in accordance with the “Guide to Application for the Fund”. A representative of the project team then joined the meeting to answer questions in relation to the proposal.

26. Note

27. Note

28. After discussion, Members concluded that the proposal was worthy of support with a total grant of \$246,040 as the proposed sum of \$43,000 overhead administrative cost was not supported. The proposal would be forwarded to the ECF Committee for formal approval accordingly.

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Business

29. Miss Florence CHAN reported to the Committee a withdrawn application namely “Investigation of photochemical air pollution in Hong Kong”. The proposal was submitted by the City University of Hong Kong. The PI applied for \$1.2 million to conduct a 3 year study on the peroxyacetyl nitrate (PAN), a major secondary pollutant formed by photochemical reaction of hydrocarbons with nitrogen oxides. In response to an external assessor’s remark that there is one PAN analyser in one local university, the PI withdrew the proposal.

Agenda Item 5: Date of Next Meeting

30. The Secretariat would inform Members of the date of the next meeting in due course.

31. The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Secretariat, ECF Research Projects Vetting Sub-committee

June 2007

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.”