環境及自然保育基金
ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION FUND

Environment and Conservation Fund Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects

Briefing Session for the Applications Invitation of 2023-24

14 July 2023

Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects

Applications will be invited once a year.
Now calling for 2023-24 applications.

29.6.2023

Application Period
Start Date

14.7.2023

Briefing

28.8.2023

Application Period
Deadline

The Briefing Session will cover:

1. Welcoming Remarks

2. Introduction of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) and Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference (RTDC) Projects

3. Priority Research Topics

4. Notes on Application

5. Vetting Process and Criteria

6. General Requirements of Projects and Disbursement of Funds

1. Welcoming Remarks

Prof Jimmy Chi Hung FUNG
Chairman
ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee

2. Introduction of
Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) and Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference (RTDC) Projects

Introduction of ECF

Established in 1994 to support green projects and activities.

Three Major Funding Schemes/Programme

Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects
[**Now open for application**]

Environmental Education and Community Action Projects

Community Waste Reduction Projects

Safeguarding National Security

Applicant organisations are required to sign an agreement on safeguarding national security by completing **Appendix I of the Application Form** to confirm that they have acknowledged and undertaken to comply with the following clauses:

– The Government reserves the right to disqualify the recipient organisation on the grounds that it has engaged, is engaging, or is reasonably believed to have engaged or be engaging in acts or activities that are likely to cause or constitute the occurrence of offences endangering national security;

– or otherwise the exclusion of the organisation from future applications is necessary in the interest of national security, or is necessary to protect the public interest of Hong Kong, public morals, public order or public safety.

Safeguarding National Security

Even after the application is approved, the Government may immediately withdraw or cancel the relevant approval upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

– the organisation has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;

– the continued engagement of the organisation or the continued implementation of the ECF project is contrary to the interest of national security; or

– the Government reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur.

Safeguarding National Security

An application will be considered **invalid** if the **Appendix I of the Application Form** is not duly signed and submitted by the applicant organisation.

Application proposals with elements of national education and patriotism may be comparatively meritorious.

Introduction of RTDC Projects

▶ Local **non-profit making organisations** are eligible to apply.

Local tax-exempt charities	**Local registered and non-profit-making organisations**

Introduction of RTDC Projects

Research and Technology Demonstration Projects

- Contribute in a **direct and practical way** towards environmental improvement and conservation of the local environment

- Promote and encourage adoption of technologies by different sectors in Hong Kong

Conference Projects

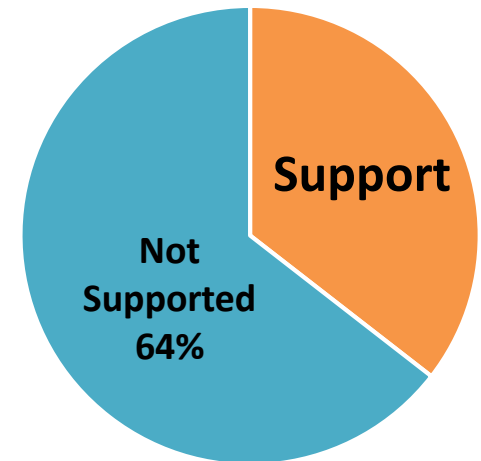- Facilitate the exchange of best practices, expertise and experience on environmental and conservation issues

- Raise Hong Kong's profile as a leading green city

2022-23 Application Results

Results of 2022 invitation exercise：

Total no. of applications received	138
No. of projects supported	49
No. of projects not supported	89
Approved amount	$35M

Support

Not Supported 64%

2023-24 Invitation for Applications

Application Period

- From 29 June to 28 August 2023 (deadline at 6 p.m.)

Budget

- $35 million in total, including $3.5 million for Conference projects

Notification of Results

- By February 2024 (tentative)

3. Priority Research Topics

Priority Research Topics

– Listed in Appendix II of the Guide to Application

Air Quality

Biodiversity and Conservation

Climate Change – Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience

Construction Noise – Prevention and Mitigation

Waste Management, Reduction and Recycling

Water Quality and Water Pollution

Air Quality

- Development and application of technologies for Greenhouse gas monitoring
- Development and application of technologies for monitoring and improving indoor air quality
- Fixed bridge based automatic sniffing system for monitoring real-time emissions from vessels and thereby analysing the sulphur content of marine fuel used
- Air quality monitoring and emission measurements using sensor technology
- VOCs monitoring technology
- Development of electric vehicle charging technology

Biodiversity and Conservation

- Regional environmental management planning (REMP) for maintaining marine or terrestrial ecosystem balances
- Urban biodiversity and application of innovative nature-based solutions in urban and coastal environments
- Baseline studies on understudied taxa groups of potential conservation concern; studies on threatened/ecologically important/keystone species and their conservation; ecological connectivity
- Wildlife management
- Invasive alien species
- Impact of climate change, human recreational activities and mercy release
- Development of new tools and/or smart technologies to identify difficult taxa groups (e.g. insects) or aid enforcement on wildlife crime
- Sustainable consumption of biological resources

Climate Change – Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience

- – Technologies for promoting cost effective applications of net-zero electricity generation, renewable energy, energy conservation and green building, green transport and waste reduction and management
- – Smart technologies which promote adoption of low-carbon living in Hong Kong
- – Development and adoption of low carbon business practices for SMEs in Hong Kong
- – Smart data management on carbon emissions
- – Innovative education technology (EdTech) to promote public education on climate change and low-carbon lifestyle or to provide capacity building
- – Technologies and smart data management for green finance

Construction Noise – Prevention and Mitigation

- Mobile construction noise barriers
- Quieter construction equipment; quieter methods for general construction, road resurfacing and building demolition works
- Domestic renovation noise reduction (e.g. quieter equipment or method to dismantle tiles)
- Traffic noise mitigation designs and measures for incorporation in residential developments
- Acoustic metamaterials and active noise cancellation devices to enhance the performance of noise mitigation design
- Light-weight and/or ventilated design for noise barriers/enclosures on existing/new road or boundary structures of building developments
- Low noise road surfacing for local roads
- Application of AI technology in sound recognition of domestic noise, domestic renovation noise and construction noise

Waste Management, Reduction and Recycling

- Reduction of disposable plastic tableware waste
- Handling and recycling mixed waste (e.g. plastic, mattress, beverage carton and construction waste)
- Economic studies on the effectiveness of Product Responsibility Scheme on waste reduction and recycling
- Environmentally-friendly packaging materials
- Reduction of printed circuit board (PCB) waste
- Optimised design for improved reparability of electrical appliances
- Green construction materials
- Food waste and yard waste management
- Animal waste treatment technologies
- Circular Economy and Reverse Logistics, application of big data and AI
- Bulk collection of the plastic beverage containers
- Innovative technology for waste composition survey
- Innovative technology for sorting of recyclables from MSW or sorting of individual recyclable types from mixed recyclables
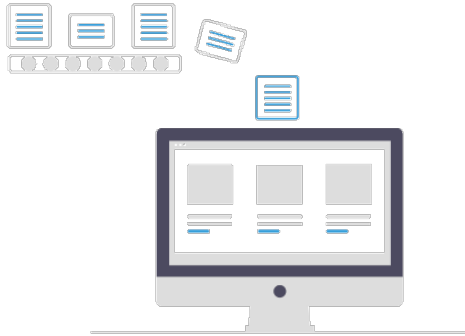
Water Quality and Water Pollution

- Innovative technology for on-site sewage treatment in remote area
- Innovative techniques for use in sewer condition survey and rehabilitation
- Smart technologies for 3D visualization and asset management of underground sewerage and storm-drain networks
- Innovative technology for Leachate treatment
- Odour mitigation technology for sewerage facilities and sewage-polluted storm drains
- Advanced technology to improve sewage treatment efficiency to reduce energy consumption
- Innovative technologies for preventing microplastics from entering the water environment
- Assessment of ecological and human health risks of microplastics present in the aquatic environment
- Risk assessment of antibiotics, anti-microbial resistance and antibiotic-resistant genes in the environment and sewage
- Smart technologies in the recognition, monitoring, tracking, capturing and / or mapping of floating / marine refuse in watercourses and coastal region
- Real-time water quality measurement and analysis system for nutrient and bacteriological parameters at inland, near-shore and open waters
- Satellite imagery and remote sensing applications for wide-area marine water monitoring and environmental incident remediation
- Big data analysis of water quality, meteorological and other data for deriving deeper understanding of the correlation and dynamics of different parameters
- Innovative technologies for cost-effective removal of phosphorus in wastewater and environmental waters
- Innovative treatment technology for oily wastewater from restaurants in Hong Kong

4. Notes on Application

How to Apply?

1   Fill in an electronic application form

https://eform.one.gov.hk/form/epd006/en/

If your organisation is unable to fill in the e-form, you may choose to:

Download application form from ECF website:

www.ecf.gov.hk

2   In person or by post to the Secretariat

5/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

3   By email to the Secretariat

ecf@eeb.gov.hk

Application Deadline

Regardless of submission method, the duly completed application form with any supplementary/supporting documents **must be submitted before 6:00 pm on 28 August 2023**. For applications submitted by post, the postmark should be dated on or before 28 August 2023.

For **paper-based application forms**, both the original hard copy and **soft copy** (in "Word" format) of the application form should be submitted.

Late or incomplete applications, and applications not submitted in accordance with the format prescribed in the Guide to Application **will not be processed**.

Applicant organisations should provide the **best and fullest information** in their applications and provide **supporting documents.**

Please tick the appropriate box to check if the documents required are provided for application:
請在適當空格內填上「✓」號以查對是否已提供申請所需文件：

Applicable to all applicant organisation 適用於所有申請機構：

☐ Appendix I - Agreement on safeguarding national security
附錄 I - 維護國家安全協議確認書

☐ Duly signed Personal Data Collection Statement
已簽署的收集個人資料的聲明

☐ Original of the duly completed "Application Form" with the signature of the person-in-charge of the applicant organisation and affixed with the original seal of the organisation
已填妥的「申請表格」正本，須附有申請機構項目負責人簽署及蓋上申請機構正本印章

☐ Section B – Details of the project's methodology
乙部—項目推行方法的詳情

☐ Section B – C.V. of the Principal Investigator (limited to 2 pages)
乙部—主要研究人員的履歷（最多兩頁）

☐ Section C – Nomination of External Experts as Assessors (**only to be filled by Investigator(s) seeking a budget of over HK$500,000 for Research or Technology Demonstration Project.**)
丙部—提名外界專家擔任評審員（只供申請資助超過 50 萬元的環保研究或技術示範項目的研究人員填寫）

Applicable to first-time applicant organisation only 只適用於首次申請機構：

☐ Completed Supplementary Sheet for First-time Applicant Organisation
已填妥的首次申請機構資料補充頁

☐ A copy of the letter issued by the Inland Revenue Department on tax-exemption under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.112) (if applicable)
稅務局就根據《稅務條例》（第 112 章）第 88 條所作豁免繳稅安排發出的函件副本（如適用）

☐ A copy of the registration document of the organisation
機構的註冊文件副本

☐ A copy of the organisation's Articles of Association
機構的組織章程細則副本

❗ Please read the "Guide to Application – Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects" carefully before completing the application form

涉假文書呃環保署38萬　鮑思高青年中心前顧問被控

f 推介 0　　分享　　Tweet　　分享

被告本周五將在東區法院應訊。

廉政公署今(10日)落案起訴賽馬會長洲鮑思高青年中心前顧問，控告他涉嫌就一個節能項目欺詐及使用虛假文書，因而從該青年中心及環境保護署轄下一個基金取得共逾38萬港元款項。被告將於本周五(12日)在東區裁判法院應訊，以待案件轉介區域法院答辯。

假文書呃環保署3.64萬津貼 前顧問認罪囚5個月

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擁有博士學歷的賽馬會長洲鮑思高青年中心前環境項目顧問，2012至14年故意向環保署和青年中心作虛假陳述，和隱瞞自己初創環保工程承辦公司的幕後負責人的身份，獲得3.64萬元的工程項目津貼。前顧問今在區域法院承認2項欺詐，另外2項使用虛假文書則由法庭存檔。法官斥被告知法犯法，最終被告雖損手而回，但仍非抗辯理由。法官念及他多年在環保界的貢獻，終判他入獄5個月。

前顧問今在區域法院承認2項欺詐，另外2項使用虛假文書則由法庭存檔。 資料圖片

Points to be Observed

–**Project duration**: normally not more than 3 years

–**No. of application:** each Principal Investigator (**PI**) can submit **ONE** application for research or technology demonstration (RTD) project and **ONE** application for conference project

–**No. of approved projects:** each PI can concurrently hold **TWO** ongoing RTD projects and **ONE** ongoing conference project

Points to be Observed

– **Applications** from Universities/THEi must be submitted **through the respective Research Offices (ROs)**

– ROs must confirm **the eligibility of the PIs and the need to include Co-Investigator(s)**(*see section 5.2.1.2 of the Guide to Application*)

– If the current appointment of the PI cannot cover the whole project period, the project must include at least one eligible Co-Investigator from the same institution proper.

Project Proposal

Demonstrable Needs of the Project
(Section 5.2.2.10 of the Guide to Application)

– List out the innovative element(s) of the proposed project and difference(s) compared to similar projects (e.g. research method, methodology, target group, study scope, or deliverables etc.)

(e.g. the proposed project will present a novel contribution to the waste management field through integration of a new resource recovery technology for municipal solid waste in Hong Kong. No previous research has been conducted in Hong Kong).

Project Proposal

Expected Benefits of the Project
(Section 5.2.2.11 of the Guide to Application)

– Deliverables of the Project
(e.g. the effectiveness of the research prototype)

– Dissemination and/or knowledge and technology transfer
(e.g. the number of papers to be submitted or presented; dissemination of the project results through e-newsletters, websites, exhibitions, online seminars/workshops, etc.; the number of media coverage on the programmes; and the technologies transferred to stakeholders)

Project Proposal

Overall Effectiveness of the Project
(Section 5.2.2.12 of the Guide to Application)
(For Research and Technology Demonstration Projects)

– State how the deliverables of the project can be applied to environmental improvement and conservation of the local environment (including its direct and indirect contributions/merits)

(e.g. the deliverables of the project can be directly applied to the reduction in exhaust emissions from local restaurants, which can also improve the health of citizens)

– State how the project make contribution(s) to academic advancement in the field of environmental improvement and conservation

(e.g. the project could establish a foundation for the development of know-how for future studies on alternatives to microplastics, thereby driving further technological advancement)

Project Proposal

Overall Effectiveness of the Project
(Section 5.2.2.12 of the Guide to Application)
(For Conference Projects)

– State how the project facilitates the exchange of practices, expertise and experience on environmental protection and nature conservation among relevant practitioners, academia and professionals

(e.g. the conference project will provide both face-to-face and online platform for experts from different countries to provide insights and exchange technologies on waste management in Hong Kong. Panel discussions will also be conducted to understand the waste management strategies of various countries)

Project Proposal

Post-implementation Development
(Section 5.2.2.13 of the Guide to Application)

– Specify whether there is a possibility that the funded project output may generate significant income after project completion. If so,

- – confirm the project is not commissioned by a commercial body to conduct the study or part of the study for deriving an income and no such agreement has been signed with any commercial body; and
- – confirm and justify how the proposed project could meet the non-profit making nature and satisfy the related requirements as prescribed in the Guide of Application.

Budget of the Project

(Section 5.2.2.14 of the Guide to Application)

– Funding for publication of results will normally **not be supported**;
– Funding for patent fees will normally **not be supported**;
– Funding for production of printed promotion materials will **not be supported**; and
– The grant shall **not be used as** payments to any individual member of the public as **a financial reward** for participation in the activities associated with the project.

Nomination of External Experts as Assessors

(Section 5.2.3 of the Guide to Application)

For applications seeking a budget of over **HK$500,000**, it is required to nominate **five** external experts as assessors in the proposal.

Declare any past and present relationships between the Investigator(s) (i.e. the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator(s)) and the nominated external assessors. **Each Investigator should complete a separate form** to indicate, for each external assessor, the nature of the relationship and provide details

5. Vetting Process and Criteria

Competition-based Vetting Mechanism

- Under normal circumstances, research and/or technology demonstration project application(s) submitted by a PI who is already undertaking two approved on-going research and/or technology demonstration projects **with overlapping project periods** will not be approved.

- Any incomplete applications may lose competitiveness. The Vetting Subcommittee or the Secretariat is not obligated to contact the applicant organisations for missing information or clarification.

- Applicant organisations are welcome to call the ECF hotline at 2835 1234 if there are any questions in completing the application form.

Vetting Procedures

Applications submitted to the Secretariat

Relevant Government Departments and/or External Assessors will review the applications

The Vetting Subcommittee will consider all applications and make recommendations for endorsement by the ECF Committee

The Secretariat will notify applicant organisations of the decisions of the ECF Committee

The vetting process will normally be completed within 6 months.

Competition-based Vetting Mechanism

Corresponding to the competition-based vetting mechanism, the following marking scheme is adopted to evaluate the merits of the applications and select the most meritorious applications for the consideration of the Vetting Subcommittee.

Assessment Criteria	Scoring Weight (Percentage of Total)		
	Applied Amount of Funding		
	</=HK$500,000	>HK$500,000 </=HK$2,000,000	>HK$2,000,000
Quality of the proposed project	60%	55%	50%
Effectiveness of the proposed project	25%	25%	25%
Capability and track record of the applicant organisation*	15%	20%	25%

* Applicant organisation includes the organisation itself and/or the principal investigator/project team

If the proposed project fails to score half or more of the relevant scoring weight in any of the assessment criteria (for example, a project applying for a funding amount of HK$2,500,000 fails to get 25% of the total score in "Quality of the proposed project"), the application will not be considered for funding.

Reasons for NOT Supporting Past Applications

Not suitable for ECF

Too theoretical

Low application / practical values

No imminent need

Low project feasibility

Similar research already conducted

6. General Requirements of Projects

Reporting Requirements

Type of Report	Reporting Period and Deadline of Submission	Report Content
Progress Report	Report every six months Submit within one month after the reporting period	Report progress, performance and financial position (statement of accounts) of the project in phase
Completion Report	Report the whole project period Submit within two month after project completion	Report outcome(s) (including comparison with original target(s)) and financial position (statement of accounts) of the project, and submit along with the auditor's report(s) with reasonable assurance, if applicable.

! Recipient organisation may be required to report project outputs regularly via smart electronic means.

Statement of Accounts and Auditing Requirements

For the 22 degree-awarding higher education institutions in Hong Kong, regardless of the amount of the grant involved in a project, a statement of accounts certified by the finance office of the university is acceptable, and there is no need to follow the auditing requirements.

Audited statement of accounts must be submitted together with the completion report.

Recipient organisations should take note of and ensure that the auditors engaged by them to perform the reasonable assurance audit must comply with the requirements provided in the "Notes for Auditors of Recipient Organisations" and "Sample Auditor's Report" in **Appendices VII** and **VIII** respectively of Guide to Application.

Auditing Requirements

Funding Amount	Statement of Accounts	Audited Statement of Accounts	Supporting documents of the expenses
Below HK$150K	✅	❌	✅
HK$150K or above and below HK$300K	✅	Recipient organisation may opt to submit: 1. Audited statement of accounts (no need to attach supporting documents of the expenses), OR 2. Non-audited statement of accounts (need to attach supporting documents of the expenses).	
HK$300K or above	✅	✅ *For projects lasting more than 18 months, organisations are required to submit **once every 12 months**.	❌

Publicity of Project

- To acknowledge the source of funding, the ECF logo should be clearly marked on all publications and publicity materials related to the project and project activities.

- Information of the projects may be uploaded to the websites of ECF or EPD for public access.

Disbursement of Funds

Criteria for disbursement of funds	Estimated % of Disbursement	Remarks
Upon signing of the funding agreement and submission of the completed auditor undertaking form (if applicable).	maximum 50%	Depends on the content of implementation plan.
Upon submission of a progress report with financial position and satisfactory performance.	Further disbursement	Depends on the financial position and the progress of the project.
Upon submission of completion report with a statement of accounts and auditor's report (if applicable) and subject to endorsement by the Vetting Subcommittee.	10%	Depends on the actual expenditure.

Disbursement of Funds

- The final amount of funding depends on the content of individual application.

- Funding cap will be set for individual budget items (such as staff cost for research supporting staff and attendance of overseas conferences).

- Flexible use of approved funds among budget items under the same category may be allowed. The arrangement will be detailed in the Approval Letter.

- Requests for additional funding after project approval will normally not be considered.

Reduction of the amount of funding disbursement

In the case of unsatisfactory performance or for any reason that the recipient organisation is unable to attain the project targets with no reasonable justification, the Vetting Subcommittee reserves the right to reduce the amount of the funding disbursement based on the performance of the recipient organisation, by taking into account of the percentage of the quantifiable targets achieved and/or other factors which deemed relevant.

Suspension/Termination of Funding Support

- the project does not commence within one year of the approval of the grant and no reasonable explanation has been given;

- the Vetting Subcommittee considers that the project has not progressed satisfactorily and no reasonable explanation has been given;

- the principal investigator 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 Subcommittee to take over the role of principal investigator;

- the recipient organisation fails to submit the required report and/or achieve the deliverables by the deadline stipulated;

- the recipient organisation fails to make proper acknowledgment of the ECF; or

- the recipient organisation fails to comply with the funding conditions as set out in this Guide and the approval letter and no reasonable explanation has been given.

Suspension/Termination of Funding Support

▸ The Government may immediately terminate any agreement with the organisation upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

  o the organisation has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;

  o the continued engagement of the organisation or the continued implementation of the ECF project is contrary to the interest of national security; or

  o the Government reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur.

Enquiries

ECF Research Projects Vetting Subcommittee Secretariat

2835 1234

ecf@eeb.gov.hk

http://www.ecf.gov.hk