

**Advisory Council on the Environment
Waste Management Subcommittee**

Notes of the 25th Meeting Held on 26 January 2010

Present

Prof. Wong Ming-hung (Chairman)
Mr. Edwin Lau
Mr. Tsang Kam-lam
Dr. Yau Wing-kwong
Dr. Man Chi-sum
Mr. Samson Lai (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies

Mr. Oscar Chow
Mr. Simon Wong

In Attendance

Mr. Albert Lam	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Ms. Margaret Hsia	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Management Policy)
Mr. Vincent Tang	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Nature Conservation and Infrastructure Planning)
Mr. PH Lui	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Infrastructure Planning)
Mr. TK Cheng	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Infrastructure Planning)1
Dr. Derek Wong	Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Management Policy Division)1
Ms. Echo Leong	Consultant, AECOM Asia Company Limited
Dr. Keith Lai	Consultant, AECOM Asia Company Limited

Action

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. The draft minutes of the 24th meeting held on 27 November 2009 were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

2. There was no matter arising from the last meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Integrated Waste Management Facilities – Sorting and Recycling Plant (Paper WMSC 01/10)

3. The Chairman recapped that the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) discussed the Integrated Waste Management Facilities (IWMF) at its meeting on 14 December 2009 and asked the Subcommittee to examine the proposed sorting and recycling plant in a greater detail.
4. Mr. Vincent Tang gave a brief introduction to Members on the Government's proposal presented to the ACE. Upon his invitation, Ms Echo Leong presented the various sorting and recycling technologies, including the latest developments in their application internationally and the pros and cons for adoption in Hong Kong.
5. A Member enquired about the marketability of the products recovered from the sorting and recycling plant. Ms. Echo Leong explained that by way of mechanical treatment, the plant could recover metals which carried good commercial value. Other recyclables such as paper and plastics could also be sold to recycling trade. Further biological treatment might generate Refuse Derived Fuel or biogas which could be fed into the incinerator as fuel or used for energy generation.
6. Noting that the plastic recyclables recovered from mixed waste would normally be contaminated, a Member enquired whether such plastic recyclables could be diverted from feeding into the incinerator. Ms Echo Leong responded that cleaning of the recyclables was technically feasible but such processes might not be commercially sound.

7. The Chairman remarked that a sorting and recycling plant might not be necessary if there were effective source separation. Mr. Vincent Tang explained that it was the recommendation of both the Advisory Group (AG) and the ACE to adopt a multi-technology approach to tackle the municipal solid waste (MSW) problem in Hong Kong; such recommendation was enshrined in the Government's Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014). A multi-technology approach carried its case since thorough source separation was not widely practiced in Hong Kong. Mr. Albert Lam added that a sorting and recycling plant could also demonstrate to the public that the Government made every effort in recovering useful materials as far as possible before waste was incinerated or landfilled.
8. A Member said that the objective of including a non-incineration element in the IWMPF project should be carefully considered and conveyed to the public. There should not be misunderstanding that a viable alternative was available to fully replace incineration as the core technology in Hong Kong, although either the Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT) or the Mechanical Treatment (MT) technologies were well-proven internationally.
9. The meeting went on discussing the MBT option. Ms Echo Leong said that MBT would generally require more land, about 2-3 times of the footprint required by the incinerator for the treatment of the same amount of waste. Except the recyclables, the availability of suitable outlets for the other products coming from the MBT process such as the low quality compost or refuse derived fuel was also a concern. The Chairman agreed, citing the experience from the former composting plant in Chai Wan.
10. A Member asked whether the biological process could help reduce the fuel required for the incineration process thereby creating a justification for adopting the technology. Mr. PH Lui and Ms Echo Leong both explained that there would not be any measurable benefit in this aspect.

11. A Member asked whether the sorted materials after mechanical process could be delivered to the future organic waste treatment facilities in Siu Ho Wan for further treatment. Mr. PH Lui said that the treatment facilities in Siu Ho Wan were intended for treatment of source-separated food waste to produce good quality compost, hence it would not be suitable for treating mixed waste after mechanical processing which might contain some contaminants.
12. After further deliberation, the Subcommittee reached the consensus that there was no strong justifications in support of adopting the MBT technology in the context of Hong Kong.
13. As to whether the MT technology should be adopted, members generally indicated support for the reason that it might reinforce the Government's commitment to minimize the use of incineration and landfilling in our MSW management.
14. In response to a Member, Ms. Echo Leong explained that the land requirements under MT and MBT would be similar. On whether the treatment capacity could be scaled up given that biological treatment would no longer be pursued, Mr. Albert Lam said that it would be appropriate to target at the original capacity of 200 tonnes per day which should be prudent for the facility to provide local experience and information for further consideration of applying non-incineration technology for MSW management in Hong Kong. A Member agreed. He noted that a small-scale facility was also in line with the recommendation of the ACE delegation.
15. The Chairman concluded that incorporating a MT plant in the IWTF would be appropriate. He undertook to report to the ACE at its next meeting on 8 February 2010. He added debris, dust and odour problems were commonly found during the operation of the MT plant for mixed MSW. While the Subcommittee supported a multi-technology approach, the Government should carry out detailed assessment with a view to properly managing

such problems.

[Post-meeting Notes: In the absence of and upon nomination by the Chairman, another member reported the deliberation to the ACE on 8 February 2010.]

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Business

Paperless Meeting

16. The Chairman recapped that at its meeting on 12 January 2010, the ACE agreed to undertake a trial for conducting paperless meetings at this subcommittee. He invited Members to provide any views so that EPD might take into account in the preparation work.

Presentation by Consultants

17. A Member said that presentations by consultants provided useful background information in understanding the subjects being deliberated. Considerations could be given to allowing access to the presentations by the public which might facilitate public engagement. After listening members' initial views, the Chairman said that the matter could be further explored taking into account comments from other ACE members.

MSW Charging

18. In response to an enquiry from a Member, Mr. Albert Lam advised that the baseline study on commercial & industrial establishments under the MSW charging was close to completion. Findings would be presented to the Subcommittee once available.

Agenda Item 5: Date of Next Meeting

19. The Secretariat would contact individual member shortly to arrange the next meeting.

**ACE Waste Management Subcommittee
Secretariat
March 2010**