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For discussion

**Funding for a Public Education Programme under the
“Policy Framework for the Management of
Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)”**

Purpose

This paper seeks Members’ support for the allocation of \$10 million from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) to implement a public education programme under the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)”. Members are also invited to advise on the funding guidelines and the vetting mechanism for the projects under the public education programme, as set out in paragraphs 7 to 20.

Background

2. Hong Kong has an imminent solid waste problem. At present, we rely solely on our landfills to dispose of our waste. Although we are recovering 43% of our waste for recycling, our landfills will be full in five to nine years if we do not substantially reduce the amount of waste we dispose of. To address the waste problem in a holistic manner, the Government published “A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” in December 2005, which set out a comprehensive strategy to tackle our waste problem head on.

3. The comprehensive strategy under the Policy Framework consists of a series of policy initiatives that enshrine the principle of “polluter pays” and the element of “responsibility”. In particular, the strategy is underpinned by waste charging, producer responsibility schemes and landfill disposal bans, which should generate synergic effect and help achieve significant waste reduction.

4. To successfully implement the proposed policy initiatives, the full support and participation of the community is crucial. The public must recognize the problem and be part of the solution. All members of the community must together make a right choice for sustainable living. A long-term and community-wide education programme will play a significant role in reinforcing the importance of waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling among community members.

5. The proposed policy initiatives under the Policy Framework are to be implemented under a well-defined timetable. It is imperative that the public education programme should closely tie in with the timetable. Through the timely and concerted efforts of both the Government and the non-government organizations, we hope to secure maximum public support to our proposed policy initiatives and encourage actual public participation.

6. Three main types of projects are currently funded by the ECF, namely (i) environmental research and technology demonstration projects, (ii) community waste recovery projects, and (iii) environmental education and community action (EE & CA) projects. The ECF has also funded the implementation of three pilot conservation management agreement projects. We note that the EE & CA projects are especially for providing funding support for educational activities in relation to environmental and conservation matter. Previous funded activities have covered subjects, such as conservation, improvement in air quality, reduction in noise pollution, improvement in water quality, sustainable use of energy, minimization of waste generation and promotion of the 3R's (reduce, re-use and recycle) concept. While the scope covered by EE & CA projects is far-ranging, these activities may not closely tie in with the policy initiatives and the timetable under the Policy Framework. The activities are usually district-based and in relatively small scale.

Public Education Programme

Objective

7. We propose to seek dedicated funding of \$10 million from the ECF to support a public education (PE) programme under the Policy Framework. The PE programme allows local non-profit-making organizations to organize public education activities that are in support of the policy initiatives in the Policy Framework. The activities under the PE programme should be long-term and

community-wide in nature, with a view to enhancing public's awareness on waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling. We hope that the activities under the PE programme could generate a comprehensive, concerted and sustained publicity effect to aid the implementation of the proposed policy initiatives under the Policy Framework.

Administration

8. Taking into account the nature of the PE programme for the Policy Framework, we propose that the administration of the PE programme should be undertaken by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). The succinct points of the Guide to Application (**Annex**) and the vetting mechanism are set out below.

Eligibility of the applicant

9. As set out in the Guide to Application, local non-profit making organizations (e.g. non-government organizations, community bodies, green groups) are eligible to apply for funding.

10. The PE programme would only consider proposals, which are in support of the policy initiatives under the Policy Framework. The Government will identify the target policy initiatives at least once a year and openly invite proposals. The Advisory Council on the Environment or its Waste Management Subcommittee could offer its views on the selection of target policy initiatives as appropriate.

Funding Limit

11. It is proposed that the funding limit of each project should not exceed HK\$500,000. Funds may be granted for full or partial support of projects.

Duration of Project

12. The proposed PE programme should last between 12 and 24 months so that they should run long enough to provide publicity support for the implementation of the target policy initiatives.

Budget Guidelines

Staff Cost

13. No funding support will be given for additional supervisory/administrative staff. However, funding for part-time project coordinators/assistants may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but the total amount for covering the cost of part-time project coordinators/assistants should not exceed 35% of the total approved budget or the total actual expenditure, whichever is less. Direct labour cost (for hiring of part-time workers) involved in conducting public education or related activities may only be supported with full justification.

Equipment and Capital Items

14. Funding for equipment/capital items may be granted if the equipment/capital item is essential for implementation of the programme, and that the recipient organization will bear all subsequent recurrent costs, including maintenance costs of the equipment/capital items. The title of equipment/capital items will remain with the Government.

Publicity

15. In order to fit with the public education works, funding for publicity items would be supported and is capped at 40% of the approved total budget.

Revenue

16. Revenue generated from the project should normally be deducted from the amount of grant applied for.

Monitoring

17. Applicants will be required to set out quantifiable targets in their funding applications as far as practicable. Successful applicants need to submit progress reports with information on the financial position once every three months to the EPD. Like the EE & CA projects, the recipient organizations are requested to conduct surveys with their participants in each sub-programme with a view to better assessing the effectiveness of the projects. EPD may carry out

visits or surprise checks to examine the progress and achievements of the projects. Recipient organizations will be required to submit a completion report within two months after project completion.

Budget Control

18. Recipient organizations will be required to provide audited statements of account of projects with approved funding of \$150,000 or above. For other approved projects, the grant received must be shown in a complete statement of accounts together with the original copy of invoices and receipts. For projects lasting more than 18 months, the recipient organizations are also required to submit a statement of account once every 12 months and within 2 months of completion of the project.

Approval on changes to project proposals

19. Any major changes to the project must be approved by EPD in consultation with the ECF Committee.

Vetting Mechanism

20. The Administration will play a leading role in introducing and implementing policy initiatives, and hence the relevant PE programme. We propose that the applications should be vetted by EPD in consultation with other relevant government departments and the Advisory Council on the Environment or its Waste Management Subcommittee as appropriate. EPD would then submit the recommendations to the ECF Committee for endorsement. We plan to complete the vetting process and inform applicants of the results within six months from the end of the application period.

Advice Sought

21. Members are invited to support the allocation of \$10 million from the ECF for implementing a public education programme under the Policy Framework and advise on the funding guidelines and the vetting mechanism for the projects under the public education programme.

Environmental Protection Department
September 2006