

**COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION & PUBLICITY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Sustainable Development Fund
Fourteenth Round of Applications**

Purpose

This paper invites Members' views on various issues related to the launching of the 14th round of applications under the Sustainable Development Fund ("SDF") subsequent to the meeting held on 12 December 2019 (EPSC Paper No. 01/19 at **Annex I**)¹.

Recommendations

2. Members are invited to:
 - (a) note the background and current status of SDF (paragraphs 3 and 4);
 - (b) comment on the proposed priority area for the 14th round of SDF applications (paragraphs 5 and 6); and
 - (c) comment on the updated arrangements for the launch, detailed processing procedures and assessment criteria for the 14th round of SDF applications (paragraphs 7 to 10).

Background

3. The SDF was established in 2003 with a sum of \$100 million to provide financial support for initiatives that will help enhance public awareness of sustainable development ("SD") and encourage sustainable practices in Hong Kong. Applications for grants from the SDF will be considered by the

¹ At the said meeting, Members agreed the amendments to the application guidelines among other issues. Further minor amendments are made to incorporate the Department of Justice's comments and regular updates.

Education and Publicity Sub-committee (“EPSC”) (and also the Council for Sustainable Development (“SDC”) if the amount applied for is \$500,000 or above) which will make recommendations to the Government on whether to approve the applications.

4. Groups such as non-governmental and community organisations, academic and research institutes and schools, as well as individuals aged 18 or above who are ordinarily residents in Hong Kong are eligible to apply for funding². So far, a total of 74 projects have been approved under the SDF involving total grants of about \$76 million. The majority of the approved projects are educational to promote public awareness of sustainability issues, e.g. solid waste reduction, energy saving, sustainable consumption of biological resources, etc. A breakdown of the number of projects approved and grants awarded in each round is at **Annex I**. Of the 74 approved projects, 67 of them have been completed and two have been withdrawn.

Potential Priority Areas

5. As agreed at the said meeting, proposals which can help carry forward the recommendations made by the SDC in the Public Engagement (“PE”) on Long-term Decarbonisation Strategy should receive particular consideration. We suggest that priority should be given to those proposals that aim to actively promote a low-carbon lifestyle to the general public, with a view to instigating behavioural changes. We support publicity and education programmes for households, small and medium enterprises and youth in the community for inducing behavioural changes in aspects of low-carbon living particularly focusing on **energy saving and waste reduction and recycling**. This recommendation is appropriate for relevant organisations to carry out initiatives which could meet the education and promotion objectives of the SDF³, with wider public participation and long-term impact, and benefit the community as a whole. It also reflects the focus of SDC’s work. In response to the SDC Report on the aforementioned PE, the Government announced in the 2020 Policy Address that the HKSAR will strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. To this end, the Government has just announced in October 2021 the Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan 2050 to set out more proactive strategies and measures on reducing carbon emissions, which echoes that the Government,

² SDF Grantees comprise a wide variety of organisations including non-governmental and community organisations, concern groups, universities and research institutes, public bodies, chambers of commerce, etc. and individuals.

³ In general, the applications for SDF should meet the SDF objectives, integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects of SD, provide benefits to the community as a whole and be non-profit making in nature. Specifically, according to the existing SDF Application Guidelines, capital items in the budget for projects will not normally be considered.

business sectors, schools and non-governmental organisations must work together in promoting and encouraging the public to adopt and practise a low-carbon lifestyle.

6. Notwithstanding the above priority area, applications that are generally consistent with the overall objectives of SDF would also be welcome.

Updated Arrangements for the Launch and Detailed Processing Procedures

7. To synchronise with the announcement of the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, we aim to launch the 14th round of SDF applications by end October 2021. In order to expedite the whole process, the application period will be shortened from three months to two months. A press release will be issued and a briefing session will be held⁴ to brief potential applicants on details of the SDF and points to note in preparing their applications. While the approved grant amounts for the past SDF projects range from about \$0.11 million to \$1.99 million, applications of large-scale projects are also welcome as they could involve wider public participation.

8. In anticipation of more and larger-scale projects and with a view to shortening the processing time, the applications could be processed in two batches, with applications for large-scale projects (project applying for \$1.5 million funding or above) being handled first followed by the other applications as necessary. It is proposed to streamline the detailed processing procedures as endorsed at the said meeting to adopt a two-tier vetting mechanism (revision at **Annex II**), in that the EPSC will directly consider all applications without Vetting Sub-groups and the SDC will consider applications for \$500,000 or above. This streamlined approach is in line with the application guidelines endorsed at the said meeting. Taking into account the time for internal screening by the Secretariat, Members will be consulted on the applications by batches and we aim to complete the whole exercise within six months after the application period.

Assessment Criteria

9. To facilitate the vetting process, we recommend two sets of the assessment criteria for the new round to be adopted as follows (one for general projects and another for low-carbon lifestyle promotion projects, and an elaboration of the criteria is set out at **Annex III**):

⁴ It will be conducted online as necessary in response to the pandemic situation.

- (a) Programme
- (b) Project Management Capability
- (c) Budgetary Management

10. We consider that these criteria cover all the factors that should be taken into account in assessing the applications and the weightings accorded to the criteria reasonably reflect a proper balance amongst them.

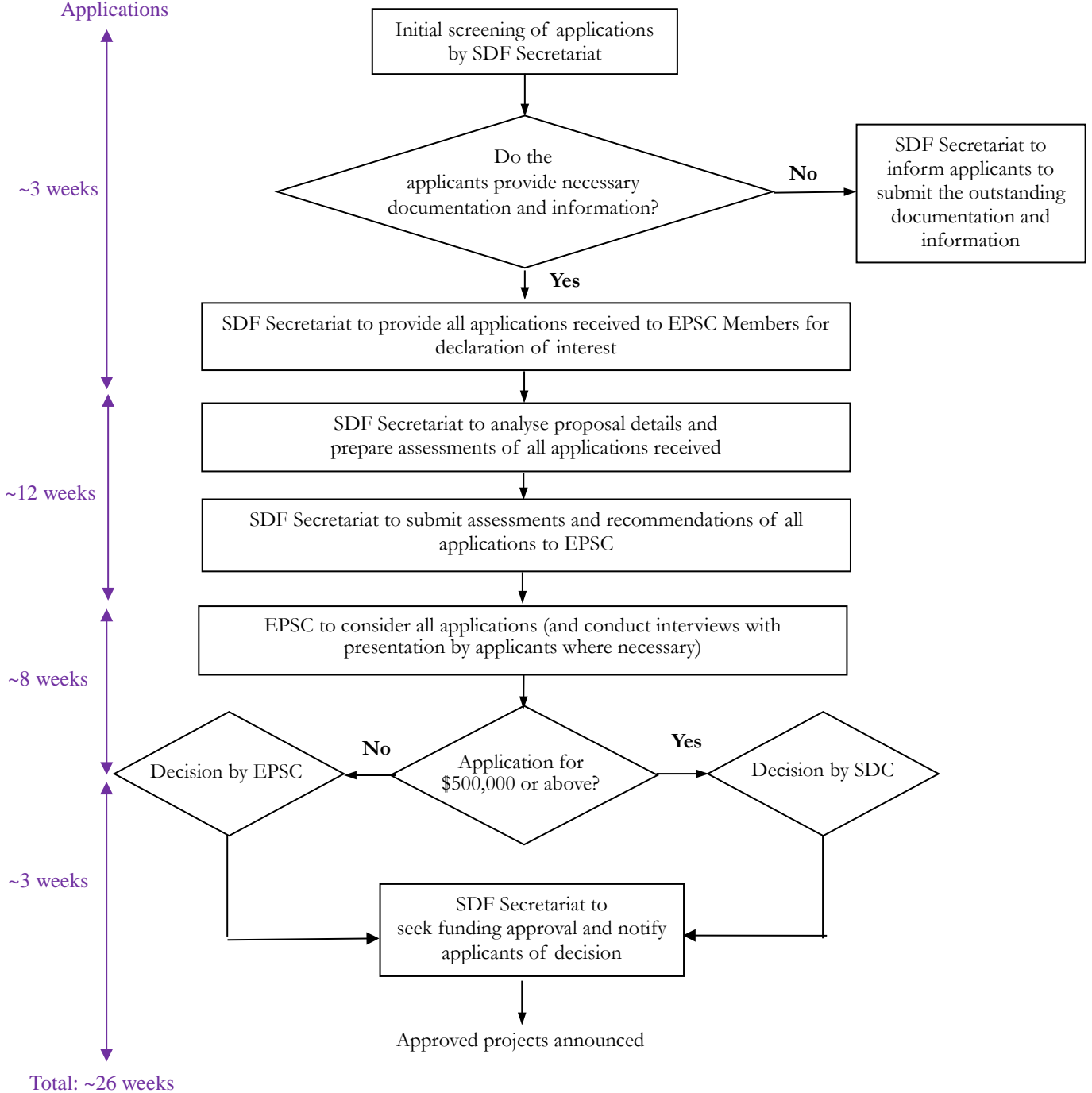
Advice sought

11. Members are invited to advise if the proposals as set out in paragraphs 5 to 10 above are in order.

**Council Secretariat
October 2021**

Flowchart on the Procedures of Processing SDF Applications

Estimated Timeframe for Processing all SDF Applications



**Proposed Assessment Criteria for
Sustainable Development Fund (“SDF”) Applications
(for General Projects)**

(a) Programme (65%)

- (i) Programme Approach: A focused project which fully meets the theme and objectives.
- (ii) Creativity: A creative project to effectively instil behavioural changes towards a green lifestyle.
- (iii) Sustainability: Programmes of the project can bring about positive impact in the long run and can be self-sustained.
- (iv) Measurable Results: The project has very clear indicators for measuring output and outcome, and can maximize outreach rate.

(b) Project Management Capability (30%)

- (i) Track Record: For an applicant which has past experience in community project implementation, its track record will be taken into consideration.
- (ii) Ability to Manage Application Procedures: The applicant presents strong ability to manage the application procedures.
- (iii) Project Planning: The proposed schedule of project implementation is well-planned and practicable.

(c) Budgetary Management (5%)

The proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with full justification for the expenditure items.

**Proposed Assessment Criteria for
Sustainable Development Fund (“SDF”) Applications
(for Low-carbon Lifestyle Promotion Projects)**

(a) Programme (50%)

- (i) Programme Approach: A focused project which fully meets the theme and objectives.
- (ii) Creativity: A creative project to effectively instil behavioural changes towards a green lifestyle.
- (iii) Sustainability: Programmes of the project can bring about positive impact in the long run and can be self-sustained.
- (iv) Measurable Results: The project has very clear indicators for measuring output and outcome, and can maximize outreach rate.

(b) Project Management Capability (45%)

- (i) Ability and Experience: The applicant presents strong ability and experience in mobilising large-scale community participation that can induce behavioural change effectively to tackle climate change. The track record of the applicant in relevant project implementation will also be considered.
- (ii) Business / Community / Professional Network and Knowledge: The applicant’s business, community and / or professional network and knowledge in promoting a low-carbon lifestyle are crucial.
- (iii) Project Planning: The proposed schedule of project implementation is well-planned and practicable.

(c) Budgetary Management (5%)

The proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with full justification for the expenditure items.