

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1703/05-06(04)

Ref. : CB1/PL/EA

**Paper for the Panel on Environmental Affairs
on 13 June 2006**

Proposed overseas duty visit

Purpose

This paper invites members to note the proposal for the Panel on Environmental Affairs (the Panel) to conduct an overseas duty visit to Japan, Denmark and Finland in August 2006.

Background

2. The Panel has been monitoring the progress made in the avoidance and mitigation of environmental pollution, particularly in respect of waste management, air pollution control and water quality management.

3. To tackle the increasingly serious problem of municipal solid waste, the Administration published “A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” in December 2005. It is noted that recovery, recycling and reuse are the three inter-related components to ensure success of waste reduction. The processes of collection, turning recovered materials into useable products and the sale of these products add values to the recovered materials and can create a circular economy that brings business and job opportunities. Nevertheless, the high land and labour costs as well as insufficient recyclable materials collected are the major barriers to the growth of recycling industry in Hong Kong. To this end, the Administration has earmarked Tuen Mun Area 38 for the establishment of an EcoPark to facilitate the development of the recycling industry and to complement other waste reduction initiatives, such as the proposed producer responsibility schemes. Given that the concept of EcoPark is new to Hong Kong, it will be useful for members to get first-hand information on overseas experience in the operation of similar facilities so that they can be in a better position to scrutinize future funding proposals relating to the EcoPark and monitor its progress of implementation to ensure the success of the EcoPark in Hong Kong.

4. The deteriorating air quality in Hong Kong has all along been a major public concern. As power plants make up the largest emission source within Hong Kong, there is a need to reduce emission from power plants so as to improve air quality and safeguard public health. In its Consultation Paper on Future Development of the Electricity Market in Hong Kong – Stage II Consultation published in December 2005, the Administration proposes a package of measures to reduce the emission of power plants, including the development of renewable energy (RE) in Hong Kong. According to the “Study on the Potential Application of RE in Hong Kong”, solar power, wind power, building integrated fuel cell and energy from waste are considered potentially feasible for wide-scale application in Hong Kong. However, there are institutional, economic and land constraints to be resolved before solar and wind energy systems could be employed on a large scale in Hong Kong. As the use of fossil fuels is considered not sustainable in the long run, the development of RE is necessary to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. Given that the Administration has commissioned two pilot schemes on the use of wind energy, a visit to overseas countries with successful application of RE in large scale will facilitate members’ understanding on the use of RE with a view to monitoring the formulation and implementation of policy on RE in Hong Kong.

5. The lack of a policy on total water management in Hong Kong has all along been the concern of the Panel. As it may not be sustainable in the long run for Hong Kong to rely on Dongjiang as its sole water supply, the Administration has been repeatedly urged to adopt a holistic approach in conserving and recycling the scarce clean water sources. Given that a number of pilot projects on desalination of sea water and secondary sewage treatment etc are underway in Hong Kong, overseas experience in the application of total water management will equip members with the knowledge to monitor the formulation and implementation of the relevant policy in Hong Kong.

Details of the proposed overseas duty visit

6. The Panel held two informal meetings on 11 May and 2 June 2006 to discuss the scope, timing and arrangements of the proposed duty visit.

Objective of the proposed duty visit

7. The purpose of the proposed duty visit is for members to get first-hand information on the latest development in the recycling and disposal of MSW, application of RE in wider scale, measures to improve air quality and water management in overseas countries so that they could be in a better position to advise and monitor the Government in implementing related policies and projects in future.

Proposed timing and places to be visited

8. It is agreed that the proposed duty visit will take place in August 2006 to visit Japan, Denmark and Finland. Japan is chosen because it is famous for its eco-towns and advanced technology for waste disposal. The active measures it has taken to improve air quality and reduce global warming may also be of interest to members. Denmark on the other hand is the forerunner in the application of wind power and other forms of RE while Finland tops the world in its water management.

9. A tentative itinerary for the proposed duty visit is given in **Appendix I**. The detailed programme for the visit will be drawn up in consultation with the host organizations in due course.

Funding arrangement

10. As approved by The Legislative Council Commission, each Member (except the President) is provided with an overseas duty visit (ODV) account of HK\$55,000 for the purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong organized by committees, other than the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee, of the Council during the 2004-08 term. Any expenditure incurred in one term in excess of HK\$55,000 has to be paid by the Member personally. However, if by the end of a term, there are unused balances in Members' ODV accounts, the funds available will be used to pay those Members who have expended more than their allocation, in proportion to their excess qualifying expenditure.

11. A breakdown of the estimated expenditure of the proposed visit is in **Appendix II**.

Membership of delegation

12. As agreed by the House Committee on 11 May 2001, a non-committee Member may join an overseas duty visit of a committee with the consent of the committee and the Member may use the allocation in the Member's ODV account to finance the visit. The House Committee also endorsed the following two guidelines to assist committees in determining the size and composition of a delegation for an overseas duty visit -

- (a) Members of a committee should have priority in participating in an overseas duty visit undertaken by the committee; and
- (b) A delegation undertaking an overseas duty visit should be of a manageable size in order not to create difficulties in logistical arrangements.

Advice sought

13. Members are invited to consider -
- (a) whether the tentative itinerary of the proposed duty visit in Appendix I be endorsed in principle; and
 - (b) whether non-Panel Members should be invited to join the duty visit.

Way forward

14. Subject to members' decision, the Secretariat will issue a circular to invite Panel members to indicate interest in joining the duty visit and liaise with the relevant Consulates-General and Economic and Trade Offices. The permission of the House Committee will also be sought for the Panel to conduct the overseas duty visit.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 June 2006

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Overseas duty visit

Preliminary itinerary for a 11-day programme to Japan, Denmark and Finland

(Assuming date of departure is 22 August 2006)

(as at 12 June 2006)

Routing: Hong Kong → Tokyo → Sapporo → Tokyo → Copenhagen → Helsinki → Copenhagen → Tokyo → Hong Kong

Date	Tue (22/8/2006)	Wed (23/8/2006)	Thu (24/8/2006)	Fri (25/8/2006)	Sat (26/8/2006)	Sun (27/8/2006)	Mon (28/8/2006)	Tue (29/8/2006)	Wed (30/8/2006)	Thu (31/8/2006)
<i>Tentative activities</i>	Depart for Tokyo	Tokyo Meeting with Tokyo Metropolitan Government representatives to exchange views on the measures to tackle air pollution, global warming, heat effect, management of municipal solid waste (MSW)	Tokyo Site visits to observe the implementation of measures, including separation of MSW at source, green rooftop and control of indoor room temperature etc. Visit a gasification plant	Sapporo Visit Sapporo Recycling Complex, focusing on the recycling of used tires and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles from source to end-products.		Depart for Copenhagen via Tokyo	Copenhagen Meeting with the relevant authorities and organizations to exchange views on the implementation and usage of renewable energy as well as the vision and plans which the Denmark Government may have in protecting the environment in the long run	Copenhagen Visit wind farms and solar energy facilities	Helsinki Meeting with the relevant authorities and organizations to exchange views on the implementation of the policy on total water management and the vision and plans which the Finland Government may have in protecting the environment in the long run	Helsinki Visit treatment plants for both potable water and sewage Depart for Hong Kong in the afternoon (Arriving at Hong Kong on 1 September 2006)

Panel on Environmental Affairs
Proposed overseas duty visit in August 2006
Tentative estimate of expenditure

Duration of visit : 22 August to 1 September 2006

Routing of visit : Hong Kong / Tokyo / Sapporo / Copenhagen / Helsinki / Hong Kong

Breakdown of expenses

Items	Estimated expenses HK\$ (per person)	
1. Return air ticket (by All Nippon Airways)	<i>Economy class</i> \$19,200	<i>Business class</i> \$34,600
2. Airport tax and fuel surcharge	\$2,768	
3. Hotel accommodation allowance		
(a) Japan	\$7,160	
(b) Denmark	\$1,982	
(c) Finland	\$1,618	
4. Duty visit expenses reimbursement		
(a) Japan	\$4,775	
(b) Denmark	\$1,320	
(c) Finland	\$1,620	
5. Travel insurance	\$370	
TOTAL :	\$40,813	\$56,213

Remarks :

1. Exchange rates adopted -
YEN100 = HK\$6.957
DKK1 = HK\$1.33
EUR1 = HK\$9.85
2. Other expenditure including hospitality, local group transportation, interpretation services (if required), souvenirs and incidental expenses will be charged against other votes of the Secretariat.