



Marine Ecology Enhancement Fund Management Committee (MEEF-MC) Assessment Guidelines

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to the MEEF-MC for the assessment of applications under the Marine Ecology Enhancement Fund (MEEF), to ensure a consistent approach is adopted by individual assessors and reduce the risk of improper assessment for the allocation of funds. These guidelines apply to the assessor involved in the assessment of any application. A member will be assigned as an assessor of an application by the Secretariat with reference to the member's expertise/specialist knowledge and upon consideration of any declared interest of the member in the *Declaration of Interest Form for MEEF Applications*. Names of assessor(s), information about the application and other information should not be disclosed.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 All necessary documents will be delivered to the assigned assessor by post or through email (according to the assessor's preference) through the Secretariat. A short summary of the applications will also be provided by the Secretariat for easy reference. If under any circumstances, the assessor is unable to assess the assigned application within the required timeframe, he/she should notify the Secretariat within three (3) business days through email after receiving an application for assessment. If the assessor needs any clarification and/or additional details in relation to an application, the requests should be made through the Secretariat within five (5) business days after receiving an application for assessment. The assessor should complete the assessment within thirty (30) business days or the date specified by the Secretariat, whichever is earlier.

3. Assessment Criteria

- 3.1 The MEEF has been established for the purpose of conserving marine life (particularly Chinese White Dolphins) within the Hong Kong waters and the Pearl River estuary waters for the benefit of the general public in Hong Kong by:
- (i) enhancing the carrying capacity of relevant marine parks and marine habitats in Hong Kong;
 - (ii) promoting dolphin friendly activities;
 - (iii) promoting the recovery of fisheries resources; and





- (iv) promoting scientific research (provided that the results are disseminated to the public) for the overall benefit of marine mammals, particularly Chinese White Dolphins.

3.2 The funding themes of MEEF have been reviewed and elaborated according to the approved Marine Ecology Conservation Plan (MECP), and subsequent discussion in the MEEFMC meetings. The MEEF aims to achieve its conservation goals by supporting initiatives in the following four themes:

- (i) Conservation & Enhancement of Marine Life and Habitat Theme
- (ii) Scientific Research & Studies Theme
- (iii) Education on Marine Environment & Sustainability Theme
- (iv) Cultural Heritage & Eco-tourism Theme

Please refer to the MECP for more details.

3.3 The following questions should be considered during the assessment of an application:

3.3.1 New applications (including single-year project and the first phase of multiple-year project applications):



(1) Which location is the project focused in? (Please assess based on the main theme of the application) (Score = 1 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Question 4 refer)

- (i) The project focuses on habitats or species/environmental education or eco-tourism in North Lantau or western waters of Hong Kong / the PRE. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The project partially focuses on habitats or species/environmental education or eco-tourism in North Lantau or western waters of Hong Kong/the PRE. (Score = 2)
- (iii) The project focuses on habitats or species/environmental education or eco-tourism in Hong Kong (excluding North Lantau or western waters of Hong Kong / the PRE). (Score = 1)

(2) Are there any planned benefits from the project, in particular, whether the project would contribute to enhancement, conservation and/or management improvement of marine ecology? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Questions 4, 10 and 11 refer)

- (i) The project is expected to bring notable benefits to habitat conservation and enhancement/understanding of marine ecology and provide advice for the





management of marine parks and the surrounding environment/promote environmental education and eco-tourism. (Score = 3)

(ii) The project is expected to bring moderate benefits to habitat conservation and enhancement/understanding of marine ecology and provide advice for the management of marine parks and the surrounding environment/promote environmental education and eco-tourism. (Score = 2)

(iii) The project is expected to bring minor benefits to habitat conservation and enhancement/understanding of marine ecology and provide advice for the management of marine parks and the surrounding environment/promote environmental education and eco-tourism. (Score = 1)

(iv) The project is not expected to bring any benefits to habitat conservation and enhancement/understanding of marine ecology and provide advice for the management of marine parks and the surrounding environment/promote environmental education and eco-tourism. (Score = 0)

(3) Do the key members of the project team have sufficient experience and ability in the field of the proposed project? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: Application Form - Section B, Questions 7, 8, 15 and 16 refer)

(i) The key members of project team have relevant qualification with 10 years or more working experience in the subject area. (Score = 3)

(ii) The key members of project team have relevant qualification with 5 - 10 years of working experience in the subject area. (Score = 2)

(iii) The key members of the project team have relevant qualification with less than 5 years in the subject area. (Score = 1)

(iv) The key members of project team have no relevant experience in the field of the subject area. (Score = 0)

(4) Does the project have clear and achievable goals? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: Application Form - Section B, Questions 5, 9 – 11 refer)

(i) The planning and goal setting are excellent with clear, specific and measureable goals. (Score = 3)

(ii) The planning and goal setting are reasonable, but some of the goals may be ambiguous. (Score = 2)

(iii) There are some deficiencies in the planning and goal setting, and the goals are ambiguous. (Score = 1)

(iv) Major deficiencies in the planning and goal setting are identified. (Score = 0)





(5) Does the project have a technically sound methodology? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Questions 9, 10, 11 and 17 refer)

- (i) The project has a sound methodology to enable the goals and objectives of the project to be achieved. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The methodology is reasonable, but some of the goals and objectives of the project may not be achieved. (Score = 2)
- (iii) Some deficiencies of the methodology are identified, and most of the goals and objectives of the project may not be achieved. (Score =1)
- (iv) Major deficiencies are identified in the methodology to achieve the goals and objectives of the project. (Score = 0)

(6) Does the project have a reasonable timeframe and work plan? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Questions 2 and 9 refer)

- (i) The timeframe and work plan are clear and reasonable and there will unlikely be any obstacles causing delays in the project. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The timeframe and work plan are satisfactory and the project team is expected to have limited obstacles causing delays in the project. (Score = 2)
- (iii) There are some deficiencies in the timeframe and work plan and it is expected there would be delays in the project. (Score =1)
- (iv) Major deficiencies are identified in the timeframe and work plan and major delay is anticipated. (Score = 0)

(7) Does the application allocate sufficient manpower and resources for the size of the project? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Questions 7, 8, 9, 12 and 14 refer)

- (i) The manpower and resources planned for the project is sufficient and reasonable. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The manpower and resources planned for the project is satisfactory. (Score = 2)
- (iii) There are some deficiencies identified in the manpower and resources planned for the project. (Score =1)
- (iv) Major deficiencies in the arrangement of manpower and resources are identified. (Score = 0)

(8) Does the project have a realistic budget? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Questions 8, 12 – 14 refer)





- (i) The budgeting is realistic and reasonable, and the project is expected to have sufficient funds for project execution. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The budgeting is satisfactory, and the project team is expected to have sufficient fund available for project execution. (Score = 2)
- (iii) There are some deficiencies in the budgeting, and the project may be expected to be out of budget or overpriced. (Score = 1)
- (iv) Major shortfall of the budget is identified. (Score = 0)

(9) Has a similar project been conducted before? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Questions 6, 14 - 16 refer)

- (i) No similar project has been conducted in Hong Kong/PRE before and it is considered beneficial/important to carry out the project. (Score = 3)
- (ii) Similar projects have been conducted in Hong Kong/PRE, but it is considered beneficial/important to carry out the project. (Score = 2)
- (iii) Similar projects have been conducted in Hong Kong/PRE, but it is considered less beneficial/less important to carry out the project. (Score = 1)
- (iv) Similar projects have been conducted in Hong Kong/PRE, and it is considered unnecessary to carry out the project. (Score = 0)

(10) Where the project is of an educational or a knowledge sharing nature, how would the project team plan to share the project outcomes and knowledge with the target audience? Will the proposed plan likely to be able to reach the target audience? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form* - Section B, Question 17 refers)

- (i) There is a plan in the application which clearly states how to share the project outcomes and knowledge with sufficient details. The plan is appropriate for the project nature and is likely to be able to reach the target audience and convey the key message effectively. (Score = 3)
- (ii) There is a plan in the application which clearly states how to share the project outcomes and knowledge with sufficient details. The plan is appropriate for the project nature but it is doubtful if it could reach the target audience and convey the key message effectively. (Score = 2)
- (iii) There is a plan in the application which vaguely states how to share the project outcomes and knowledge with little details. The plan may not be appropriate for the project nature and may not be able to reach the target audience or convey the key message effectively. (Score = 1)





- (iv) No plan is included in the application, or if a plan is included, there are major deficiencies on how the project outcomes and knowledge will be shared. The plan is inappropriate for the project nature and is unlikely to be able to reach the target audience or convey the key message. (Score = 0)

(11) Considering the above assessment items, do you agree that the application should receive MEEF funding?

- (i) The project objectives can strongly enhance the marine environment for the benefit of marine ecology; the MEEF should consider approving this application. (please select “Strongly agree”)
- (ii) The project objectives can fairly enhance the marine environment for the benefit of marine ecology. (please select “Agree”)
- (iii) The project objectives can fairly enhance the marine environment for the benefit of marine ecology, but there might be some potential risk that the project cannot be fully implemented. (please select “Neutral”)
- (iv) The project objectives can fairly enhance the marine environment for the benefit of marine ecology, but there might be high potential risk that the project cannot be fully implemented. (please select “Disagree”)
- (v) The project objectives can barely enhance the marine environment for the benefit of marine ecology, and there might be high potential risk that the project cannot be fully implemented. (please select “Strongly disagree”)

3.3.2 Applications for Project Extension for multiple-year projects:

(1) Were the desired objectives, benefits, outcomes and impacts as indicated in the previous project phase application (including methodology, work plan and timetable), fully achieved during the previous project phase, with reference to enhancement, conservation and/or management improvement on marine ecology? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* - Section B, Questions 3, 4 and 11 refer)

- (i) The project progress of the previous project phase was ideal and had no significant issues; the project so far has contributed to enhancement, conservation and/or management improvement on marine ecology. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The project progress of the previous project phase was mostly reasonable with minor issues without affecting the overall project progress; the project so far has contributed to enhancement, conservation and/or management improvement on marine ecology. (Score = 2)





- (iii) The project progress of the previous project phase was either ideal and had no significant issues, or was mostly reasonable with minor issues without affecting the overall project progress, but has not contributed to enhancement, conservation and/or management improvement on marine ecology. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The project progress of the previous project phase was greatly delayed and the cause of delay was not unpredictable. (Score = 0)


(2) Has the project team implemented any contingency plans in face of delay of project progress in previous project phase (if any)? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* - Section B, Questions 4, 7 and 11 refer)

- (i) The previous project phase has progressed as scheduled and there was no delay in project progress. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The previous project phase has implemented a contingency plan in face of project delay and has caught up with the proposed project progress. (Score = 2)
- (iii) The previous project phase has implemented a contingency plan in face of project delay but could not catch up with the proposed project progress. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The project progress in the previous phase has delayed without implementation of any contingency plan. (Score = 0)

(3) In the case that the desired objectives, benefits, outcomes and/or impacts as indicated in the previous application were not achieved during the previous project phase, does the application provide any specific and practical solution to prevent or solve the relevant issue(s)? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* - Section B, Questions 4(iii), 4(iv), 7 and 11 refer)

- (i) The desired objectives, benefits, outcomes and impacts have been fully achieved in the previous project phase. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The desired objectives, benefits, outcomes and/ or impacts were not fully achieved in the previous project phase, but a specific and practical plan has been drawn up in the application to prevent or solve the relevant issue(s) in this project phase. (Score = 2)
- (iii) The desired objectives, benefits, outcomes and/ or impacts were not fully achieved in the previous project phase, and a simple plan has been drawn





up in the application to prevent or solve the relevant issue(s) in this project phase but some information is impractical. (Score = 1)

- (iv) The desired objectives, benefits, outcomes and/ or impacts were not fully achieved in the previous project phase, but the application does not include any plan to prevent or solve the relevant issue(s) in this project phase. (Score = 0)

(4) Does the application indicate a detailed work plan for this project phase? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* - Section B, Questions 4, 7 and 11 refer)

- (i) The application has included a detailed and specific work plan which clearly demonstrated that this project phase can be implemented as scheduled. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The application has included a detailed work plan but part of the plan may be ambiguous. (Score = 2)
- (iii) The application has included a simple work plan but some information is lacking and irrelevant. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The application does not include a work plan or the implementation plan is greatly flawed for the project to proceed. (Score = 0)

(5) Does the project have a reasonable timeframe and work plan for this project phase? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for project Extension* - Section B, Questions 2, 7 and 11 refer)

- (i) The timeframe and work plan are clear and reasonable and there will unlikely be any obstacles causing delays in this project phase. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The timeframe and work plan are satisfactory and the project team is expected to have limited obstacles causing delays in this project phase. (Score = 2)
- (iii) There are some deficiencies in the timeframe and work plan and it is expected there would be delays in this project phase. (Score = 1)
- (iv) Major deficiencies are identified in the timeframe and work plan and major delay is anticipated. (Score = 0)

(6) Is the project scope of the application (e.g. project objectives, work plan, timetable, project team, project budget, etc.) consistent with that mentioned in the previous project phase application? If there are any differences or





updates, are the justifications reasonable? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* - Section B, Questions 4-8, 10-11 refer)

- (i) The work plan, project team and financial arrangements of the application for project extension are generally the same as that in the previous project phase application. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The work plan, project team and financial arrangements of the application for project extension are different from that in the previous project phase application but the overall application has been revised according to the previous project outcome and the justifications were reasonable. (Score = 2)
- (iii) The work plan, project team and financial arrangements of the application for project extension are different from that in the previous project phase application and the justifications provided were not reasonable. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The work plan, project team and financial arrangements of the application for project extension are different from that in the previous project phase application and the project has deviated from the original project scope and objectives. (Score = 0)

(7) Will the application allocate sufficient manpower and resources according to the project scope? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* - Section B, Questions 4-8, 10-11 refer)

- (i) The application will allocate sufficient manpower and resources according to the project scope and shall be able to fully implement the work plan. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The application will allocate sufficient manpower and resources for most of the project scope but may not be able to implement part of the work plan. (Score = 2)
- (iii) The application will allocate inadequate manpower and resources for most of the project scope and it is not certain whether the project can be fully implemented. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The allocation of manpower and resources is inadequate for the project scope and is unlikely to implement the work plan. (Score = 0)

(8) Do the key members of the project team have sufficient experience and knowledge to implement the project? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension* – Section A, Proposed Project; Section B, Questions 5, 6, 10 and 11 refer)

- (i) All key members of the project team are equipped with relevant experience and knowledge to fully implement the project. (Score = 3)





- (ii) Some key members of the project team are equipped with relevant experience and knowledge to fully implement the project. (Score = 2)
- (iii) It is not certain whether the project team has relevant experience and knowledge but the project should be able to implement. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The project team have no relevant experience and knowledge, therefore the project will be difficult to implement. (Score = 0)

(9) Does the project have a realistic budget? Has the applicant provided reasonable justification, quotations and budget comparison for key project particulars? (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension - Section B, Questions 6, 8-11 refer*)

- (i) The project proponent has provided a realistic budget and has compared the budget for key project particulars. (Score = 3)
- (ii) The project proponent has provided reasonable budget but has not compared the budget for key project particulars. (Score = 2)
- (iii) It is uncertain whether the project's budget is reasonable. (Score = 1)
- (iv) The project budget is not reasonable. (Score = 0)

(10) Where the project is of an educational or a knowledge sharing nature, how does the project team plan to share the project outcomes and knowledge in the upcoming phase, and, whether the plan is appropriate and is it likely to be able to reach the target audience (Score = 0 to 3) (Note: *Application Form for Project Extension - Section B, Question 11(a) refers*)

- (i) There is a plan included in the application which clearly states how to share the project outcomes and knowledge with sufficient details. The plan is appropriate for the project nature and is likely to be able to reach the target audience and convey the key message effectively. (Score = 3)
- (ii) There is a plan included in the application which clearly states how to share the project outcomes and knowledge with sufficient details. The plan is appropriate for the project nature but it is doubtful if it could reach the target audience and convey the key message effectively. (Score = 2)
- (iii) There is a plan included in the application which vaguely states how to share the project outcomes and knowledge with little details. The plan may not be appropriate for the project nature and may not be able to reach the target audience or convey the key message effectively. (Score = 1)





- (iv) No plan is included in the application, or if a plan is included, there are major deficiencies on how the project outcomes and knowledge will be shared. The plan is inappropriate for the project nature and is unlikely to be able to reach the target audience or convey the key message. (Score = 0)


(11) Considering the above assessment items, do you agree that the current application should receive MEEF funding?

- (i) The application has extended the project objectives of the previous project phase and has demonstrated the capability of the project team; the MEEF should consider approving this application. (please select “Strongly agree”)
- (ii) The application has extended the project objectives of the previous project phase with minor issues during previous project phase implementation, and areas of improvement are required. (please select “Agree”)
- (iii) The application has extended the project objectives of the previous project phase with some delays during previous project phase implementation, and there might be some potential risk that the project cannot be fully implemented. (please select “Neutral”)
- (iv) The application has extended the project objectives of the previous year but has experienced major issues during previous project phase implementation, and there might be high potential risk that the project cannot be fully implemented. (please select “Disagree”)
- (v) The application’s project scope and objectives are significantly different from the project application in the previous project phase without adequate justification, or the project has failed to implement during the previous project phase; the MEEF should not consider approving this application. (please select “Strongly disagree”)

3.4 The application should be scored according to the assessment guidelines. The scores and comments for new applications (including single-year projects and the first phase of multiple-year projects) should be marked in the *New Application Assessment Form*, with 0 as the lowest score (except Question 1 above) and 3 as the highest score for each assessment criteria. The maximum score is 30 points. The scores and comments for the application of project extension for multiple-year projects should be marked in the *Application Assessment Form for Project Extension*, with 0 as the lowest score and 3 as the highest score for each assessment criteria. The maximum score is 30 points.

In respect of each question, if the assessor decides to award a score of 0 or 3, the assessor should justify his/her award by filling in the comments in the *New Application Assessment Form* and *Application Assessment Form for Project*





Extension. In addition, the assessor shall provide overall comments on each application in the *New Application Assessment Form* and *Application Assessment Form for Project Extension*. If the application is intended to be conducted for multiple years in phases, the assessors should make a note at the end of the *New Application Assessment Form* and *Application Assessment Form for Project Extension* to facilitate the review of re-application for the next Project Year. Each application has to score 1 or above in each of the assessment questions per assessment form in order to be further considered in the discussion of funding priorities. If a score of 0 is given in any of the assessment questions for an application, the application will be disqualified and will not be further considered in the discussion of funding priorities.

