

Construction Industry Council
5th Progress Report of Committee on Environment and Technology

Purpose

This paper outlines the main points discussed at the 5th meeting of the Committee on Environment and Technology held on 6 December 2007. The record of attendance is at Annex.

Issues Discussed

2. Members discussed the following items –
 - way forward on construction research and development (R&D)
 - Study on Sustainable Construction for Public Works Projects.

Progress on Matters Arising from the 4th Meeting on 26 October 2007

3. Members noted the following –

Paragraph 17(a)

Discussion papers on the way forward on construction standards and promotion of green buildings were discussed in the 6th CIC meeting on 15 November 2007. While the recommendations to set up two task forces on construction standards under the Committee was endorsed, CIC members concluded that the Committee should further consider the arrangements for setting up an independent entity for promoting green buildings because it was unlikely that such an entity could function effectively without owning the assessment method. The Committee should seek the view of the HK-BEAM Society on the way forward before bringing up the matter again for discussion by CIC.

[Post meeting note –

An informal meeting between the Committee and the HK-BEAM Society was held on 12 December 2007. Apart from the Chairman, one other Member attended in response to the invitation issued by the Secretariat.]

Paragraph 17(b)

Mr Peter Lee was nominated as the representative of CIC in the HK-BEAM Executive Committee following the endorsement of the nomination at the CIC meeting on 15 November 2007.

Way Forward on Construction R&D

(A) *Institutional framework*

4. The Task Force on Construction R&D set up under the former PCICB in 2003 to consider the way forward on the subject recommended that CIC should encourage innovation in the local construction industry by taking charge of the overall co-ordination of R&D and performing the following functions –

- setting clear objectives, directions and priorities for R&D to address both immediate concerns and long-term needs and minimize overlapping;
- canvassing and allocating resources to spur and steer R&D activities;
- encouraging collaboration between industry stakeholders, research bodies and the academia;
- devising measures to improve the promulgation of research findings;
- identifying ways for creating synergies with other initiatives related to R&D; and
- nurturing and promoting a strong R&D culture within the industry for innovation and technology upgrading.

5. Members supported the above recommendations agreed that the Committee on Environment and Technology should take charge of the co-ordinating role and the performance of the recommended R&D functions. However, the day-to-day execution would be full-time tasks and should therefore be entrusted to the staff of the permanent CIC Secretariat.

(B) *Co-ordinating functions*

6. Members explored the possible modus operandi for discharging the co-ordinating functions. One of the possibilities would be for CIC to play a

matching role by taking stock of the research requirements of the industry and identifying suitable organizations which would be prepared to undertake R&D in response to these requirements using their own resources. Members envisaged that public sector organizations might be prepared to do so to tackle industry-wide issues within their ambits. Another possibility would be for CIC to take stock of planned and on-going research projects and suggest fine tuning of their scopes to make the deliverables useful to the industry as a whole.

7. CIC could play a useful role in co-ordinating the conversion of the deliverables of research projects into practical references (such as guidelines, specifications and codes of practice) that could be used readily by industry stakeholders. For example, the Concrete Producers Association (CPA) had commissioned the Hong Kong University to conduct a research on problems of placing tremie concrete in large diameter bored piles. While the research was conducted for litigation, in view of the problems general relevance of the problem to the whole industry, CIC could co-ordinate the efforts to develop practical references for tackling the concreting problem on the basis of the research findings.

(C) Funding of R&D projects by CIC

8. While CIC should accord higher priority to co-ordinate R&D efforts of the industry, consideration should also be given to making allocations in the annual budgets for financing R&D so that CIC could take the lead in nurturing a culture for innovations. The funds could be used for commissioning R&D projects that would benefit the industry at large but were unlikely to be undertaken by individual industry organizations.

(D) CIC's focus on R&D

9. Research projects were classified into three types for the purpose of defining CIC's focus: basic research projects, product research projects and practical research projects. Basic research projects aimed to extend the frontiers of knowledge. The deliverables of these projects were usually academic in nature and could not be readily applied for practical purposes. CIC did not need to be involved in basic research projects but could take stock of their deliverables to identify results with practical application potentials.

10. Product research projects were commissioned by commercial organization for product development. CIC should not be involved in these commercial activities but could put forward proposals for encouraging local product research through procurement arrangements.

11. CIC should focus on practical research projects that were directly related to the needs of the industry. Practical research projects could be further divided into applied research projects and thematic research projects. The former aimed directly at problem solving and productivity enhancements. The latter aimed to identify the issues related to particular themes and recommend possible solutions.

(E) Recommendations

12. Members agreed to recommend to CIC that–

- the Committee be tasked to take charge the R&D functions set out in paragraph 4;
- staff of the permanent CIC Secretariat should be assigned to undertake the day-to-day execution of these functions and to provide working level support to the Committee; and
- consideration be given to allocation of funds annually for financing R&D projects commissioned by CIC.

Study on Sustainable Construction for Public Works Projects

13. DEVB would commission a one-year study in December 2007 on sustainable construction for public works projects. The study would aim to review the local and international practices, identify good practices and measures with proven effectiveness, take stock of the measures already adopted in public works projects and develop a framework to achieve balanced consideration of environmental, economic and social factors. DEVB would brief Members on the progress and initial findings in mid-2008.

Any Other Business

14. HD agreed to submit a paper on the initiatives being pursued to enhance the sustainability of public housing development. The Secretariat would identify suitable speakers for briefing the Committee on the assessment of carbon footprint.

Further Actions

15. The following further action was agreed –

- (a) The Secretariat would arrange to report the outcome of the discussions on R&D to CIC;

- (b) DEVB would brief Members on the progress and initial findings of the study on sustainable construction for public works projects;
- (c) HD would submit a paper on initiatives being pursued to enhance the sustainability of public housing development; and
- (d) The Secretariat would identify suitable speakers on assessment of carbon footprint.

**CIC Secretariat
December 2007**

Committee on Environment and Technology

**5th Meeting held at 10:00 am on 6 December 2007
in Conference Room 1124, Murray Building**

Record of Attendance

Present

Mr Conrad Wong	Chairman
Mr LAM Wo-hei	
Mr Peter Lee	
Mr H W Cheung	Director of Buildings
Mr P H Ho	Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors
Mr NG Shiu-ming	Association of Plastering Sub-contractors
Mr Y C Chan)
Dr Alex Li) Development Bureau
Mr Anthony Fok	Environmental Protection Department
Mr Ken Cheung	Housing Department
Mr PANG Long	Hong Kong Construction Site Workers General Union

Absent with Apologies

Dr Andrew Chan
Mr CHEUNG Tat-tong
Prof KO Jan-ming
Mr Derek Zen

In Attendance

Construction Industry Council Secretariat

Mr K H Tao	Chief Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 1
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