

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Education and Publicity Sub-Committee

Paper 04/03

Launch of the Sustainable Development Fund

Purpose

This paper invites Members' views on matters related to the launch of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the related publicity plan.

Proposal

2. We propose that –
 - (a) Members endorse the draft guidelines and application form for the SDF at **Annex A** to this paper;
 - (b) Members consider the proposed publicity plan for the launch of the SDF set out at **Annex B**;
 - (c) the SDF be launched on 6 September 2003 and that the deadline for the first batch of applications be 31 October; and
 - (d) this Sub-committee form a sub-group comprising 4 to 5 Members to vet applications for grants from the SDF.

Considerations

Application Guidelines

3. On 13 June 2003, the Finance Committee (FC) approved the allocation of \$100 million to establish the Sustainable Development Fund. Based on the funding criteria submitted by this Sub-Committee to the full

Council and to the FC, as well as on comments made by FC Members in approving the funding allocation, we have drawn up the detailed guidelines and application forms for the SDF at **Annex A** for Members' endorsement.

4. Some of the key features of the SDF application guidelines are -
- An undertaking by the Sustainable development Unit (SDU) to process applications within three to four months – this is similar to the time taken by other government funds;
 - Grants would be paid in advance in one lump sum or in instalments every three months, depending on the duration of the project;
 - Any organisation receiving a grant of over \$250,000 for a project would be required to submit annual audited accounts; and
 - A full evaluation report would be required from the recipient of the grant once the project has been completed.

Publicity Plan

5. A proposed publicity plan for the launch of the SDF is at **Annex B** for Members' consideration. The steps in the programme include -

- Issuing a press release;
- Uploading guidelines and application forms to the SDU website;
- Sending e-mail 'fliers' to community groups and individuals who we know to have previously expressed an interest in the area of sustainable development;
- Distributing posters and leaflets to District Offices, Universities, schools and community groups; and
- Arranging an introductory seminar both to launch the SDF and to deal with initial questions from potential applicants.

First Batch of Applications

6. We plan to launch the SDF formally on 6 September 2003, and to remain open for the first batch of applications to 31 October. We would review the timing for inviting and receiving the second batch of applications, which we expect to invite in March 2004, in the light of experience gained from this first phase of the exercise.

Vetting of Applications

7. Initial feedback from community and other groups suggests that there may well be twenty or more submissions in the first batch of applications. Although the SDU will conduct the initial vetting of these applications, there will still be a requirement for this Sub-committee to advise as to whether the applications should be approved. Rather than convene several full meetings of the Sub-committee to consider the recommendations of the SDU in detail, we propose that a Vetting Committee comprising 4 to 5 Members of the EPSC be formed to assess applications and make overall recommendations to the full Sub-committee according to the funding criteria.

Further Action

8. Subject to Members' advice, we shall prepare Chinese language versions of the guidelines and application forms at Annex A and upload these on to the SDU website, as well as printing copies for public distribution. We shall also prepare the publicity programme detailed at **Annex B**, with a view to launching the SDF on 6 September.

9. We shall report on progress with the receipt of applications at the next meeting of the Sub-committee.

Council Secretariat
June 2003