



INTRODUCTION TO THE HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FUND

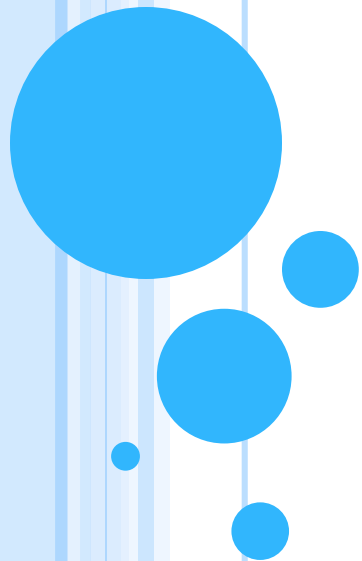
Dr Richard COLLINS
Chief Scientific Reviewer (Research Office)
Food and Health Bureau

**Briefing cum Grant Skills Training Workshop for
the 2020 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects**

OUTLINE

- Overview of the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)
- Areas of Projects
- Peer Review Process
- Application and Timeline

OVERVIEW OF HMRF



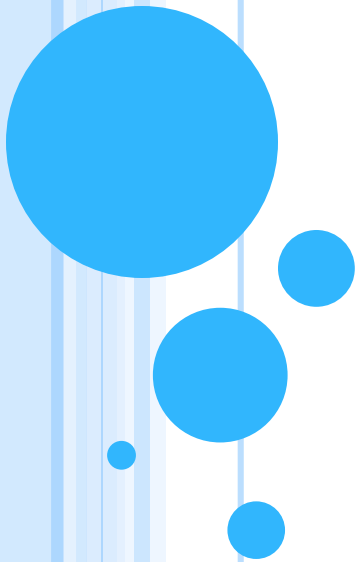
OVERVIEW OF HMRF

- Administered by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB)
- Established in Dec 2011
 - Eight annual open calls (2012 - 2019)
- Incorporates activities of previous FHB funds, i.e.
 - Health and Health Services Research Fund
 - Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases
 - Health Care and Promotion Fund

MISSION OF HMRF

- To build research capacity...
- ...through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge in health and medicine to encourage, facilitate, and support health and medical research to:
 - Inform health policies
 - Improve population health
 - Strengthen the health system
 - Enhance healthcare practices
 - Advance standard and quality of care
 - Promote clinical excellence

AREAS OF PROJECTS



AREAS OF PROJECTS

- Public Health, Human Health and Health Services Research
- Infectious Diseases Research
- Advanced Medical Research
- Health Promotion

PUBLIC HEALTH, HUMAN HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

- Examine the **cause, treatment and prevention** of the full range of diseases and conditions that affect **human health** and the impact of the organisation, financing and management of **healthcare services** on the delivery, quality, cost, access to, and outcomes of such services

INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH

- Focus on infectious diseases which are prevalent in Hong Kong and neighbouring regions or areas in which the Hong Kong academic community has a competitive edge

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

- Involves the use of biotechnology to identify and develop novel screening, diagnostic methods and therapeutics/treatments in various medical fields, including
 - Paediatric
 - Neurosciences
 - Clinical genetics
 - Clinical trials

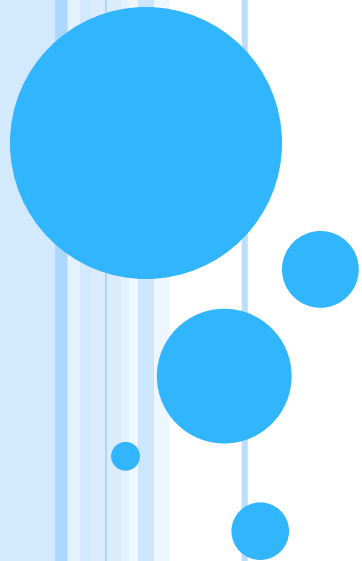
HEALTH PROMOTION

- Include a coordinated set of activities that help people adopt **healthier lifestyles** by enhancing awareness, changing adverse health behaviours or creating a conducive environment that supports good health practices

POINTS TO NOTE

- Routine public health or clinical services that are provided by the Government or government funded agencies will normally not be considered for support
- In general, HMRF does not support guideline development
- Applicants are strongly recommended to consult and/or collaborate with field experts (e.g. Hospital Authority clinicians) to improve the feasibility of research proposals, in particular clinical studies and those involving human subjects
- The administering institution (AI) shall be responsible for the provision of the basic facilities required to support the project including employment service of the required project staff, procurement of services and equipment, accounting services, etc.

PEER REVIEW PROCESS



PEER REVIEW PROCESS

- 1st: Referee Panel (2500+)
 - Renowned experts in their fields
 - Usually 2 External Reviewers (ERs) per application

- 2nd: Grant Review Board (GRB)
 - More than 200 local senior health professionals and academics
 - Since 2018 Open Call, **Non-Local Experts** will participate in the second-tier peer review
 - Independent review and panel discussion

1ST Tier Peer Review

- Two external reviewers (ER) per application
- Work independently
- Standardised assessment criteria
- ERs assign an overall rating (1-4)
 - 4: recommended for support
 - 3: recommended for support (subject to clarification / amendment)
 - 2: not recommended for support at present (resubmission possible)
 - 1: not supported
- Applications receiving **single or double low** rating (1 or 2) are normally not eligible for second-tier peer review

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS)

- Originality
- Relevance to the fund and thematic priorities
- Significance of the research questions
- Quality of scientific content
- Credibility of design and methods
- Applicability to local context
- Translational potential / value

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (HEALTH PROMOTION PROJECTS)

- Potential impact in response to the health needs of the target local community
- **Scientific evidence** of effectiveness of the proposed health promotion activities
- Innovation
- **Relevance to thematic priorities**
- Feasibility of the proposal
- Evaluation plan of programme effectiveness
- **Cross-sector collaboration**, in particular collaboration between non-governmental organisations and tertiary institutions
- Impact and **sustainability** of the programme
- Potential to build community capacity in health promotion

2nd Tier Peer Review

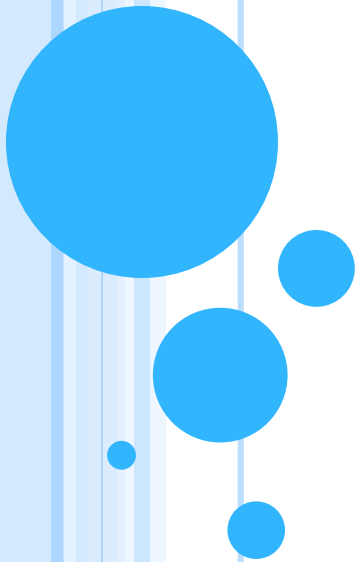
- Senior health professionals and academics
- Includes **Non-Local Experts** from overseas
- Meet in person / via Zoom to discuss applications
- Two reviewers (Speakers) per application
 - Work independently
 - Standardised assessment criteria
 - Speakers assign an overall rating (1-4)
- Final overall rating / funding recommendation (1-4) decided by **consensus**
- The success rate over the last three years is on average **24%**
 - Comparable with other funding schemes
 - RGC GRF 2020/21 Medicine, dentistry and health: **96/367=26%**

RESULTS OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Decision letter in Oct 2021 (6 months after application deadline)

- 4 - Recommended for support
 - Nil / minor issues to address
- 3 - Recommended for support
 - **Subject to satisfactory response** to the ERs'+ GRB's comments within 3 weeks
 - Ethics approval / safety clearance/ consent for accessing data for third party data (*to be submitted within 12 weeks from the date of grant approval letter unless specified*)
 - For clinical trials, Department of Health **Clinical Trial Certificate / Medicinal Test Certificate** is required (suggest applying **as early as practical**, preferably during the submission of application to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement
- 2 - Not recommended for support at present
 - Resubmission possible in next open call
- 1 - Not supported

APPLICATION AND TIMELINE



GRANT SIZE & ELIGIBILITY

➤ Grant

- \$1.5 million for up to 3 years
 - Larger size / longer duration may be supported at the discretion of the GRB
 - Smaller pilot studies are encouraged
- One application only (either research or health promotion project or new proposal or resubmission) by each principal applicant (PA)

ELIGIBILITY

- Invite applications from locally-based tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-profit-making organisations, registered community groups or other appropriate centres, units or services
- PA must be based in a Hong Kong organisation throughout the project period and employed by the AI at time of submitting the application
 - Inform us immediately if plan to leave the AI after submission of application. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the application

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

- Through **eGMS** by **30 April 2021** (18:00 HKT)
 - Pay attention to AI's **internal deadline**, if any
 - Application with incomplete signatures may not be considered
 - Application without **reference code of thematic priority** may be treated as an incomplete application and may not be considered
- 5b. → Please state the most relevant thematic priority*:
- *please refer to the explanatory notes for details of the thematic priorities
- PA will receive the acknowledgement email from the Secretariat if the application is successfully submitted

eGMS – ONLINE SUBMISSION



Welcome to the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) of the Research Fund Secretariat of the Food and Health Bureau, HKSAR.

This is an online platform for managing the funding applications administered by the Research Fund Secretariat. The system supports electronic submission of proposals, on-line management of approved projects and dissemination of project results.

All grant applications must be submitted via this system starting from the launch of eGMS in December 2014. By setting up one single eGMS account, you can submit multiple grant applications for funding administered by the Research Office of the Food and Health Bureau.

Login to eGMS

Email:

Your login email is your email address.

Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)
[Forgot your login?](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Account Registration *(FOR APPLICANTS ONLY!)*

Notes to Grant Review Board (GRB) Members/ External Reviewers

eGMS account has already been opened for GRB Members and External Reviewers. Please contact the Research Fund Secretariat (Email: egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk) if you have any questions.

v2.60(Soft Launch)

the Research Office. Non-PA users can contact the Research Office (Email: egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk) for registration of an eGMS account or add the PA role to your existing eGMS account.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) v2.10(Soft Launch)

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- Proposed **research** project: Sections 13 (a) – (h) of the research proposal, with the standard header

2020 HMRF Open Call Proposal

should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form

- The proposal template can be downloaded from <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>

Grant Applications

Investigator-initiated Projects

- Electronic Application Form (e-Form): Available in [eGMS](#)
(Path in eGMS: Project > Application > Application Call > Web-based Online e-Form)
- [Quick Guide for Completing the electronic Application Form](#) (PDF File 223K) updated
- [Proposed Research Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 33K) updated
- [Proposed Health Promotion Project \(Section 13\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) (Word File 30K) updated

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- A new item "(v) Potential pitfalls and contingency plans" has been added under Section (d) Plan of Investigation

d)→ Plan of Investigation:↵
↵ (i)↵ Subjects ○○○○○↵
↵ ↵ ↵
↵ (ii)↵ Methods ○○○○○↵
↵ ↵ ↵
↵ (iii)↵ Study design ○○○○○↵
↵ ↵ ↵
↵ (iv)↵ Data processing and analysis ○○○○○↵
↵ ↵ ↵
↵ (v)↵ Potential pitfalls and contingency plans ○○○○○↵
↵ ↵ ↵

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

- Proposed **health promotion** project: Sections (a) – (h) of the proposal, with the standard header

2020 HMRF Open Call Proposal – Health Promotion

should be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form

- The proposal template can be downloaded from <https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk>

Grant Applications

Investigator-initiated Projects

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REGULATORY / ETHICS APPROVAL / CONSENT FOR ACCESSING THIRD-PARTY DATA

- Submit ethics/safety/regulatory approvals/consent for accessing third-party data within **12 weeks (or as specified by the Secretariat)** after the announcement of funding decisions
- For clinical trials, confirm with Department of Health if a **Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate** is required **as early as practical** (preferably during the submission of application to the HMRF) to avoid delay in project commencement
- Ensure that the protocol/scope approved by the relevant regulatory body/IRB is the **same** as that approved by HMRF

STAFF COST - POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS/ RESEARCH STUDENTS

- Shall work on the approved HMRF project
- Shall **not be PA or Co-Applicant** of the HMRF project concerned
- Shall **not be double funded** by other sources
- Can support part-time in **proportion to the amount of research work** on the approved HMRF project
- Shall **enter into contract of employment** with the administering institution.
- Ensure the appointment under the approved HMRF project will **not breach the terms / restrictions / undertaking** of the proposed staff signed with other parties (e.g. University Grants Committee/Research Grants Council).

SIMILAR STUDIES AND OTHER FUNDING

- Should declare any duplicate funding in the electronic Application Form
- Shall notify the Secretariat immediately
 - Any other similar or related application submitted to other funding agencies in addition to those listed in the electronic Application Form
 - The funding decision of any similar or related application once available

11a. (i) Have any of the applicants listed in Section 9 submitted this or a similar research proposal to the HMRF or any of its preceding funding schemes, or other funding agencies (local or overseas) in the past 3 years? YES NO

Attention: In this section include all previously submitted similar proposals in the past 3 years, i.e. proposals rejected or not supported by HMRF or other funding agencies. Please attach a copy of the previous application, the reviewers' comments (if any), a point by point response to the reviewers' comments, and/or a description of the differences or changes made between the previous and the current proposal. Failure to provide sufficiently detailed information may adversely affect the assessment of your proposal.

If yes, please provide the following details:-

For proposal(s) pending a funding decision, please complete Section 11a. (ii) below.

No.	Project Title	Name of Applicant(s)	Project Ref No.	Funding Agency	Funding Decision / Rating
1					
Previous application		The review panel's feedback (if any)			

Please use the box below to respond point-by-point to the reviewers' comments (if any), and/or highlight the major changes that have been incorporated into the application. Applicants declined for any reason by the HMRF or other funding agencies will be accepted only if the reasons for the rejection have been described in detail and a point-by-point response is provided describing how these issues have been addressed.

11a. (i) Do any of the applicants listed in Section 9 intend to submit this or a similar research proposal to the HMRF or other funding agencies (local or overseas) in the next 6 months? YES

Attention: At any time before the announcement of the funding decision of this application, applicants are required to notify the Research Fund Secretariat immediately about: (a) any other similar or related application submitted to other funding agencies in addition to those listed below; and (b) the funding decision once available.

If yes, please provide the following details:-

No.	Project Title	Name of Applicant(s)	Project Ref No.	Funding Agency	Expected Date of Decision (dd/mm/yyyy)
1					

Please give a summary of the similarities and differences between the application and the proposal to be submitted (100 words max)

RESUBMISSION

- Applications **not supported in a previous application round** of HMRF investigator-initiated research projects/health promotion projects meeting the following criteria should be submitted under the category of “Resubmission”–
 - Application rated “**3**” which has been revised to address all reviewers’ comments in a structured and consistent manner
 - Application rated “**2**” which has been substantially revised to address all reviewers’ comments in a structured and consistent manner

RESUBMISSION

- Applications **rejected in a previous application round** of HMRF investigator-initiated research projects/health promotion projects (i.e. **no grading** or **rated “1”** or **incomplete** or **outside of the funding scope**) or Research Fellowship Scheme, or other funding agencies (local or overseas) must be submitted as a **new** application with **extensive changes** or improvements made **with full justifications**

RESUBMISSION

- To be assessed on the **continued relevance** of the application with respect to knowledge gap, policy needs, translational value and **prevailing thematic priorities** at the time of resubmission
- Having satisfactorily addressed previous comments is **not a guarantee** of funding

APPLICATION TIMELINE 2020/21

Date	Items
30 Apr 2021 (18:00 HKT)	Closing date
Oct 2021	Decision letters issued <ul style="list-style-type: none">PA to respond to the comments of External Reviewers (ERs) and/or Grant Review Board (GRB) within 3 weeks
Nov - Dec 2021	Review of PAs' responses to satisfactorily address comments made by the ERs and/or GRB
Jan – Mar 2022	Final approval letter and agreement after resolving all outstanding issues including budget clarification and ethics approval

FURTHER INFORMATION

<https://rfs.fhb.gov.hk/>



食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau

ENGLISH | 繁體版 | 简体版 | 



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Food and Health Bureau
9/F, Rumsey Street
Multi-Storey Car Park Bldg
2 Rumsey Street
Sheung Wan
Hong Kong

Enquiry emails:

rfs@fhb.gov.hk (General)

egmsenquiry@fhb.gov.hk (eGMS)

THANK YOU

