

Open call for funding applications for investigator-initiated research projects and health promotion projects under HMRF begins

The Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) administered by the Food and Health Bureau invites funding applications for investigator-initiated research projects and health promotion projects from today (December 30) onwards. Applications from locally based tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-governmental organisations and other appropriate centres, units and services are invited.

â€‹

The HMRF aims to build research capacity and 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, and promote clinical excellence through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge derived from local research in health and medicine. It also provides funding support to evidence-based health promotion projects that help people adopt healthier lifestyles by enhancing awareness, changing adverse health behaviours or creating a conducive environment that supports good health practices.

Applications in the following areas will be accepted for consideration by the HMRF:

1. public health, human health and health services (e.g. primary care, non-communicable diseases, Chinese medicine, etc);
2. prevention, treatment and control of infectious diseases, in particular emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases;
3. advanced medical research which applies advanced technologies including but not limited to biotechnology in medicine, use of drugs and treatments, clinical trials, virtual health such as telemedicine, etc, to facilitate the translation of knowledge generated from health and health services or infectious diseases studies into clinical practice and to inform health policy; and
4. health promotion that facilitates mobilisation of local resources to promote good health and prevention of illness in the community.

Collaboration with local or non-local organisations is encouraged. Higher priority for funding will be given to proposals addressing this year's thematic priorities, which are infectious diseases, primary healthcare and non-communicable diseases, mental health, cancer and implementation science.

As the HMRF emphasises the importance of the translational potential of research findings, starting from this application round, applicants are required to provide a clear explanation in simple language on how the

research findings will benefit patients and/or the healthcare system, such as improving patient care and/or population health, influencing clinical practice and/or health services management, or informing health policy in Hong Kong. Moreover, advanced medical research shall focus on clinical studies.

The grant ceiling is \$1.5 million per project with a grant duration not exceeding three years. The mini-grant was renamed as a seed grant and the relevant grant ceiling has been raised from \$100,000 to \$500,000, with a view to facilitate larger-scale pilot studies, such as those evaluating trialability and scalability for future implementation, and small-scale research with achievable objectives.

Only one application from each principal applicant is allowed, either a new or a resubmission of an application. The principal applicant should be based in a Hong Kong organisation throughout the project period and be employed by the administering institution at the time of submission.

Applications will be subject to two-tier peer review. The vetting will take into account scientific merit, local relevance and translational potential/value of the proposals, capacity of the administering institutions, sustainability of health promotion projects, the track record of applicants, value for money of the proposals and research ethics, where applicable.

Completed electronic application forms should be submitted via the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) (rfs.fhb.gov.hk/eGMS/) on or before 6pm on March 31, 2022 (Hong Kong time). Briefing sessions, grant skills training workshops and eGMS training sessions, to be held in January and February 2022, are now open for registration.

â€‹

Details of the updated thematic priorities, application-related materials and the workshops are now available on the website of the Research Fund Secretariat (rfs.fhb.gov.hk). Enquiries can be made by e-mail to rfs@fhb.gov.hk.