

Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme 2024-25 opens for application

The Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) today (April 18) announced that the Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (SPPRFS) 2024-25 is open for applications between now and June 5, 2024.

The SPPRFS is a government-financed funding scheme dedicated to supporting evidence-based public policy research by higher education institutions and think tanks in Hong Kong. The CEPU is its Secretariat. As the Government's internal research unit, the CEPU was set up to enhance the Government's capabilities in research and advocacy on long-term and strategic issues. One of its tasks is to build up external policy research capacity through measures including administering the SPPRFS. This will be conducive to the achievement of the CEPU's objectives, including to advocate for and assist in the formulation of long-term and strategic policies from a forward-thinking perspective; to keep abreast of national development and analyse and suggest areas of significance in the integration into national development; to examine international relations and situations, and analyse opportunities and risks; and to grasp the sentiments of Hong Kong citizens to understand the general direction and focus of their concerns.

In light of the research needs and policy priorities of the Government, six strategic themes have been identified for the SPPRFS 2024-25. They are: (a) Development Opportunities from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area under the National 14th Five-Year Plan; (b) Achieving Carbon Neutrality; (c) Hydrogen Economy; (d) Sustainable Development of Elderly Care Services with an Ageing Population; (e) Healthcare Innovations; and (f) Education. Under each strategic theme, there are specified research areas on which researches should be conducted.

Applications for the SPPRFS 2024-25 must be made under one of the specified strategic themes and in line with the specified research areas. Those falling outside the specified strategic themes and specified research areas will not be considered generally.

Each SPPRFS project may be granted a maximum of HK\$5 million and last from one to five years.

Assessments will be conducted by an Assessment Panel which comprises experienced academics. The Assessment Panel will also take into account comments of external reviewers who are local and non-local experienced academics and experts during the assessment process. To ensure policy relevance of the research proposals, suggestions and views of relevant government bureaux/departments will also be sought for reference by the Panel. A declaration of interests system is in place to ensure that the

assessments are fair and impartial.

Research quality and strategic relevance to public policy development in Hong Kong are the primary considerations in evaluating research proposals under the SPPRFS. Other factors that will be taken into account by the Panel include the deliverables of the research, the research team's capability, the feasibility and practicality of the proposal, the implementation schedule, and the proposed budget. Institutional support towards capacity building in public policy research and any external funding sources and support will also be taken into consideration.

Separately, the major themes and indicative research areas of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (PPRFS), which is also administered by the CEPU, have been updated having regard to Hong Kong's current and long-term development as well as the need for research on various social issues. Applicants are encouraged to prepare proposals with reference to the six strategic themes and specified research areas for the SPPRFS 2024-25, as well as eight other major themes with 29 indicative research areas. As compared to the SPPRFS, the PPRFS focuses on research studies of a shorter duration and smaller scale. Applications for the PPRFS are accepted throughout the year and the results of each batch of applications will be announced on a quarterly basis in general.

For details of the SPPRFS and the PPRFS, including eligibility criteria, research areas, assessment mechanism, application method and other related information, please visit the CEPU website (www.cepu.gov.hk/en/PRFS).