

University Grants Committee allocates an additional \$250 million to support research projects on COVID-19 and other novel infectious diseases

The following press release is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

In response to the COVID-19 epidemic and its evolving global impact, the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Research Grants Council (RGC) have allocated a one-off additional funding of \$150 million and \$100 million respectively under the Collaborative Research Fund and the Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS) to support the UGC-funded sector in conducting research related to COVID-19 and other novel infectious diseases (NIDs).

The Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong, said, "The rapid spread of COVID-19 has brought about a huge impact around the world, including Hong Kong. We face unprecedented challenges not only to our public health system but also to education, business operations and all facets of life in our community. Looking back on the past few decades, different NIDs also brought various threats to humankind. The UGC would like to support, through this one-off additional funding, UGC-funded universities for research projects related to COVID-19 and NIDs, especially projects and solutions that can help identify and/or address the wider health, social, economic or environmental impact of the epidemic.

"While priority will be given to COVID-19 research and those projects that may be completed early, NID research in all facets and disciplines are welcomed. We expect that the additional funding can support around 25 medium-size and two to three large-scale research projects."

He added, "The UGC and the RGC always strive to encourage local universities to conduct high-impact research especially those that would benefit people's livelihood and the economy. Through this additional funding, we are joining hands with the Hong Kong community in our battle against the epidemic."

The RGC has issued invitations to the UGC-funded universities for submissions, with the deadline on July 17, 2020. Further information is available on the website of the RGC (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/collaborative/application.html). For the TRS, call for preliminary proposals for TRS 2021/22 will be issued in July/August 2020. Details will be uploaded to the RGC website in due course.