



Health and Medical
Research Fund (HMRF)

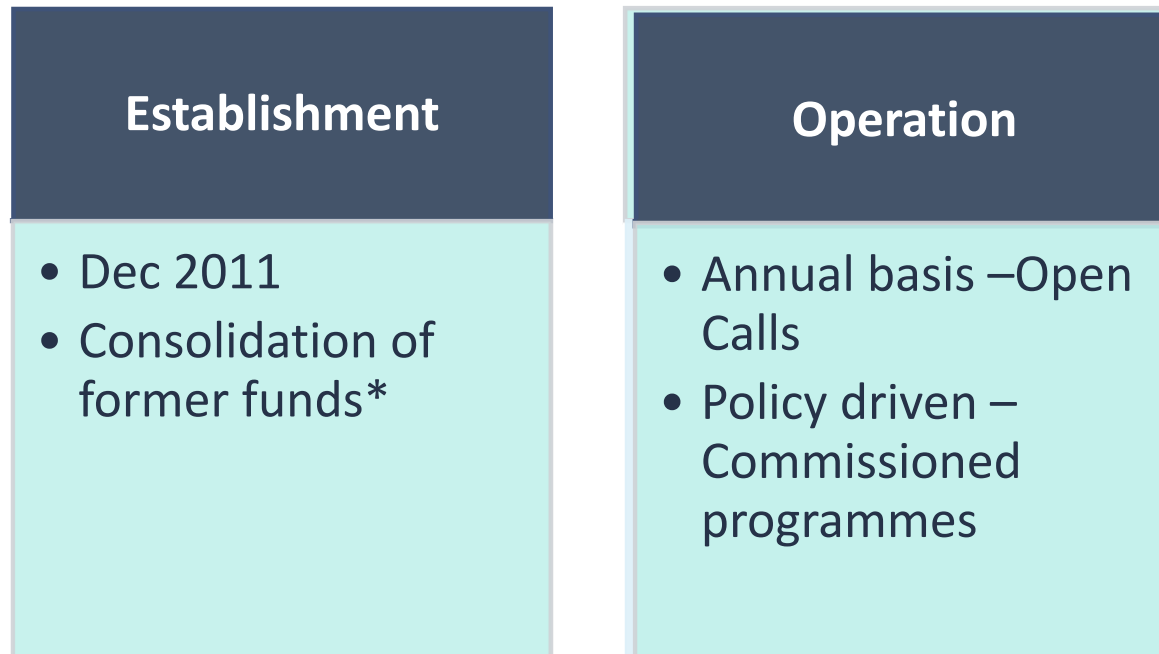
2023 OPEN CALL FOR INVESTIGATOR- INITIATED PROJECTS

Research and Data Analytics Office
Health Bureau
January 2024

OUTLINE

- Overview of the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)
- Funding scopes
- Thematic priorities
- Submission and timeline
- Examples of early rejected applications

OVERVIEW OF HMRF



*Former funds:

- Health and Health Services Research Fund (HHSRF)
- Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases (RFCID)
- Health Care and Promotion Fund (HCPF)

MISSION

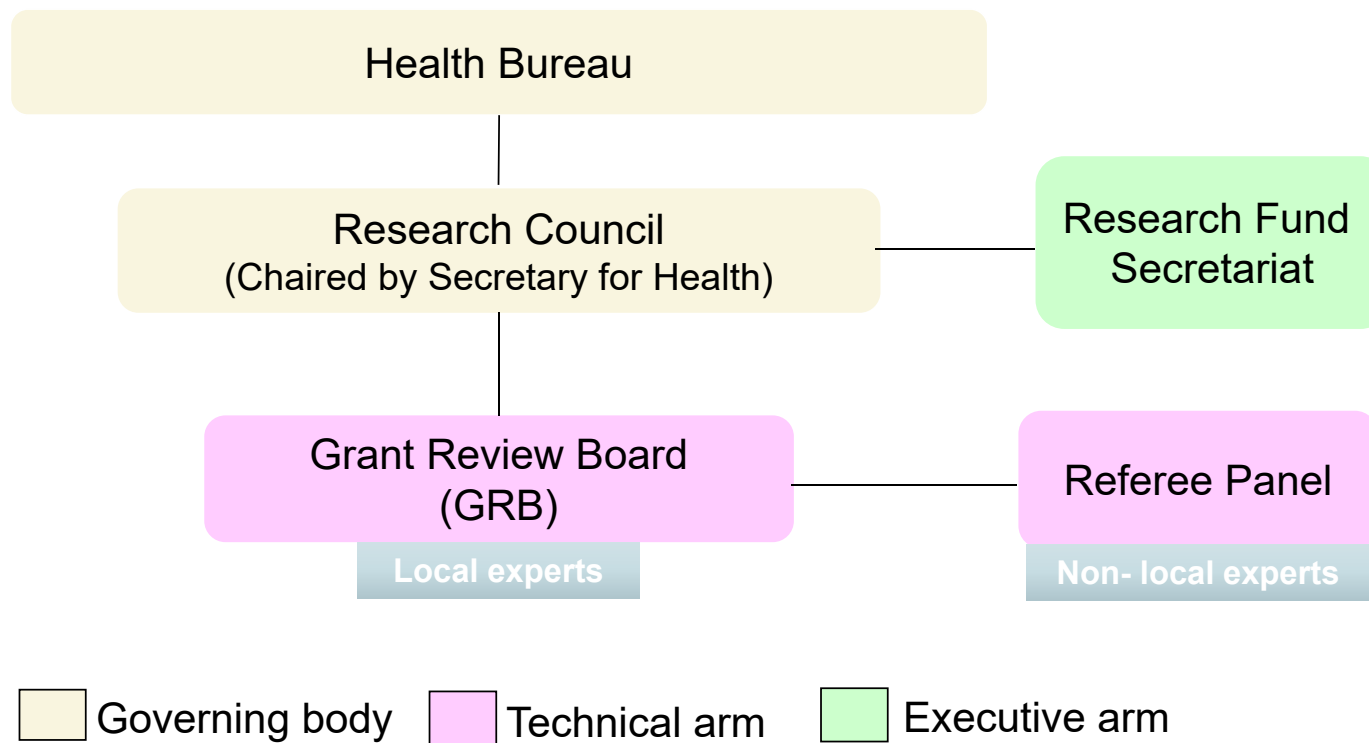
➤ *Build research capacity and to encourage, facilitate and support **health and medical research** to:*

- *Inform health policies*
- *Improve population health*
- *Strengthen the healthcare system*
- *Enhance healthcare practices*
- *Advance standard and quality of care*
- *Promote clinical excellence*

*... through generation and application of **evidence-based scientific knowledge** derived from local research in health and medicine.*

➤ *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.*

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



FUNDING SCOPE



FUNDING SCOPE

Enhanced

Supports applications on the following research projects -

Clinical research

- including patient-oriented research, epidemiological and behavioural studies, outcomes research and health services research

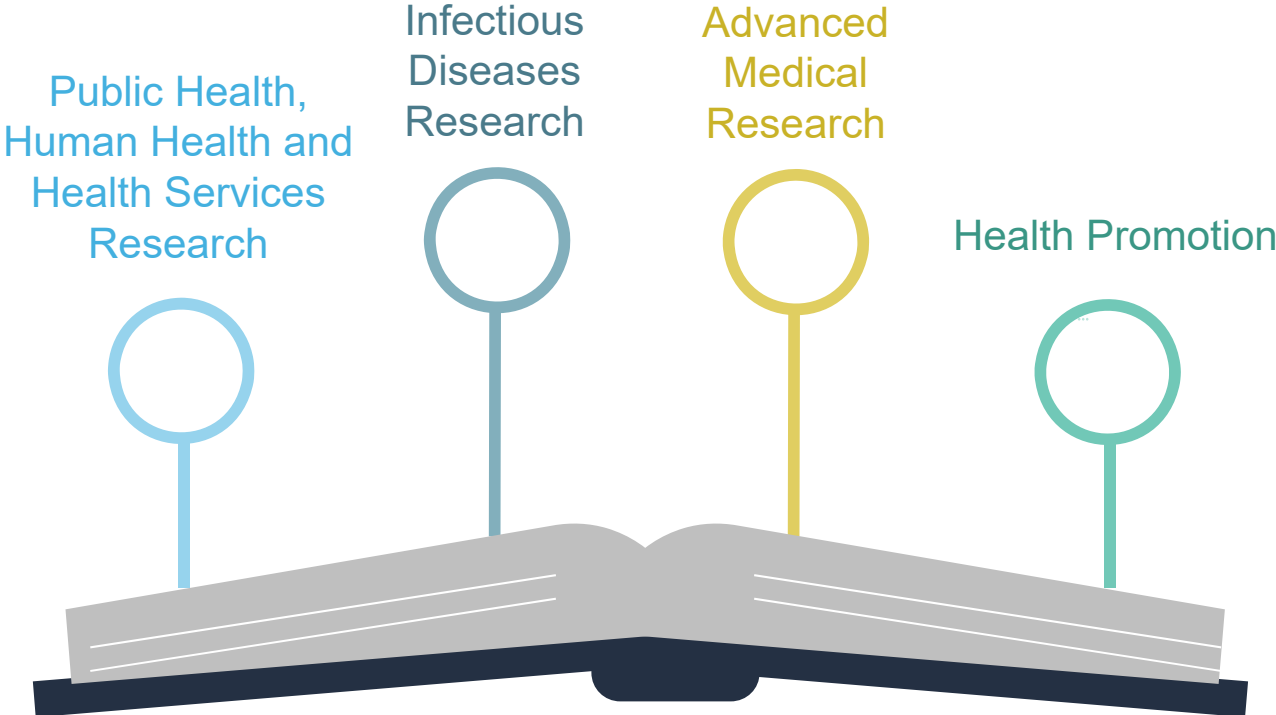
Infectious diseases research with public health implications

- from bench to bedside and at community level and with translational value

Chinese medicine - clinical research

- Based on Chinese medicine theory and methodology

AREAS OF PROJECTS



PUBLIC HEALTH, HUMAN HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

Public Health

- To **enhance prevention** and **treatment** and so improve population health

Health Services

- To determine which interventions and services are **effective and cost-effective** in the local healthcare setting

Chinese Medicine

- Must be **clinical research** which is based on Chinese medicine theory and methodology

INFECTIOUS DISEASES RESEARCH

Support research proposals:

- Focus on those infectious diseases that are **prevalent** in or **pose threat** to Hong Kong and neighbouring areas
- With **public health implications** from bench to bedside and at community level
- With **translational value**

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

➤ **Clinical Studies**

➤ **Apply advance technologies to facilitate** the translation of knowledge generated from health and health services or infectious diseases studies

○ into **clinical practice**

○ to inform **health policy**

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

Examples of **clinical studies using advanced technologies**:

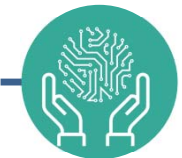
clinical trials on effectiveness of disease treatment using genome editing technologies



development of **machine learning and artificial intelligence** approaches for drug treatments, surgical procedures, systemic therapy and radiotherapy with evaluation in clinical practices



clinical applications of **sequencing technology** for disease prognosis, diagnosis and treatment strategies



HEALTH PROMOTION

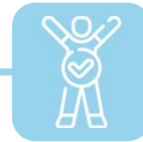
Based on [scientific evidence](#) and evaluated in a systematic way



Pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the [RE-AIM framework](#) are required



- Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance/ sustainability



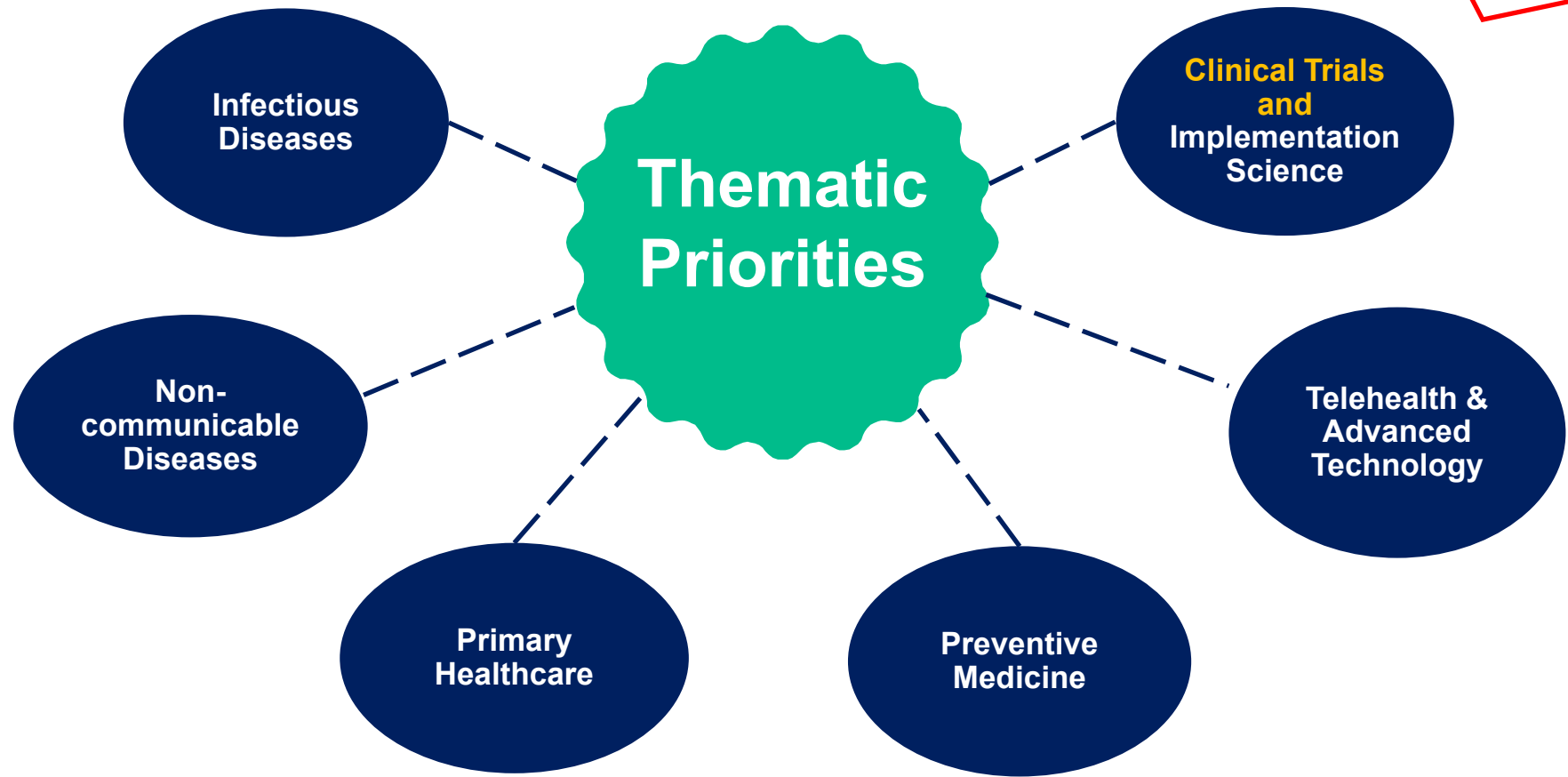
Include a coordinated set of activities that help people adopt [healthier lifestyles](#) by enhancing awareness, changing adverse health behaviours or creating a conducive environment that supports good health practices

THEMATIC PRIORITIES



THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR 2023 HMRF OPEN CALL

Updated



A. INFECTIOUS DISEASES



A. INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- Extend the scope from respiratory pathogens to **infectious diseases with public health implications.**



A-0004	Economic studies on vaccines and develop and evaluate strategies to improve acceptability and vaccine uptake , especially in high risk groups
A-0005	Develop and test novel approaches for enhancing prevention, surveillance, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and recovery/rehabilitation from infectious diseases and its sequelae

B. NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES



B. NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

- Beef up “Mental Health” to encourage **help-seeking** and add a new thematic priority to address mental health needs of **vulnerable groups**.

B-0007	Identify means to increase mental health literacy, promote mental wellbeing, encourage help-seeking , and reduce stigma towards persons with mental health needs
B-0008	Identify and evaluate novel measures to address mental health needs of vulnerable groups (including low-income, ethnic minority families and the elderly)



C. PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Key areas of thematic priorities:

- Enhance primary care services for NCD
- Effectiveness of collaborative care service model for NCD
- Innovative service models
- Family doctor concept
- Adopt a life course preventive care approach and evaluate effectiveness and cost-effectiveness**
- Enhance usage of primary healthcare services



C. PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

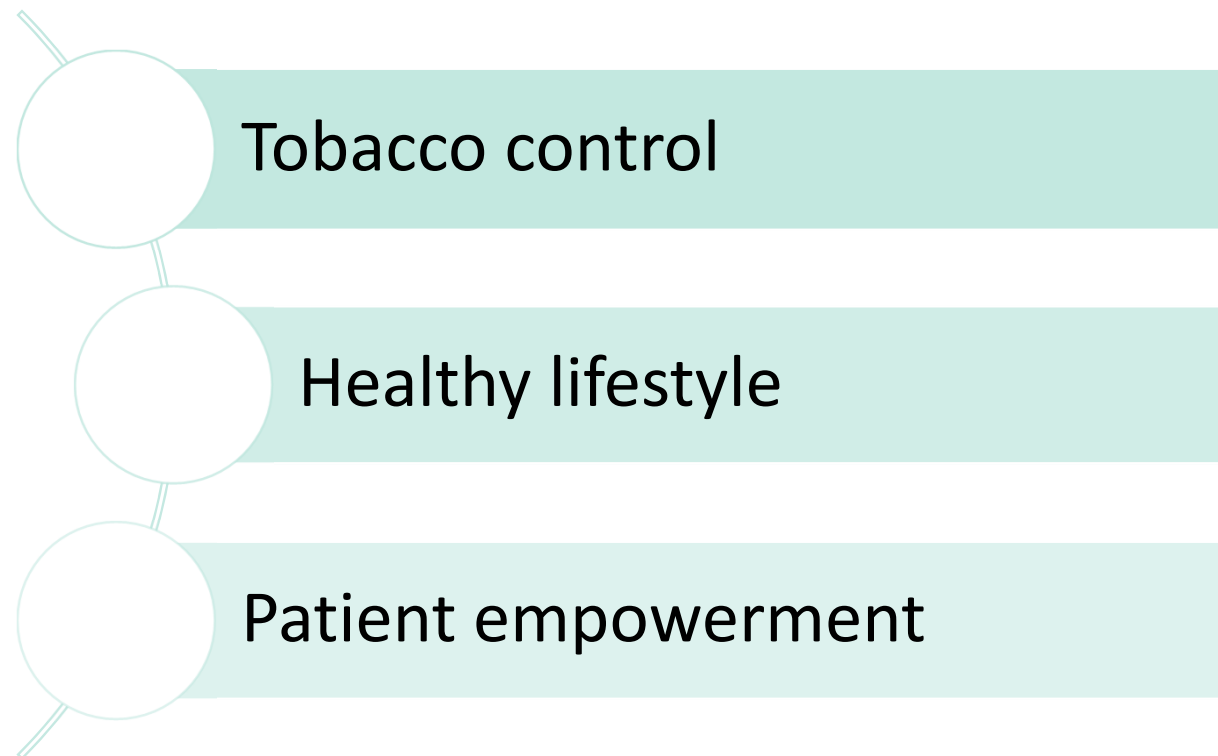
- Add a new thematic priority to promote the **adoption of life course preventive care approach** and to evaluate the **effectiveness and cost-effectiveness** of preventive care

C-0005	Develop strategies and measures to adopt a life course preventive care approach to address unique needs across lifespan of each age group and to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of preventive care , including cost of enhancements through specific schemes, programmes and interventions for specific age groups/cohorts
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NEW

D. PREVENTIVE MEDICINE



D. PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

- Beef up “Tobacco Control” to understand smoking and other addictions and prevent younger generation from smoking

D-0001	Develop and evaluate innovative measures to further reduce smoking prevalence in Hong Kong, in particular preventing the younger generation from smoking (including the use of alternative smoking products)
D-0002	Develop innovative methods, measures, and study designs to assess tobacco use knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours and other related addictions such as video gaming and drug abuse; including measures to best predict future use of tobacco products other than conventional cigarettes



E. TELEHEALTH AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY



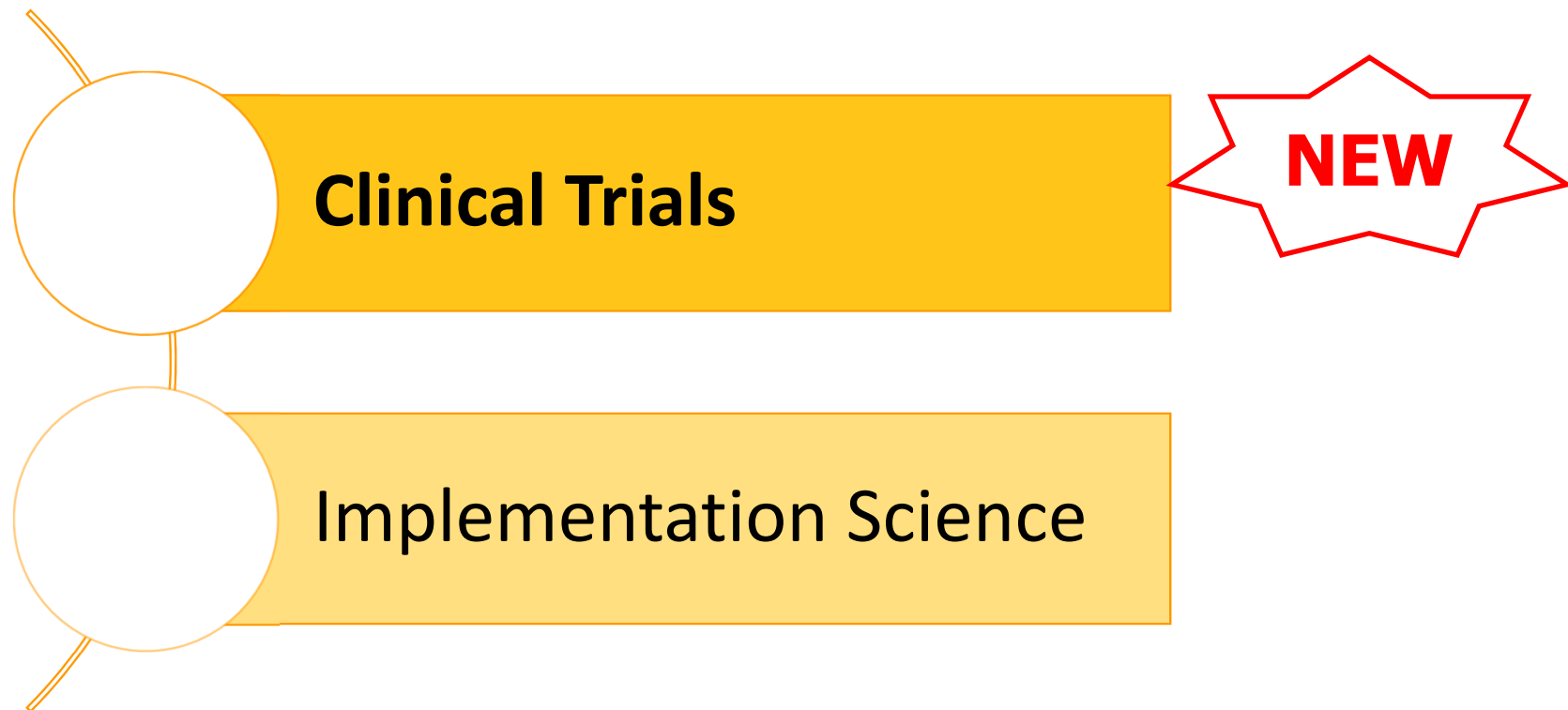
Genetics/genomic in clinical applications

Big data analytics of clinical information

Technology-based clinical management systems

IT tools/solution and advanced technology for smart care provision

F. CLINICAL TRIALS & IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE



F. CLINICAL TRIALS & IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Clinical Trials



F-0001	Clinical trials on the development and testing of new drugs, techniques, treatments, diagnostic and therapeutic medical devices, public health and health system interventions with a view to improving clinical practice and population health
F-0002	Clinical trials that adopt a lifecycle approach to include children and older adults, as well as other population groups often underserved by clinical trials

F. CLINICAL TRIALS & IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Implementation Science


Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)

Practical, Robust, Implementation and Sustainability Model (PRISM)

Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance (RE-AIM)

Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF)

Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (PARIHS)



Applicants to elaborate in eForm Section 10(d)

SUBMISSION AND TIMELINE



GRANT SIZE & TYPES

1 application per Principal Applicant. Select either one from -

**\$1.5 million for
up to 3 years**

**Seed Grant:
\$0.5 million for
up to 3 years**

**Research
project**

**Health
promotion
project**

New proposal

Resubmission

GRANT SIZE & TYPES



**Seed
Grant**

Grant ceiling	≤\$500,000
Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Larger-scale pilot study <u>or</u> small-scale study with achievable objectives; and2. Pre-defined outcome indicators to scale up

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ **Locally based** tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-governmental organisations or other appropriate centres, units and services
- ✓ PA must be **based in a Hong Kong organisation throughout** the project period and be employed by the administering institution at the time of submitting the application
- ! **Inform us immediately** if you plan to leave the local institution after submission of application. **Failure** to do so will **result in disqualification** of the application

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

- ! Through **eGMS** by **28 March 2024 (6:00 pm HKT)**
- ! Your institution's **internal deadline**, if any
- ! Signatures of all applicants are required
- ! Receive acknowledgement email upon successful submission of application via eGMS
- ! Application will **NOT** be processed **if the correct proposal template (Section 10) is not used**

eGMS – ONLINE SUBMISSION



Welcome to the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) of the Research Fund Secretariat of the 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 and Data Analytics Office of the Health Bureau.

Login to eGMS

Email:

Your login email is your email address.

Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Forgot your login?](#)

[More Info >](#)

Account Registration *(FOR APPLICANTS ONLY!)*

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

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

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) v2.235.0

For security reasons, with effect from 16 May 2018, the eGMS supports the following browsers: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Safari 7+ with Transport-Level-Security (TLS) protocol version 1.2. For details, please click [here](#).

This system does not support email domain @163.com.

Note: eGMS service is not available during the system maintenance from 14 Dec 2023 18:30 to 19:30 (HKT). We regret for the inconvenience caused.

If you have any queries or encounter difficulties relating to eGMS, please send email to egmsenquiry@healthbureau.gov.hk

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Privacy Policy Statement](#) [Personal Information Collection Statement](#) [Disclaimer](#)

SECTION 10 PROPOSAL

- **Two different templates** for Sections 10 (a) – (h) must be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form

2023 HMRF Open Call – Research Proposal

2023 HMRF Open Call – Health Promotion Proposal

- To download from <https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk>
 - Briefing Sessions and Training Workshops for Grant Applications for the 2023 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects
 - Thematic Priorities
 - Guidance Notes on Grant Application updated
 - Explanatory Notes on Grant Application updated
 - Electronic Application Form (e-Form): Available on eGMS
(Path in eGMS: Project > Application > Application Call > Web-based Online e-Form)
 - Proposal Template for Research Project (Section 10(a)-(h)) updated
 - Proposal Template for Health Promotion Project (Section 10(a)-(h)) updated

SECTION 10 PROPOSAL (RESEARCH PROJECT)

➤ Stately clearly the research in context:



b(i). **Research in context:**

(i) What is the existing evidence before this study based on an up-to-date literature search? State clearly whether research on a similar topic has been/is being carried out. Outline the research approaches in other studies and highlight their deficiencies and the research gap.

█ ↵

↵

(ii) How will this study add value to existing evidence to improve patient care, population health, influence clinical practice and/or health services management, or inform health policy in Hong Kong and elsewhere?

█ ↵

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SECTION 10 PROPOSAL (RESEARCH PROJECT)

➤ (d) Plan of Investigation:

[For project addressing the thematic priority of Implementation Science, please state clearly the proposed framework(s)/mode(s) to analyse barriers and facilitators of implementation outcomes.]

[For seed grant application (i.e. grant ceiling is HK\$500,000), please state clearly the pre-set criteria to enable scale-up to a larger project and/or enhance the efficacy/effectiveness of existing practice.]

- (i) Study design [redacted]
- (ii) Methods [redacted]
- (iii) Subjects (with justification on the sample size) [redacted]
- (iv) Data processing and analysis [redacted]
- (v) Potential pitfalls and contingency plans [redacted]



➤ (h) Plan of Investigation:

h. ↕ **Key References:** ↕

Include a maximum of 40 references in Vancouver style. ↕

↕ [redacted] ↕

↕

SECTION 10 PROPOSAL (HEALTH PROMOTION)

➤ (d) Project Plan

[The proposed health promotion project without using a RE-AIM framework will be treated as incomplete and will not be processed. Please refer to <https://re-aim.org/> for reference.]

[For project addressing the thematic priority of Implementation Science, please state clearly the proposed framework(s)/model(s) to analyse barriers and facilitators of implementation outcomes. Please refer to <https://www.fic.nih.gov/About/center-global-health-studies/neuroscience-implementation-toolkit/Pages/methodologies-frameworks.aspx> for reference.]

[For seed grant application (i.e. grant ceiling is HK\$500,000), please state clearly the pre-set criteria to enable scale-up to a larger project and/or enhance the efficacy/effectiveness of existing practice.]

SECTION 10 PROPOSAL (HEALTH PROMOTION)



➤ (b) Justification for Conducting the Project:

(i) ↻ Health needs of the local community (supported by published data or relevant experiences) ↻

█ ↻

↻ ↻

↻

(ii) ↻ What is the existing evidence before this project based on an up-to-date literature search? State clearly whether project on a similar topic has been/is being carried out. Outline the approaches in other projects and highlight their deficiencies and the gap in health promotion. ↻

█ ↻

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(iii) ↻ How will this project add value to existing evidence in addressing the health needs of the local community? ↻

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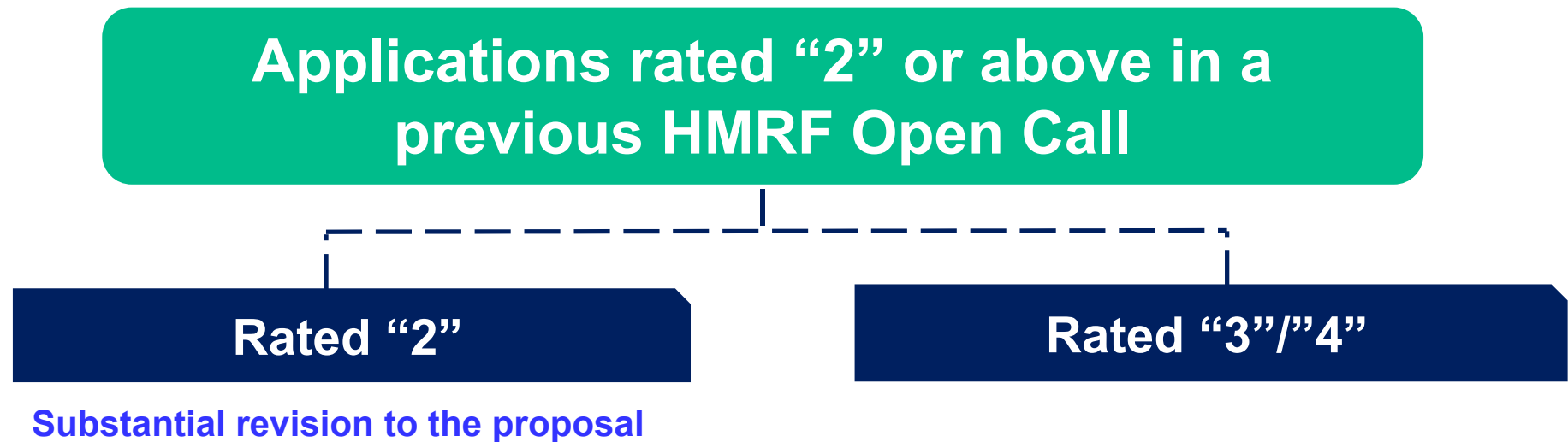
SECTION 10 PROPOSAL (HEALTH PROMOTION)

➤ (d) Project Plan



- (i) Target group (justify and explain the feasibility in reaching the target group size)
- (ii) Implementation plan
- (iii) Contingency/alternative plan if any problem encountered during implementation
- (iv) Cross-sector collaboration
- (v) Indicators and targets
What are the pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the RE-AIM framework?
- (vi) Evaluation plan (**RE-AIM framework**)
 - Reach of the target population
 - Effectiveness (or Efficacy)
 - Adoption by target staff, settings, systems and communities
 - Implementation: consistency, costs and adaptations made during delivery
 - Maintenance/sustainment of intervention effects in individuals and settings over time
- (vii) Results analysis

RESUBMISSION



structured **point-by-point response to address all** GRB and/or reviewers’ comments in the GRB Assessment Report

Highlight the **major changes** in the resubmission proposal

RESUBMISSION

- To be assessed on the **continued relevance** of the application with respect to
 - a) knowledge gap
 - b) policy needs
 - c) translational value
 - d) **prevailing thematic priorities** at the time of resubmission
- Having satisfactorily addressed comments of GRB/reviewers is **not a guarantee** of funding

NEW SUBMISSION NEEDED

Previously rejected applications:

Previous HMRF Open Call

- no rating
- rated “1”
- incomplete or outside of the funding scope

Research Fellowship Scheme

- not recommended for support
- incomplete or outside of the funding scope

Other funding agencies

- Rejected by other local or overseas

Must **submitted as a new application** with **extensive changes** or **improvements made with full justifications.**

REGULATORY/ETHICS APPROVAL

Regulatory/Ethical Approvals/Consent for Accessing Third-party Data

- Submit within **12 weeks** (or as specified by the Secretariat) from the date of decision letter of the application
- Regulatory/ethics approval(s)/evidence for accessing third-party data bear(s) the **same project title** as that in the approved application
- The **protocol/scope** included in such approval(s)/evidence for accessing third-party data must be the **same** as that in the application

Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate





- Confirm with Department of Health if required as early as practical

CONSENT FOR ACCESSING THIRD-PARTY DATA

- Clarify access to data/resources provided by others, e.g. letter of collaboration (colleagues in other local institution, overseas institution, Government departments, etc)
- Hospital Authority: Data Sharing Portal



POINTS TO NOTE – MANAGEMENT OF TRACK RECORDS OF APPLICANTS

-  Scientific Misconduct (Plagiarism, fraudulence, etc)
-  Double dipping not declared
-  Conflict of Interest not declared
-  Non-compliance

COMMON EXAMPLES – PLAGIARISM/SELF-PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism

- Copies verbatim the sentence(s) from another source in the proposal without citing the reference or giving any indication that it had been previously published
- Copies a sentence or text from another source and make minor editorial adjustments (e.g. changing abbreviations or tenses) but acknowledges the original source
- Replicates the plan of investigation, research aims, objectives and hypotheses of another research group without acknowledgement
- Figure(s) used in the application was found to have been used in a previous publication or public presentation

Self-plagiarism

- The applicant reproduces text and/or figures from his/her own published work in the proposal without acknowledgement

PROPER DECLARATION OF SIMILAR STUDIES AND OTHER FUNDING

- Applicants listed in [Section 7](#) of the e-Form should declare any duplicate funding
- At any time before the announcement of the funding decision, applicants are required to notify the Secretariat immediately about –



any other similar or related application submitted to other funding agencies in addition to those listed in the e-Form



the funding decision of any similar or related application once available

WORK DONE BEFORE PROJECT COMMENCEMENT



Costs of work (e.g. the purchase of equipment or the first working day of a project staff) **incurred before the commencement date** or the writing-up of such work are not allowed

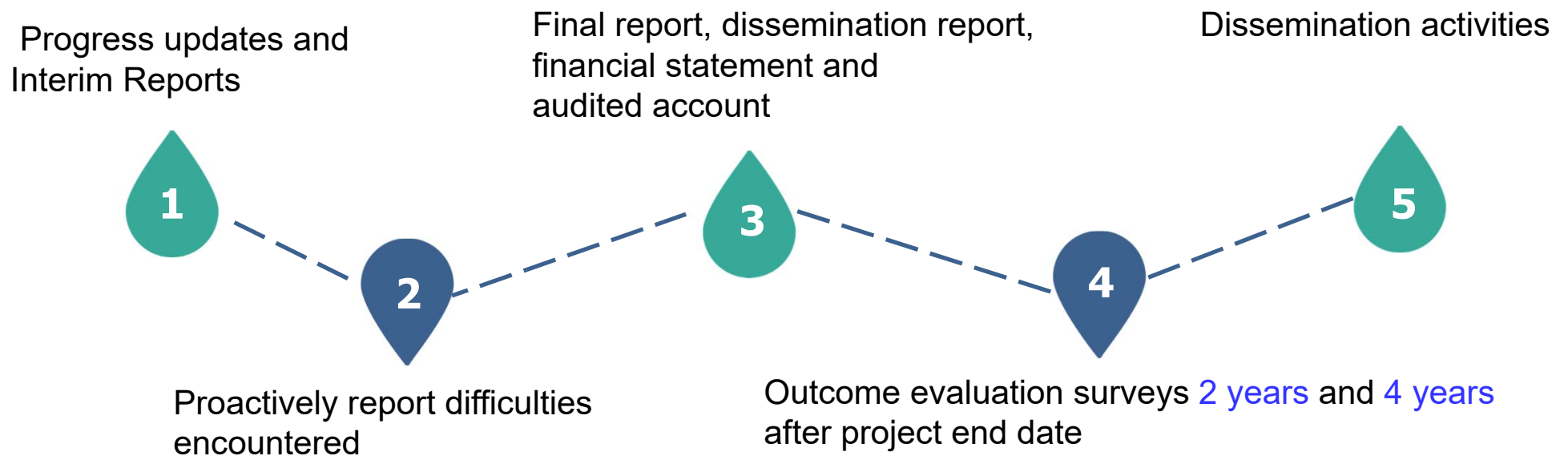


Research work (e.g. subject recruitment) **conducted before the commencement** of the project which includes the period before and after application submission is not allowed.



If such case is declared upfront before the Agreement is signed, the PA has to **adjust the funding scope and the funding amount** for GRB's consideration and approval

POINTS TO NOTE – FUNDED PROJECTS



EXAMPLES OF EARLY REJECTED APPLICATIONS



EXAMPLES



OUT-OF-SCOPE
under AMR/HHS

- Basic/pre-clinical research studies (in vitro, in vivo) are not supported
- Patient samples collected to test a device without clinical application/ validation
- Human samples collected to generate organoids for transcriptome analysis without correlation of the transcriptome findings with clinical records or follow-up on clinical management

EXAMPLES

OUT-OF-SCOPE

Basic/preclinical
research under HHS
(Chinese medicine)

A **pre-clinical study** which aims to determine the treatment effect of a traditional Chinese medicine/herbal formula for a particular disease using mouse models.

EXAMPLES

OUT-OF-SCOPE

Research under ID with
low public health
implication

- A viral evolutionary biology study which aims to identify novel virus species by next-generation sequencing of samples collected from various animal sources.
- This study is unlikely to identify new viruses that can infect human and cause public health threats.

EXAMPLES



- **AMR / HHS/ ID:** methodology, sampling, study design, description of primary and secondary outcomes, data analysis plans, potential pitfalls and contingency plans
- **Seed Grant:** **pre-defined outcome indicators** that would enable scale-up to a larger project and/or enhance the efficacy/ effectiveness of existing practice
- **Implementation Science:** proposed framework(s)/ model(s) **to analyse barriers and facilitators** of implementation outcomes

EXAMPLES



**INCOMPLETE
APPLICATION**

HP: pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the RE-AIM framework

EXAMPLES

OTHERS

Non-compliance with
resubmission
requirements

- **Not meeting resubmission requirements**

No structured (i.e. point-by-point) response to address all comments in the GRB Assessment Report or the revised proposal with highlights of changes was not provided.

EXAMPLES

OTHERS

Non-compliance with
submission
requirements

- **Not meeting submission requirements**

For rejected applications (HMRF or other funding agencies)

Not providing the required materials:

- Original rejected proposal
- All comments raised by funding agency
- PA's responses to these comments
- The revised application with highlights of changes made
- Detailed justification if no changes are made

EXAMPLES



OTHERS

Under-declared for a rejected application

- **Under-declaration**

Under-declared a grant proposal rejected in a previous HMRF application round or by another funding agency

EXAMPLES



OTHERS

- Proposal template (Section 10 (a) –(h)) not used; wrong proposal template used (e.g. HHS/AMR/ID must use research project template)
- Exceeding 4,000 words (Section 10(a) to (d))

APPLICATION TIMELINE FOR 2023 OPEN CALL

Date	Items
28 Mar 2024 (6:00 pm HKT)	Closing date
Sep 2024	Decision letters issued <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PA to respond to the comments of reviewers and/or GRB within 3 weeks
Oct 2024 – Mar 2025	Review of PAs' responses to satisfactorily address comments of reviewers and/or GRB
	Final approval letter and agreement after resolving all outstanding issues including budget clarification, ethics approval and submission of outstanding/overdue deliverables of previously funded projects

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Home
- What's New
- Council & Committees
- Policies and Guidelines
- Annual Reports
- Call for Application
- Funds
- Funded Project
- Past Events
- Publications
- Useful Links
- Contact Us



Investigator-initiated Projects

The HMRF invites applications for investigator-initiated research projects and health promotion projects.

The normal grant ceiling for a proposal is HK\$1,500,000 and the usual duration is 3 years. Higher grants or grants of longer duration may be awarded where justified.

Larger-scale pilot studies, such as those evaluating trialability and scalability for future implementation, and small-scale research with achievable objectives, can be submitted to seed grant with a grant ceiling of \$500,000 per project.

- [Briefing Sessions and Training Workshops for Grant Applications for the 2023 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects](#)
- [Thematic Priorities](#)
- [Guidance Notes on Grant Application](#) updated
- [Explanatory Notes on Grant Application](#) updated
- [Electronic Application Form \(e-Form\): Available on eGMS](#)
(Path in eGMS: Project > Application > Application Call > [Web-based Online e-Form](#))
- [Proposal Template for Research Project \(Section 10\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) updated
- [Proposal Template for Health Promotion Project \(Section 10\(a\)-\(h\)\)](#) updated
- [Sample Response Letter \(For Resubmission\)](#)
- [Training Manuals for electronic Grant Management System](#)
- [Research Project Assessment Form](#)
- [Health Promotion Project Assessment Form](#)
- [Code of Practice on Data Confidentiality and the Use of Data for Medical Research](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Research Fund Secretariat website. On the left is the logo of the Research Fund Secretariat Health Bureau, with the text "Research Fund Secretariat Health Bureau" and "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China". On the right is the "HONG KONG ASIA'S WORLD CITY" logo. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the text "Enter search keyword(s)" and a magnifying glass icon, followed by "SITE MAP" and an envelope icon. Below the search bar are "Search" and "Share" buttons. The main banner features the text "Research Fund Secretariat" in a blue box, followed by "2023 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects" in large white font. Below this, it states "Closing date: 28 March 2024 (6:00 pm Hong Kong time)". Further down, it mentions "Briefing sessions will be held on 9 and 16 January 2024" and "Training workshops will be held on 11 and 19 January 2024". At the bottom of the banner is a yellow link "Click here for more details" with a right-pointing arrow. The background of the banner is a blue-tinted image of a person's hand writing on a notepad, with a DNA double helix and molecular structures visible in the background.



Enquiry emails:

rfs@healthbureau.gov.hk (General)

egmsenquiry@healthbureau.gov.hk (eGMS)



THANK YOU

