INTRODUCTION OF THE
HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FUND

Research Office
Health Bureau
1 February 2023

OUTLINE

➢ Overview of the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF)

➢ Funding Scope

➢ Thematic priorities

➢ Submission and Timeline

➢ Examples of early rejected applications

OVERVIEW OF HMRF

Establishment	Operation	Administration
• Dec 2011 • Consolidation of former funds*	• Annual basis – Open Calls • Policy driven – Commissioned programmes	• Research Fund Secretariat, Health Bureau

*Former funds:
- Health and Health Services Research Fund
- Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases
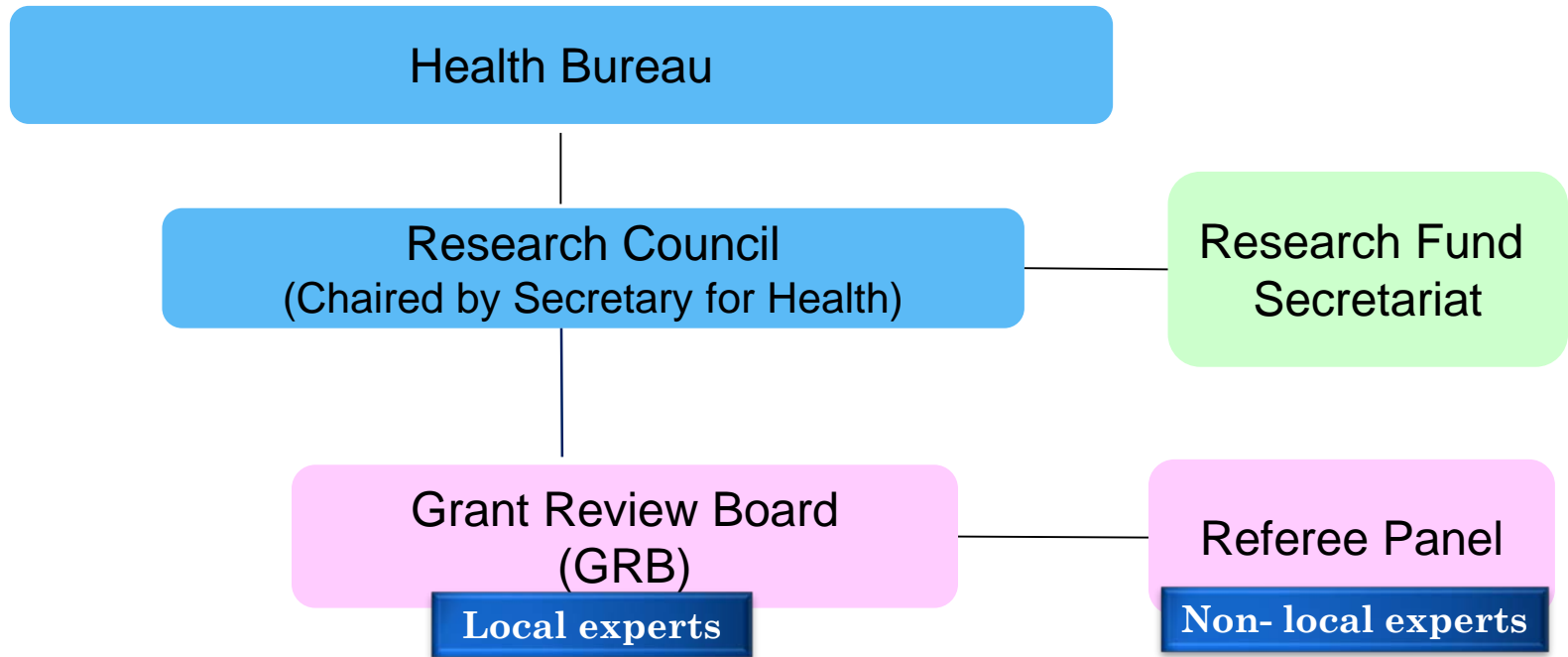- Health Care and Promotion Fund

OVERVIEW OF HMRF

Mission

➤ *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*
- *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.*
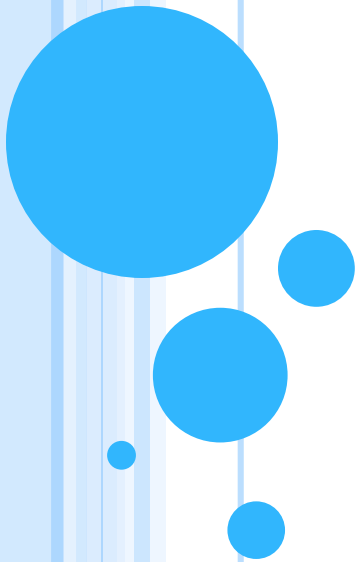
OVERVIEW OF HMRF

Governance Structure

| Health Bureau |
| Research Council (Chaired by Secretary for Health) |
| Research Fund Secretariat |
| Grant Review Board (GRB) — **Local experts** |
| Referee Panel — **Non-local experts** |

Governing body | Technical arm | Executive arm

Funding Scope

FUNDING SCOPE

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, prevention and treatment 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.

➢ Public health research

➢ Health services research

➢ Chinese medicine

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

➤ Basic science, clinical, translational, epidemiological and health services research studies are supported

ADVANCED MEDICAL RESEARCH

➢ Proposal shall focus on clinical studies which apply advanced technologies to facilitate the translation of knowledge generated from health and health services or infectious diseases studies into clinical practice and to inform health policy.

➢ Basic/pre-clinical research studies are not supported.

Advanced Medical Research

➤ Examples of clinical studies using advanced technologies:

  ➤ clinical trials on effectiveness of disease treatment using genome editing technologies;

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

  ➤ development of augmented or mixed reality approaches for drug treatments, surgical procedures, systemic therapy and radiotherapy with evaluation in clinical practices;

  ➤ disease diagnosis or monitoring

HEALTH PROMOTION

➢ Base on scientific evidence and evaluated in a systematic way

➢ 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

➢ Pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the RE-AIM framework is required
  • Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance/ sustainability

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Funding Scope

Emphasise on translational potential so as to:

1
Improve patient care and population health

2
Influence clinical practice and/or health services management

3
Inform health policy in Hong Kong and elsewhere

4
Identify potential facilitators and barriers to this impact being achieved

Applicants to elaborate in eForm Section 5(a)

THEMATIC PRIORITIES
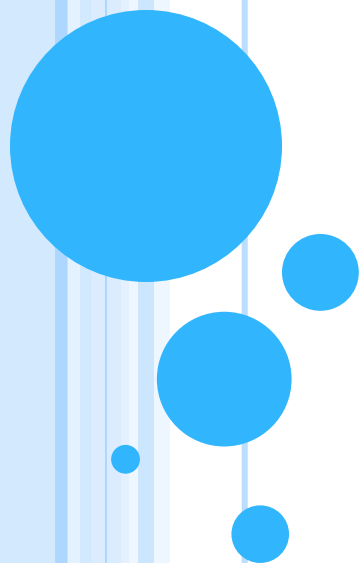
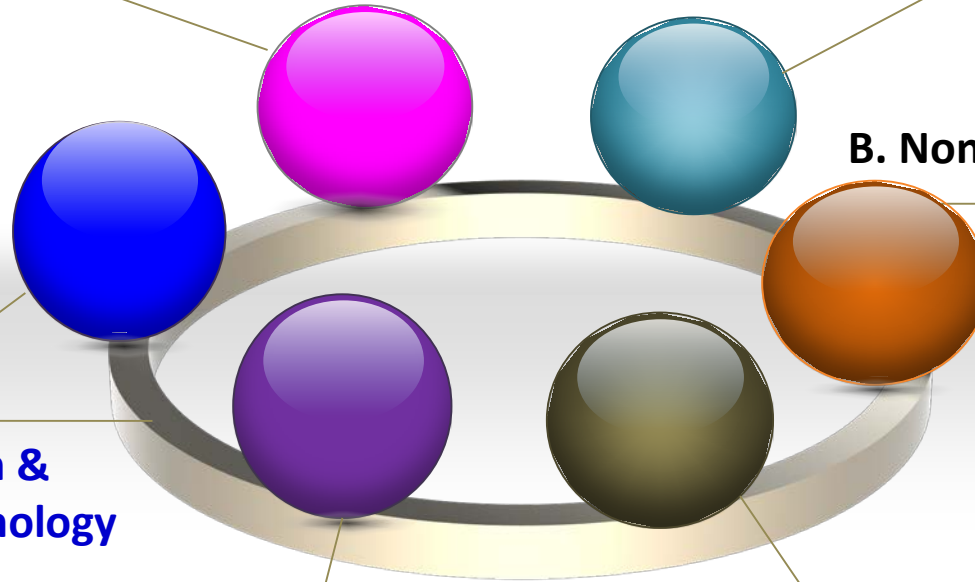# Thematic priorities for 2022 HMRF Open Call

F. Implementation Science

A. Infectious Diseases

B. Non-communicable Diseases
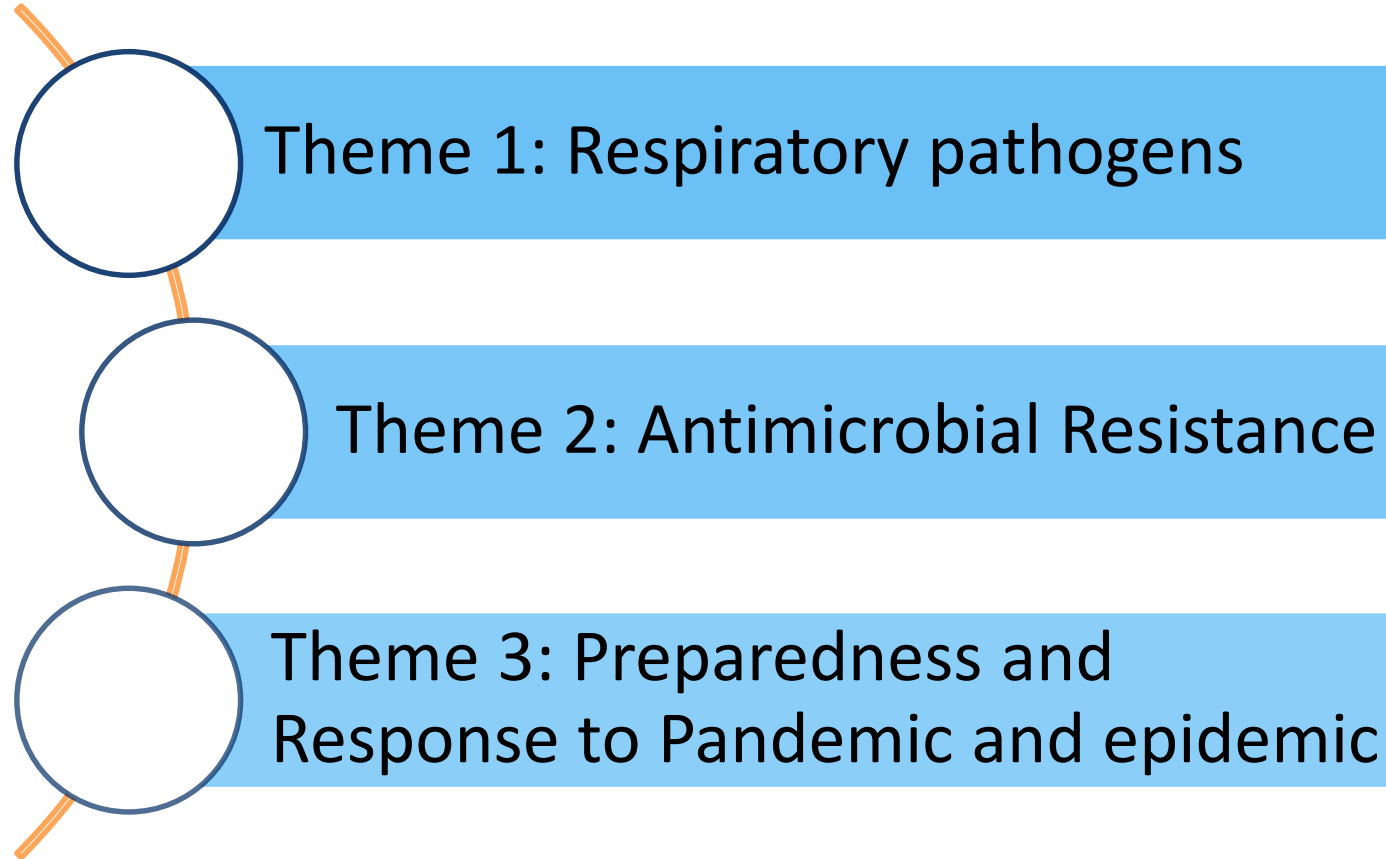
E. Telehealth & Advanced Technology

D. Preventive Medicine

C. Primary Healthcare

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A. Infectious Diseases

Theme 1: Respiratory pathogens

Theme 2: Antimicrobial Resistance

Theme 3: Preparedness and Response to Pandemic and epidemic

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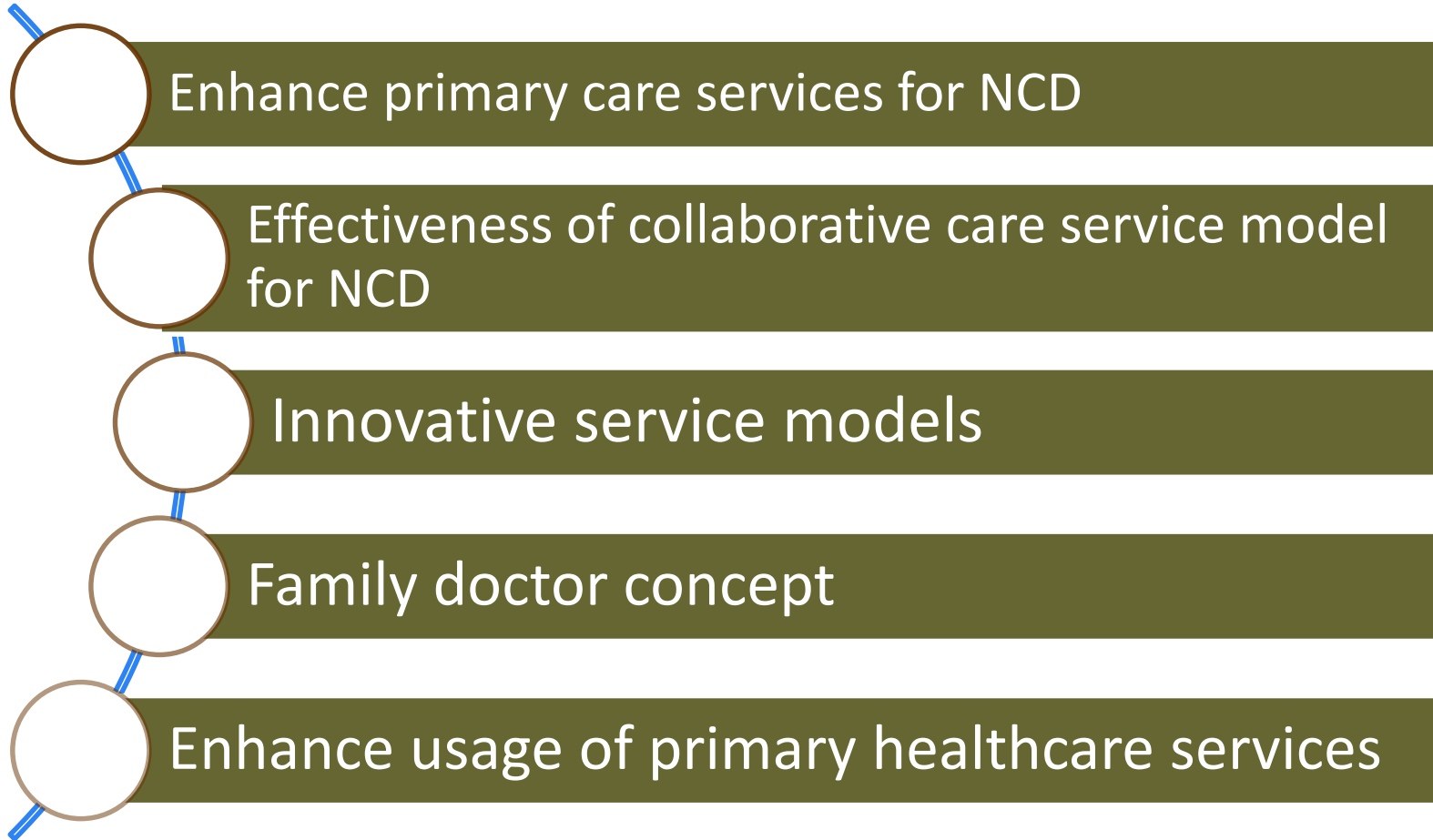# B. NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Detection, treatment and management

Ageing and elderly care

Mental health
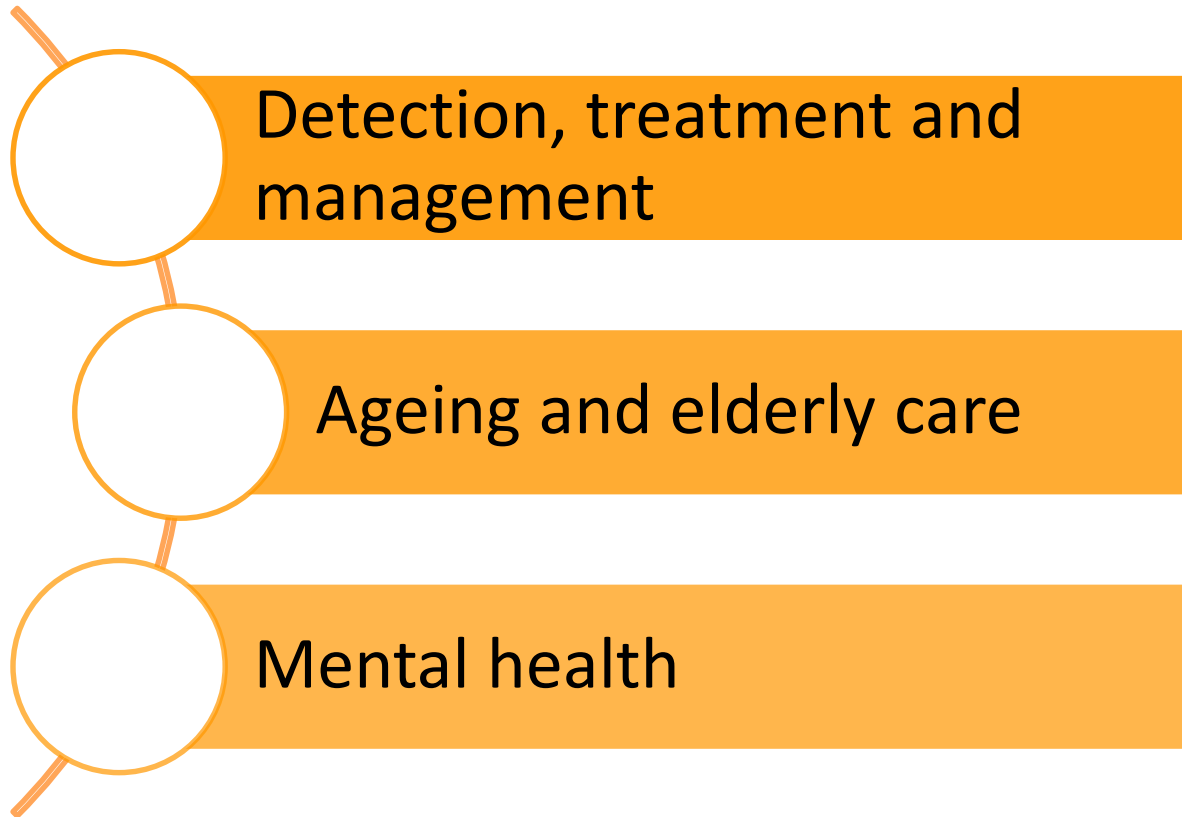
C. Primary Healthcare

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
- Enhance usage of primary healthcare services

D. Preventive Medicine (New)

Tobacco control

Healthy lifestyle

Patient empowerment
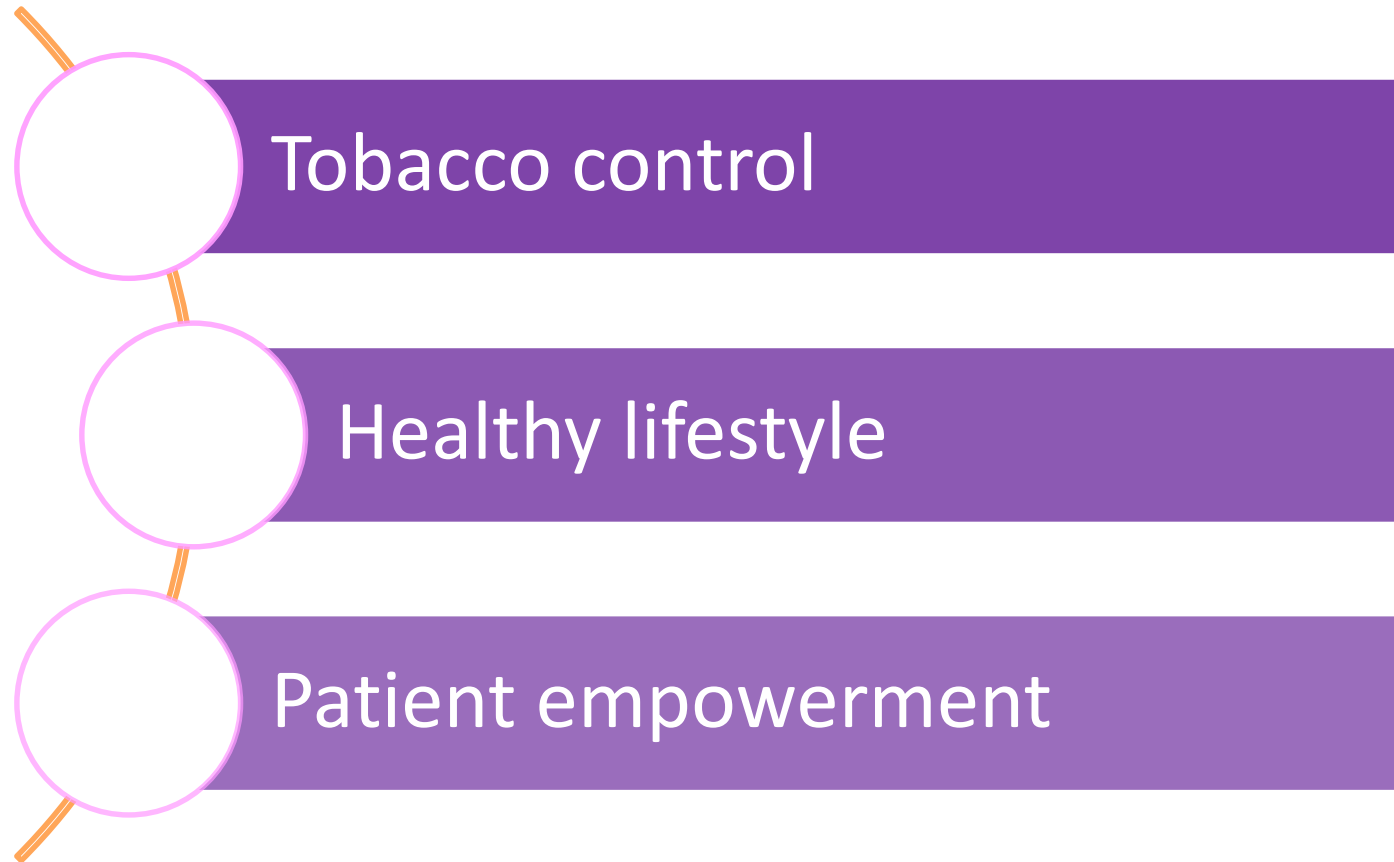
E. Telehealth and Advanced Technology (New)

Key areas of thematic priorities:

- 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

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F. Implementation Science

Pre-set criteria/framework/model to analyse barriers & facilitators of implementation outcomes:

Consolidated **F**ramework for **I**mplementation **R**esearch (CFIR)

Practical, **R**obust, **I**mplementation **S**ustainability **M**odel (PRISM)

Reach **E**ffectiveness **A**doption **I**mplementation **M**aintenance (RE-AIM)

Theoretical **D**omains **F**ramework (TDF)

Promoting **A**ction on **R**esearch Implementation in **H**ealth **S**ervices (PARHiS)

Applicants to elaborate in eForm Section 13(d)

SUBMISSION AND TIMELINE
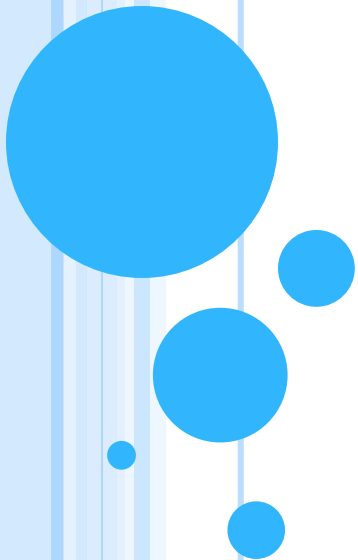
GRANT SIZE & TYPES

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
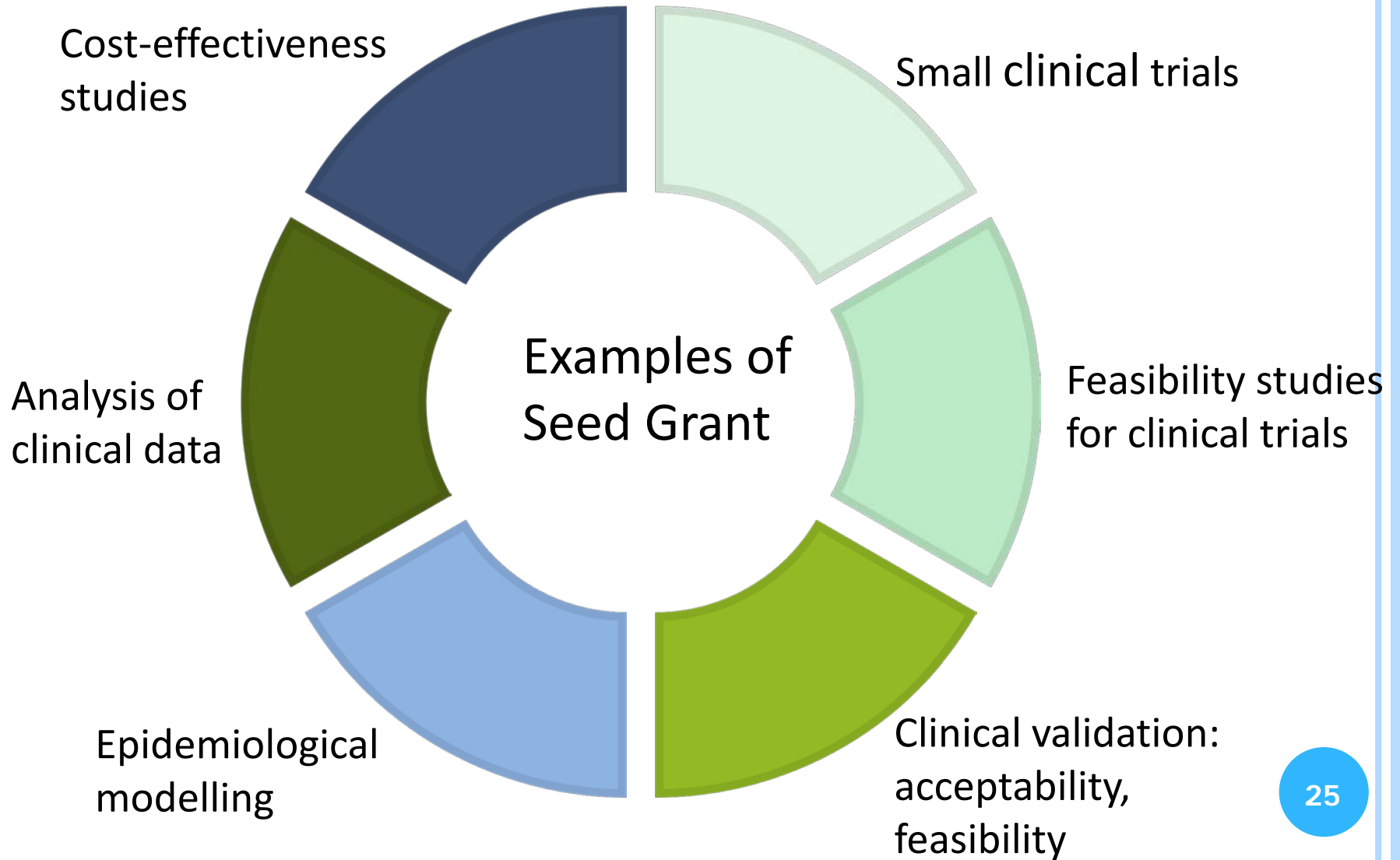
New proposal

Resubmission

GRANT SIZE & TYPES

Starting from 2021 Open Call

Seed Grant

Grant ceiling	**≤$500,000**
Criteria	1. Larger-scale pilot study <u>or</u> small-scale study with achievable objectives; and 2. Pre-defined outcome indicators to scale up

Seed Grant

Cost-effectiveness studies

Small clinical trials

Examples of Seed Grant

Analysis of clinical data

Feasibility studies for clinical trials

Epidemiological modelling

Clinical validation: acceptability, feasibility

ELIGIBILITY

✓ Locally based tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-governmental organisations and 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

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Submission of application

! Through eGMS by 31 March 2023 (18:00 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 13) is not used

eGMS – Online submission

eGMS
electronic Grant Management System

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 Office of the Health Bureau.

Login to eGMS

Email: _____

Your login email is your email address.

Password: _____

[Login]   Forgot your password?
          Forgot your login?

[Login with iAM Smart]

More Info >

Account Registration *(FOR APPLICANTS ONLY!)*

[Register for Principal Applicant Account]

[Register for Co-Applicant Account]

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

v2.192(Soft Launch)

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.

SECTION 13 PROPOSAL

➢ **Two different templates** for Sections 13 (a) – (h) must be attached as a PDF file to the e-Form

2022 HMRF Open Call – Research Proposal

2022 HMRF Open Call – Health Promotion Proposal

➢ To downloaded from https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk

- Briefing Sessions and Training Workshop for Grant Applications for the 2022 Open Call for Investigator-initiated Projects
- Guidance Notes - Grant Application for Investigator-initiated Projects *(PDF File 697K)* updated
- Explanatory Notes - Grant Application for Investigator-initiated Projects *(PDF File 688K)* 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 13(a)-(h)) *(Word File 35K)* updated
- Proposal Template for Health Promotion Project (Section 13(a)-(h)) *(Word File 32K)* updated

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SECTION 13 PROPOSAL (RESEARCH PROJECT)

- (d) Plan of Investigation accordingly -

d) Plan of Investigation:

[For advanced medical research, basic/pre-clinical research studies are not supported. Please state clearly how the study will focus on clinical studies and apply advanced technologies to facilitate the translation of knowledge generated from health and health services or infectious diseases studies into clinical practice and to inform health policies.]

[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.]

[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)   Subjects (with justification on the sample size)

(ii)   Methods

(iii) Study design

(iv)   Data processing and analysis

(v)   Potential pitfalls and contingency plans

Section 13 Proposal (Health Promotion)

- (d) Project Plan accordingly -

(d)   Project Plan:

[Please state clearly the pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the RE-AIM framework. Please refer to https://re-aim.org/ or https://www.fic.nih.gov/About/center-global-health-studies/neuroscience-implementation-toolkit/Pages/methodologies-frameworks.aspx 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.]

[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)   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

Resubmission

➤ Applications rated "2" or above in a previous HMRF Open Call can be submitted under the category of "Resubmission"–

- Application rated "2" should be substantially revised to address all GRB and/or reviewers' comments in a structured and consistent manner

- Application rated "3"/"4" should be revised to address all GRB and/or reviewers' comments in a structured and consistent manner

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

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Resubmission

- Applications rejected in a previous HMRF Open Call (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

Regulatory / Ethics Approval

Ethical/safety/regulatory approvals/consent

- Submit within 12 weeks (or as specified by the Secretariat) after announcement of funding decisions

Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate

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

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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

- Declaration
  - Supplementary sponsorship - Monetary, investigational new drugs/devices, reagents, consumables and rental of equipment

  - Any use of the grant monies to purchase products or services from businesses owned wholly or partly by the administering institution or any of the applicants, or any of the proposed personnel and sub-contractors/agencies to be engaged in the project

Points to note

- Duplicate funding
  - Failure to declare double funding (including submission of grant applications or similar proposals to HMRF or other funding agencies (local or overseas)) and potential conflict of interest shall be subject to penalty as determined by the RC

  - Work done before project commencement date must be declared

- Plagiarism
  - Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, is not tolerated and is considered as a type of serious misconduct and subject to penalty

POINTS TO NOTE – FUNDED PROJECTS

➢ Progress updates and Interim Reports

➢ Proactively report difficulties encountered

- e.g. slow progress, unexpected conditions affecting project completion, prior approval is required for change in study/project design, project extension and project team

➢ Final report, dissemination report, financial statement and audited account

➢ Outcome evaluation surveys 2 years and 4 years after project end date

➢ Dissemination activities, e.g. publication in Hong Kong Medical Journal, present at Journal Clubs, symposium, meetings and related HMRF activities.

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EXAMPLES OF EARLY REJECTED APPLICATIONS
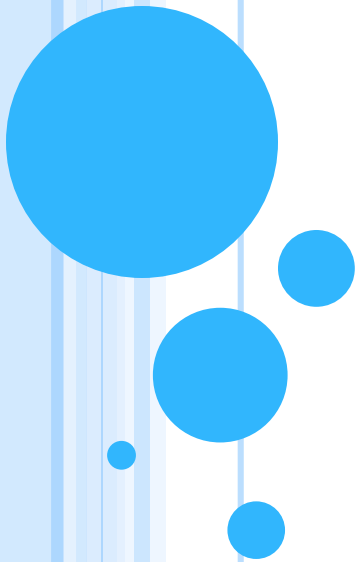
EXAMPLES

IMMATURE APPLICATIONS

Insufficient details for peer review

- Too few words (word limit: 4000).

- Research methods are described by reference to citations without description

- Lacking description of sampling, inclusion and exclusion criteria and how the primary and secondary outcomes are collected and measured

- Bullet points on data processing and analysis (or just provide the names of test statistics) without description

Examples

Immature Applications

Insufficient details for peer review

- For Health Promotion project, no pre-set criteria for process and outcome evaluation based on the RE-AIM framework

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EXAMPLES

INELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS

Non-compliance with submission requirements

- Exceeds word limits (4,000 words) in detailed proposal (Section 13(a) to (d)

e.g. putting "Plan of Investigation" to Appendix (5-page long)

- Use the wrong template (Section 13) for detailed proposal

e.g. A health services research was submitted as "Health Promotion" under Area of Project and detailed as "Health Promotion Proposal" in Section 13

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EXAMPLES

INELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS

Non-compliance with submission requirements

- Not meeting resubmission requirements

e.g. Point-by-point responses were not provided to address all comments made by the Grant Review Board and Reviewers.

- Incomplete application

e.g. Under-declared a grant proposal rejected by another funding agency; responses to reviewers' comments and the revised proposal with highlights of changes were not provided

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Out of scope - Advanced Medical Research

Clinical research not using advanced technologies

Basic / preclinical research

EXAMPLES

OUT-OF-SCOPE

Advanced Medical Research

- Establish cell lines, organoids and xenografts for preclinical drug testing studies without clinical validation

- Use of human samples for modeling disease pathogenesis in animal study / cell line without clinical validation

- Examine molecular mechanism and therapeutic effects of a new drug without use of advanced technologies

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EXAMPLES

OUT-OF-SCOPE

Health and Health Services Research

- Examine the functional roles and molecular mechanisms of an enzyme in metastatic cancer cells using in vivo and in vitro studies

- Evaluate a stem cell therapy for treatment of non-communicable disease in animal models

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EXAMPLES

OUT-OF-SCOPE

Infectious Diseases

- Investigate novel viruses to improve animal health and not related to human health

- Examine the gut microbiota in treatment of non-communicable diseases using animal models

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APPLICATION TIMELINE FOR 2022 OPEN CALL

Date	Items
31 Mar 2023 (18:00 HKT)	Closing date
Sep / Oct 2023	Decision letters issued • PA to respond to the comments of External Reviewers (ERs) and/or Grant Review Board (GRB) within 3 weeks
Nov 2023 – Mar 2024	Review of PAs' responses to satisfactorily address comments of ERs and/or GRB
	Final approval letter and agreement after resolving all outstanding issues including budget clarification and ethics approval

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FURTHER INFORMATION

FURTHER INFORMATION

Enquiry emails:
rfs@healthbureau.gov.hk (General)
egmsenquiry@healthbureau.gov.hk (eGMS)

THANK YOU