Guideline for HKUST Bridge Gap Fund 2024

The Bridge Gap Fund ("BGF") is established with the support of the Funding from HKUST, the Knowledge Transfer Earmarked Grant from the Hong Kong Government as well as other resources. The BGF is introduced by the Office of Knowledge Transfer (OKT).

Objectives

- BGF is to strengthen the commercialization of HKUST technology for licensing technology to industry, forming technology start-up companies, industry collaboration or application to funding with industry partnership.
- BGF aims to translate HKUST's research outcomes into viable intellectual property to attract and motivate industry partners to work with HKUST to create commercial and societal impact.

Form of Funding Support

- Each approved project will typically receive funding support of up to HK$ 0.25M for "Seed Project Support Scheme" and up to HK$ 0.5M for "IP Commercialization Scheme". The total BGF for this Call for Proposal is up to HK$ 5M.
- Funding support is to fund eligible activities within the project (refer to Appendix). Funding for a project is available for up to twelve (12) months (from the project commencement date) with tangible deliverables. The expenditure incurred must commence only after the approval of the BGF and cannot be used retrospectively. Unexpended balance must be returned to HKUST.
- Additional funding of up to $0.1M will be offered to awarded BGF projects for demonstrating sustainability contributions through the Sustainable Smart Campus as a Living Lab (SSC) initiative for use in developing highly visible and interactive educational components for the HKUST community. Eligibility for SSC funds will be contingent on demonstration that the project contributes to specific targets listed within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The award of this funding will be subject to the approval of the SSC Committee following the criteria listed in the SSC website. The SSC Committee shall notify successful candidates under separate cover.

- Principal Investigator should submit a project progress report every 6 months and work closely with OKT during and after the project execution.
- Principal Investigator can submit more than one application for different projects.

Eligibility

(a) <u>Seed Project Support Scheme (Up to HK$ 0.25M per project):</u>
- Principal Investigator must be full-time faculty members (including RAP) of HKUST (Clear Water Bay) who have not received any funding support from OKT funding program (including but not limited to PCF, BGF, HBJRI, HKJRI & HCIC) and CSSET funding program.
- Projects should demonstrate the commercial potential and the advancement in technology readiness of HKUST research outputs, the prospect of adoption by industry partners, or the establishment of startup. Projects that focus on basic research are NOT eligible.
- The projects received or are receiving other funding supports with the same deliverables are NOT eligible.

(b) <u>IP Commercialization Scheme (Up to HK$ 0.5M per project)</u>:
- Principal Investigator must be full-time faculty members of HKUST (Clear Water Bay).
- Projects should have clear background Intellectual Properties (IPs) with invention/software/know-how disclosure submitted to OKT.
- Projects should demonstrate the commercial potential and advancement in technology readiness of HKUST research outputs, the prospect of adoption by industry partners, or establishment of startup. Projects that focus on basic research are NOT eligible.
- The projects received or are receiving other funding supports with the same deliverables are NOT eligible.

Additional Funding Support - Sustainable Smart Campus support (up to HK$0.1M per project):

- Projects must be approved by the **<u>Seed Project Support Scheme or the IP Commercialization Scheme </u>**before being eligible for SSC support.

- Projects should demonstrate their contribution to positive social impact by explaining how the work helps advance one or more of the <u>UN Sustainable Development Goals</u> "Targets and Indicators."
- In the spirit of using the campus as a "living lab," eligible projects must either (1) implement their prototype or intervention in a visible location on campus which can be the source of the teaching and learning components, or (2) install a teaching and learning feature in a visible location on campus that directs attention to the project and its educational features.

Selection Mechanism & Criteria

- Project selection criteria include IP strength, commercial potential and impact. Principal Investigators must demonstrate their projects with commercial potentials, including but not limited to forming start-ups, and/or foreseeable adoption and application by industries for further downstream development using available funding sources (excluding ITF Tier-3 funding).
- In considering an application, the BGF Review Committee will evaluate, at a minimum, the following criteria:

  - **Potential for Commercialization**
    - Key problem or gap that the proposed technology can solve
    - Market opportunities
    - Target industry players or startup potential
    - Commitment from industry player
  - **Technology**
    - Strength of Background IP (patent / patent application, copyrights, software, know-how, database, etc.)
    - Technology and IP development plan
    - Level of innovation and viability of deliverables
    - Possibility to establish the deliverables
  - **Project Team**
    - Demonstration of the capability of research and development
    - Adequacy of the team to perform the project

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

- All IPR arising from the BGF project will be owned by HKUST, unless alternative arrangement is specified.
- The Principal Investigator is required to inform the OKT of any new intellectual property that may arise from the project.
- Licensing arrangement of IPR arising from the BGF follows HKUST's IP Policy.

Appendix

Important Notes

- Project completion date is 30 June 2025. The project cannot be extended, and unexpended balance <u>must be returned</u> to HKUST.

- Any substantial changes from the original project outlined in the funding request must report to OKT for approval.

- Principal Investigators are required to submit the budget virement to OKT and Research Office for approval regarding the following situation:
  (a) a new expenditure item is proposed regardless of its amount; or
  (b) the overspending for an individual item (i.e. Salary, Equipment, etc) exceeds 30% of the budgeted amount

- OKT reserves the right to terminate the project where there is evidence that the project fails to adhere to the project proposal, unless a change has been agreed in writing.

- HKUST's policies governing the usage of research funding, IP ownership, recovery of direct IP protection and development cost and distribution of revenue will apply to the BGF.

- Fail to achieve the deliverables or non-compliance with the terms and conditions associated with the project is a factor which OKT will take into account in considering future applications from the same Principal Investigator or the same project team members.

- The Principal Investigator is required to declare in the application whether the Principal Investigator has sought or is seeking funding support for the project from other funding sources. Double subvention for the project will not be allowed.

- The Principal Investigator is required to declare any conflict of interests or potential conflict of interests with the parties engaged for the execution of the project, and/or any shareholdings with potential licensee(s) or spinoff company.

Budget Requirements

- The BGF will <u>not cover</u>:

  - General equipment that not specifically related to the deliverables;
  - Patent applications;
  - General administration and overhead;
  - General office IT equipment;
  - Depreciation / amortization or provisions not presenting actual expenses incurred;
  - Maintenance cost of existing equipment;
  - Utilities – charges for electricity, gas, water, telephone, fax, etc;
  - Travel, accommodation and subsistence (except local travel expenses within Greater Bay Area on a reimbursement basis).

  The above list is not exhaustive. Principal Investigator should consult the OKT for any questions regarding eligible costs for the BGF.

Application Procedures

- Principal Investigator is required to complete all sections of the [Application Form](#) in English and upload [Online Research Project Submission Approval](#) (ORPA) Form, approved record of [Committee on Research Practices Review (CRP) Form](#) (if applicable) and other supporting documents, including technology positioning, commercialization plan, including forming startup companies.

- Once the application is approved, the Principal Investigator will become the recipient of the BGF and is responsible for the following:
  - Execution of the approved project;
  - Overseeing and reporting the progress of the project;
  - Ensuring proper use of the approved project fund in accordance with this Guideline;
  - Attending progress review meetings for the project;
  - Meeting with industry partners for potential technology adoption or forming startups;

- Working with OKT technology cluster heads on commercialization of the project.

Application Review Procedures

- Upon receipt of an application, OKT may seek clarification or supplementary information from the Principal Investigator.

- If principal Investigator is interested in applying SSC additional funding support, before the full application is submitted, project teams are encouraged to share their project details and receive feedback from SSC staff to improve chances of support. [Contact information is on the website](#).

- The full application will be submitted to the BGF Review Committee, the Committee will be chaired by AVP-RD(KT), members may include Heads of OKT, faculty members in related technology areas, as well as external experts.

- The functions of the BGF Review Committee are to assess, review and approve the proposals submitted to the Committee.

- To avoid conflict of interest, member(s) of the BGF Review Committee will be required to declare whether they are directly or indirectly related to an application and, if so, will be refrained from participating in the discussion of the particular application.

- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited in late April to attend the BGF Review Meeting held in May to present the application and answer questions from the BGF Review Committee.

Notification of Results

- If an application is recommended for funding support, an offer letter will be issued to the successful applicants in late May. The letter may include special terms and conditions associated with the project imposed by the BGF Review Committee. The Principal Investigator may need to revise the application form accordingly before the funding could be issued.

- If an application is unsuccessful, the Principal Investigator will be notified in writing.

- Each Principal Investigator will have **3 calendar days** from the date of offer to accept the offer.

- For each successful application, the Principal Investigator will be the recipient of the approved funding. The Principal Investigator has to comply with this Guideline and all the terms and conditions laid down in the offer letter.

Disbursement of the BGF

- Unless otherwise stated, disbursement of the approved BGF will be made through the Research Office (RO) after receipt of duly signed acceptance of the offer together with all required documents.

- The Principal Investigator shall be responsible for any project expenditures and commitments in excess of the amount approved as stated in the offer letter.

Submission of Progress and Final Reports

- All projects are monitored against their progress on milestones and deliverables throughout the project period. At least one milestone review session shall be arranged with OKT's staff in charge of individual project. Upon request by OKT or as specified in the terms and conditions associated with the project, Principal Investigators will provide timely progress reports for assessment.

- The Principal Investigator will submit the final report for the project within one (1) month from the project completion or early termination date.

- Typically, the final report should include, but not limited to the following:

  - Achievements of the project with respect to the objectives and deliverables;
  - Actual expenditure for the project, including unexpended funds for the project to be returned to HKUST;
  - List of Foreground IP generated from the project

- Commercialization plan with identified partners or startup plan

- Progress and final reports should be prepared in the standard format. In-depth technical details should be provided to facilitate assessment. Upon request by the OKT, Principal Investigators will provide timely clarification and / or additional information to substantiate the content of progress and final reports. To better assess the project deliverables, Principal Investigators may be invited for presentation (with demonstration/ showcase of prototype, if applicable) after the project completion date.

- The report(s) will be reviewed by OKT and submitted to AVP-RD(KT) for further consideration and comments.

Procurement Procedures

- The Principal Investigator should ensure that all procurements for goods and services should be carried out in an unbiased and fair manner and must comply with the current procurement policy at HKUST.