

Public Policy Research Funding Scheme and Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme

Guidance Notes

Applicants must read these Guidance Notes in conjunction with the Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements carefully in preparing applications. All sections of the application form must be completed with supporting documents wherever required. The English version shall prevail whenever there is any discrepancy between the English and Chinese versions.

1. Introduction

The Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (PPRFS) and the Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (SPPRFS) are government-financed funding schemes dedicated to supporting public policy research in Hong Kong. The two funding schemes are administered by the Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU).

CEPU is set up to enhance the Government's capabilities in research and advocacy on long-term and strategic issues. Its objectives include –

- (i) to advocate for and assist in the formulation of long-term and strategic policies from a forward-thinking perspective;
- (ii) to keep abreast of national development, including directions, plans and policies, analyse and suggest areas of significance in the integration into national development, and actively participate in and contribute to the pursuit of such areas;
- (iii) to examine international relations and situations, and analyse opportunities and risks, so that the Government can seize opportunities, create a favourable environment for development, and prevent risks at the same time; and
- (iv) to grasp the sentiments of Hong Kong citizens, understand the general direction and focus of their concerns, discover factors that are conducive to social harmony and stability, and assist in decision-making directions and formulation of measures.

In addition to conducting in-house research studies, CEPU aims to build

up external policy research capacity through administering PPRFS and SPPRFS amongst other measures. In line with CEPU's scope of work, researches funded by PPRFS and SPPRFS are expected to be conducive to the achievement of the stated objectives of CEPU and in turn the development of Hong Kong.

Both PPRFS and SPPRFS aim to promote evidence-based public policy research in Hong Kong to facilitate public policy discussion and in turn enhancing policy formulation to meet the needs of society, as well as nurturing the talents required. Specifically, SPPRFS aims to support longer-term public policy research on strategic themes and research areas identified by the Government, build up research capacity and facilitate collaboration among institutions/think tanks whilst PPRFS focuses on smaller scale public policy research of shorter duration. Research studies that will inform Government's policy making process, drive changes, keep up with national development and international trends, and contribute to policy development will be considered for funding. These include applied researches that are problem-focused and solution-oriented, and forward-looking researches on strategic and long-term issues. Only research studies that have direct policy implications or relevance and will facilitate public policy formulation in Hong Kong, and the outcomes from which can be effectively and practically translated into policy may be provided with funding. Research that are mainly academic in nature will not be funded.

Applications for PPRFS are accepted throughout the year, while applications for SPPRFS are invited once a year in general.

1.1 Research Areas and Topics

Strategic themes and specified research areas for SPPRFS will be identified for each year's application in light of the research needs and policy priorities of the Government. All submitted applications must fall under the specified strategic themes and specified research areas announced for each exercise. **Those falling outside the specified strategic themes and specified research areas will not be considered generally.** For 2024-25, six strategic themes together with specified research areas available on the [schemes' webpage](#) have been identified. Applications for SPPRFS 2024-25 must be made under one of the specified strategic themes and in line with the specified research areas.

For PPRFS, applicants should make reference to the list of research themes and areas available on the [schemes' webpage](#). The list includes strategic themes and specified research areas for SPPRFS 2024-25 (summarised under code S1 to S6) which align with the Government's policy priorities and research needs, and applicants are encouraged to prepare proposals with reference to. Besides these themes and research areas, the list also includes eight major themes for PPRFS, namely (a) co-operation with the Mainland; (b) land and housing; (c) economic development; (d) livelihood issues; (e) innovation and technology; (f) education and youth development; (g) environmental protection; and (h) political

development and governance with 29 indicative research areas.

2. Guide to Application

2.1 Eligibility

The following persons are eligible to apply for funds under PPRFS and SPPRFS -

- (a) academics, teaching/research staff who are teaching or eligible to teach a course in undergraduate programmes or above in degree-awarding institutions of categories (A) and (B) listed below;
- (b) visiting scholars/adjunct professors/honorary professors/emeritus professors who are teaching or eligible to teach a course in undergraduate programmes or above in degree-awarding institutions of categories (A) and (B) listed below; and
- (c) public policy researchers in local non-profit making public policy research think tanks as stated in category (C) below. Principal Investigators (PIs) in this category must possess relevant public policy research experience.

The eligibility of the applicant has to be checked and confirmed by the institutions / think tanks concerned.

(A) *Eight degree-awarding institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC)*

- City University of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Baptist University
- Lingnan University
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- The Education University of Hong Kong
- The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- The University of Hong Kong

(B) *Publicly-funded and self-financing local degree-awarding institutions*

- Centennial College
- Gratia Christian College
- HKCT Institute of Higher Education
- Hong Kong Chu Hai College
- Hong Kong Metropolitan University

- Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education
- Hong Kong Shue Yan University
- Saint Francis University
- School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University
- School of Professional Education and Executive Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Vocational Training Council
- The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
- The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts
- Tung Wah College
- UOW College Hong Kong
- Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education

(C) *Local non-profit making public policy research think tanks*

Think tanks under this category must be non-profit making and registered in Hong Kong with proven and recognised track records of public policy research. An eligible think tanks can be a society established in Hong Kong under the Societies Ordinance (Cap. 151), a company incorporated under the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622 or Cap. 32 before 3 March 2014) or a charitable institution or trust of public character registered under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112).¹

2.2 Quotas of Applications

There is no quota on the number of applications for an eligible institution/think tank. But the maximum number of PPRFS/SPPRFS projects that a PI can hold concurrently is two normally. The PI should be responsible for the overall management and ownership of the project. It is important that institutions/think tanks should satisfy themselves that the applications are of sufficient quality before they are submitted for consideration.

There is no limit on the number of Co-Investigator(s) (Co-I(s)) who work with the PI on the project, but each Co-I should have a clear, distinct and material role.

¹ On making the first application, think tanks are required to submit valid proof documents on their registration status and non-profitmaking nature, i.e. a copy of the Memorandum (if any), Articles of Association or Constitution duly signed by the Chairman and one other office bearer. The Memorandum (if any), Articles of Association or the Constitution should state its non-profit-making nature, including a clause specifying that members do not take any share of the profits of the organisation, and upon dissolution of the organisation members shall not take any share of the profits or assets of the organisation. Interested think tanks should consult the Secretariat in case of enquiries. The Secretariat has the final right to determine a think tank's eligibility to apply for the PPRFS and SPPRFS.

2.3 Research Mode

Applicants are welcome to propose any innovative research mode to conduct public policy research which will facilitate mutual exchange between the Government and researchers in public policy research, thereby enabling researchers to gain more insights on policy formulation and enhancing the quality of public policy research in Hong Kong.

To enhance policy relevance of funded projects, PIs are encouraged to proactively engage government bureaux and departments and other stakeholders in the course of research, particularly when drawing up policy recommendations and disseminating project findings.

Funding applications that may directly or indirectly promote unhealthy behaviours (e.g. alcohol drinking, smoking and gambling) will not be supported.

2.4 Project Duration

2.4.1 *PPRFS*

For PPRFS, the duration of research projects will normally last from six to 12 months. Projects with a longer duration up to three years will be considered if strong support and justifications are provided.

2.4.2 *SPPRFS*

For SPPRFS, the duration of research projects may last from one to five years.

2.4.3 *Commencement of Project*

PPRFS and SPPRFS projects shall commence within three months upon the funding award or the grant shall be withdrawn. The PI shall provide sound justifications and seek the prior approval of the PPRFS and SPPRFS Secretariat for defer of project start date. Such request will only be entertained exceptionally.

2.5 Funding

2.5.1 *Funding Cap on PPRFS*

Given the keen competition for the limited funds available, each project under PPRFS will normally be granted HK\$1 million or below. Applicants are required to provide strong justifications for any project costing over HK\$1 million.

2.5.2 Funding Cap on SPPRFS

The funding cap for each project granted under the SPPRFS is HK\$5 million.

2.5.3 Guiding Principles

Unless otherwise approved by the Secretariat, expenditure could only be incurred during the approved project period. Expenditure incurred outside the project period could not be covered by PPRFS and SPPRFS funds.

The principle of economy and cost effectiveness of expenditure shall be observed at all times. Proper records in respect of administration of the funded project, use of funds and documentation of quotations should be kept for audit purposes.

Institutions/think tanks and PIs have the responsibilities to ensure that PPRFS/SPPRFS grants are used appropriately and reasonably within the approved scope and timeframe. The Secretariat shall not be bound to reimburse expenditure outside the approved scope or not properly incurred. It will claw back the released fund on such items and the institutions/think tanks concerned shall return the corresponding amount to the Government.

2.5.4 Permissible Items

Under the policy on the prevention of double benefits, PPRFS/SPPRFS grants must **not** be used to remunerate PIs and Co-I(s), or to subsidise their salaries, including honorarium, in any way, if they are receiving any forms of salary/remuneration/honorarium/allowance by public funds.

Funding support may be provided for the remuneration of research support staff, such as Senior Research Assistants, Research Assistants and Student Helpers, who assist in conducting research work and are remunerated with salary. In case where a research supporting staff is employed for several projects, his/her salary should be apportioned pro rata accordingly. The policy on the prevention of double benefits also applies to the remuneration of research support staff. The underlying principle is to ensure prudent use of public resources.

Applicants who fail to comply with the rules on the prevention of double benefits will be required to refund the Government the benefits overpaid to them with interest.

In cases where there is genuine need, funding for relief teachers may be provided so as to enable the PI concerned to allocate sufficient time for research. Relief teachers engaged for this purpose are meant to relieve the PIs of their day-to-day teaching loads and administrative burden related to teaching.

Nevertheless, it is the primary responsibility of institutions to make the best use of their resources. Hence, such funding will be provided only exceptionally. PIs have to provide detailed and reasonable justification. For details, please refer to the Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements for the PPRFS and SPPRFS.

PPRFS/SPPRFS grants could be used for covering the overhead expenses relating to a project at a rate up to 15% of the grant.

PPRFS/SPPRFS grants could also be used for covering the audit fee for a project, which should not exceed HK\$5,000 for projects lasting less than 36 months and HK\$15,000 for projects lasting 36 months or above.

PPRFS/SPPRFS grants must **not** be used for the procurement of equipment (other than stationery, printing, reference books, etc. that are **not** regarded as equipment). Funding may be used to purchase specialised software licenses (e.g. data analysis software like NVivo), but **not** general software licenses (e.g. Microsoft Windows & Office).

Funding requests for the provision of transportation and accommodation for general participants of dissemination events, meals, editing, proofreading and translation of reports/publications and dissemination in journals will **not** be entertained.

2.5.5 *Outsourcing of Research Work*

While any outsourcing or sub-contracting of research work is strictly prohibited, proposals to outsource the work of conducting opinion surveys may be accepted, subject to justifications and considerations by the Assessment Panel (see section 3.1 below).

2.5.6 *Data Collection outside Hong Kong*

In principle, PPRFS/SPPRFS grants should primarily be used for undertaking research work in Hong Kong. PIs may only use the grant for data collection outside Hong Kong if this is a necessary and justified part of the research. The Assessment Panel will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the merits and justifications provided by PIs.

2.6 Submission of Application

The application form, including the research proposal, must be –

- (a) endorsed by the institution/think tank concerned with signature of the person-in-charge of the organisation and official chop of the organisation; and

- (b) in the specified format and submitted to the PPRFS and SPPRFS Secretariat by email (ppr@cepu.gov.hk).

Clarifications or supplementary information from the applicant may be required whenever necessary. Applications will be processed for vetting **only** after the receipt of all relevant information, including submissions of clarifications or supplementary information.

Institutions/think tanks bear the primary responsibility for prevention, detection, and investigation of research misconduct, including but not limited to misuse of funds, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, double-dipping and non-disclosure of similar / related research work in the application. They are strongly advised to vet the applications using anti-plagiarism software before submitting them to the Secretariat. If applications have not been vetted by anti-plagiarism software before being submitted to the Secretariat, institutions/think tanks should confirm in the application form that they are satisfied that the application has been prepared in accordance and compliance with the sector-wide research integrity standards. Please refer to section 8 for further information on research integrity and handling of research misconduct.

The Secretariat reserves the right not to consider an application on grounds including that the application has been declined previously on the ground of research misconduct by PPRFS/SPPRFS or other funding agencies, or that in all the circumstances the granting of funding to the application will be contrary to public interest.

2.7 Access to Third-Party Data and Research Ethics/Safety Approval

If access to data and records from third-parties, including but not limited to government department(s) or official agencies, is critical to the proposed study, the PI should provide evidence in the application form that the parties concerned have been approached for approval of access to the related data/records and if the application is approved for funding, to provide confirmation of such approval as soon as possible, and in any case before commencement of the project².

It is the responsibility of PIs and the institutions/think tanks to ensure that the research proposals are carefully reviewed for their compliance with applicable laws, health and safety guidelines and ethical standards. Ethics clearance should be sought for research involving human subjects, living animals and/or artefacts. PIs should provide relevant ethics approvals and/or safety approvals as soon as possible, and in any case before commencement of the project.

² PPRFS and SPPRFS projects shall commence within three months upon the funding award.

Failure to observe the above requirements will result in withdrawal of grants. In such a case, the institution/think tank concerned will need to return disbursed funds, if any, to the Government.

2.8 Disclosure of Information

It is the responsibility of PIs to provide true and accurate information in the application form. Withholding or failure to disclose material information relating to the application, including but not limited to the omission of details of similar / related research work or similar / related research proposal for which other funding previously or currently applied and/or approved, may result in disqualification of the application and/or other disciplinary action. Please refer to section 8 for further information on research integrity and handling of research misconduct.

For the PIs' own interests, it is advisable for the PI to declare related research work even when there is uncertainty. Declaration of related proposals / projects / research work does not necessarily mean that the applications concerned will be adversely affected. The application may still be funded if the PI is able to justify the differences of the proposals / projects / research work for separate funding and the need to conduct the proposed research work despite similar research has been / will be conducted.

2.9 Processing Time of Applications

Generally speaking, the assessment process of applications under PPRFS and SPPRFS takes approximately six months, but the duration of which could be subject to change depending on the actual circumstances.

3. Assessment Mechanism

3.1 Assessment Panel

An Assessment Panel set up by the Government will consider all PPRFS and SPPRFS applications and make recommendations to the Government. The Panel is chaired by and comprises experienced academics. Please refer to the scheme's webpage for the composition of the Assessment Panel.

3.2 Peer Review

Apart from Panel Readers, applications under PPRFS and SPPRFS will also be assessed by reviewers who are not members of the Assessment Panel (non-Panel reviewers)³. The non-Panel reviewers include both local and non-local

³ In general, each qualified PPRFS application will be assessed by at least 2 Panel Readers and 1 non-
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experienced academics and experts. To ensure policy relevance of the research proposals, suggestions and views of relevant Government bureaux/departments will also be sought for reference by the Assessment Panel.

3.3 Assessment Criteria

Research quality and the relevance of the proposal to the public policy and needs of Hong Kong are the principal criteria in assessing research proposals.

In considering a research proposal, due consideration will be given to –

- (a) research/scholarly merit including research design and methodology, novelty and innovation;
- (b) relevance and implication to public policy development in Hong Kong; the extent to which it will foster informed discussion on the relevant policy and address the needs of Hong Kong; whether the findings can be effectively and practically translated into policy from a forward-looking perspective, taking into account national development and international situation; and dissemination plan;
- (c) feasibility and practicality of the proposal;
- (d) the capability of the applicant, including academic qualifications, research records, past research performance, and outcomes of past projects;
- (e) whether the research proposal's schedule of implementation is well-planned and practicable, and the duration is reasonable;
- (f) whether the proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with full justifications provided;
- (g) whether the research proposal has alternative sources of funding support; and
- (h) whether there is or likely to be a duplication of the work already or currently carried out by other groups.

3.3.1 SPPRFS

Applications for SPPRFS will first be screened if they fall under the specified strategic themes and specified research areas. Research quality and the

Panel reviewer, whereas each qualified SPPRFS application will be reviewed by the Assessment Panel and each shortlisted application will be assessed by at least 2 Panel Readers and 2 non-Panel reviewers.

strategic relevance to the public policy development of Hong Kong are the primary considerations in evaluating SPPRFS research proposals. In considering a research proposal, besides the assessment criteria set out in section 3.3 above, the Assessment Panel will also take into account institutional support towards capacity building in public policy research (e.g. infrastructure support or matching funds), and any external funding sources and support.

Research teams of shortlisted proposals may be invited for a selection interview, in which the research teams will present their proposal to the Assessment Panel. Government bureaux/departments concerned may also be invited to send representatives to attend the selection interview on the relevant proposals. Government bureau/department representatives are welcome to raise questions to the research teams and offer policy views and insights to the Assessment Panel to enrich the assessment process.

3.4 Assessment Process

Qualified applications will undergo a very rigorous assessment process which involves the Assessment Panel and non-Panel reviewers made up of local and non-local experienced academics and experts. In deciding whether to recommend funding for an application, the Assessment Panel will take into account the comments of individual reviewers and the views of relevant bureaux/departments. The Assessment Panel will take a holistic view on the research proposal and reach a collective decision. Grants are allocated on a competitive basis (the success rate is based on the general quality of the proposals as assessed by the Assessment Panel, and the availability of funds in a particular year). No appeal will be entertained by the Assessment Panel unless in case of a major procedural flaw. Where appropriate, applicants are encouraged to revise their applications for re-submission.

3.5 Avoidance of Conflict of Interest

To avoid conflict of interest, any member of the Assessment Panel who has any connection with an applicant, such as belonging to the same organisation (in recent years or currently), should declare interest at the meeting before joining the discussion. After an interest has been declared, the Chairman of the Assessment Panel shall consider whether an actual or perceived conflict of interest has arisen and accordingly decide whether the member concerned may speak or vote on the matter, remain in the meeting as an observer, withdraw from the meeting altogether, or other appropriate action. A declaration of interests system is also in place for other reviewers to ensure that the assessments are fair and impartial.

If, for the avoidance of conflict of interest, an applicant wants to exclude a person from reviewing his or her application, the applicant should submit to the Secretariat separately the request in writing, setting out the full circumstances and

justification. Such request should not be made under any section of an application which in its entirety will be sent to reviewers for assessment. In all cases, the Secretariat reserves the right of final decision on the selection of reviewers. In order to preserve anonymity of reviewers for upholding the integrity of the assessment mechanism, the Secretariat will not inform the applicant of the outcome of the decision.

4. Monitoring and Funding Arrangement

4.1 PPRFS

An Initial Progress Report should be submitted five months after approval of application to demonstrate good progress of the project and the research is carried out in accordance with the approved proposal. 50% of the funding for a project shall be disbursed upon approval of the project and signing of an undertaking and 30% upon acceptance of an Initial Progress Report. The remaining 20% of the funding shall be disbursed upon acceptance of a final report. For PPRFS project with duration longer than one year, the PI has to submit a Mid-Term Progress Report by the end of half of the project period. Other than the abovementioned progress reports, the Secretariat may require the PI to provide progress updates as and when necessary. If considered appropriate by the Assessment Panel, the final payment for a project of which the revised final report is rated “unsatisfactory” may not be disbursed or disbursed in full.

4.2 SPPRFS

Progress Reports should be submitted at an interval as specified by the Secretariat to demonstrate good progress of the SPPRFS project and the research is carried out in accordance with the approved proposal. Other than the below mentioned progress reports, the Secretariat may require the PI to provide progress updates as and when necessary.

For SPPRFS projects lasting 24 months or below, funding will be released in three tranches. 50% of the funding for a project shall be disbursed upon approval of the project and signing of an undertaking. 30% of the funding shall be disbursed upon acceptance of a Deliverable Progress Report to be submitted by the end of half of the project period. For monitoring purpose, Progress Reports should be submitted by the end of one-fourth and three-fourths of the project period. The remaining balance of 20% of the funding shall be released upon acceptance of a final report.

For SPPRFS projects lasting over 24 months, funding will be released in four tranches. 40% of the funding for a project shall be disbursed upon approval of the project and signing of an undertaking. 30% and 20% of the funding shall be disbursed upon acceptance of the First and Second Deliverable Progress

Reports, to be submitted by the end of one-third and two-thirds of the project period respectively. For monitoring purpose, Progress Reports should be submitted by the end of one-sixth, half and five-sixths of the project period. The remaining balance of 10% of the funding shall be released upon acceptance of a final report.

If considered appropriate by the Assessment Panel, the final payment for a project of which the revised final report is rated “unsatisfactory” may not be disbursed or disbursed in full.

4.3 PPRFS and SPPRFS

Ongoing projects will be monitored by the Secretariat. All completed projects will be reviewed by the Assessment Panel, which will assess the effectiveness of the project by comparing the project results against its original objectives and targets as set out in the project proposal. Relevant Government bureaux/departments’ comments may also be sought.

PIs have to submit a final report (in softcopy and in both word and pdf formats) by the completion date and two colour-printed and bound hard copies of the final report upon notification by the Secretariat. PIs also have to submit a Completion Report with quantitative empirical data generated from the research, if any, (in word/excel, pdf and machine readable such as comma-separated values (CSV) formats) accompanied by an auditor’s report⁴ within six months after the project completion date.

Timely submission of reports is important and reflects on the diligence and ability of the PI and the institution in managing a project. If an extension of the submission deadline is required, prior written approval should be obtained from the Secretariat. An extension of three months of the deadline for final report may be granted in justifiable cases. Further extension may be granted only under exceptional circumstances and with strong justifications.

If reports remain overdue without sound justifications or are not submitted in accordance with the required format and/or contain insufficient information, or if PIs fail to revise and resubmit as required by the Secretariat by the specified deadline, the Secretariat will consider taking follow-up action as appropriate, including but not limited to withholding payments, recovering disbursed payment, terminating the projects and rating them as “unsatisfactory” for record and taking it into account when considering new applications from the PI.

⁴ The auditor’s report should be prepared by a Certified Public Accountant or a Public Accountant registered under the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Cap. 50) declaring that all expenses incurred fall within the approved scope and complied with these Guidance Notes, and the Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements for the PPRFS and SPPRFS and any terms and conditions specified by the Secretariat and/or the Government.

If projects are not carried out in accordance with the approved work plan (or the revised work plan as subsequently approved by the Secretariat), implementation date and period, these Guidance Notes, the Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements for PPRFS and SPPRFS, and terms and conditions specified by the Secretariat and/or the Government, if the PI fails to seek the Secretariat's prior approval for any major changes, if the PI is found to have committed research misconduct, if any of the research activities or the research report may constitute a breach of any laws applicable to Hong Kong from time to time (e.g. Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201), Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200), The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, etc.), or if the research is in contrary to public interest, the Secretariat reserves the right to withhold the release of the approved fund, deduct the amount of grant, revoke the funding approval, terminate with retrospective effect from the date of PI's departure (for change of PI) or the original project completion date (for project extension), claw back the released fund, remove the project from the list of granted projects and take other actions as appropriate.

The above cases may also be brought to the Assessment Panel for consideration whether the non-compliance should be taken into account as part of the PI's track record in assessment of future applications; whether the PI should be debarred from making applications under PPRFS and SPPRFS for up to three years; and/or whether a financial penalty should be imposed.

4.4 Public Dissemination of Final Reports

Final reports which are rated "satisfactory" by the Assessment Panel will be uploaded onto the schemes' webpage for public reference. For reports which are rated "unsatisfactory", the relevant PIs will be required to revise and re-submit the final reports within two months for the Assessment Panel's re-consideration. If a revised final report is rated "satisfactory", it will be uploaded onto the schemes' webpage. However, if a revised final report remains "unsatisfactory", neither the report nor its abstract will be uploaded onto the schemes' webpage. Instead, a remark stating that "*the Assessment Panel decided that this report has not been completed according to requirements*" would appear next to the relevant project title on the schemes' webpage. The relevant case will be brought to the attention of the President of the institution/head of the think tank concerned. The Assessment Panel will take into account the PI's record of producing an "unsatisfactory" final report when considering future applications from the PI. The Assessment Panel may also decide to debar the PI from applying for funding for up to three years if so warranted. If considered appropriate by the Assessment Panel, the final payment for such projects may not be disbursed or disbursed in full as an additional penalty.

5. Presentation of Results

PIs may be invited to present research findings to the Government as appropriate.

6. Intellectual Property Rights and Use of Project Data

All PIs and Co-I(s) shall grant for the benefits of the Government, its authorised users, assigns and successors-in-title an irrevocable, non-exclusive, perpetual, transferrable, sub-licensable, royalty-free and worldwide licence to use the Results. Such licence to use shall include the right to (a) copy the Results in any format and in any medium; (b) upload the Results including the final report of the research onto the schemes' webpage and make available copies thereof to the public; (c) issue copies of the Results to the public including publishing the Results or any part thereof in reports, publications and/or publicity materials; (d) circulate the Results to bureaux and departments of the Government, statutory bodies and other organisations/parties for reference; (e) playing and showing the Results or any part thereof in the public; and (f) making an adaptation of the Results or any part thereof. In relation to any part of the Results to which PIs and Co-I(s) are not empowered to grant the licence aforesaid, PIs and Co-I(s) undertake to procure at their sole costs and expenses the grant of such rights for the benefits of the Government, its authorised users, assigns and successors-in-title by the relevant third party Intellectual Property Rights owners. In all instances, the copyright of PIs and Co-I(s) will be duly acknowledged.

PIs and Co-I(s) warrant to the Government that -

- (i) the provision of the Results in performing the research project, the use or possession by the Government, its authorised users, assigns and successors-in-title of the Results or any part thereof for any of the purposes contemplated by the application form/Guidance Notes/Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements does not and will not infringe any Intellectual Property Rights and any other rights of any persons.
- (ii) in respect of any materials used by PIs and Co-I(s) in the performance of the research project and in respect of which any Intellectual Property Rights are vested in a third party, PIs and Co-I(s) shall have obtained the grant of all necessary clearances for themselves and their authorised users, and the Government, its authorised users, assigns and successors-in-title authorising the use of such materials for any of the purposes contemplated by the application form/Guidance Notes/ Guidelines on Disbursement, Accounting and Monitoring Arrangements.

“Intellectual Property Rights” means patents, trade marks, service marks,

trade names, design rights, copyright, domain names, database rights, rights in know-how, new inventions, designs or processes and other intellectual property rights whether now known or created in future (of whatever nature and wherever arising) and in each case whether registered or unregistered and including applications for the grant of any such rights.

“Results” means any output arising from applications approved under the PPRFS and SPPRFS including articles, papers, presentations, summaries, publications, statistics, videos and reports.

Five years after completion of the research project, the quantitative empirical data generated from the research would be uploaded onto the schemes’ webpage for data archiving. Users of the data sets archived will be required to acknowledge the research team and the Government. Such sharing of project data among the public policy community would facilitate the development of evidence-based public policy research in Hong Kong. Empirical datasets provided in CSV format will also be uploaded onto DATA.GOV.HK five years after completion of the research project.

7. Liability

Any information, opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in Results from projects funded by PPRFS and SPPRFS do not represent the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and/or the Assessment Panel.

Notwithstanding the provision of the grant by the Government, or the compliance by the PI and the institution/think tank with the conditions of such grant, the PI and institution/think tank shall remain solely liable for all costs, liability or damages relating to the project and the publication of such work.

8. Research Integrity

The Assessment Panel and the Secretariat attach great importance to research integrity and all researchers are expected to observe the highest standard of integrity in preparing research proposals and conduct of researches. Researchers should adhere to good practices adopted widely by the research community in the conduct of research and observe the research integrity policies and ethical guidelines of the relevant institutions/think tanks. Researchers applying for or in receipt of PPRFS/SPPRFS funding are required to strictly follow all the rules and guidelines and fulfil all the requirements set out by the Secretariat. It is the responsibility of the researchers to seek clarification from the Research Office of their affiliated institutions/think tanks when there is any doubt or uncertainty about the requirements. Institutions/think tanks are required to

report immediately to the Secretariat any suspected research misconduct in relation to PPRFS/SPPRFS applications and PPRFS/SPPRFS-funded projects. All cases of suspected research misconduct will be handled seriously and fairly in accordance with the Procedures for Handling Research Misconduct available on the schemes' webpage.

9. Offer of Advantage to Government Officials and Reviewers

The offer of an advantage to any government officials or reviewers (including Assessment Panel members and non-Panel Reviewers) with a view to influencing the outcome of an application is an offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201). Any such offer by the PI, Co-I(s), members of the research team and/or the institution/think tank, its employees or agents will render the application null and void.

In the event that the PI, Co-I(s), members of the research team and/or the institution/think tank, its employees or agents involved in a granted project commit an offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201) (including the offering of any advantages to any reviewer or Government officials), the Secretariat may withhold the release of the approved fund, deduct the amount of grant, revoke the funding approval, terminate the project, claw back the released fund, remove the project from the list of granted projects and take other actions as appropriate. The Secretariat will also refer the case to relevant law enforcement agency(ies) for action as appropriate.

10. Use and Handling of Personal Data

Details on the use and handling of personal data are set out in Annex.

PPRFS & SPPRFS Secretariat
April 2024

**Handling of Information and Personal Data Contained in
Public Policy Research Funding Scheme &
Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme Application**

Purpose of Collection of Data

1. Information and personal data contained in your application will be used by the Secretariat, the funding body for the following purposes:

- (a) processing of application, including but not limited to determination of your eligibility, verification of information provided in the application, identification of reviewers; and other purposes related to the application;
- (b) assessment of the merits of the research proposal;
- (c) prevention and/or investigation of suspected research misconduct and/or contravention of laws and regulations, and promotion of research integrity culture; and
- (d) administration of the funding schemes, including but not limited to compilation of periodic reports and statistical returns for analysis and research in relation to the use of public funds, project monitoring, promotion, publicity and dissemination.

2. The provision of information and personal data in the application is voluntary. However, failure to provide sufficient and correct information and personal data as required in the application form and in accordance with the Guidance Notes of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme and Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme may result in the application not being processed.

Transfer and/or Disclosure of Data

3. Information and personal data in your application, or copies of which, will be transferred and/or disclosed to the Assessment Panel, non-Panel reviewers, government bureaux/departments, research funding agencies and parties relevant and necessary for the purposes as stated in paragraph 1 above; and may also be published on the schemes' website and DATA.GOV.HK as appropriate.

Handling of Your Information and Data

4. Your application including your personal data (e.g. CVs) will be handled with care by the Secretariat and/or the funding body. Staff of the Secretariat and/or the funding body, members of the Assessment Panel, non-Panel reviewers, and other parties who may be involved in the processes described in Paragraph 1 above will

be allowed access to the data on a need-to-know basis but they will be placed under a duty of confidentiality to the Secretariat and/or the funding body. Information so collected will not be used for any other purposes. If you want to exclude any individuals from access to your application, you should inform the Secretariat separately when you submit your application. The Secretariat does not accept applications that are classified “confidential” by the Principal Investigators. It also reserves the right to stop processing or reject any applications if the applicants’ requests render it impossible for the applications to be adequately assessed.

5. When the Secretariat obtains reviewers’ assessment on your application, the reviewers will be made aware of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance in Hong Kong.

Physical Retention of Applications

6. Applications that are funded will be retained at the Secretariat and/or the funding body for periodic review of progress and final assessment of the research investigation and outcome.

Right of Access to Personal Data

7. Notwithstanding the arrangement described above, nothing in this note will affect your legal right to request access to data held by the Secretariat and/or the funding body about you or your research proposal and to update or correct such data. Nevertheless, the Secretariat and/or the funding body reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the processing of any such request(s).

Further Information

8. All requests for access to data or correction of your personal data or for information regarding policies and practices and kinds of data held by the Secretariat and/or the funding body should be made in writing, by post, email or fax, addressed as follows:

Secretariat of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme and
Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme
Chief Executive’s Policy Unit
26/F Central Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar
Hong Kong
Email: ppr@cepu.gov.hk
Fax: 2524 2706