THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services

IdeaBooster Fund

<u>Application Guidelines</u>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The University Grants Committee (UGC) has specifically defined knowledge transfer (KT) as "*the systems and processes, by which knowledge, including technologies, know-hows, expertise and skills are transferred between higher education institutions and society, leading to innovative, profitable, economic or social improvements.*" It is noteworthy that KT is a two-way process and should encompass both technology-based and non-technology-based initiatives of all academic disciplines.

1.2 To inspire and support CUHK researchers in translating their knowledge and technologies into tangible societal impact, the ***IdeaBooster Fund*** is established to rally innovations across disciplines to address global challenges, for the benefit of Hong Kong and beyond.

1.3 The IdeaBooster Fund has four major objectives:

    i) To support the **development of early-stage ideas** into a variety of impactful translational projects;

    ii) To promote and cultivate an innovative culture across campus, stimulating a problem-driven innovation mindset within the CUHK community for research and knowledge transfer initiatives;

    iii) To encourage CUHK researchers to accelerate the transition from discovery research to goal-oriented translational projects which address a clear unmet market need;

    iv) To inspire and encourage CUHK researchers to gain direct knowledge and insight from societal/industry needs, and to address critical social issues through interdisciplinary solutions, thereby creating tangible societal impact.

1.4 The IdeaBooster Fund is supported by the UGC Recurrent Funding for KT.

2. APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

2.1 Eligibility

2.1.1 Full-time academic staff members at Assistant Professor rank or Research Assistant Professor rank or above are eligible to apply for the Fund as Project Leader.

2.1.2 Individuals who fulfill the following criteria may also apply for the Fund as Project Leader with an endorsement from their Department Chairperson, Unit Head, or Project Supervisor.

   i)   Full-time CUHK teaching staff with a Postgraduate degree (or equivalent qualification) in any disciplines on the rank of Lecturer or above; or

   ii) Full-time CUHK research staff with a Postgraduate degree (or equivalent qualification) in any disciplines above the rank of Research Assistant (e.g. Postdoctoral Fellow / Research Associate / Research Officer / Research Fellow); or

   iii) Full-time CUHK Postgraduate student (Research Programmes) in any disciplines will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.1.3 The Project Leader is the central point of contact of the project, taking overall responsibility for the project including the reporting.

2.1.4 All CUHK staff, students, and non-CUHK members may participate as team members.

2.2 Rules and Conditions

2.2.1 Applications should be submitted via the online application portal (https://orkts-cuhk.grantplatform.com/), on or before the application deadline. Late and/or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

2.2.2 Each Project Leader may only submit one application in each round. Dual applications will not be considered. Project Leaders may serve as team members in other projects.

2.2.3 Reapplications (i.e. resubmission of previously rejected proposals) should highlight new or innovative elements compared with previous proposals.

2.2.4 Prior to preparing an application, applicants are strongly recommended to read through the *Notes to Applicants*, to ensure full compliance with the requirements.

2.2.5 Funding amount: HK$100,000 to 200,000 per project, depending on the respective developmental stage and scale, and subject to the Committee on Knowledge Transfer (KTC)'s final decision.

2.2.6 Project Duration: 12 or 18 months.

2.2.7 The funding is granted for only up to two years and is not a recurrent fund for the long term.

2.2.8 Normally the commencement date will be 30th June every year.

2.3 Funding Scope

2.3.1 The Fund seeks to provide funding to support early-stage ideation and exploratory projects from all academic disciplines, provided that they are bold and innovative solutions which aim to generate economic and social impact. Projects with an interdisciplinary approach to tackle crucial societal challenges will be advantageous.

2.3.2 The expected project deliverables include prototypes, models, and proof-of-concept, which would ultimately lead to next-stage development outcomes. Further funding from internal and external sources e.g. Technology Start-up Support Scheme for Universities (TSSSU), Knowledge Transfer Project Fund (KPF) if suitable.

2.4 Budget

2.4.1 The Project Leader, or the named team member in cases with special approval, will be the sole budget holder of the project account.

2.4.2 Only items directly related to the project should be budgeted, while budget breakdown (i.e., unit price times the unit requested) and detailed justifications should be provided for each item.

2.4.3 Eligible expenses include:

i) Manpower
- Salary of essential project staff;
- Participation of existing CUHK staff in IdeaBooster Fund projects should NOT be regarded as Outside Practice and no remuneration for such should be budgeted.

ii) Other direct costs
- Consumables;
- External consultancy or development services;
- Other expenditures directly related to the project will be considered on a case-by-case basis;
- Equipment including computers is normally not covered by the Fund.

2.4.4 Ineligible expenses include:
- Overhead charges;
- Patent costs, which may be payable from the New Patent Funding Schemes, a separate funding scheme;
- Operating costs of self-funded programs;
- Projects initiated and operated solely by students or external parties without the involvement and support of a CUHK department or unit; and
- Business entertainment.

2.4.5 The KTC reserves the right for final decision.

2.5 Evaluation Criteria

2.5.1 All applications will be reviewed and rated according to the following assessment criteria:

i) <u>Innovativeness, Creativity and Technology</u> (40%)
Relevance to underpinning research; the extent to which the proposed idea challenges existing paradigms and employs new technologies, methodologies or concepts; scope and potential for impact through interdisciplinary knowledge.

ii) <u>Implementation Feasibility</u> (25%)
Project feasibility (e.g. existence of a holistic plan to realization); a set of well-defined milestones with a clear timeline and with clear budget considerations.

iii) <u>Potential for Impact</u> (25%)

The project's potential to create a significant impact within and beyond the university, including environmental, social, cultural or economic perspectives.

iv) <u>Commercialization and Market Feasibility</u> (10%)

The project's potential for commercial success, market demand, intellectual property strategies, and the ability to attract further funding or industry collaboration.

3. APPROVED PROJECTS

3.1 Project Profile

3.1.1 Upon approval of an application, a Project Profile with details about the funding allocation and conditions will be provided to the Project Leader for confirmation and signature, with copies forwarded to the Department Chairperson, Unit Head, or Project Supervisor. Before ORKTS receives the signed Project Profile, funding will not be allocated.

3.1.2 If the Project Leader cannot agree to the funding amount and conditions, the funding will be returned to ORKTS for re-allocation.

3.2 Reporting

3.2.1 Bi-annual progress report(s) should reach ORKTS on or before the due dates specified in the Project Profile. A final report, with an Income and Expenditure Statement, should be submitted to ORKTS within TWO (2) months from the project's end date. All reports must be signed by the Department Chairperson, Unit Head, or Project Supervisor.

3.2.2 Report templates will be provided by ORKTS upon project approval.

3.2.3 The KTC will take into account the funded project's performance and quality of reports in evaluating future KT funding applications from the Project Leader.

3.2.4 ORKTS may request further materials for outcome sharing purposes. These materials could include, but are not limited to, posters and videos.

3.3 Use of Funds

3.3.1 The overall budget for a project cannot be exceeded once it is approved.

3.3.2 Project funding will be disbursed according to the rationale below:

	Project Duration (Months)	
	12	**18**
1st Installment (Project start date)	100%	70%
2nd Installment (Upon approval of the 2nd bi-annual report)	N.A.	30%

3.3.3 Funds should only be used to support approved project activities. The KTC Chairperson has the right to suspend or terminate the fund allocated to a project and retrieve any unspent balance under but not limited to the following conditions: the funding conditions of the project are not met, the funding is not used in compliance with the approved budget, or the required reports are not provided according to schedule.

3.3.4 No expenditure may be incurred after the project end date, and any unspent balance must be returned to ORKTS. An Income & Expenditure Statement should be submitted to ORKTS within TWO (2) months after the project end date.

3.4 Change Requests

An approved project is required to be carried out strictly in accordance with the Project Profile. Modification to the project will normally require prior approval by the KTC Chairperson. Relevant change requests should be submitted via ORKTS.

3.4.1 Project Extension
- Extension period is restricted to SIX (6) months, and the Project Leader should apply for an extension at least ONE (1) month before the end date;
- Extensions will normally be considered only <u>once</u> for each project, and will only be granted to enable a small portion of the specified yet incomplete project deliverables to be completed;
- Extension will not be granted for a project that does not make enough progress,

or for a project that expands its scope to include new deliverables after the end date.

3.4.2 Budget change

- Where the cumulative deviation of expenditure for an item does not exceed 30% of the original approved budget and does not result in any increase in the total approved project cost, prior approval from ORKTS is not required;
- New budget items that do not previously exist in an approved budget must seek approval.

3.4.3 Change of Project Leader

- In the event of the departure of the project leader, a new project leader (preferably a team member) should be proposed and approval from the KTC should be sought before the departure;
- The KTC has the right to suspend or terminate the fund allocated and retrieve any unspent balance if there is about concern the team's ability to achieve the project's deliverables.

3.5 Publicity and Acknowledgements

3.5.1 The Project Team is advised to keep ORKTS informed of their publicity arrangement, in particular for press interviews and promotional events.

3.5.2 The source of funding should be acknowledged in all publicity materials related to the project by displaying the logos and names of CUHK/ORKTS conspicuously where appropriate.

Supported by Knowledge Transfer Fund at CUHK
香港中文大學知識轉移基金支持項目

4. INQUIRY

For inquiries, please contact the Venture Acceleration Team, ORKTS:

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Last Update: Mar 2024