

Research Translation Strategy for Health and Medical Research Fund (2025)

Consultation Report – Executive Summary



Research and Data Analytics Office
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Health and Medical Research Fund
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The Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) has a clear and distinct mission of enabling evidence-based health practices and policies from local research, and a longstanding emphasis on the translation value of the research it funds. With an aim to further enhance the translational impact of HMRF research, the Health Bureau (HHB) has recently proposed a Research Translation Strategy (Strategy) involving 18 Actions guided by four Key Principles (KP). An extensive consultation exercise on the proposed Strategy, involving diverse stakeholders, has been conducted between December 2024 and April 2025.

Stage 1 of the consultation exercise involved a Written Consultation Survey (Survey) obtaining 5-point support rating and free-text comments on the four KP and 18 Actions (totalling 22 investigation items) of the Strategy. The Survey was sent to about 300 individual or institutional stakeholders, with 119 (39.4%) returning valid feedback. With reference to the comments received at Stage 1, a series of Consultation Meetings was conducted in Stage 2, to gain more in-depth insights from key public sector end-users of HMRF research, namely the Department of Health (DH), Primary Healthcare Commission (PHCC), and Hospital Authority (HA). The quantitative and qualitative feedback from the two stages of the consultation exercise were analysed, with summary statistics capturing the overall extent of support to the four KPs and 18 Actions and synthesised qualitative findings depicting stakeholders' key opinions and suggestions to enhance the Strategy.

Overall, the proposed Strategy received strong support across stakeholder groups, with the average positive response (i.e. “Strongly support” or “Support”) rate at over 90% for both the four KP and 18 Actions. Written comments also showed strong alignment between the direction of the proposed Strategy and views of stakeholders, while also capturing diverse constructive suggestions to enhance the Strategy and for HMRF’s longer-term consideration. The rich responses provided HHB with valuable insights for enhancing the proposed Strategy. With the high level of support for the directions and most actions proposed in the Strategy, no major departure from the key directions is recommended, while the diverse perspectives from across all stakeholders were balanced in revising the Strategy. The key feedback and subsequent enhancements of the Strategy and follow-up actions are summarised in seven aspects below:

Definitions and scopes of key concepts

- There were crosscutting calls for more clearly defined concept and scope of research translation across the research lifecycle. These should be accommodative for a wide range of research within HMRF's remit and for diverse research outputs and outcomes. There were also suggestions to ensure RC would not over-emphasise research translation at the expense of other research aspects (e.g. scientific innovation).
- The final Strategy will reiterate the funding scope of HMRF, clarify the scope of research translation to encompass both short- and long-term impact and diverse research types, and provide a more balanced articulation on RC's role in promoting research translation.

Funding, support, and incentives

- With clarified scope of research translation, the Strategy could consider different possibilities of funding and support for research translation efforts, including dedicated funds for research translation, mechanisms connecting researchers with end-users, and administrative or capacity building support.
- The Research Council will monitor the implementation of the Strategy and consider in due course the feasibility of various additional support suggested in the consultation feedback to promote research translation after further review.

Capacity-building

- There was an overarching call to promote system-wide understanding and culture of research translation across diverse stakeholders. In particular, stakeholder-specific capacity building activities in diverse formats have been recommended, in order to meet distinctive needs of different parties, including those on the preparation of the research translation module in HMRF applications and connecting with other stakeholders.
- Consideration will be given to the capacity-building needs of researchers, end-users, reviewers, and Research Fund Secretariat (RFS) staff, with relevant effort to be initiated before mandating research translation module in funding applications. Relevant feedback on the approach, topics, and format of capacity-building initiatives will also be duly considered in light of resource requirements.

Engagement, collaboration, and coordination

- Mechanisms should be developed to facilitate collaboration between researchers and end-users in research translation, with careful balance of involvement in order to maintain scientific independence and robustness, while also ensuring support and openness towards innovative research. Public sector end-users (DH, PHCC, HA) were positive in enhancing collaboration with RFS to promote translation of HMRF studies.
- The final Strategy will clarify the nature and provide examples of research translation organisations to be connected with. RFS will further explore mechanisms for public sector end-users to communicate their research needs to researchers and for more effective research findings dissemination.

Review process and safeguards

- On including end-users in the HMRF application review process, there was a clear need for balanced composition in the Grant Review Board (GRB), with member selection criteria that would ensure appropriate expertise and avoid non-scientific biases and conflict of interest. Due consideration should be given to the possibility of designing a more defined role and scope of review among end-user reviewers, e.g. to assess only the research translation elements.
- The final Strategy will highlight that measures have been in place to ensure a balance between the scientific rigour and diversity in perspectives of the grant review process. After some experience of implementation, the role of end-user reviewers will be reviewed with reference to practices of other research funders.

Dissemination of research findings

- Effective dissemination could involve diverse formats (e.g. multi-media materials), platforms (e.g. different social media), and stakeholders; and guidelines would be needed to support researchers. The RFS website should be enhanced to enhance navigation and accessibility of findings. The new HMRF logo should be widely promoted for enhanced visibility and impact of HMRF research. The enhanced dissemination efforts should be adequately resourced both within RFS and administrative institutes (e.g. knowledge transfer office at universities) and safeguarded with mechanisms for intellectual property right protection.

- The suggested dissemination formats, approaches, and channels will be considered for feasibility in future, subject to resource requirement. The new HMRF logo will be for official use only, including publicity of Commissioned Studies, but further review will be undertaken. The final Strategy will undertake that intellectual property rights will be observed in HMRF's dissemination efforts.

Planning and evaluation

- The importance of recognising both short- and long-term translation impact, and impact pathways (e.g. output, outcome, impact) in the research translation module (to be mandated in funding applications) was clearly highlighted. There were calls for clear application guidelines, assessment criteria, and timeline for the research translation module. In evaluating project outcomes, appropriate framework and indicators should be identified with due consideration for relevance, practicality, time course, and diverse nature of research, noting that both qualitative and quantitative measures should be adopted for a more balanced and comprehensive assessment.
- The final Strategy will undertake to (a) develop relevant guidelines with careful considerations of the range of issues raised in the consultation, in order to support applicants in preparing the Research Translation Module required for funding applications (b) take into account diverse research types in outcome evaluation for which both quantitative and qualitative outcome indicators will be used.

HHB is hugely grateful for all the insights and efforts from all the stakeholders involved in the consultation exercise. Through the consultation exercise, which drew together almost 120 individual and institutional responses across the academic, public, private, and non-governmental sectors, HHB found generally strong support and alignment for the proposed Strategy and ascertained valuable feedback and insights from diverse perspectives. In light of the findings of the exercise, the proposed Strategy was revised with corresponding adjustments, and a range of follow-up actions have been noted for future consideration.

The [full document of the Strategy](#) is available on the RFS website.

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