

Briefing Session for **2024 Open Call for** **Research Fellowship Scheme**

Research Fund Secretariat
Research and Data Analytics Office
Health Bureau
November 2024

Outline

- Overview of the Scheme
- Eligibility and Requirement
- Review Process
- Points to Note
- Monitoring and Presentation

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Overview

of

the Scheme



Research Fellowship Scheme

Administration

- Research Fund Secretariat, Health Bureau

Establishment

- August 2015

Operation

- Annual basis

Components

- Training programme
- Research project

Objectives

Support researchers or professionals, particularly healthcare professionals, in their **early to mid-career** to enhance their skills in **public health and health services research**

Framework

Support successful applicant -

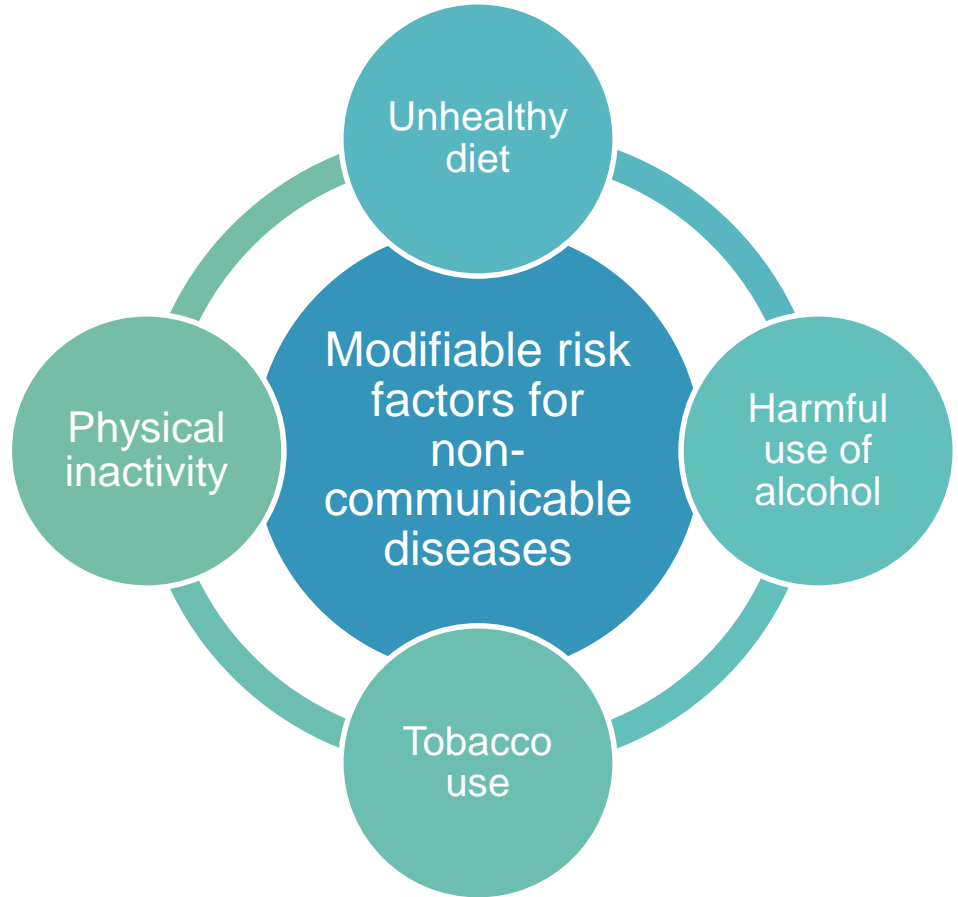
- To attend overseas training programme (at least **3** months cumulatively)
- To carry out a small-scale research project relating to the proposed training programme with **no more than 3** research objectives

Funding Scope

Supports applications on the following research projects -

- **Clinical research** including patient-oriented research, epidemiological and behavioural studies, outcomes research and health services research
- **Infectious diseases research with public health implications** from bench to bedside and at community level and with translational value
- Clinical research **based on Chinese medicine theory** or clinical research on Chinese medicine theory and methodology

Funding Priority



Grant Size

- **\$1.2 million** for up to **2 years**

1

\$0.4 million (**maximum**) for **overseas** training programme

- Training/course fee
- Air package (up to **2 round-trip** economy class)
- Accommodation expenses
- Subsistence allowances

2

\$0.8 million (**maximum**) for research project

- Staff costs (including cost for research staff and reliever)
- Other expenses
- Equipment

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Eligibility

and

Requirement



Application Streams

Stream A (16 awards)

Tertiary institutions funded by the UGC

UGC: University Grants Committee

Stream B (4 awards)

Designated **teaching hospitals** of the medical schools of CUHK and HKU, i.e.

Prince of Wales Hospital and **Queen Mary Hospital**

Eligibility

Fellowship Applicant (FA)

- Medical and health-related professionals or researchers
- < 10 years' post-doctoral or post-qualification
- Full-time employees of the Administering Institutions (AIs)
- Based at same AI throughout the fellowship period
- Support from a Mentor*

*A full-time staff of the AI. For Stream B, the Mentor can be a full-time staff of the respective medical school of HKU & CUHK

Ineligible Applicant



FA with ongoing fellowship project



Resubmission of similar application that was not funded in the previous application round(s) of HMRF

Requirement – Training Programme



- Train FA to become a better scientist/researcher
- Knowledge/skills should be relevant and applicable to the research project
- Training plan should include purpose, duration, activities, relevance to the research project and deliverables



- × Clinical attachment that cannot improve FA's research capability
- × Regular programmes for higher academic qualification (e.g. Master or PhD degree)

Requirement – Research Project



- **Clinical** research / Research on infectious diseases with **public health implications**
- Apply knowledge and skills acquired in the training programme
- Original with advancement in scientific knowledge
- Translational potential within short-to-medium timeframe
- Small-scale study with ≤ 3 research objectives



- × Simple replication of previous overseas studies
- × Develop methods / techniques / research platforms without evaluation of the tool in a clinical setting

Examples - Outside Funding Scope

EXAMPLE

A pre-clinical study which aims to determine the treatment effect of a traditional Chinese medicine/herbal formula for a particular disease using mouse models.

Basic / preclinical research on Chinese medicine → Non-clinical research

EXAMPLE

A study which aims to identify novel virus species by next-generation sequencing of samples collected from various animal sources, followed by bioinformatics analysis to investigate the virus evolution and the susceptibility of transmission to potential new hosts.

This study is a viral evolutionary biology project, and is unlikely to identify new viruses that can infect human and cause public health threats

Application with Unclear Local Relevance

EXAMPLE

A study aims to establish an early detection model of mental disorders in specific age groups using a dataset outside Hong Kong that contains regionally variable parameters such as genotypes, environmental and cultural factors, and social behaviours.

EXAMPLE

A study aims to examine the tumour microenvironment / gut microbiome of cancer patients before and after chemotherapy. All clinical samples were obtained from non-Chinese cancer patients outside Hong Kong.

No dataset / subjects from Hong Kong → unclear how the research findings will benefit patients' health and/or healthcare system in Hong Kong

Examples - Within/Outside the Funding Scope (Annex 1)

Within funding scope

- i. *Clinical research: mechanisms of human disease, therapeutic interventions, clinical trials, development of new technologies*

No.	Research Area	Examples
1.	Clinical virology	<i>Clinical research: mechanisms of human disease</i> A combination of pre-clinical and clinical research to responses and the associated cellular pathways among va infected subjects. The pre-clinical part is to conduct anim: functional role of a selected type of immune cell and treatment. Research conducted with human subjects involv to identify correlation with results generated from animal e:
2.	Treatment	<i>Clinical research: therapeutic interventions/clinical trials</i> A prospective cohort study aiming to determine the safety therapy regimen among patients with a particular medical i
3	Clinical study of Chinese Medicine formula	<i>Clinical research: therapeutic interventions/clinical trials</i> A study aiming to investigate the clinical efficacy and safe consisting of multiple Chinese herbal medicines on patient condition using a randomised placebo-controlled clinical formula on the modulation of the oral and fecal microbiot determined by metagenomics.

Outside funding scope

- i. *Basic / preclinical research on Chinese medicine*

No.	Research Area	Remarks
1.	Biochemical study of medicinal plant extracts	<i>Non-clinical research</i> A pre-clinical study which aims to determine the treatment effect of a traditional Chinese medicine/herbal formula for a particular disease using mouse models.

- ii. *Research on infectious diseases with low public health implication*

No.	Research Area	Remarks
2.	Phylogenetic analysis	A study which aims to identify novel virus species by next-generation sequencing of samples collected from various animal sources, followed by bioinformatics analysis to investigate the virus evolution and the susceptibility of transmission to potential new hosts. This study is a viral evolutionary biology project, and is unlikely to identify new viruses that can infect human and cause public health threats.

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Review

Process



Application Submitted via eGMS

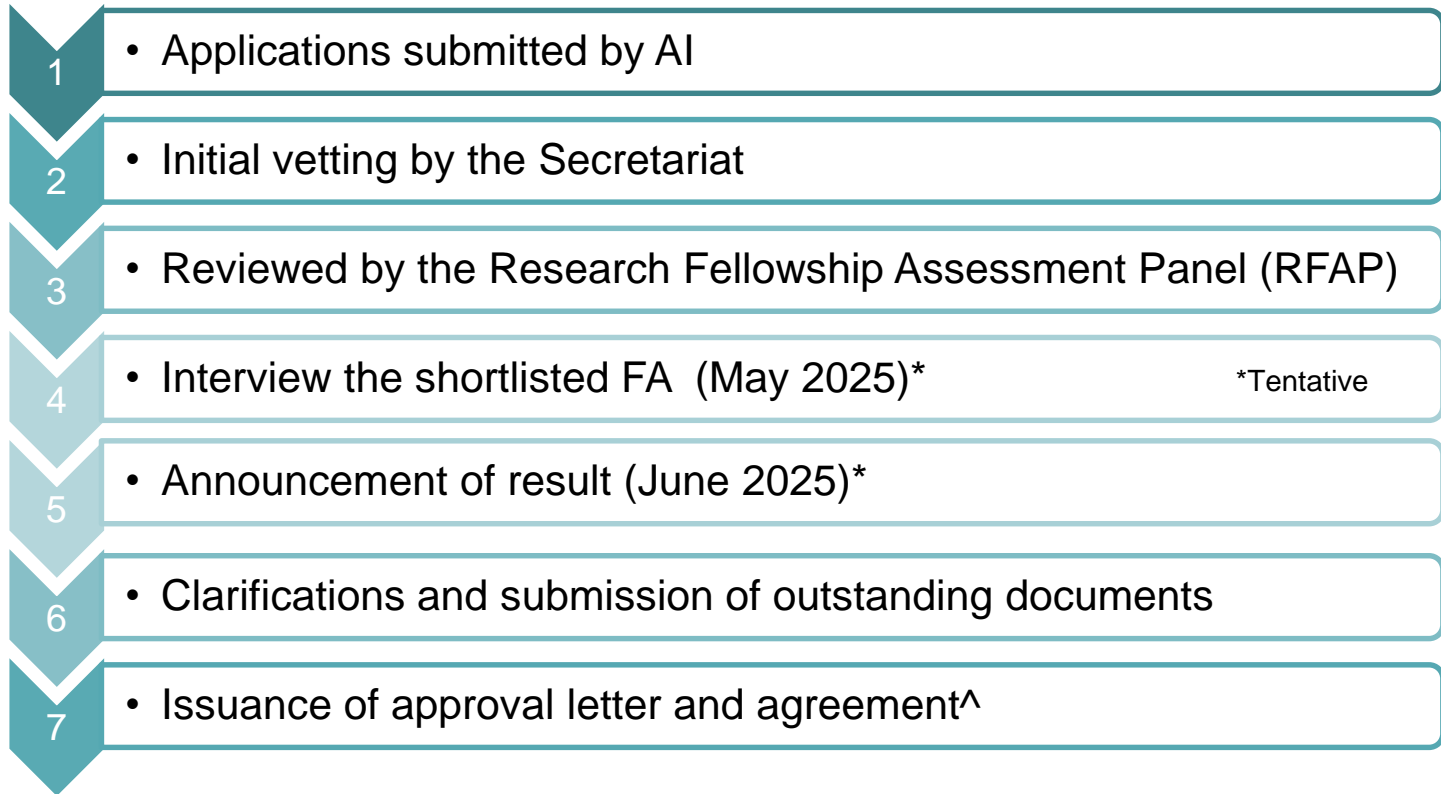
Complete the
e-form

- <https://rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk/eGMS/>

Attachments

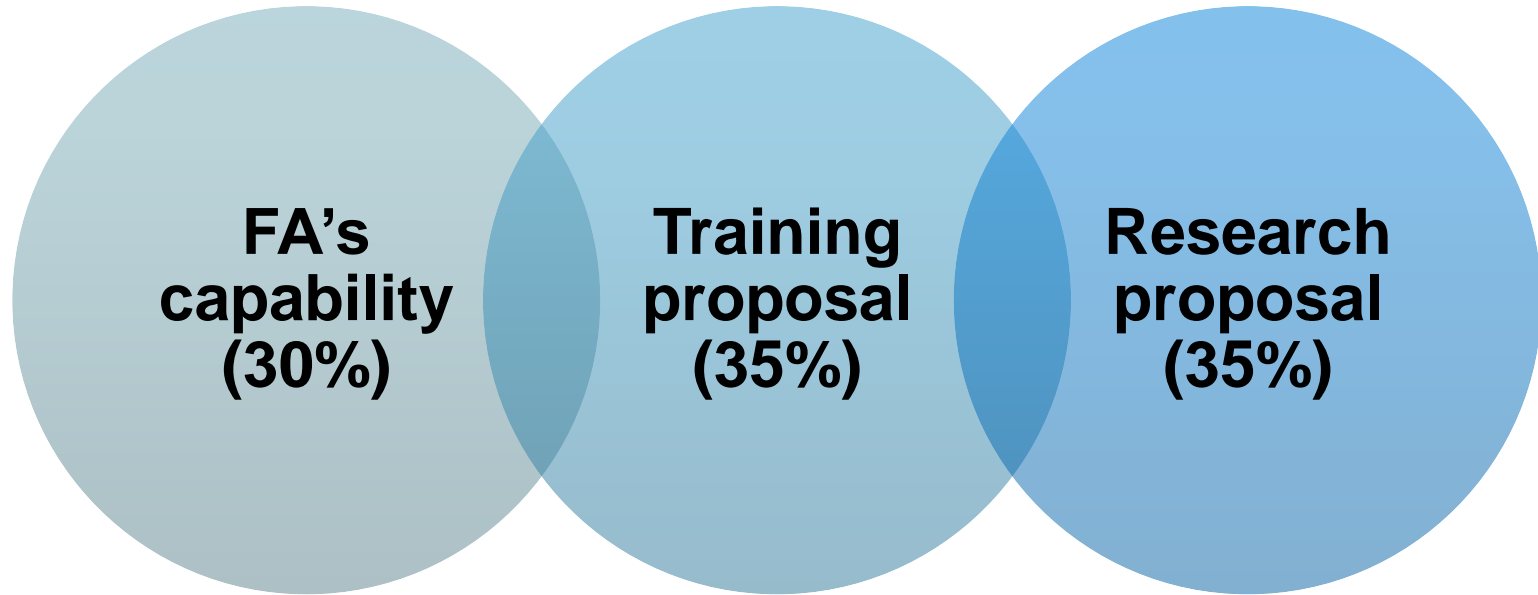
- Nomination letter from President/
Vice-Chancellor (for Stream A) /
Hospital Chief Executive (for Stream B)
- Mentor's endorsement and CV

Review Process



^ Fellowship should commence within [6 months](#) from the date of approval letter

Assessment Criteria



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Points

to

Note



Points to Note – Submission

eGMS electronic Grant Management System

- Submission via AI in **eGMS** by **6 Jan 2025** (6:00 pm HKT)
- FA will receive acknowledgement email



Pay attention to AI's internal deadline, if any



Application with incomplete signatures/ electronic endorsement may not be considered



1 application per FA



Maximum 8 applications per AI,
except HKU and CUHK for up to 10 applications

Points to Note – Ethics / Third-party Data Access

Regulatory / Ethical Approvals / Evidence for Accessing Third-party Data

- Submit within **12 weeks** (or as specified by the Secretariat) after announcement of funding decisions
- Regulatory/ethics approval(s)/evidence for accessing third-party data bear(s) the **same project title** as that in the application approved by the RFAP
- The **protocol/scope** included in such approval(s)/evidence for accessing third-party data must be the **same** as that in the application

Clinical Trial Certificate/Medicinal Test Certificate

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

Management of Track Records of Applicants

w.e.f. 1 Nov 2024

Scientific Misconduct

- Plagiarism / Self-plagiarism
- Falsification / Fabrication
- Double dipping not declared
- Conflict of Interest not declared
- Non-disclosure of submission of similar/related proposals in the application
- Non-disclosure of similar/related research work in the application

Non-Compliance

- No submission of Final Report by deadline without valid justification
- Early termination without valid justification
- Incomplete project without valid justification
- Final report graded “Unredeemable” or “Unacceptable” or “Not accepted”

Level of Penalty & Penalty Actions

- Light / Medium / Heavy / Serious / Critical
- **Warning letter**
- **Disqualification** of related or all submitted applications
- **Debarment** from 1 to 5 years in all capacities in all funding schemes
- **Partial payment or recovery of grant**

Declaration of Similar/Related Studies and Other Funding

FAs and all Co-As should declare –

- any duplicate funding
- whether there is any similar/related research work done or training conducted before the proposed commencement date upon receiving the decision email

At any time before the announcement of the funding decision, applicants are obliged to notify the Secretariat immediately about –

- Any other similar application(s) submitted to the HMRF or other funding agencies (local or overseas) in addition to those listed in e-Form; and
- The funding decision of all declared similar applications once it is available
- Failure to make declaration may lead to application **not eligible** for further processing and shall be subject to **penalty**

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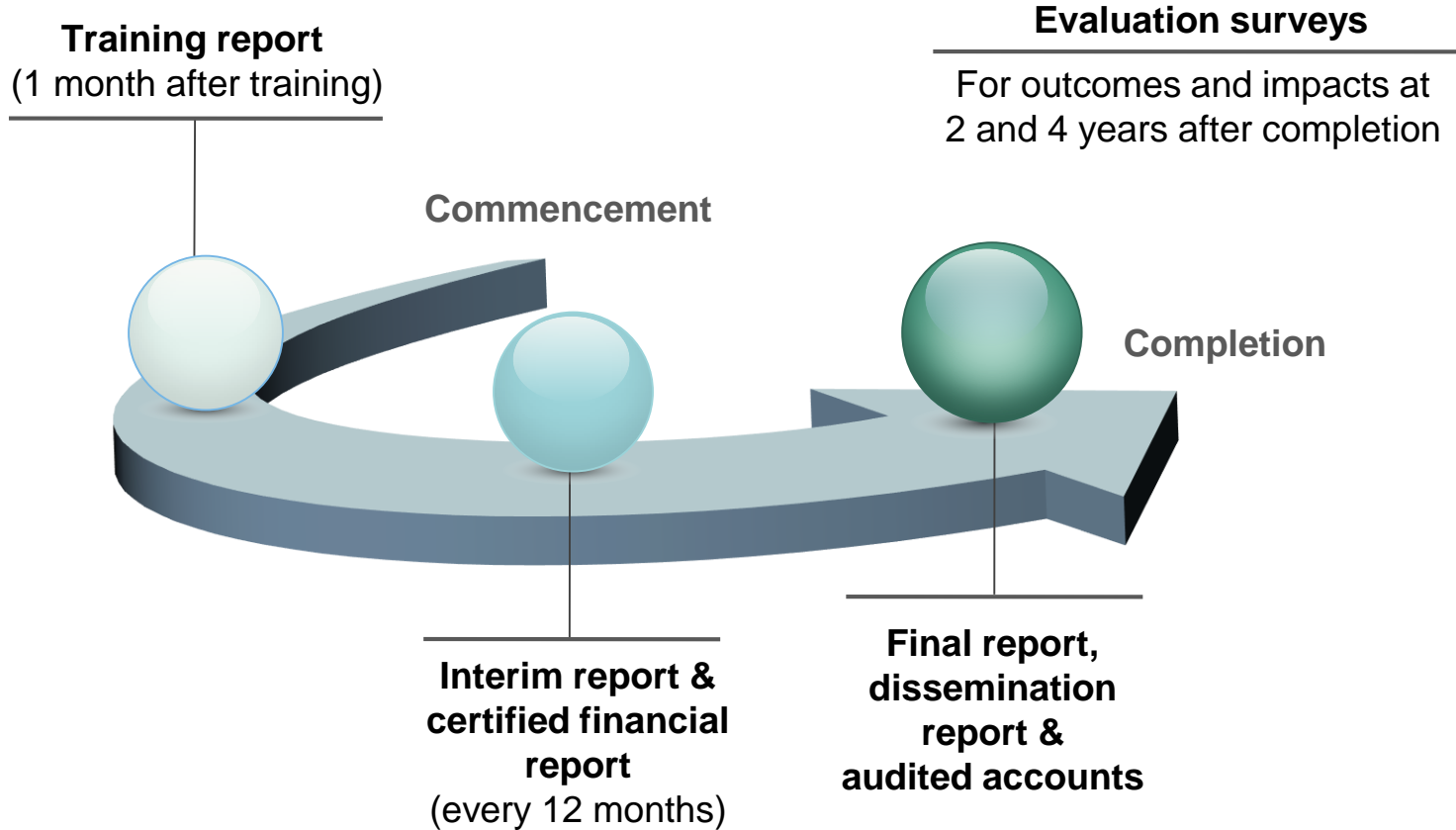
Monitoring

and

Presentation



Monitoring



Presentation and Publication

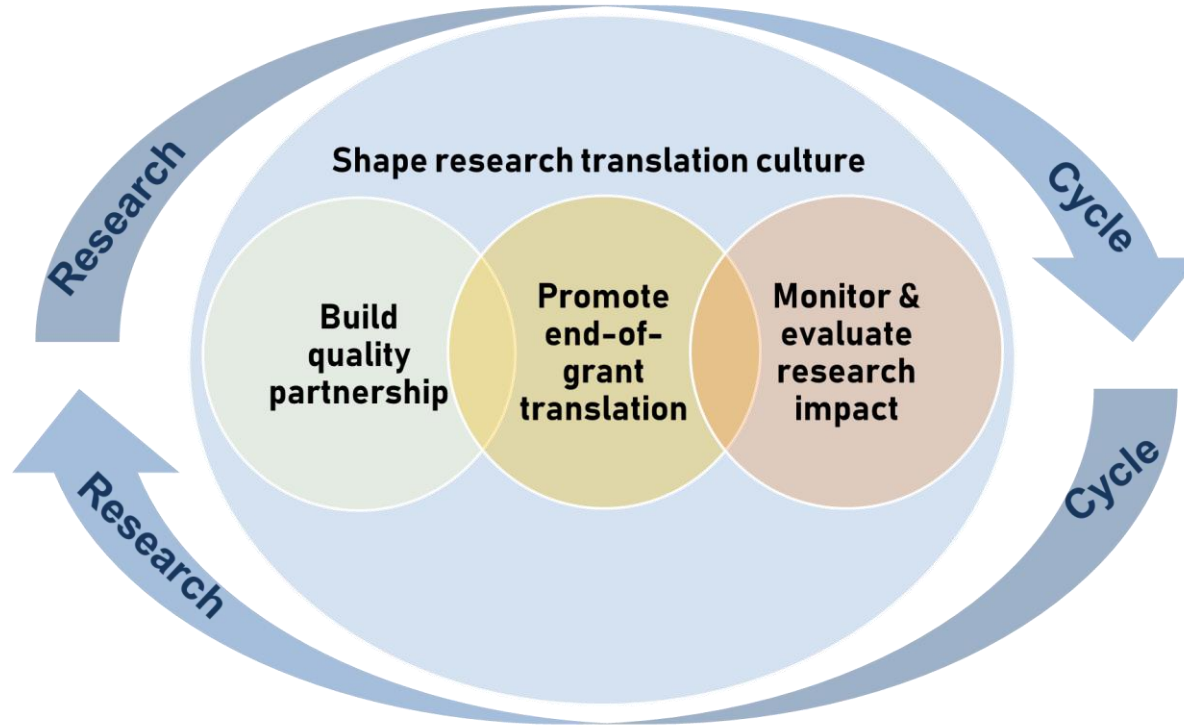
Achievements

**Project
Deliverables**

**Learning
Experience**



Research Translation Strategy of HMRF



Research funded by HMRF is expected to generate impact beyond academia

Researchers must recognise their role in research translation

Research translation should be promoted throughout research cycle

Research Translation

Covers the processes of synthesis, dissemination, exchange and application of research findings to improve individual and population health through

- informing further research, clinical practices, healthcare services, health policies;
- changing health behaviours; and
- strengthening healthcare systems.

Research Translation



Journal publication and conferences suffice?



Liaise with end-users of your research findings: before, during and after project (healthcare professionals? patients? community partners? general public)



Disseminate findings in format and channels suitable for your end-users, e.g. infographics, workshops, professional lectures, press conferences, newspaper, website, social media

Research Translation



Drive the application/ adoption of your findings

Established professional network	Adopted as guidelines	Adopted by community partners	Influenced clinical services	Adopted as public health practice
Fellowship recipient initiated an Asian anaphylaxis registry	Findings informed HK College of O&G's guideline on preferred test of cervical cancer screening	Novel service model in promoting HPV vaccination among MSM adopted by a NGO	Findings informed "Survivorship Care Plan" of Hong Kong Children's Hospital	Sewage testing adopted as a surveillance tool by the Government in monitoring COVID-19



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