

Guideline for HKBU Matching Proof-of-Concept Fund (MPCF)

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Introduction

1. The Matching Proof-of-Concept Fund (MPCF) is established to enhance knowledge transfer, particularly technology transfer, which is endorsed and valued by the University Grant Committee (UGC) and the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC). Hong Kong Baptist University is providing additional funding to intellectual property creators at the University to establish proof of concept, identify a development path and an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) strategy for innovative ideas arising from their research.

Objectives

2. MPCF aims to facilitate academic staff to demonstrate the industrial potentials of their inventions and technologies, as well as to undergo proper IPR management for effective knowledge transfer to local and regional industries.
3. The objective of the MPCF is to provide funds to enable IPR created in the University to be brought to a pre-demonstration stage where potential commercialisation opportunities have been identified. MPCF aims to assist technology and knowledge based development projects towards realising their commercial potential.
4. The application and approval process will be **operated in complement with the current invention disclosure process** at the University to assist commercialisation of identified inventions and technologies. Applications are invited from all inventors of protected and protectable IPR at the University, which could lead to possibilities of commercialisation. Applications without current IPR protection need to be submitted with a [Preliminary Invention Disclosure Form](#). This form is available from the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) website at (<http://kto.hkbu.edu.hk>) under Patent Application.
5. The MPCF is a “gap fund” scheme design to bridge the gap between innovative IPR at HKBU and the possible commercialisation of such IPR or the successful transfer of such technology to the industry community, which is not used to support basic research. The current University policies governing the usage of research funding, IPR ownership, recovery of direct IPR protection and development cost and revenue sharing will apply.

Focus Areas

6. MPCF will focus on technological areas that are of key economic benefits to the society and in line with the key research strengths at HKBU.

Funding Support

7. MPCF operates on a three-dollar-to-one (3:1) cash-matching basis up to the maximum funding cap per project -- **\$200,000 in total per project**. Application should be supported with evidence of the matching fund, i.e. \$150,000 to be

matched by \$50,000 from the applicant. Interdisciplinary project may apply for extra funding subject to consideration and approval of the Knowledge Transfer Committee (KTC). Subject to availability of resources, **up to 5 MPCF project** may be funded for every academic year.

8. A matching fund, \$50,000 from the applicant should be consumed first and followed by the matching fund, \$150,000 from the University's fund.
9. The completed application will be reviewed and scored by the KTC. The amount of allocated funding to the successful applications would be based on the final score given by the KTC as follows:

Scoring of Application (out of 100)	Approved Funding Amount
80 or above	100% of Requested Funding
70-79	90% of Requested Funding
60-69	80% of Requested Funding

Applications scoring below 60 are deemed rejected. A revised budget plan and/or project proposal to accommodate the approved funding amount has to be approved by Head of KTO and/or the KTC before project commencement. For clarity, even if the approved funding amount is not equal to 100% of requested funding, a matching fund should be kept at most 3:1 and capped to \$50,000 when revising the budget plan. Either a matching fund from the applicant or allocated fund to the applicant would be round up to a dollar.

Project Duration

10. Each MPCF project will typically last no longer than **12 months** (from the project commencement date), and is non-renewable.
11. The MPCF is open for application until 31 March of each year.
12. The expenditure incurred must commence only after the approval of the grant and cannot be used retrospectively. Unspent balance must be returned to the University.

Eligibility

13. Applicants must be current full-time UGC-funded academic staff of HKBU.
14. Applicants should not currently hold more than two projects.
15. The funding aiming at demonstration of the technology's feasibility, which is used

for the following eligible purposes:

- prototype design and development; or
- full lab-scale demonstration; and / or
- specialised testing, verifying applications, and conducting field studies.

Selection Mechanism and Review Process

16. Applicants with current IPR-protected inventions and technologies at the University that demonstrate industrial potential and are likely to attract industrial investment are encouraged to apply for MPCF. Applications without IPR protection will also be accepted, **subject to evidences that such inventions are IPR-protectable** and approval of such applications will bring competitive advantages for the commercialisation of the technology.

17. All MPCF applications will be reviewed and approved by Knowledge Transfer Committee (KTC). KTC will evaluate each application based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

i. Novelty and Technology Merit

- Novelty, inventiveness and innovation based on sound science;
- Stage of development of the technology and its applicability for commercialisation;
- Sound methodology and implementation plan; and
- Well defined and realistic deliverables.

ii. Potential for Technology Transfer and Commercialisation

- Clear potential for commercial exploitation (commercial potential / market needs / route to market);
- Market opportunities; and
- Generation of economics and social benefits to the society.

iii. Intellectual Property Status

- Intellectual property position, including filed / granted patents, copyrights, software, know-how, etc. that already exist or to be developed and protected during the project.

iv. Team Expertise and Project Management

- The capability of the project team;
- Drive and commitment of the project members; and
- Presentation of overall planning of the project that demonstrates the intended work can, in normal circumstances, be completed within the proposed period.

Application Procedure

18. Applicants should carefully read this [“Guideline for Matching Proof-of-Concept](#)

Fund” with explanatory notes therein and complete a “MPCF Application Form”. Applicants are required to submit the MPCF Application Form to the KTO. Both this Guideline for Matching Proof-of-Concept Fund and the MPCF Application Form are available from the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) website (<http://kto.hkbu.edu.hk>).

19. Applications using the MPCF Application Form should be **completed and submitted electronically** to KTO. **One signed hard copy should also be sent to KTO.**
20. Applicant can submit more than one application for different projects.
21. All sections in each application form must be duly completed and all supporting documents (including IPR position, existing commercial links and commitment of matching funding) must be provided at the time of submission.
22. Once the application is approved, the applicant will become the recipient of the MPCF and is responsible for the following:
 - i. Execution of the approved MPCF project;
 - ii. Overseeing and reporting the progress of the project;
 - iii. Ensuring proper use of the approved project fund in accordance with this Guideline;
 - iv. Answering enquiries;
 - v. Attending progress review meetings for the project.
23. The deadline for submitting MPCF applications is **31 March** of each applicable year.
24. Applicant is required to submit a budget proposal for the project, showing all expenditures and justifications for the budget. All expenditure items have to be grouped under the categories of *Staffing, Facilities, Equipment, Services* and *Other Direct Costs*. Unspecified cost items, such as miscellaneous, sundry and contingency, etc. will not be accepted.
25. MPCF may only be used to support eligible project activities. Eligible costs include:
 - i. Staff costs;
 - ii. Project-related facilities, equipment, materials and consumables;
 - iii. Subcontracted consultancy, testing / characterisation services, or other development services;
 - iv. Expenditure on prototype development.
26. MPCF will not cover:
 - i. General administration and overhead;
 - ii. General office IT equipment;
 - iii. Depreciation / amortization or provisions not presenting actual expenses incurred;

- iv. Maintenance cost of existing equipment;
- v. Utilities – charges for electricity, gas, water, telephone, fax, etc;
- vi. IP protection cost;
- vii. Travel, accommodation and subsistence.

The above list is not exhaustive. Applicant should consult the KTO for any questions regarding eligible costs for the MPCF.

Announcement of Results

27. A typical application will take approximately **2 months** to process and the result will be announced once available.

Review Procedures

28. Upon receipt of an application, KTO may seek further clarification or supplementary information from the applicant.
29. Good track record in previous MPCF project(s) from the technology commercialisation's perspective would be supportive to the application. For examples, successful commercialisation included the establishment of a technology start-up and the development of a consultancy project.
30. The full application will be submitted to the Knowledge Transfer Committee (KTC) chaired by the Associate Vice-President (AVP) in Knowledge Transfer, with members comprising senior faculty members and Head of KTO.
31. In case there are more fundable project applications than available funding for a given period, KTC can decide to fund the applications with the higher scores.
32. The functions of the KTC are to assess, review and approve the applications submitted to KTO.
33. To avoid conflict of interest, member(s) of the KTC 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.
34. In order to protect the confidentiality of a potential IPR in the applications submitted, all members of KTC have entered into a Non-Disclosure Agreement with the University to protect the confidentiality of information disclosed to them.

Notification of Results

35. The results will be announced to the applicants within **2 months** from submission of their applications.
36. If an application is recommended for funding support, an offer letter will be issued by the AVP/ Head of KTO to the successful applicant. The letter may include

special terms and conditions associated with the project imposed by the KTC. The applicant may need to revise the application form accordingly before the funding could be issued.

37. If an application is unsuccessful, reason(s) will be provided in written form as feedback to the applicant.
38. The applicant can write to KTO to withdraw the application at any time before accepting the offer for the MPCF.
39. Each applicant will have **14 calendar days** from the date of offer to accept the offer.
40. For each successful application, the applicant will be the recipient for the approved funding. The recipient has to comply with this Guideline and all the terms and conditions stated in the offer letter.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

41. The University will own all IPR arising from the MPCF project, unless alternative arrangement is specified. The IPR ownership will be in accordance to the IPR policies at HKBU.
42. The recipient is required to inform the KTO of any new intellectual property that may arise from the project.

Disbursement of the MPCF

43. Unless otherwise stated, disbursement of the approved MPCF will be made through the Finance Office after receipt of duly signed acceptance of the offer together with all required documents.
44. The applicant shall be responsible for any project expenditures and commitments in excess of the amount approved as stated in the offer letter.
45. KTC may terminate a project or suspend the funding support at any time in special circumstances for reasons including but not limited to a lack of progress of the project in a material way, slim chance of completion of the project in accordance with the project proposal, as well as if the original objectives of project are no longer relevant to the needs of the industry, or the KTC sees fit to terminate the project in public interest. KTC will reserve the right to demand immediate return of all the unexpended funds after the termination of the project.

Submission of Progress and Final Reports

46. All projects are monitored against their milestones throughout the project period.

47. Mid-term evaluation may be required. Upon request by KTO or as specified in the terms and conditions associated with the project, recipients will provide timely progress reports for assessment.
48. The applicant will submit the final report for the project within **two (2) months** from the project completion or early termination date.
49. Typically, the final report should include, but not limited to the following:
 - i. Achievements of the project with respect to the objectives;
 - ii. How the results from the project have enhanced the commercialisation of the technology;
 - iii. IPR position as the result of the project;
 - iv. Actual Expenditure for the project, including if there is unexpended funds for the project to be returned to the University;
 - v. Post-project plan, if any;
 - vi. A two-page product/invention commercial introduction (e.g. a two-pages teaser).
50. 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 KTO, recipients will provide timely clarification and / or additional information to substantiate the content of progress and final reports.
51. The report(s) will be reviewed and may be submitted to the KTC for further consideration and comments

Procurement Procedures

52. The applicant 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 the University.
53. The applicant should submit change request to KTC via KTO with justification(s) for any new budget item(s) or approved budget item(s) with 30% overspending.

Important Notes

54. Any substantial changes from the original project outlined in the funding request including the change of any milestone(s) and/or deliverable(s) must report and submit change request to KTO for approval.
55. KTC reserves the right to require the recipient to recover funds where there is evidence that the project is failing to adhere to the project proposal, unless a change has been agreed in writing.
56. Any record of mishandling of funds or lack of discipline in financial management or non-compliance with the terms and conditions associated with the project is a

factor in which the KTC will take into account in considering future applications from the same applicant or the same project team members.

57. Project awarded with the MPCF may be used for publication purposes by the KTO. However, KTO will avoid the public release of commercially sensitive or confidential materials.
58. The applicant is required to declare in the application whether the applicant has sought or is seeking funding support for the project from other funding sources. Double subvention for the project will not be allowed.
59. All applications that have dealings with ethical and safety issues have to obtain ethical and or safety approval from the Committee on the Use of Human & Animal Subjects in Teaching and Research (HASC) at the University and are conducted in accordance to the relevant policies at the University. Relevant applicants must provide all necessary supporting information to support this fact in their applications.

Enquiries

60. The MPCF is overseen by the KTC and funded by the UGC via the University. Administration of the MPCF is performed by the KTO and all inquiries on the MPCF should be directed to:

Knowledge Transfer Office, Hong Kong Baptist University

Address : Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
Tel : (852) 3411 8098 or (852) 3411 8076
Fax : (852) 3411 8093
E-mail : kto@hkbu.edu.hk
Website : <http://www.kto.hkbu.edu.hk>