RGC Town Hall Meeting on Collaborative Research

(Engineering and Physical Sciences)

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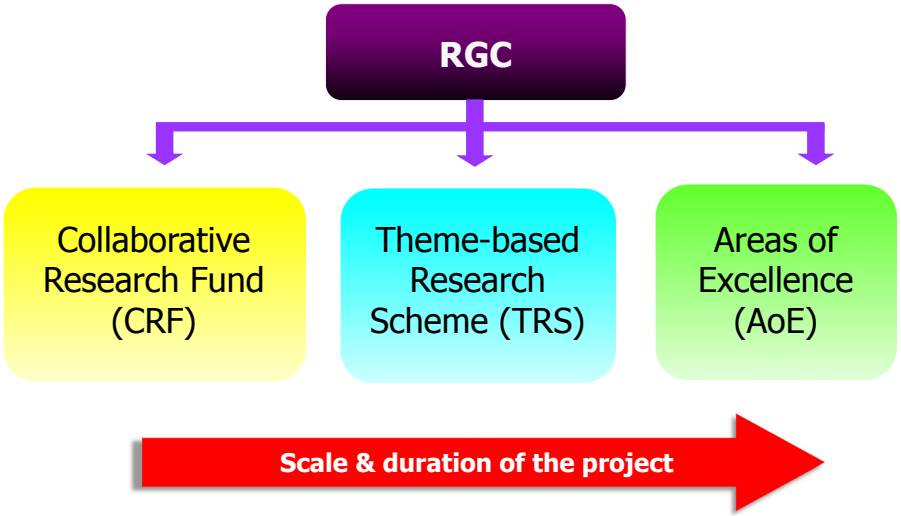
Major Programmes of Collaborative Research



Major Programmes of Collaborative Research

	CRF	TRS	AoE
Call for application	Every year	Every year	Every two years
Funding amount	HK$ 2-10M	HK$ 75M max	HK$ 60M max
Project duration	≤ 3 years	5 years	8 years
Preliminary proposal requirement	800 words summary + 4-page proposal description	1-page summary + 5-page proposal description	1-page summary + 5-page proposal description

Major Programmes of Collaborative Research

	CRF	TRS	AoE
Full proposal requirement	13-page proposal description	23-page proposal description	23-page proposal description
Major review report	--	After 2nd & 4th years	After 4th year
On-site visit	--	After submission of major review report	After submission of major review report

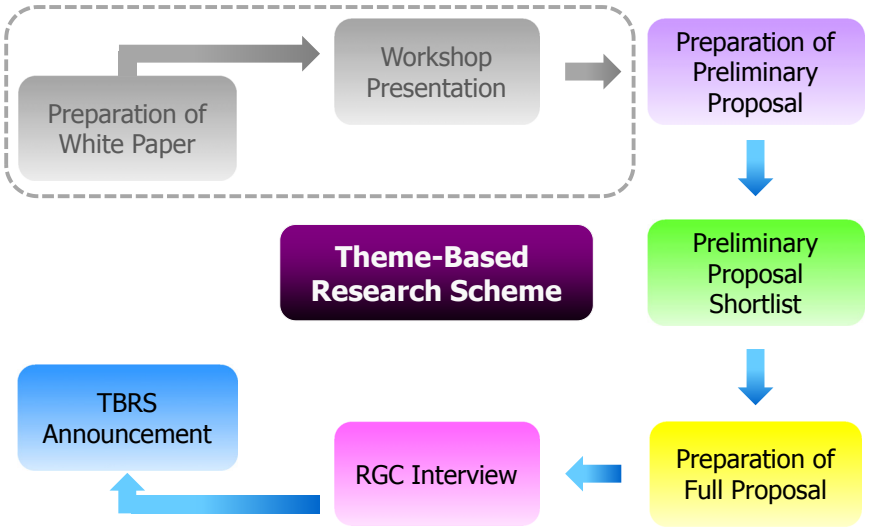
Background of Collaborative Research Fund (CRF)

- Equipment Grant
  - To enable the acquisition of major research facilities or equipment
  - To assist institutions in "leveraging" support from equipment suppliers
- Group Research Grant
  - To encourage research groups for collaborative research across disciplines and/or across institutions
  - To enhance the research output of institutions in terms of the level of attainment, quantity, dimensions and/or speed

Background of Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS)

- Initiated from HK$ 18 billion Research Endowment Fund in 2009
- Investment income about HK$ 200 M per year
- Objective - To focus academic research efforts on themes of a more long-term nature and of strategic benefit to the development of Hong Kong
- 3 Themes
  - Promoting good health
  - **Developing a sustainable environment**
  - Enhancing Hong Kong's strategic position as a regional and international business centre

Timeline of 1st Round of Theme-based Research Scheme



Background of Areas of Excellence (AoE) Scheme

- Objectives
  - To provide a platform to nurture areas of international excellence through high quality research and inter-institutional collaboration
  - To support large-scale, broad and long-term research projects
  - No pre-determined AoE themes or topics
  - ***May transfer to TRS if the proposals fall within the scope of the topics of TRS***

Important Considerations in Proposal Preparation

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- Choice of title and abstract
- Well-defined and achievable scope & objectives
- Existence of a clear strategy
  - Up-to-date knowledge of the area with good literature survey and solid background

    (recent developments in the field; key persons in the field – very likely to be your reviewers)
  - **Key issues and challenges to be addressed**

    (originality and scientific merit)
  - **Reasonable and achievable milestones and deliverables**
  - Clear and logical presentation

  - **Reasonable budget** with strong justification

    (Standard equipment unlikely to be supported; quotation needed for equipment of over HK$ 200,000)
- Multi-disciplinary in nature?
- Credentials of the Project Team
  - Have necessary stature by the peers in the field?
  - **Sound track record of PIs and Co-Is?**

    (short CV, progress reports, work done by PI in the area)
  - Do team members reinforce and/or complement each other?

    Clear roles of team members?
- **Clear collaboration plan**
- References cited
  - PI's seminal work and knowledge in the area reflected; reviewers hinted

Important Considerations

Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS) & Areas of Excellence (AoE)

- Qualification as world-leading by international standards
  - Address intellectually challenging problem?
  - **Significant academic impact** within the grand challenge topic?
- Impact to Hong Kong
  - Future social or economic development of Hong Kong?
  - **Unique to Hong Kong**?
- Sound structure for an excellent research project
  - **Sound system of governance**?
  - **Multi-disciplinary collaboration**?
  - **Clear roles and responsibilities** of each Pis
- Track records and experience of PC and Co-PIs
  - Coordinating large-scale research projects?

Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS)

- Involve ***stakeholders***, e.g. general public, relevant industrial sectors, policy makers, to provide advice & transfer results to impact the target sector of the society
- Provide a **knowledge dissemination plan** for communicating the project outcomes to research community and stakeholders
- Provide a **plan for transferring technological know-how** to industry, if appropriate
- Provide a **plan for the training** of future research talents
- Provide a **plan to transfer relevant research results** to benefit education and industry
- Provide a technology transfer plan for ITC if applicants who contemplate applying for funding support from ITF

Areas of Excellence (AoE)

- Excellence – uniqueness of the project team and the project
- Addressing grand challenges beyond existing strengths and excellence – value-addedness and synergy
- Research collaboration – core requirements
- Inter-institutional and/or inter-disciplinary projects within the same institutions
- **Sufficiently focused**
- Good prospects of sustainability beyond the funding period
- **No mandatory requirement for matching funding**

Other Important Considerations in Proposal Preparation

- Avoid very similar projects (overlap with previous applications)
  - RGC may transfer AoE proposal to TRS if it falls within the scope of the topics of TRS
- Exceptionally novel ideas or concepts (controversial or non-controversial)
  - Supported by some preliminary findings
- Make full use of space allowed
- Do not copy and paste between sections
- Non-disclosure of professional relationships and previous associations with nominated reviewers – automatic disqualification

Important Considerations in RGC Interview

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- Provide
  - background/motivation (why)
  - objectives (what you want to achieve and why will the results be important)
  - approach/research plan (how)
  - potential impacts of the proposed research
- Avoid to use jargons or undefined acronyms
- Avoid to have slides with ultrahigh information density that convey little useful information
- Appropriate font size, easily readable
- No undecipherable or crowded plots or images with invisible labels

Important Considerations in RGC Interview

- Enough time to explain the figures
- No need to read verbatim the slides
- Demonstrate strong track records of investigators
  (awards, *h* indices, impact factors) but overdoing it can be a turn-off
- Provide a credible plan of collaboration and management
- Prepare **dissemination plan** (including intellectual merit and impact to Hong Kong, knowledge transfer plan), if necessary
- Good time management
  - Plan the content and timing of the last slide for a strong and memorable finish
- Speak clearly and project your voice to the back of the room
- Avoid being monotonous

Important Considerations in RGC Interview

- Demonstrate strong leadership of PC
- Good coordination among team members
  - Clear roles of each team member
  - Identify responsibilities of each team member
    (who should be responsible for the questions in the specific field)
  - Be well prepared for common interview questions and answers
- Address feedback comments by panel
- Prepare presentation printouts
- Composition of panel members

Theme-Based Research Scheme Project

Theme: **Developing a Sustainable Environment**

Grand challenge topic: **Organic Photo-Voltaic and Light Emitting Diodes**

Project Title: **Challenges in Organic Photo-Voltaics and Light-Emitting Diodes – A Concerted Multi-Disciplinary and Multi-Institutional Effort**

Project Coordinator: **Prof. Vivian W.W. Yam (Chemistry, HKU)**

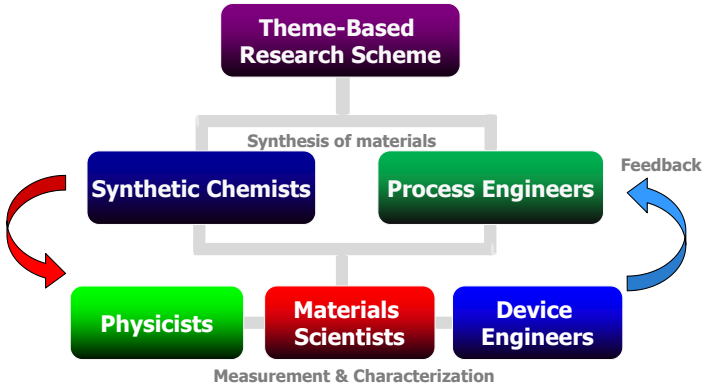
Co–Principal Investigators:

Prof. Vivian Wing Wah Yam (HKU) (Coordinator)
Prof. Hoi Sing Kwok (HKUST)
Prof. Ka Ming Ng (HKUST)
Prof. Furong Zhu (HKBU)
Prof. Chi Ming Che (HKU)
Prof. Chun Sing Lee (CityU)
Prof. Charles Surya (PolyU)

Critical Success Factors

- Built upon the recognized strengths of the team
- Multi-institutional involvement, with 5 participating institutions (HKU, HKUST, HKBU, HKPolyU, CityU)
- Interdisciplinarity, with expertise from chemists, physicists, materials scientists and device engineers

Clear roles of team members



Critical Success Factors

- Required critical mass of research excellence and infrastructures in place
- Address grand challenges related to energy and sustainable environment
- Collaborative links and efforts through AoE on Institute of Molecular Functional Materials and State Key Laboratory on Synthetic Chemistry
- Strong industrial links for collaboration/technology transfer
- **Clear mission, goals, deliverables, detailed strategic plan and implementation methods**
- **Well-defined management structure**
- Institutional support (e.g. **SRT on Molecular Materials** - Provide a platform for interdisciplinary research between the fields of chemistry, physics and engineering)

Thank You and Good Luck!