**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
語文教育及研究常務委員會**

Sponsorship Projects
2024/25

-------------◆-------------

Guide to Applicants

-------------◆-------------

Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau

Address : Room 1702, 17/F, Skyline Tower,
39 Wang Kwong Road,
Kowloon Bay, Kowloon
Tel : 3525 1469 / 3527 0167
Fax : 2801 7732

(Updated in January 2024)

Standing Committee on Language Education and Research

Sponsorship Projects 2024/25
Guide to Applicants

Applicants shall read this Guide carefully while preparing application(s). **All parts of the application form** shall be completed with supporting documents wherever required. The English version shall prevail in case of any discrepancies between the Chinese and English versions.

---

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Standing Committee on Language and Education Research

Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) was established in 1996 to advise the Government on language education issues in general and the use of the Language Fund (LF) in particular. Since its establishment, with a view to enabling the people of Hong Kong, particularly students and working adults, to become biliterate (Chinese and English) and trilingual (Cantonese, Putonghua, and English), SCOLAR has complemented and supplemented the efforts of the Government, other advisory bodies, and stakeholders by funding and implementing various initiatives through the use of the LF.

1.2 Sponsorship Projects

With a view to creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for the people of Hong Kong, particularly students and the workforce, SCOLAR launched the Sponsorship Projects in the 2015/16 school year. Potential community partners are encouraged to submit proposals on promoting reading, language education, and language use that will help to enrich the language environment of Hong Kong. The aims of Sponsorship Projects are –

- promoting biliteracy and trilingualism among the people of Hong Kong through an array of language-related and event-based / competition-based project(s); and

- engaging the community in language education in order to enrich the language environment of Hong Kong and leveraging on the efforts and success of other parties in organising language-related and event-based / competition-based project(s) in the community.

2. APPLICATION DETAILS

2.1 Eligibility

2.1.1 The applicant must be:
  ➢ a body corporate either incorporated or registered under the Companies

Ordinance (Cap. 622),
- a charitable institution or trust of a public character recognised under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112), or
- a tertiary institution, a society or an organisation (excluding primary schools and secondary schools) registered under the Laws of Hong Kong[1].

2.1.2   The applicant must have proven track records of organising language activities / programmes.

2.2   Project Period

2.2.1   The project period shall begin and end within the 2024/25 school year (**i.e. between September 2024 and August 2025**), including publicity and enrolment of participants.

2.3   Funding

2.3.1   Funding cap
The maximum amount of sponsorship for each proposed project shall **not exceed 50% of the total estimated or actual expenditure** of the project, whichever is the lesser. The minimum total estimated expenditure for each proposed project shall be HK$250,000.   There is no ceiling on the total estimated expenditure of the proposed project but the maximum amount of sponsorship for each proposed project is **capped at HK$1,200,000**.   In case of an increase in actual income (e.g. other sponsorships, donations, ticket income, admission charges, etc.) and/or a decrease in actual expenditure, the actual amount of sponsorship for the project would be deducted correspondingly.

2.3.2   Other Funding
The applicant shall provide details on other funding sources as well as other partners identified or planned to be engaged (if any).   If an applicant receives other funding for the same project (regardless of the source), the applicant shall notify the SCOLAR Secretariat immediately.   If the proposed project receives **any other public funding** from the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, whether or not the public funding is used for the expenditure covered by the LF, the **relevant application will not be considered** (as for projects that have been approved, SCOLAR reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship and demand immediate return of the grants disbursed).

2.4   Project Requirements

2.4.1   Proposed projects shall contribute to the vision and mission of SCOLAR, **i.e. promoting biliteracy and trilingualism among the people of Hong Kong**.

2.4.2   Proposed projects shall be **language-related event-based / competition-based** projects conducted in Hong Kong.   Examples include (but not limited to) :
- carnivals or festivals;
- competitions, talks, seminars or author sharing sessions in literary arts;

---

[1] Examples of the Laws of Hong Kong include Societies Ordinance (Cap. 151), Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap 320), etc.

- ➢ public speaking activities;
- ➢ theatre performances with post-performance sharing sessions; and
- ➢ creative language-related events for the community.

2.4.3 Priority will be given to projects which:
- ➢ include novel or creative elements to enable beneficiaries to appreciate the beauty of language and/or promote the effective use of language in the community;
- ➢ encourage active engagement and participation of the community, including the workforce; and
- ➢ cater for different language needs and abilities of participants; and
- ➢ encourage cross-disciplinary learning between language and other subjects (e.g. STEAM, creative media, culture, sports.).

2.4.4 The proposed project shall be non-profit-making in nature and must not include any profit-making activities.

2.4.5 The proposed project shall not be used for political, religious, commercial publicity or raising funds for any individuals or organisations.

2.4.6 The proposed project shall be of considerable scale with a view to bringing an impact to the community and the total number of direct beneficiaries[2] shall be **no less than 500**.

2.4.7 Direct beneficiaries of the proposed project shall include more than one type of target group, for instance, students, parents, teachers or the general public. A project organised solely for an individual school will not be considered.

2.4.8 The applicant may collaborate with local or overseas partner(s) to implement the project. For a joint application, the applicant shall be the lead organisation and be responsible for the project.

2.4.9 The applicant must appoint a Project Leader[3] who has expertise and experience in planning and organising educational activities / programmes, as well as knowledge in project management, quality assurance and other relevant support services.

2.4.10 The applicant must appoint a Language Advisor with expertise and experience in language education and/or organisation of language activities to help map out language learning elements and monitor the learning and teaching effectiveness of the proposed project, including reviewing teaching plans and project materials.

2.4.11 The applicant should take into account the potential challenges posed by unforeseeable circumstances such as COVID-19, and propose an alternate plan to state how the proposed activities could be flexibly delivered by alternate modes, e.g. online or non-

---

[2] Direct beneficiaries may include participants of workshops and contests, members of school teams, audience of talks and seminars, etc.

[3] Subject to the structure and design of the proposed project, Project Leader or other management staff with relevant expertise and experience may also take up the role of the Language Advisor.

physical means; or rescheduling the proposed activities within the proposed project period).

2.4.12 A practical publicity strategy for promotion and enrolment of participants shall be included in the application and in the budget. The purpose, scale and effectiveness of each publicity item should be clearly set out. The applicant shall make good use of technology and new media in devising the publicity and enrolment strategy to enhance effectiveness. If the proposed project targets primary and secondary students, the project partner shall promote the approved project to **all** eligible schools taking note of the proposed activity schedule and the local school calendar.

2.4.13 Subject to availability of resources, projects previously sponsored by LF under Sponsorship Projects will be considered on individual merits provided that the following criteria are met:
  ➢ the project is unique and brings a positive impact on the society; and
  ➢ the project was well-received in the previous round(s) by the community.

2.5 Showcasing of Project Outcomes

2.5.1 Upon completion of the project, project partners shall produce a short video of up to three minutes to showcase the project outcomes. Video content could include, for example, highlights of activities and events, participants' sharing, adjudicators' comments, participants' works, and winning entries.

2.5.2 Project partners shall provide relevant project materials such as teaching kits, videos and photos of events, and participants' works to SCOLAR Secretariat for showcasing and dissemination purposes.

2.5.3 Project partners shall participate in and support SCOLAR's annual showcasing event(s) by, for example, inviting participants to attend and share their learning experiences and outcomes; providing additional workshop / seminar for demonstration purpose; producing promotional videos for sharing, as well as assisting in any relevant work as and when requested by the SCOLAR Secretariat.

2.6 LF Agreement

2.6.1 The applicant is required to enter into a standard LF Agreement with the Trustee of LF upon acceptance of the sponsorship for the proposed project.

3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

3.1 Budget

3.1.1 All expenditures must be exclusively used for the proposed project and incurred within the project period (**i.e. September 2024 to August 2025**). The applicant should submit a detailed budget with justifications.

3.1.2 The budget shall be realistic and cost-effective. Item descriptions that are too brief and not adequately justified may not be accepted.

3.1.3   Depending on the content of the proposed project, expenditure items should be grouped under the following categories:
(a) staff cost;
(b) activity cost;
(c) publicity expenses; and
(d) general expenses.

3.1.4   The applicant must submit a publicity budget with breakdown and justification for each item.   The applicant shall indicate whether the publicity would involve self-owned platform(s), and if so, the amount of sponsorship sought from the LF to publicise on such platform(s) shall not exceed 20% of the total amount of sponsorship sought from the LF for the proposed project[4].

3.1.5   The project partner will be required to submit audited accounts after completion of the project according to the terms and conditions set out in the LF Agreement and relevant guidelines.   **A maximum of HK$12,000, HK$14,000 and HK$20,000 of audit fees** charged by an independent certified public accountant for preparation of the auditor's reports for projects with grant less than HK$1 million, between HK$1 million and HK$5 million and more than HK$5 million respectively may be included in the budget.

3.1.6   The sponsorship sought from the LF shall not cover contingency budget for unexpected minor expenses or administrative overhead incurred by tertiary institutions funded by the University Grants Committee.   If necessary, the above expenses should be covered by other funding sources.

3.2   Procurement

3.2.1   The purchase of goods and services shall be conducted in an open, fair and competitive manner and in line with the "**General Guidelines on Procurement**" (available on SCOLAR website: scolar.gov.hk). Relevant quotation documents and transaction records shall be properly kept and submitted to SCOLAR Secretariat together with the financial reports as detailed in 4.2.1 below.

3.3   General Principles for Allowable and Unallowable Costs

3.3.1   The Applicant should refer to the General Principles for Allowable and Unallowable Costs set out at **Annex** when preparing the budget.   The principles are for general guidance only.   The SCOLAR Secretariat has the discretion to determine the amount of sponsorship, having regard to the circumstances of each individual case.

3.4   Schedule of Grant Disbursement

3.4.1   Funding support is normally given as a grant and disbursed by instalments. Instalments of grant will only be disbursed if relevant requirements as stipulated in the LF agreement are satisfied.

---

[4] Special consideration shall be made if full justifications with supporting information are provided for exceeding the 20% budget cap.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM

4.1 Monitoring of Project Materials

4.1.1 The logos of SCOLAR and LF shall be suitably included in all project materials (i.e. publicity materials, learning and teaching materials, etc.) as acknowledgement.

4.1.2 All draft project materials (i.e. publicity materials, learning and teaching materials, etc.) shall be sent to the SCOLAR Secretariat for approval at least two weeks before production.

4.2 Submission of Reports and Observation Visits

4.2.1 Project partners are required to submit a progress report and an interim financial report during the project period, and an end-of-project report and a final financial report within three months upon completion of the approved projects. The final financial report shall be accompanied by audited accounts and an agreed-upon procedures report prepared by an independent certified public accountant declaring that all expenses incurred fall within the scope of LF grant, and are in line with the Clauses specified in the standard LF Agreement.

4.2.2 All approved projects are subject to supervision and evaluation of the SCOLAR Secretariat via review of progress report, end-of-project report and financial reports as well as SCOLAR Secretariat's observation visits of project activities.

4.3 Evaluation

4.3.1 The proposed project shall be evaluated on its effectiveness in achieving the objectives of Sponsorship Projects.

4.3.2 Project partners are required to conduct self-evaluation of their approved projects and collect both quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants for assessment of project effectiveness. Detailed design, work plan and methodology of the evaluation, including measurable outcomes, performance indicators and the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, shall be included in the application form.

4.3.3 Details of the evaluation result shall be reported in the progress / end-of-project reports according to the time frame set out in the LF Agreement.

5. ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

5.1 Assessment Process

5.1.1 The SCOLAR Secretariat will conduct preliminary vetting and submit the qualified applications to the vetting panel composed of SCOLAR Members for further assessment. Applicants may be invited to present their proposed projects to the vetting panel if necessary. Assessment results will be announced in the third quarter of 2024 tentatively.

5.1.2　All applications will be assessed on individual merits.　SCOLAR reserves the rights to accept, reject or request modifications to selected applications.

5.2　Assessment Criteria

5.2.1　The assessment criteria are as follows:

(a) Project objectives
- ➢ relevance of the proposed projects, in particular, whether they could tie in with the vision and mission of SCOLAR as well as the objectives of Sponsorship Projects

(b) Project content
- ➢ depth and concreteness of the project content
- ➢ potential benefits to the language environment in Hong Kong
- ➢ effectiveness in enabling beneficiaries to appreciate the beauty of language and/or promoting the effective and creative use of language
- ➢ appropriateness of the proposed activities
- ➢ sustainability of project outcomes

(c) Project structure and management
- ➢ scale of the proposed project
- ➢ suitability and feasibility
- ➢ proposed number and types of direct beneficiaries
- ➢ expertise and experience of the project leader and language advisor
- ➢ effectiveness of the publicity strategy
- ➢ effectiveness of evaluation methodology and tools

(d) Cost-effectiveness
- ➢ whether the budget is prudent, realistic and fully justified
- ➢ availability of alternative funding support for the proposed project

(e) Capacity of the applicant
- ➢ background, governance structure, track record as well as past performance of the applicants in organising language activities / programmes, including previous SCOLAR projects
- ➢ other factors deemed relevant by SCOLAR

6.　NOTES TO APPLICANTS

6.1　Staff Administration
Project partners shall ensure openness and fairness in staff recruitment and manage conflict of interest according to the "**General Guidelines on Staff Administration**" (uploaded on SCOLAR website: scolar.gov.hk).

6.2　Intellectual Property Rights
All learning and teaching materials, promotional materials, publications and audio / visual

materials related to the projects shall not infringe copyright or Intellectual Property Rights. SCOLAR shall have the right to use, duplicate and disseminate all project materials developed.

6.3 Sexual Conviction Record Check
If the approved projects target students, project partners should take note of Education Bureau Circular No. 7/2021[5] and request appointed staff / tutors to undergo the Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC) operated by the Hong Kong Police Force.

6.4 Liability
SCOLAR shall not be responsible for any financial loss of the project partner in connection with the implementation of the proposed project. SCOLAR does not accept any responsibilities for claims, demands or liabilities arising from the approved project. The project partner shall take out appropriate liability insurance for the project concerned (such as public liability insurance).

7. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

7.1 The applicant MUST submit:

(a) **a completed application form** either in Chinese or English (in duplicate);

(b) **a proposal (optional)** either in Chinese or English (maximum 10 pages of A4 paper; in duplicate);

(c) **a copy of the organisation's registration document** (for charitable organisations, also a copy of the letter issued by Inland Revenue Department for tax exemption under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance); and

(d) **a USB flash drive**[6] containing an identical soft-copy of 7.1(a) the application form (and 7.1(b) the proposal) **in MS Word format**, as well as the documents in 7.1(c) above **in PDF or JPG format**.

7.2 Applications shall be submitted <u>in person</u> or by <u>post/courier</u> to:

Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau
Room 1702, 17/F, Skyline Tower
39 Wang Kwong Road, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon
(Attn: ExO(EP))

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday   8:30 am to 1:00 pm; 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Saturday, Sunday and Public Holiday   Closed

7.3 **Application deadline: 12:00 noon on 11 March 2024 (Monday).** (For application by post, date on postmark shall not be later than the closing date.)

---

[5] Education Bureau Circular No. 7/2021 is accessible on Education Bureau's webpage:
https://applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBC/EDBC21007E.pdf

[6] USB flash drive submitted to the LE & SCOLAR Section for the application will not be returned to the applicants.

7.4 In case the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is in force for any duration between 8:30 am and 12:00 noon on the application closing date, the application closing time will be extended to 12:00 noon on the next working day.

7.5 Late submissions will not be considered. Applications by fax, e-mail or other electronic means will not be accepted.

7.6 Applicants may be requested to provide supplementary documents and information after the deadline for processing the application. Failure to provide such information on time will lead to termination of the application without further notice.

7.7 All submitted applications and supplementary documents will not be returned.

7.8 Applicants will be informed of the result in writing in the third quarter of 2024. SCOLAR's decision is final. The decision on the funding to be granted rests with SCOLAR. Unsuccessful applicant, however, may submit a fresh application in the next round of Sponsorship Projects.

8. ENQUIRIES

For enquiries, please contact the SCOLAR Secretariat at 3525 1469 / 3527 0167 or visit the SCOLAR's website at scolar.gov.hk.

Language Education and SCOLAR Section
Education Bureau
January 2024

Language Fund
Principles for Allowable and Unallowable Costs for
Sponsorship Projects

Introduction

        This document aims at assisting the applicants in determining whether the cost of an item is allowable under the Language Fund (LF hereafter) Grant as well as the extent thereof.

Target Beneficiaries

2.   The LF Grant shall only be used for the agreed target beneficiaries.

General Principles

3.   The general principles for determining allowable costs for a LF project are listed below:

    (a)   The cost is in accordance with the terms and conditions stipulated in the LF Agreement.

    (b)   The cost is incurred within the ambit and the scope of the approved budget.

    (c)   The cost is incurred within the project period.

    (d)   The cost is necessarily incurred for the purposes for which the LF Grant is provided.

    (e)   The cost is reasonable and accords with the principles of sound financial management, in particular in terms of value for money and cost-effectiveness.

    (f)   The cost is actually and provably spent. It is adequately documented by accounting records and documents such as vouchers, invoices, receipts, payroll records, timesheets, etc.

Common Allowable Costs

4.   Staff Cost, Activity Cost, Publicity Expenses and General Expenses **will be considered each on its own merit**.

5.   Examples of allowable items include –

    (a)   language-related activities, including but not limited to opening ceremony, rounding up the completion of a project, seminars, workshops, exhibitions;

    (b)   educational materials (e.g. educational booklets or digital resources);

    (c)   allowances for voluntary helpers;

    (d)   insurance for public liability;

(e)   travelling expenses (except items listed in clause 7(k) below);

(f)   fees for instructors / speakers;

(g)   publicity (e.g. promotional materials, certificates for volunteers); and

(h)   audit fees charged by an independent certified public accountant for the preparation of auditor's reports for projects, with the maximum amount of sponsorship as indicated below:

Overall expenditure of the approved project	Maximum amount of sponsorship
less than $1 million	$12,000
between $1 million and $5 million	$14,000
more than $5 million	$20,000

Common Unallowable Costs

6.   Grantees shall finance the unallowable costs from non-LF sources.

7.   Examples of unallowable items include –

(a)   expenses for building facilities (including office and accommodation)
- *expenses for rates, office rental, building management fee, renovation, operation, repair and maintenance, etc.;*

(b)   business set up cost
- *expenses on the formation or establishment of a limited company or organisation;*

(c)   entertainment expenses
- *costs associated with any type of entertainment and related incidental expenses;*

(d)   equipment and maintenance cost
- *purchase of furniture and/or equipment, such as computer, video equipment items, etc.;*
- *maintenance costs for equipment such as computer, video equipment, etc.;*

(e)   food cost
- *food of any kind such as snacks, beverages, refreshments, meals for project staff;*

(f)   insurance premiums
- *insurance premiums not directly related to the project such as travel insurance, employees' compensation insurance, directors' and officers' liability insurance, etc.;*

(g)   penalties and fines

(h) personal expenses
- *expenditures on goods and services for private purposes;*

(i) staff cost
- *salary increment to project personnel;*
- *fringe benefits for staff (e.g. education allowance, medical insurance, housing allowance, etc.);*
- *severance payment and untaken leave of staff employed;*
- *gratuities;*
- *allowances other than employer's contribution to the mandatory provident fund;*

(j) cost for stored value card
- *costs for acquiring and/or adding value to stored value card such as octopus, phone card;*

(k) travelling expenses
- *project staff's travelling expenses between home / accommodation and workplace;*
- *excess travelling expenses, i.e. amount over the cheapest reasonable form and route of public transport;*
- *costs for travel documents (e.g. passport costs) and related expenses (e.g. visa fees);*

(l) utility expenses
- *expenses such as charges for electricity, gas, water, telephone (fixed line or mobile), fax, internet access, etc.; and*

(m) unrelated administration costs
- *general administration and expenses not directly related to the project (excluding administration overhead charges by University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institute).*

Handling of Unallowable Costs

8.   Expenditure on unallowable items that cannot be charged to the LF Grant shall be borne and financed by the Grantees / non-LF sources.

9.   For any uncertainty on whether an expense should be charged to the LF Grant, written clarification shall be sought from the Language Education and SCOLAR Section. Language Education and SCOLAR Section may at its sole discretion determine whether the expenses concerned should be charged to the LF Grant or not.