



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

**Sponsorship Projects  
2021/22**

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**Guide to Applicants**  
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Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau

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*(Latest version in December 2020)*

**Standing Committee on Language Education and Research**  
**Sponsorship Projects 2021/22**  
**Guide to Applicants**

Applicants must read the Guide to Applicants carefully in preparing applications. All parts of the application form must be completed with supporting documents wherever required. The English version shall prevail whenever there is any discrepancy between the English and Chinese versions.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Standing Committee on Language and Education Research (SCOLAR)**

The vision of the Standing Committee on Language and Education Research (SCOLAR) is to enable the people of Hong Kong, in particular, students and the workforce, to be bi-literate and tri-lingual for better learning and better life. Since the establishment of the Language Fund (LF) in 1994, SCOLAR has, through the use of the LF, complemented and supplemented the efforts of the Government, other advisory bodies and stakeholders by funding and implementing research and development projects on language learning and language education issues, enhancing professional development of Chinese language and English language teachers, providing school-based support on Chinese language and English language education, and creating a facilitating language environment for our students as well as in the community.

### **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 to engage community partners to submit proposals and to encourage initiatives that promote the importance of reading, language education and language use, thereby enriching the language environment of Hong Kong. Sponsorship Projects aims to –

- Promote bi-literacy (Chinese and English languages) and tri-lingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English) to the people of Hong Kong through an array of language-related event-/competition-based project(s); and
- Engage the community to enrich the language environment of Hong Kong and leverage on the efforts and success of other parties in organising language-related event-/competition-based projects in the community.

## II. GUIDE TO APPLICANTS

### 1. Eligibility

Applicants must be **registered organisations<sup>1</sup>, statutory bodies or recognised community organisations<sup>2</sup>**.

### 2. Funding

#### (a) 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 the actual amount of other incomes obtained by a grantee for a project (e.g. other sponsorships, donations, ticket income, admission charges, etc.) and/or a decrease in the actual expenditure, the actual amount of sponsorship granted for the project would be deducted correspondingly to meet the requirement of paragraph 3.2 under Sponsorship Criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> Registered organisations include bodies/schools registered under the Societies Ordinance, the Companies Ordinance or the Education Ordinance, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Recognised community organisations include charitable bodies that are eligible for tax exemption under the Inland Revenue Ordinance.

(b) Allowable Costs

Applicants should refer to the general principles for determining allowable and unallowable costs for the LF projects as set out at **Annex** when considering the budget for their application.

**3. Sponsorship Criteria**

- 3.1 The proposed projects must help achieve the vision and mission of SCOLAR, i.e. promoting bi-literacy and tri-lingualism to the people of Hong Kong;
- 3.2 The proposed projects must be non-profit-making in nature and must not be used for political, religious, commercial publicity or raising funds for any individuals or organisations;
- 3.3 The proposed projects must be held in Hong Kong. Study tours/visits to the Mainland China/overseas places will not be sponsored;
- 3.4 The proposed projects shall be language-related event-/competition-based projects for the community. The proposed projects shall be territory-wide as far as possible whilst projects on district-based will also be considered. The proposed projects shall be of considerable scale with a view to bringing an impact to the community – the total number of people involved (including participants and spectators) shall be no less than 300 for both district-based and territory-wide projects;
- 3.5 Successful applicants (i.e. Grantees) are required to submit audited project accounts (containing the Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet and Notes, and an independent auditor’s report on them) with unaudited supplementary information appended to the project accounts and a report of factual findings in connection with the internal controls of the Grantee issued by an auditor in respect of each project assuring that the funds have been properly used according to the terms and conditions as set out in the LF Agreement and its Guidelines;
- 3.6 The applicants must provide details on other funding sources as well as other participating/collaborating parties identified or planned to be engaged. If an applicant receives other sponsorships for the same project (regardless of the source) after submitting the application or after the project is approved, the applicant must notify SCOLAR immediately. If an applicant

receives any other public funding from the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for the **same project** (regardless whether the public funding is used for the expenditure covered by the Sponsorship Project or not), the relevant project will not be considered (as for projects that have been approved, SCOLAR reserves the right to withdraw the sponsorship);

- 3.7 Joint application (i.e. application jointly made by two or more local organisations) is allowed, but a principal or lead organisation must be identified and be responsible for the application;
- 3.8 Projects which have already been in progress (e.g. publicity and enrolment) will not be considered (excluding preparation work such as booking of venues);
- 3.9 Existing regular projects which are financially “self-sufficient” will not be considered<sup>3</sup>;
- 3.10 School activities organised solely for students of an individual school will not be considered. However, school activities involving parents, jointly organised by a number of schools or open to public will be considered; and
- 3.11 In general, applications for sponsorship for projects which have previously been sponsored will not be considered. That said, repeated sponsorship will be considered only if resources allow and on individual merits provided that the following criteria are met –
  - the project is unique in the community;
  - the project is well-received; and
  - the project brings territory-wide impact.

Project comprising new elements is preferred. Priority will be given to those projects with new element(s).

- 3.12 Proponents must submit a detailed breakdown of the publicity budget with sound justifications for each proposed publicity item. The purpose, scale and effectiveness of each publicity item should be clearly set out in the application for SCOLAR’s consideration. Proponents are also encouraged to make good

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<sup>3</sup> Refers to organisations with stable income and funding sources. If necessary, applicants will be required to submit documentary proof to show that the projects concerned are not existing regular projects which are “self-sufficient”. Otherwise, the applications concerned will not be considered.

use of technology in devising the publicity strategy to enhance the effectiveness.

### **III. ASSESSMENT MECHANISM**

#### **1. Assessment Criteria**

The relevance, contribution(s) and impact(s) of the proposed project to the language education in Hong Kong as well as the quality of the proposals are the principal assessment criteria. The proposals will be assessed upon, but not limited to, the following assessment criteria –

- whether the objectives, aims and contents of the proposed project tie in with vision and mission of SCOLAR;
- the potential benefits of the proposed project on facilitating language development, in and beyond school setting;
- the scale and social recognition of the proposed project;
- whether the proposed project promotes bi-literacy (Chinese and English languages) and tri-lingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English) to the people of Hong Kong;
- the depth and concreteness of the contents of the proposed project;
- whether the preparation arrangements of the project are appropriate and practical;
- whether the publicity strategy of the project is appropriate, practical, creative, effective and conducive to obtaining the best value for money;
- whether the proposed budget is prudent, realistic and cost-effective, with clear and full justifications provided;
- whether the proposed project has alternative sources of funding support;
- the background, governance structure, track record together with past performance of the applicants in organising activities, including results of previous projects; and
- other factors deemed relevant by SCOLAR.

#### **2. Assessment Process**

The Language Education and SCOLAR Section will conduct preliminary vetting of the proposals received, and then submit the

shortlisted applications to the vetting panel, which is composed of SCOLAR Members, for detailed discussion and assessment. Interviews or presentations will be arranged if necessary and recommendations of the vetting panel will then be submitted to SCOLAR for consideration.

#### **IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM**

Grantees are required to conduct self-evaluation and submit progress report(s) and interim financial report(s) on a regular basis during the project period, and an End-of-project report and a Final Financial Report within three months upon completion of the project. The Final Financial Report must be accompanied by auditor's reports prepared by an independent certified public accountant declaring that all expenses incurred fall within the scope of sponsorship of SCOLAR, and in line with the Clauses specified in the standard LF Agreement. All approved projects are subject to external evaluation by SCOLAR via review of progress report(s), financial report(s), End-of-project Report and Final Financial Report as well as visits of activities of the sponsored programme.

The logo of SCOLAR should be included in all publicity materials as acknowledgement and the publicity materials should be sent to the Language Education and SCOLAR Section for approval before production. Prior approval by SCOLAR should be obtained on any modification or amendment in any aspect of the project.

#### **V. NOTES TO APPLICANTS**

##### **1. Impact of COVID-19**

Proponents should take into account the potential challenges posed by COVID-19 when devising the content of the projects. In particular, proponents are required to propose contingency plans taking into account COVID-19 (e.g. whether the proposed activities could be flexibly delivered by alternate modes such as online or non-physical means; or whether there is room for rescheduling the proposed activities to a different time within the proposed project period).

**2. LF Agreement**

In general, Grantees are required to enter into a standard LF Agreement with the Trustee of the LF upon acceptance of the sponsorship for the proposed project.

**3. Project Period**

Grantees must begin and complete all activities that are set out in the proposal between September 2021 and August 2022.

**4. Procurement**

The purchase of goods and services should be conducted in an open, fair and competitive manner and in line with the “General Guidelines on Procurement” (uploaded on SCOLAR website: [www.scolar.gov.hk](http://www.scolar.gov.hk)).

**5. Schedule of Payment**

Funding support is normally given as a grant and distributed by installment(s) subject to mutual agreement, having regard to the circumstances of individual case.

**6. Detailed Budget Breakdown**

Applications must include a detailed cost and budget breakdown of the (i) proposed activities/programmes; and (ii) contingency plan taking into account the impact of COVID-19 epidemic if deemed appropriate, including all individual items involved in each activity/programme.

Publicity strategy and budget shall be included in the proposal. Proponents must submit a detailed breakdown of the publicity budget with sound justifications for each proposed publicity item. The purpose, scale and effectiveness of each publicity item should be clearly set out in the application for SCOLAR’s consideration.

Applicants who intend to jointly organise/co-organise the proposed projects with other organisations or accept sponsorship from other organisations in cash or in kind should provide the details in the application. Otherwise, SCOLAR reserves the right to withdraw the sponsorship.

**7. General Principles for Allowable and Unallowable Costs**

The principles set out at **Annex** are for general guidance only. SCOLAR has the discretion to determine the amount of sponsorship, having regard to the circumstances of individual case.

**8. Change(s) of Approved Project**

The approved project should be organised according to the details as specified in the proposal. No changes without the consent of SCOLAR are allowed. If any changes are made without the consent of SCOLAR and there are no justified reasons for the non-reported case, SCOLAR reserves the right to reduce or withdraw the sponsorship.

**9. Insurance**

SCOLAR does not accept any responsibilities for claims, demands or liabilities arising from the sponsored project. The Grantee should take out appropriate liability insurance for the project concerned (including public liability insurance).

**10. Publications**

All promotional materials, publications and audio/visual materials relating to the projects shall not infringe copyright or Intellectual Property Rights. The promotional materials should be sent to SCOLAR in advance for consideration. All project materials shall not be produced for sale within the project period.

**11. Invitation to SCOLAR**

Grantees should invite SCOLAR Members and staff of the Language Education and SCOLAR Section to attend the relevant ceremonies or other activities of the sponsored programmes as appropriate.

**VI. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION**

Information required for application:

- (a) **Completed application form, together with a maximum of 10-page A4-size proposal (optional), in duplicate;** the application form and proposal can be submitted either in English or Chinese;
- (b) **A copy of the organisation's registration document;**
- (c) **A copy of supporting document certifying that the applicant qualifies for tax exemption under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance** (applicable to charitable organisations only);  
and

- (d) A **CD-ROM** containing the completed application form and proposal mentioned in (a) above in MS Word format and the documents mentioned in (b) and (c) above in PDF format.

Applications should be sent to:

**Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau,  
Room 1702, 17/F, Skyline Tower, 39 Wang Kwong Road,  
Kowloon Bay, Kowloon**

***Application deadline: 12:00 noon on 11 February 2021 (Thursday).*** (Date on postmark should not be later than the closing date. Late submissions will not be considered. Applications by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.)

Applicants will be requested by SCOLAR to provide supplementary documents and information from time to time for processing the application. Failure to provide such information within a reasonable time frame will deem the application unsuccessful without further notice. All submitted applications and supplementary documents, whether accepted or not, will not be returned.

Applicants will be informed of the result in writing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021. **SCOLAR's decision is final.** The decision on the sponsorship and the amount to be granted rests with SCOLAR. Applicants that failed in the selection may submit a fresh application for next round of selection.

## **VII. ENQUIRIES**

For enquiries, please contact the Language Education and SCOLAR Section at 3527 0167/ 3525 1469 or visit the SCOLAR's website at <http://www.scolar.gov.hk>.

**Language Education and SCOLAR Section  
Education Bureau  
December 2020**

**Language Fund  
Principles for Allowable and Unallowable Costs for  
Sponsorship Projects**

**Introduction**

This document aims at assisting the applicants in considering 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 as follows –

- (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; and
- (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. Expenses which mainly are Staff Cost, Operation Cost, Promotion Cost and General Expenses **will normally be considered, depending on the circumstances of individual case.** Some allowable

items are listed below as a reference.

- (a) Language-related activities, including but not limited to opening ceremony, rounding up the completion of a project, seminars, workshops, exhibitions. Applicants should set out in detail in the application the objective(s), arrangements, expenditure and relevant details of the activities concerned;
- (b) Educational materials (e.g. educational booklets or DVDs);
- (c) Allowances for voluntary helpers;
- (d) Insurance (including public liability);
- (e) Travelling expenses;
- (f) Fees for instructors/speakers;
- (g) Publicity (e.g. promotional materials, certificates for volunteers); and
- (h) A maximum of HK\$10,000 of audit fees charged by independent certified public accountant for preparation of auditor's reports.

### **Common Unallowable Costs**

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

6. Some unallowable items are listed below as a reference.

- (a) 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
  - *Purchase of furniture and/or equipment, such as computer, video equipment items which will incur recurrent expenditure;*
  - *Maintenance costs for equipment such as computer, video*

- equipment, etc.;*
- (e) Food costs  
*Food of any kind such as snacks, beverages, refreshments, meals for project staff (except for voluntary helpers);*
  - (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 costs
    - *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) Stored value card  
*Costs for acquiring and/or adding value to stored value card such as Octopus, phone card;*
  - (k) Travelling
    - *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 such as charges for electricity, gas, water, telephone (fixed line or mobile), fax, internet access, etc.; and*
  - (m) Administration costs  
*General administration and expenses not directly related to the project.*

### **Handling of Unallowable Costs**

7. In general, expenditure on unallowable items that cannot be charged to the LF Grant shall be borne and financed by the Grantees. Prior approval in writing must be sought from the LF for any unallowable costs. The LF may at its sole discretion determine whether to grant approval or not.