



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

**Sponsorship Projects
2022/23**

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Guide to Applicants
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Standing Committee on Language Education and Research

Sponsorship Projects 2022/23 Guide to Applicants

Applicants shall read the Guide to Applicants carefully in preparing applications. All parts of the application form shall 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

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 its establishment, SCOLAR has, through the use of the of the Language Fund (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 encourage community partners to submit proposals of initiatives on promoting reading, language education and language use, thereby enriching the language environment of Hong Kong. Sponsorship Projects aim at –

- promoting 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 and

event-/competition-based project(s); and

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

II. GUIDE TO APPLICANTS

1. Eligibility

Applicant shall be a body corporate either incorporated or registered under the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622) or a tertiary institution, an approved charitable institution or trust of a public character etc. as established under the Laws of Hong Kong¹.

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.

(b) Expenses of publicity on self-owned platform(s)²

If there is a genuine need for an applicant to publicise the proposed

¹ Examples of the Laws of Hong Kong include Societies Ordinance, Education Ordinance and Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, etc.

² If there is an exceptional need to include a publicity budget on its self-owned platform in the estimated expenditure that would exceed the cap as stipulated in clause 2(b), the applicant needs to submit full justifications with relevant supporting information for special consideration.

project on its self-owned platform(s), the estimated amount of sponsorship sought from the LF for covering such expenses shall not exceed 20% of the total estimated amount of sponsorship sought from the LF for the proposed project.

(c) Allowable Costs

Applicants shall 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 Proposed projects shall help achieve the vision and mission of SCOLAR, i.e. promoting bi-literacy and tri-lingualism to the people of Hong Kong.
- 3.2 Proposed projects shall be non-profit-making in nature and shall not be used for political, religious, commercial publicity or raising funds for any individuals or organisations.
- 3.3 Proposed projects shall be language-related event-/competition-based projects for the community. Examples include (but not limited to) language-related:
 - carnivals or festivals;
 - competitions of various types of literary arts;
 - public speaking activities;
 - theatre performances with post-performance sharing workshops;
 - talks, seminars or author sharing sessions on literary arts; and
 - creative language-related events for the community, etc.
- 3.4 Priority will be given to proposed projects that -
 - include novel or creative elements to enable beneficiaries to appreciate the beauty of language and/or promote the effective use of language among the community;
 - encourage active engagement and participation of the community, including the workforce; and
 - cater for different language abilities and needs of participants.

- 3.5 Proposed projects shall be held in Hong Kong and territory-wide as far as possible, while district-based projects will also be considered.
- 3.6 Proposed projects shall be of considerable scale with a view to bringing an impact to the community – the total number of direct beneficiaries³ involved shall be no less than 500 participants.
- 3.7 Direct beneficiaries of the proposed projects shall include more than one type of target group, for instance, students, parents, teachers or general public. School activities organised solely for students of an individual school will not be considered.
- 3.8 Applicants shall appoint a language advisor with expertise and experience in language education and/or organisation of language activities to help map out language learning elements of the proposed project and monitor the effectiveness of the proposed project.

4. Points to Note

- 4.1 Applicants shall 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 shall notify the Language Education and SCOLAR Section 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).
- 4.2 For joint application (i.e. application jointly made by two or more local organisations), a principal or lead organisation shall be identified and be responsible for the application.

³ Direct beneficiaries include participants of workshops and contests, members of school teams competing in a school-based competition, audience of talks and seminars, etc.

- 4.3 Applicants shall appoint a Project Leader⁴ who has experience in planning and organising educational activities/ programmes, as well as in coordination, quality control and provision of other relevant support services for educational activities/programmes. The project leader shall ensure that the project would be effectively implemented and meet the project objectives.
- 4.4 Proposed projects shall commence in the coming school year. Projects which have already been in progress (e.g. publicity and enrolment) will not be considered (excluding preparation work such as booking of venues).
- 4.5 Applications for sponsorship for proposed projects which have previously been sponsored by Language Fund under “Sponsorship Projects” 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 have a positive impact on society as a whole.

III. ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

1. Assessment Criteria

The relevance, contribution(s) and impact(s) of the proposed projects to the language education in Hong Kong as well as the quality of the proposals are the principal assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are as follows –

- the relevance of objectives, aims and contents of the proposed projects, in particular, whether they could tie in with the vision and mission of SCOLAR;
- the effectiveness of the proposed projects in promoting bi-literacy (Chinese and English languages) and tri-lingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English) to the people of Hong Kong;
- the potential benefits of the proposed projects on enriching language environment in Hong Kong;
- the scale and social recognition of the proposed projects;

⁴ Subject to the structure and design of the proposed project, Project Leader or other management staff of the proposed project with relevant expertise and/or experience in language education and/or organising language activities may also take up the role as the language advisor as mentioned in paragraph 3.8 under Part II.

- the depth and concreteness of the contents of the proposed projects;
- the relevant expertise and experience of the proposed language advisor;
- the proposed number and types of direct beneficiaries;
- the potential contribution(s) of the proposed projects in enabling beneficiaries to appreciate the beauty of language and/or promoting the effective use of language among the community in a creative way;
- the appropriateness, feasibility, creativity and effectiveness of the proposed publicity strategy and its conduciveness in obtaining the best value for money;
- the cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget, in particular, whether it is prudent and realistic with clear and full justifications provided;
- the sufficiency of alternative sources of funding support to sponsor the proposed projects;
- the background, governance structure, track record together with past performance of the applicants in organising language 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 assessment. Interviews or presentations of applicants will be arranged if necessary.

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM

1. Grantees are required to conduct self-evaluation of their approved projects 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 approved projects. The Final Financial Report shall 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.

2. The logo of SCOLAR shall be included in all publicity materials as acknowledgement and the publicity materials shall be sent to the Language Education and SCOLAR Section for approval at least two weeks before production. Prior approval by the Language Education and SCOLAR Section shall be sought well in advance (i.e. at least two weeks before implementation) on any modification or amendment in any aspect of the approved projects.

V. NOTES TO APPLICANTS

1. **Detailed Budget Breakdown**

Applications shall 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 if deemed appropriate, including all individual items involved in each activity/ programme.

Publicity strategy and budget shall be included in the application form and/or proposal. Applicants shall 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 shall 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 shall provide the details in the application. Otherwise, SCOLAR reserves the right to withdraw the sponsorship.

2. **Impact of COVID-19**

Applicants shall take into account the potential challenges posed by COVID-19 when devising the content of the projects. In particular, applicants 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).

3. **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.
4. **Project Period**
Grantees shall begin and complete all activities that are set out in the proposal between September 2022 and August 2023.
5. **Procurement**
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” (uploaded on SCOLAR website: www.scolar.gov.hk).
6. **Audit Requirement**
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.
7. **Schedule of Issuing Instalments**
Funding support is normally given as a grant and distributed by instalment(s) subject to mutual agreement, having regard to the circumstances of each individual case.
8. **General Principles for Allowable and Unallowable Costs**
The principles set out at **Annex** are for general guidance only. The Language Education and SCOLAR Section has the discretion to determine the amount of sponsorship, having regard to the circumstances of each individual case.
9. **Change(s) of Approved Project**
The approved project shall be organised according to the details as specified in the proposal. No changes without the consent of the Language Education and SCOLAR Section are allowed. If any changes are made without the consent of the Language Education and SCOLAR Section and there are no justified reasons for the

non-reported case, SCOLAR reserves the right to reduce or withdraw the sponsorship.

10. **Insurance**

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

11. **Publications**

All promotional materials, publications and audio/visual materials relating to the projects shall not infringe copyright or Intellectual Property Rights. The above materials shall be sent to the Language Education and SCOLAR Section for consideration at least two weeks before publication/distribution. All materials shall not be produced for sale within the project period.

12. **Invitation to SCOLAR**

Grantees are encouraged to 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

1. Information required for application includes-

- (a) **completed application form**, in duplicate (either in English or Chinese);
- (b) **a maximum of 10-page A4-size proposal (Optional)**, in duplicate (either in English or Chinese);
- (c) **a copy of the organisation's registration document;**
- (d) **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
- (e) **a CD-ROM or a USB flash drive⁵** containing the soft-copy of completed application form and proposal as mentioned in (a) and

⁵ CD-ROM and USB flash drive submitted to the LE & SCOLAR Section for the application of Sponsorship Project 2022/23 will not be returned to the applicants.

(b) above (in MS Word format), as well as the documents mentioned in (c) and (d) (in PDF format).

2. Applications shall be sent/delivered to:
**Language Education and SCOLAR Section, Education Bureau,
Room 1702, 17/F, Skyline Tower, 39 Wang Kwong Road,
Kowloon Bay, Kowloon (Attn: ExO(P))**
3. **Application deadline: 12:00 noon on 28 February 2022 (Monday).** (For postage, date on postmark shall not be later than the closing date.)
4. Late submissions will not be considered. Applications by fax, e-mail or other electronic means will not be accepted.
5. Applicants will be requested by the Language Education and SCOLAR Section 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.
6. Applicants will be informed of the result in writing in the 3rd quarter of 2022. 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 3153 4283 / 3527 0167 or visit the SCOLAR's website at <http://www.scolar.gov.hk>.

**Language Education and SCOLAR Section
Education Bureau
January 2022**

**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 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. Expenses which mainly are Staff Cost, Activity Cost, Publicity Expenses and General Expenses **will normally be considered,**

depending on the circumstances of each individual case.

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 DVDs);
 - (c) allowances for voluntary helpers
 - (d) insurance for public liability;
 - (e) travelling expenses;
 - (f) fees for instructors/speakers;
 - (g) publicity (e.g. promotional materials, certificates for volunteers); and
 - (h) a maximum of \$8,000, \$14,000 and \$20,000 of audit fees charged by an independent certified public accountant for the preparation of auditor's reports for projects with overall expenditure less than \$1 million, between \$1 million and \$5 million and more than \$5 million respectively.

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 which will incur recurrent expenditure*
 - *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) unallowable 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*
 - *gratuitiess*
 - *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) unallowable 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 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.