



Innovation and Technology Commission

Innovation and Technology Fund

General Support Programme

Guide to Filling in the Application Form

This Guide explains how to complete the application form for the General Support Programme (GSP) under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF).

2. Details of ITF and GSP are available at <http://www.itf.gov.hk>. In addition to the information in this Guide and the application form, the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) may issue supplementary information and guidelines from time to time. Please check the above website to see if there is any update before submission.
3. If you have any question on this Guide and the application form, please contact -

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Innovation and Technology Commission
11/F, North Tower
Tseung Kwan O Government Offices
30 Tong Yin Street
Tseung Kwan O, Sai Kung
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GSP Secretariat
Innovation and Technology Commission
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General

Objective

1. The Government set up ITF in 1999 to fund projects that contribute to innovation and technology upgrading in industries. GSP is a programme under ITF catering for non-research and development (R&D) projects that contribute to the upgrading and development of our industries, the fostering of an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong as well as promoting popular science.

Scope of Funding

2. Projects to be supported under GSP may include conferences, exhibitions, seminars, workshops, promotional events, popular science promotional activities, events or projects to support upgrading and development of industry, etc. In general, GSP will not support projects for promotion of products/services of any specific commercial entity.

Submission of Applications

3. Applications for GSP are open all year round. Please use ITF Form 5.5 for applications for GSP projects.
4. Applications must be submitted to the GSP Secretariat either -
 - (a) electronically through the Innovation and Technology Commission Funding Administrative System (<https://itcfas.itf.gov.hk/>); or
 - (b) in hard copy in triplicate (one original plus two duplicate copies) and a soft copy (preferably in MS Word 2010 or above) in person or by post.
5. Applications will be considered by the GSP Vetting Committee which will make recommendations to the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology (CIT) on funding support. Members of the Vetting Committee are required to declare their interest and refrain from discussing relevant applications as the occasions arise. The membership of the Vetting Committee is available at <http://www.itf.gov.hk>.
6. Where ITF funding for a project exceeds HK\$50 million, approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council is required.

7. ITC reserves the right to seek additional information where necessary. Unless upon request of ITC, supplementary information provided after the submission of an application will NOT be accepted.
8. Applicants may be required to attend assessment meeting(s) to answer questions from the Vetting Committee.
9. The applicant will be notified of the result of its application in writing.

Withdrawal

10. Withdrawal of an application should be made by the applicant in writing to the GSP Secretariat before the project agreement is signed.

Resubmission

11. An application which has been unsuccessful in the past may be resubmitted only if it has been revised substantially. The revised application will be treated as a new application and will be subject to the same assessment process.

Important Note

12. The applicant shall conform in all respects with all legislation (including, but not limited to, the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance), regulations and by-laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in carrying out the project.
13. The Government may at any time terminate all or any part of the funding support by giving written notice to the applicant with immediate effect on the occurrence of any of the following events:
 - (i) the applicant has engaged or is engaging in acts of activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
 - (ii) the continued engagement of the applicant or the continued performance of the funding agreement is contrary to the interest of national security; or
 - (iii) the Government reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned in paragraph (i) to (ii) above is about to occur.

Part A The Applicant

1. The applicant must be an organisation in Hong Kong, for example:
 - (a) non-profit making trade/industry association or chamber of commerce;
 - (b) public body, e.g. the Hong Kong Productivity Council, the Vocational Training Council, etc.;
 - (c) charitable organisation registered under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance;
 - (d) a local university or other tertiary/post-secondary institute by statute;
 - (e) District Council; or
 - (f) local unincorporated or incorporated company under the Companies Ordinance.
2. The applicant should obtain prior consent of the parties concerned in filling in the application form.
3. Where an application is successful, the applicant will enter into a project agreement with the Government and is required to comply with the terms and conditions therein, including monitoring project progress and expenditure, submission of reports and audited accounts, etc.
4. There is no limit on the number of sponsors and supporting parties. It is desirable that letter(s) of support/sponsorship with the company/organisation chop(s) can be enclosed.

Part B The Project

(A) Total Project Cost

The total project cost is the sum of all estimated expenditure to be incurred (including items to be covered by sponsorship) and the administrative overheads (applicable to University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions only). Applicants are required to provide details of the cost items under the section 'Financial Arrangements' in Part C of the application form.

(B) Sponsorship

1. All projects normally require sponsorship of no less than 10% of the total project cost (required level of sponsorship) from companies not relating to the applicant organisation in terms of ownership or management and/or from other sources of contribution, e.g. non-governmental organisations (NGOs), District Councils, charitable organisations, statutory bodies, individuals, etc. If the applicant is not a company as described in paragraph 1(f) of Part A, contribution provided by the applicant itself or by its related parties will also be accepted as sponsorship for the project.
2. Sponsorship can either be in cash or in-kind or a combination of both. In-kind sponsorship can cover items which are necessary for the project including rental of venue, publicity, etc. Documentary proof of the value of sponsorship should be provided to facilitate a fair assessment of the value of sponsorship.
3. In order to encourage applicants to self-sustain worthwhile projects in the long run and to ensure a wise use of public money, repeat applications¹ should fulfil two conditions:
 - (a) The net requested ITF funding amount must be less than that of the immediately previous approved edition of the same project series; and
 - (b) The required level of sponsorship must increase by 10% for the repeat application², using the required level of sponsorship of its

¹ Whether an application is a repeated version will rest with the final decision of the GSP Vetting Committee.

² For applications submitted under the cut-off period in February 2025 or later, the first approved application in a series of repeat applications will be treated as the first edition. Under this arrangement, the required sponsorship level for the first edition is 10% of the total project cost. For the second edition, the required

immediate previous edition as the base.

(C) Payment Schedule

1. The pledged sponsorship should normally be paid before the project commences.
2. ITF funding may be disbursed upfront or by instalments subject to due payment of sponsorship and satisfactory progress of the project.

(D) Project Schedule/Reports

The project will be monitored against its stated project schedule. For projects with project period longer than 12 months, the applicant is required to submit a mid-project report and a final report. For projects less than 12 months, a final report should be provided upon completion of the project. However, ITC reserves the right to call for additional progress report(s) or seek additional information/explanation at any time as it sees fit.

sponsorship level increases to 20%. For the third edition, it rises further to 30%, and so on. This arrangement does not apply to applications received on or before 31 October 2024.

Part C Justifications

1. The assessment framework comprises 5 components. Their weightings are as follows:
 - (a) Expected impact to the community (40%);
 - (b) Support of Government policies (10%);
 - (c) Quality of submission (20%);
 - (d) Management capability (15%); and
 - (e) Financial assessment (15%).

I. Expected Impact to the Community

1. The project will be assessed on its potential to facilitate general upgrading and future development of one or more sectors in industry, contribute to innovation and technology upgrading of the economy, broaden the scientific and technical knowledge base of the economy, foster an innovation and technology culture in the community or promote popular science.
2. Consideration will be given to whether there is a demonstrated need for the project or whether the project is unnecessarily duplicating the work carried out by other institutions. For projects aiming to promote an innovation and technology culture and promote popular science, the availability of more or less similar activities *per se* would not be a deterring factor, but due consideration will be given to the merits of the case.
3. Consideration will also be given to the sustainability of the project outcome after project completion.

Activities outside Hong Kong

4. Events/activities funded under GSP projects should primarily be conducted within the territory of Hong Kong. However, given the “global” nature of innovation and technology, in particular the close ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland, GSP can also support events/activities outside Hong Kong if strong justifications can be given. In general, the relevant expenditure should not exceed 50% of the total project cost (net of overheads). The applicant should provide details to demonstrate the “Hong Kong angle”, i.e. benefits to Hong Kong.

II. Support of Government Policies

1. We will be interested in projects that will dovetail Government policies bringing benefit to the community at large, e.g. promoting popular science.

III. Quality of Submission

1. In assessing the quality of the submission, consideration will be given to whether the implementation plan is realistic, whether the budget projection and assumptions are reasonable, whether enough supporting information has been provided, etc.
2. Since environmental friendliness is highly relevant to innovation and technology, considerations will be given to green measures adopted for the projects, e.g. recycling of exhibition materials, use of environmental friendly materials, etc. Some examples of green measures are at Annex for reference. The applicant should provide details of proposed green measures in the application.

IV. Management Capability

1. This refers to the ability to instil confidence that the applicant and its project team will be able to deliver the proposed project fully. Background/experience of the project team (general and in particular running similar types of projects), overall planning and organisational structure of the project, etc. will be relevant.
2. The capacity of the project team will also be considered having regard to its commitments in other areas including on-going ITF projects and the resources available for the project.
3. Where appropriate, the track record of the applicant and the project team in previous ITF projects (including management of project schedule and compliance with reporting/monitoring requirements) will also be reviewed. In particular, project teams with a poor track record of complying with reporting requirements may be considered as lacking the necessary management capability to carry out ITF projects.

V. Financial Assessment

The applicant should ensure that all relevant financial information has been provided and that the basis of calculation is reasonable.

(A) Project Expenditure

1. The applicant should provide a breakdown of the estimated project expenditure. Considerations will be given to the cost effectiveness of the project. Except otherwise approved by CIT, all expenditure must be clearly accounted for and be exclusively used for the project and incurred within the project period as follows -

(a) Manpower

- (i) Project funding can be used to cover the salary of project staff, including employer's mandatory contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF), contract gratuities, annual salary adjustment (excluding increments and promotions) and general fringe benefits (e.g. medical).

- (ii) ITF will not fund the emolument to a person who is already on the payroll of the applicant organisation.
- (iii) The applicant is required to notify ITC of any change in the key project staff, e.g. project coordinator.

(b) Other Direct Costs

- (i) Project funding can be used to cover –
 - 1. All reasonable costs, subject to acceptance by ITC, necessary to be incurred for the project, including setting up of venue, rental of venue, passage and accommodation for overseas speakers, transportation, publicity, meals and refreshment, etc. In assessing the maximum permissible limit, we will generally follow prevailing Government practices/limits unless there are exceptional justifications. The applicant can however top up an item at its own cost if it so desires.
 - 2. External audit fees as required by the ITF project agreement. The maximum provisions allowed for an annual/final audited account of a project costing less than HK\$1 million, between HK\$1 million and HK\$5 million and more than HK\$5 million should not be more than HK\$8,000, HK\$14,000 and HK\$20,000 respectively.
 - 3. Prizes for events like competition or scholarship should preferably be designated for specific purposes (e.g. passage for study tours, book coupons, etc.) and the value should be at a reasonable level.

The applicant should consider taking green measures where applicable and avoid wastage of expenditure items.

(ii) The applicant should ensure that all procurement for goods and services is carried out in an unbiased and fair manner and should generally comply with the following procedures -

| Aggregated value of each procurement | Requirement |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| HK\$50,000 and below | Quotations from at least two suppliers |
| Above HK\$50,000 to HK\$1,350,000 | Quotations from at least five suppliers |
| Above HK\$1,350,000 | Open tender |

In case the applicant intends to procure goods or services from one company/organisation/individual, it has to provide details, justifications and its relationship with the company/organisation/individual in the application form for not following the procurement process set out above. If the application is approved, subsequent approval from ITC will not be required.

(c) Administrative Overheads

- (i) For projects undertaken by UGC-funded institutions, administrative overheads up to 15% of the ITF funding requested (i.e. net of administrative overheads) can be included in the project budget.
- (ii) The administrative overheads should be included as part of the project expenditure.

(B) Sponsorship

1. The sponsorship should normally be at least 10% of the total project cost. In general, we welcome a higher degree of sponsorship. In cases where there is genuine difficulty for the applicant to seek sponsorship but the event will bring significant benefit to the community or is highly relevant to Government policies (see Section II above), the requirement for sponsorship may be waived by CIT.
2. In order to encourage applicants to self-sustain worthwhile projects in the long run and to ensure a wise use of public money, a higher sponsorship level for repeat application is required (see paragraph (B)3 of Part B above).
3. Sponsorship can either be in cash or in-kind or a combination of both. In-kind sponsorship can cover items which are necessary for the project including rental of venue, publicity, etc.

(C) Project Income and Residual Funds

1. Applicants are encouraged to generate income from the project where appropriate, e.g. charging fees on conference attendees.
2. All ITF funding, sponsorship and project income received during the project period should be credited to the project account and ought to be used for offsetting actual project expenditure. After completion (or termination, as the case may be) of the project or its earlier termination, the applicant shall return to the Government all unspent funding contributed by the Government, project income and interest income in the project account.

Annex

Examples of Green Measures for Reference

(A) To avoid -

- excessive decorations in exhibition booth and venue
- distributing plastic bags to visitors/participants
- excessive paper publications but to use electronic version of promotional materials
- leftover materials by making accurate estimation
- usage of non-environmental-friendly materials/paints, etc.

(B) To reduce -

- souvenirs
- energy usage by adopting energy saving measures

(C) To recycle/reuse -

- promotional materials for later use
- wastes at recycle bins
- equipment/furniture as far as practicable
- exhibition materials, e.g. panels, cabinets, signage, as far as possible
- environmental friendly reusable construction materials