Guidelines for the Management of Research Grants

Disbursement of funds

1. All Institutions (including Host and Partner Institutions) will be required to ensure that the expenditures are fundable, necessary and reasonable for the conduct of the Research and verify claimed items with source documents, before submitting the funds requisition to Grantor.

2. A list of non-fundable direct cost items is provided in the Annex.

3. All expenditure should be incurred (based on invoice or service rendered date) within the Term[1].

4. In general, prudence should be exercised for all project costs, and expenditures claimed must comply with the Institutions' internal procurement processes, guidelines and policies.

5. Grantor reserves the rights to reject any claims that have resulted from changes to Research without prior approval from Grantor and items found not to be fundable, not necessary, not reasonable, not relevant or not used for the Research.

Expenditure of Manpower (EOM)

6. Funding of Research Personnel under the grant must comply with prevailing and consistently applied human resource guidelines of the employing Institution(s).

7. This will extend to Institutions' prevailing policies on associated human resources costs (e.g. staff insurance, overtime claims, staff relocation, employment benefits, employment levy, employment pass, pre-examination medical check-up, housing allowance, service award and recruitment associated cost).

8. All EOM related expenses shall be pro-rated taking reference from the project start date, except for lump-sum insurance claims, which shall be allowable as claimed. As a general principle, staff costs should be charged based on time commitment to the Research.

9. Details of Research Personnel employed under the Funding must be provided in the manpower listing, and continuously updated, including new additions and those whose employment have ended.

[1] Expenditures related to on-boarding of research personnel may be supported before the start of Term, but must be made in accordance with the Institutions' human resources policies and after the date in which the Grantor receives the completed Acceptance Form.

10. All Institutions must adhere to the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices[2].

11. The Institution(s) are allowed to make manpower changes (i.e. increase/decrease in headcount, change in designation or scheme of hires, change in time commitment to the grant), as long as the changes are necessary for the Research, comply with the Institution(s)' policies and does not exceed the EOM vote.

12. Claims for staff performance bonus should be submitted within six (6) months following the end of the Term. For Host Institutions that practise accrual of performance bonus, balance Funds should either be returned or claimed within six (6) months if the pay-out comes after the end of the Term. In instances where the end of the Term does not coincide with the regular annual appraisal cycle, the Institution(s) will be allowed to submit a final performance bonus of the Research Personnel, based on the prevailing human resource policies and pro-rated to the number of months of service from the last appraisal of such Research Personnel to the end of the Term.

Equipment ("EQP")

13. The Institutions / Investigators shall ensure that the purchase of each equipment is necessary for the Research or activity supported by the Funding and is not otherwise reasonably available and accessible.

14. For high value equipment purchase, Investigators are required to update the list of equipment acquired, as part of the Yearly Progress Report submission. Grantor may require the Institutions / Investigators to allow approved Third Parties to access and use the equipment, subject to the availability of the equipment.

15. The Institutions are allowed to make changes within the EQP vote (i.e. changes in quantity and changes in equipment), provided that these changes are (i) necessary, relevant and used for the Research; (ii) do not constitute a change in Research; and (iii) are kept within the approved equipment vote budget.

Other Operating Expenses ("OOE")

16. The Institutions are allowed to make changes within the OOE vote (i.e. changes in quantity and changes in OOE items), provided that these changes are (i) necessary, relevant and used for the Research; (ii) do not constitute a change to the Research; and (iii) are kept within the approved OOE vote budget.

Overseas Travel ("OT")

17. It is the responsibility of the Investigators / Institutions to ensure that all travel expenses are in line with the Institutions' consistently applied policy on travel.

[2] Please refer to www.mom.gov.sg for details of the Fair Consideration Framework.

The Institutions are to ensure that any travel undertaken is in relation to the Research only and for no other purpose.

18. The purpose of the travel should be directly relevant to the Research and necessary to accomplish the Research objectives.

19. Virement of Funds into the OT vote is not allowed.

Research Scholarship ("RS")

20. Postgraduate stipend must align with the prevailing rates set by the Ministry of Education. Postgraduate stipend and tuition support will not attract indirect costs.

21. Virement from RS vote to other budget category votes is not allowed, regardless of variation amount.

Indirect Costs

22. Indirect costs in research are those costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored research project, but contribute to the ability of the Institutions to support such research projects (e.g. providing research space, research administration and utilities, and not through the actual performance of activities under the sponsored projects).

23. The Grantor does not manage indirect cost funding. Investigators should refer and adhere to their Institutions' policy of managing indirect cost funding.

Variations to the Research

Virement between Votes

24. Grantor delegates the approval authority for the virement of funds between the votes to the Institution's Director of Research (or equivalent), subject to a cumulative amount not exceeding ten percent (10%) of the total project direct cost value.

25. For virements cumulatively above ten percent (10%), the approval authority remains with the Grantor. Requests for virement should be submitted to Grantor no later than three (3) months from the end of the Term.

26. Retrospective virement requests or late requests to Grantor will not be allowed, unless there is compelling justification.

Grant Extension

27. Request for no-cost grant extension should be made to the Grantor before the last six (6) months of the original end of the Term. Any variation requests necessary to meet the extension period must be made known as part of the extension request.

28. A one-off project extension should not be more than a total of six (6) months. An extension beyond six (6) months will require compelling justification.

Change in Lead Principal Investigator/Investigators (Not applicable for Talent Award)

29. Grantor's approval will be required for a change in the Lead Principal Investigator/Investigators.

30. The Lead Principal Investigator plays a significant role in steering the Research towards its intended objectives. As such, the Host Institution will be required to inform the Grantor immediately and provide a mitigation plan, should there be a long leave of absence by the Lead Principal Investigator or change to the Lead Principal Investigator. The Host Institution will be required to provide the Grantor an assessment of why the proposed Lead Principal Investigator would be a suitable fit to steer the Research towards its envisaged goals. Grantor reserves the right to suspend / terminate the Research if the mitigation plan is not satisfactory.

Change in Host Institution

31. Grantor's approval will be required should there be a change in Host Institution. The request must be made to Grantor and be endorsed by the Director of Research (or equivalent) of both the existing and new Host Institutions.

Change in Research Scope

32. Grantor's approval will be required for any change(s) to the scope of the Research. This includes change, removal or addition of scientific objectives, deliverables/Key Performance Indicators or milestones.

33. If an activity/task initially meant to be carried out by the Investigators/Institutions is subcontracted or entrusted to a third-party, this would also constitute a change in Research and Grantor's prior approval will be required.

Audit and Progress Reports

Periodic Audit Report

34. The Host Institution is required to submit a Periodic Audit Report, in accordance with the audit terms of reference as provided by the Grantor separately.

Yearly Progress Report

35. The Institutions are required to submit a Yearly Progress Report within two (2) months from the end of the Financial Year (by 31 May). The requirement to submit a Yearly Progress Report is waived if the project start date is three (3) months or less from the end of the reporting FY.

Final Report

36. The Institutions are required to submit a Final Report within three (3) months following the end of the Term.

Comprehensiveness of Reports

37. Investigators will be required to give additional information about the progress and outcomes of any Research if the information submitted in the Yearly Progress Reports and/or the Final Report is deemed to be inadequate.

Final Claim/ Statement of Account

38. The Institutions are required to submit a Final Claims / Final Statement of Account within six (6) months from the end of the Term.

Debarring of Investigators

39. Lead Principal Investigators who fail to submit the Final Report and/or Final Statement of Account within the stipulated timelines will be debarred. Debarred Lead Principal Investigators will not be eligible to submit new grant applications as Lead Principal Investigator for a period starting from the final report submission, and ending one year from the date the overdue Final report and/or Final Statement of Account is received by Grantor.

Acknowledgement Guidelines

40. All Institutions should attribute their awards/grants to the Grantor(s).

41. At any time, during or after completion of the Research, Institutions should acknowledge the Grantor for its Funding support in any publication (including the Internet) of any material based on or developed under the Research.

42. Published materials include scientific publications, books, journals, articles, newsletters, brochures, posters, websites, conference materials, case studies and reports.

43. In public communication, efforts should be made to acknowledge the Grantor's support in media releases, interviews, speeches, videos or any other media materials.

44. Where possible, the acknowledgement statement should follow:

"This research / project is supported by the National Research Foundation, Singapore, and Building and Construction Authority, Singapore under its Green Buildings Innovaiton Cluster (GBIC) Programme (GBIC Award <ref no>, if applicable)[3].

If there is more than one funding source, the names of each source of funding are to be placed in order of the funding value.

45. Where applicable, the following disclaimer must be included in all published materials arising from the Research:

"Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the views of National Research Foundation, Singapore and Building and Construction Authority, Singapore.

[3] This shall be based on the grant award reference number, as indicated in the Letter of Award.

Approvals from Ethics Committees

A letter with the necessary approval(s) from the relevant ethics board and committees must be sent to Grantor, where and when applicable. Failure to do so may delay the disbursement of Funds.

Research Collaboration Agreements

The Institutions may undertake work on the Research in collaboration with a Collaborator. Where and when this occurs, the Investigators are responsible for putting in place research collaboration agreements that are undertaken by the Institutions.

Inter-Institutional virements

Inter-institutional virements, where applicable, require the Grantor's approval and acknowledgement from the Director of Research (or equivalent) for all Institutions involved.

Annex

NON-FUNDABLE DIRECT COSTS

Type of Expenses	Description
Salaries of Lead PI / Investigators / Visiting Professors & researchers/ Collaborators/ general administrative support staff	Not allowable.
Teaching buy outs	Not allowable for the hiring of substitutes to perform the Investigators' teaching duties.
Stipend top-up for existing post-graduate scholarship holders	Not allowable.
Undergraduate stipend and tuition support	Not allowable.
Costs related to general administration and management	Not allowable. This includes common office equipment, such as furniture and fittings, office software, photocopiers, scanners and office supplies.
Costs of office or laboratory space	Not allowable. This includes renovation/outfitting costs, rent, depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditures such as water, electricity, general waste disposal and building/facilities maintenance charges.
Personal productivity tools & communication expenses	Not allowable, unless the use of mobile phones and other form of smart devices were indicated in the methodology for the Research.
Audit fees (Internal and external audit) and Legal fees	Not allowable.
Entertainment	Not allowable.
Refreshment	Not allowable, unless this is related to a hosted conference or workshop for the Research.
Fines and Penalties	Not allowable.
Patent Application	Not allowable. This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost.
Professional Membership Fees	Not allowable.
Staff retreat and team-building activities	Not allowable.