

Prenatal/Early Childhood (PEC) Grant Call 2026

Briefing Webinar

Human Potential Coordinating Office
Biomedical Research Council
Agency for Science, Technology and Research

23 July 2026

Official (Open) / Non-Sensitive



Agenda

01 Background

02 Objectives and Key Outcomes

03 Research Areas and Scope

04 Grant Tiers

05 Evaluation Criteria

06 Eligibility

07 Submission Process

08 Grant Call Timeline

09 HP Website and POC

Background: Human Potential (HP) Programme and PEC Focus

Demographic context

Low birth rates, ageing population and workforce pressures make human capital a national priority

Programme context

HP Programme sits within the Human Health and Potential (HHP) domain and retains its overall focus of optimising human potential in RIE2030 by:

- a) improving the holistic health, wellness and academic readiness of individuals; and
- b) Increasing their economic contribution over their lifetime.

PEC focus

Improving child physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development, alongside maternal health and well-being

Objectives and Key Outcomes: PEC Grant



Build ecosystem capacity and capabilities

in maternal, prenatal and early childhood research – critical stages that influence outcomes across the life-course



Catalyse multi-disciplinary Collaboration

between researchers and operational agencies, building on momentum from RIE2025 PEC Grants



Support targeted, evidence-based Interventions

promoting physical, metabolic, mental and socio-emotional well-being

Complements Science of Learning (led by MOE) and the Integrative Adolescence Research Programme. Awards are made through open, competitive calls to IHLs, publicly funded research and healthcare institutions.

PEC26 Grant Call Research Theme



Empowering Caregivers to Foster Healthy Development

Within the life course:

Preconception

-1 year

→

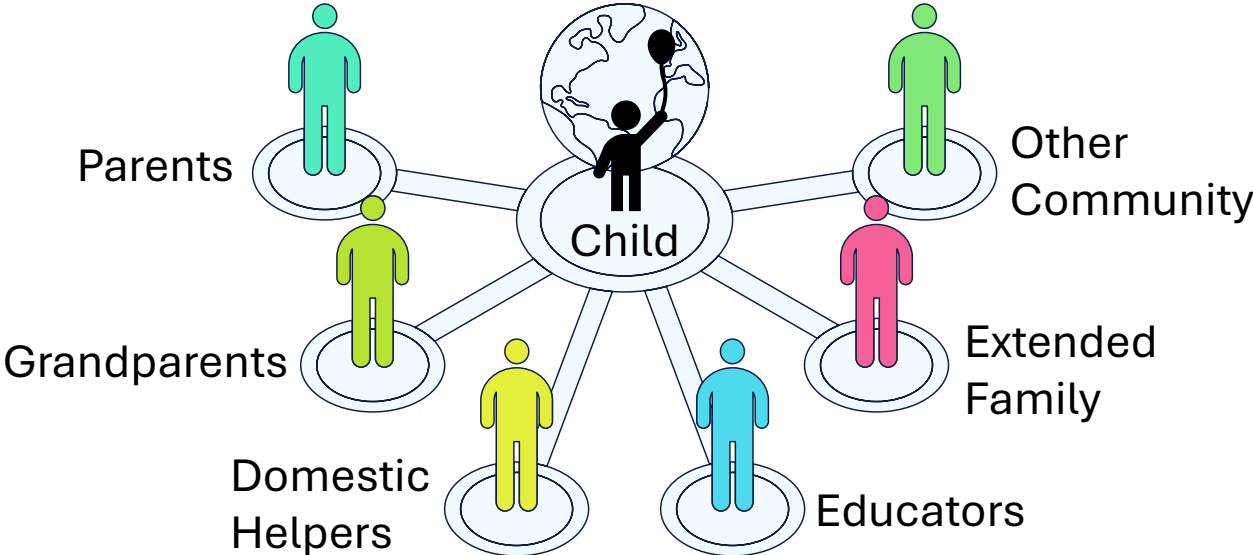
Pregnancy

→

Early-mid Childhood

0-10 years

Caregivers:



Research Areas and Scope

01

Caregiving Relationships, Interactions and Communication

Strengthen caregiving relationships, interactions and communication practices across parents, family members, educators and other caregivers, with demonstrated impact on children's cognitive, language, socio-emotional and self-regulation outcomes in Singapore's diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts

02

Caregiver Well-being, Capacity and Contexts

Enhance caregiver well-being, caregiving capability and caregiving contexts (including family, community and organisational environments) to support high quality caregiving and improved developmental outcomes for children from prenatal to childhood

03

Multi-caregiver Configurations, Alignment and Stability

Optimise caregiving structures, configurations and alignment in multi-caregiver systems to support caregiving stability, coherent routines and secure, developmentally supportive caregiving relationships, especially for children experiencing socioeconomic or environmental adversity

04

Caregiver-led Play and Holistic Development

Strengthen caregiver-led play and play-based interactions across home and school linked environments to support children's holistic development, including cognitive, language, socio-emotional and self-regulation outcomes, with explicit consideration of socioeconomic and environmental constraints

Research Areas and Scope

Cross-cutting Approaches

Use these approaches to strengthen proposals within the research areas — not as standalone projects.

01 Focus on Modifiable Mechanisms

Move from non-modifiable risk factors to actionable protective, compensatory and promotive pathways

02 Generate Singapore-relevant Evidence

Anchor measures, models and caregiving processes in Singapore's multicultural contexts

03 Prioritise Causal Understanding

Use research designs that can identify mechanisms and causal pathways

04 Emphasise Behavioural, Relational and Developmental Mechanisms

Explain how caregiving quality translates into developmental change

Grant Tiers

Three Tiers of Awards

Tier 1

Seed innovative research ideas and support the development of young investigators towards research independence

Up to 3 years

Up to S\$500,000*

Tier 2

Support impactful research programmes addressing important translational gaps in maternal, prenatal and childhood health and development

Up to 3 years

Up to S\$2,000,000*

Tier 3

Support large-scale collaborative research programmes capable of generating evidence that informs practice, programmes and policy

Up to 4 years

Up to S\$5,000,000*

**Funding quantum inclusive of 30% indirect cost*

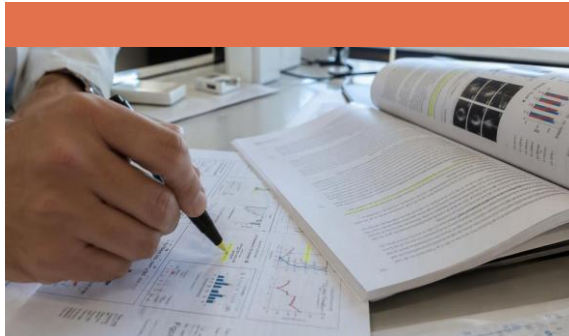
Across all tiers, proposals:

- may encompass discovery, mechanistic, developmental, translational, implementation and/or intervention research
- with identified public-sector or private organisations through collaboration or Letters of Support may be favourably considered

Evaluation Criteria



Relevance and Strategic Alignment



Strength of Evidence and Rationale



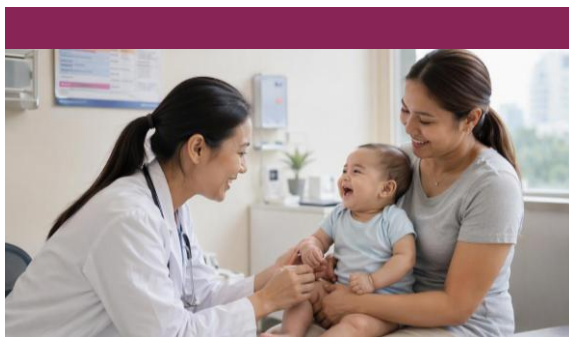
Innovation and Knowledge Advancement



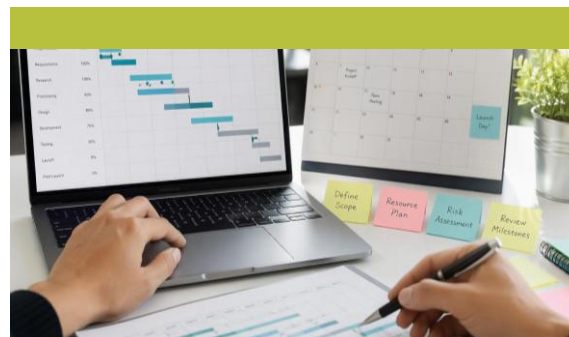
Scientific Rigour and Methodology



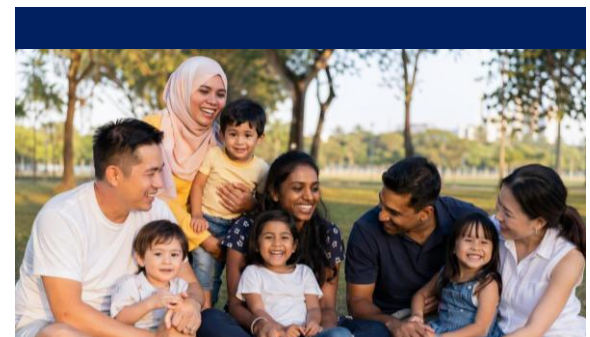
Investigator/Team Capability and Collaboration



Potential for Translation, Implementation and Impact



Feasibility, Execution and Resource Appropriateness



Ethics, Equity, Inclusion and Beneficiary Relevance

Evaluation Criteria

Relevance and alignment of the proposed research to the PEC Grant Call objectives, research themes, cross-cutting approaches, and identified scientific and/or translational needs

Strength of the scientific and/or translational rationale, including the significance of the problem, evidence gap, and justification for the proposed research

Originality, scientific and/or translational innovation, and potential of the proposed research to advance knowledge, methods, technologies, interventions and/or implementation approaches

Scientific quality, appropriateness and rigour of the proposed study design, methodology and analytical approach to achieve the project objectives

Capability, expertise and experience of the investigators, including the appropriateness of the proposed team composition, mentorship and collaborations to successfully deliver the proposed research

Potential for the proposed research to generate meaningful scientific, clinical, societal and/or economic impact, including future translation, implementation and adoption

Feasibility of successfully delivering the proposed research, including the appropriateness of the proposed scope, execution strategy, resources and project planning

Consideration of ethical, equity and inclusion principles, and the relevance of the proposed research to intended beneficiaries and diverse populations

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Eligible Organisations

In Singapore

- Institutes of Higher Learning
- Public sector agencies
- Public hospitals & healthcare institutions
- Public research entities

Eligible Researchers

- One Lead PI with ≥ 0.75 FTE primary appointment
- Research carried out in Singapore
- Team PIs lead work packages (if applicable)
- Co-Is from publicly funded institutions
- Ministries / Public Agencies / Private organisations may join as collaborators
- Researchers who are salaried by this PEC26 awarded project cannot be PIs/Co-Is on this project.

Proposal Requirements and Funding Rules

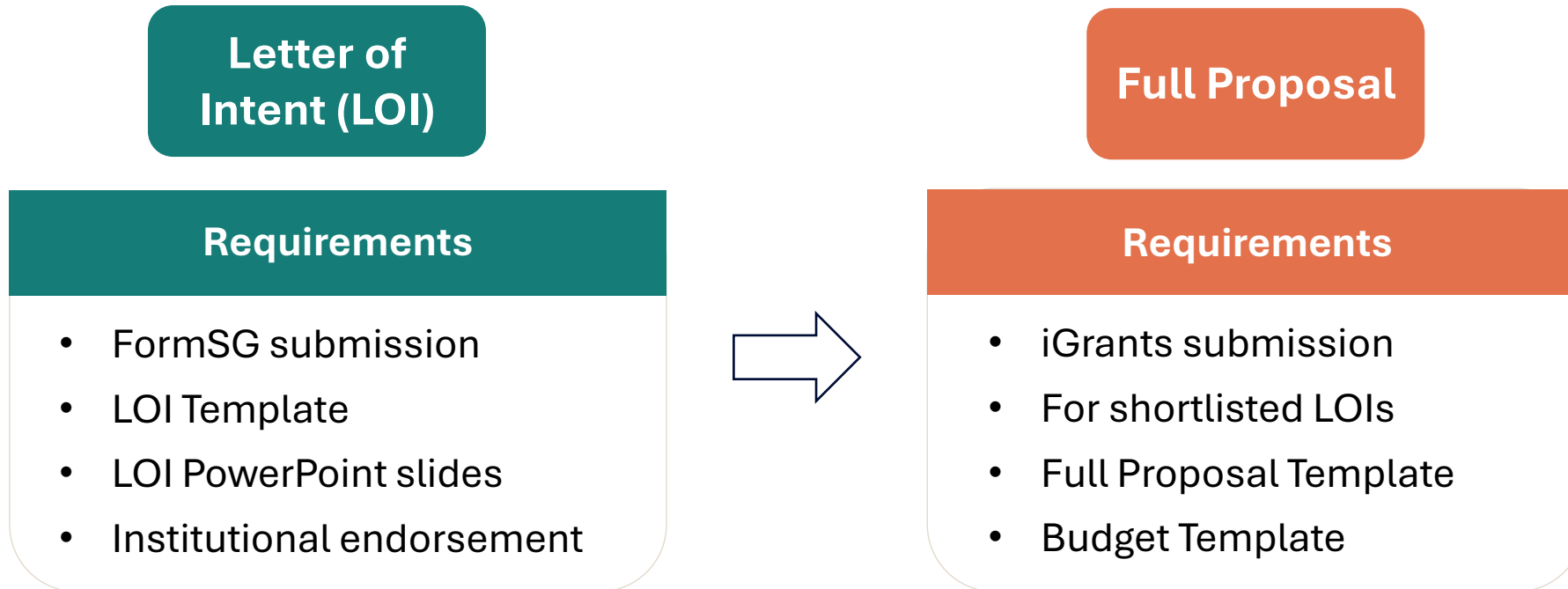
Proposal Requirements

- All research must be conducted in Singapore
- Assets acquired remain in Singapore, under the eligible organisation's
- Research may not be contracted out, in whole or part

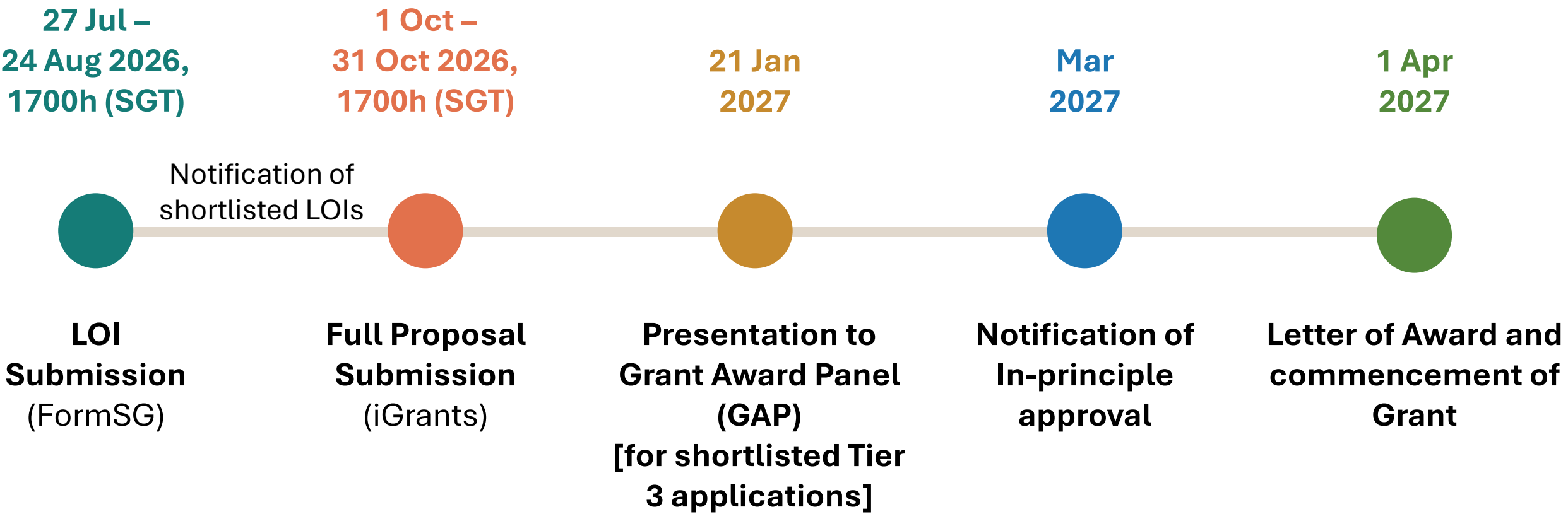
Funding Rules

- Up to 100% of approved qualifying direct costs
- Up to 30% indirect costs, subject to A*STAR's approval
- Declare all funding sources; no parallel or duplicate submissions
- Reference A*STAR's Terms & Conditions 2020 and Guidelines 2020

Two-stage Submission Process



Grant Call Timeline



HP Website and Point of Contact

HP PEC Website

Interested applicants may visit the A*STAR funding opportunities webpage (<https://www.a-star.edu.sg/Research/funding-opportunities>) to download the relevant materials, grant call information deck and application package.

Human Potential Coordinating Office (HPCO), A*STAR

hppo@a-star.edu.sg



THANK YOU

For more information, visit www.a-star.edu.sg

