

**Hong Kong-Singapore Joint Call for Proposals:**  
**Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC) and**  
**Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR)**  
**2026**

(Guidelines for Singapore-based Public Sector Research Performers)

**Summary:**

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|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Call announcement:</b>                      | 24 August 2026 (SGT)                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Deadline for submission:</b>                | 20 October 2026 (SGT)                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Selection results announcement:</b>         | May 2027 (tentative)                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Start of projects:</b>                      | August 2027                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Total number of projects to be awarded:</b> | Phase 1: Up to 10 projects<br>Phase 2: Up to 3 projects                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Funding per project:</b>                    | Total Expenses in two phases:<br>Phase 1: Up to SGD 150,000, inclusive of 30% indirect costs<br>Phase 2: Up to SGD 300,000, inclusive of 30% indirect costs                      |
| <b>Duration of each project:</b>               | Phase 1: 24 months<br>Phase 2: 36 months                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Eligibility:</b>                            | Singapore side: Singapore-based Principal Investigators (PIs) are eligible to apply if their primary appointment is 75% or more in a local publicly funded research institution. |
| <b>Submission:</b>                             | To A*STAR via iGrants: <a href="https://igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg">igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg</a>                                                                                 |
| <b>A*STAR Contact Details:</b>                 | TANG See Aik (Ms.),<br>email: oga_bilats@a-star.edu.sg                                                                                                                           |

## 1. Introduction

This new joint grant call by Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC) and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research of Singapore (A\*STAR) aims to promote and strengthen Hong Kong–Singapore research collaboration by supporting jointly integrated research projects of mutual interest.

For Singapore, this funding measure is carried out under the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2030 (RIE2030) plan.

## 2. Research Fields

The joint grant call is looking for innovative, bold-thinking joint research proposals in the following areas:

- (a) Artificial Intelligence for Smart Cities of Tomorrow;
- (b) Science for Energy and Environmental Sustainability; and
- (c) Translational Immunology and Emerging Diseases.

## 3. Eligibility

Applications must be submitted to both A\*STAR and RGC by the respective Singapore-based and Hong Kong-based applicants. Please note that proposals received by A\*STAR and not submitted to RGC (and vice versa) will automatically be considered ineligible.

The research duration must be 24 months in Phase 1, and 36 months in Phase 2 should the project be selected for extension. PIs are expected to lead the proposed research throughout this period.

Eligible Researchers for A\*STAR Support:

- Singapore-based Principal Investigators (PIs) are eligible to apply if their primary appointment is 75% or more in a local publicly funded research institution.
- Applications must be endorsed by the applicants' Host Institution/s, prior to submission.
- Applicants must deliver their project in accordance with the A\*STAR Grants Terms & Conditions (T&Cs) and Guidelines.

## 4. Proposals Submitted under this Call

Proposals submitted under this Joint Call must be jointly developed by the Singapore-based and Hong Kong-based research teams. The joint proposal must be written in English and must comply with instructions in the application form.

Applicants are required to provide all the information requested in the application form, including all necessary attachments and endorsement by the relevant Host Institutions and Hong Kong-based PI. Further details are provided in the application form.

## 5. Amount of Funding

A\*STAR will support up to SGD 150,000 per project in Phase 1, and up to SGD 300,000 per selected project in Phase 2, inclusive of indirect costs (capped at 30%) for Singapore Public Sector Research Performers.

Participants are to allocate a portion of their total direct expenses to exchange activities of researchers who can play an important role in the joint research and who are expected to be internationally active in the future, e.g., by promoting their international mobility and circulation, such as dispatching them to the partner country or holding workshops, or by providing international research opportunities such as presenting at international conference.

## 6. Eligible Costs

Please refer to the A\*STAR Grants T&Cs and Guidelines for the fundable items.

A list of non-fundable direct cost items is provided in the table below.

| Type of Expenses                                                                                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Salaries of Lead PI / Investigators / Visiting Professors & researchers/ Collaborators/ general administrative support staff | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by Grantor.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 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 unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by Grantor. 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 unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by Grantor. This includes renovation/outfitting costs, rent or depreciation of buildings and equipment, and related expenditures such as water, electricity, 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, specifically approved by the Grantor 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                                                                                                                    |

This list is not exhaustive and applies only to the expenditure of the grant funds. Other costs may be ineligible where we decide that they do not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes for the project or that they are contrary to the objective of the program.

You must ensure you have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.

## 7. Submission

Parallel submission of applications by the Singapore-based and Hong Kong-based applicants is required. The Singapore-based and Hong Kong-based applicants should prepare a joint proposal (Parts II and V of the application form) and submit the respective application form to A\*STAR and RGC. The joint proposal submitted to each agency must be identical in content.

The PI from Singapore must submit the application form, along with the Budget, Milestones and KPIs Excel to A\*STAR through the iGrants platform ([igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg](https://igrants-app.a-star.edu.sg)).

Applicants submitting their applications through the A\*STAR online submission system (iGrants) are required to complete the relevant fields in the system. To allow sufficient time for submission, applicants are strongly advised to begin the submission process at least one week prior to the deadline for this Joint Call. Applications received after the submission deadline will not be taken into consideration.

## 8. Timeline

- **Call announcement:** 24 August 2026
- **Deadline of submission:** 20 October 2026
- **Selection results announcement:** May 2027 (tentative)
- **Expected start of granted projects:** August 2027

## 9. Assessment and Selection

### 9.1. Evaluation Procedure

Independent Committees consisting of experts selected by RGC and A\*STAR, respectively, will evaluate all proposals. Based on the results of the evaluation, RGC and A\*STAR will make a joint decision for the selected proposals to be funded.

All funded projects under Phase 1 will be required to submit a progress report to facilitate consideration and selection of projects to be taken forward under Phase 2.

### 9.2. Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

The following general evaluation criteria shall apply to all submitted proposals:

- Capability of PIs
  - Research leaders should be able to lead and take responsibility for the entire team strongly. A sufficient collaborative system should be planned that can contribute greatly to the achievement of the research objectives as leaders.
- Expected scientific results
  - The expected achievements from the proposed research should be eminent, creative and of an internationally recognised standard.
- Expected economic and social impact
  - The expected outcomes from the proposed research should attempt to produce a significant impact on the development of future science and technology or to create innovative technological seeds that can contribute to the creation of new industries in the future.
- Synergy effects of international collaboration
  - The expected achievements from the proposed research should be produced through essential collaborative research rather than a combination of individual research projects.
  - The exchange plan is clearly planned, and organic ties are expected to be fostered.
- Consistency with the research field of this grant call and feasibility of implementation (given proposed plan, participants, budget, facilities, means of cooperation, etc.)
  - The proposed methodology should be feasible, with well-defined research and exchange milestones from both sides and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (from the Singapore side).
  - Research objectives must be matched to the research field of this grant call. Plans, and deliverables must be clearly described, and technical challenges must be properly addressed.
  - Teams highlight the novelty of their approaches or methodology based on providing

the clues necessary to demonstrate the feasibility of the research concept.

## **10. Reporting**

Any key changes to the project team or activities, particularly if they affect the ability to complete the project should be made known to A\*STAR immediately. The Institutions shall submit the reports and statements set out in Clause 10 of the A\*STAR Grants T&Cs, in accordance with the format required by A\*STAR. Notwithstanding Clauses 10.2 to 10.8 of the A\*STAR Grants T&Cs, A\*STAR may vary the reporting requirements of the Institutions in the Letter of Award. This includes but is not limited to requiring the Institutions to provide reports and statements within different deadlines or at more regular intervals. The provisions of Clause 10 of the A\*STAR Grants T&Cs shall apply (together with any necessary adjustments) to such reporting requirements.

Time is of the essence with respect to the obligations set out in Clause 10 of the A\*STAR Grants T&Cs. In the event that an Institution fails to fulfil any requirement set out in Clause 10 of the A\*STAR Grants T&Cs within the stipulated timeline or to demonstrate satisfactory progress in the Research, A\*STAR may discontinue further disbursements of the Funding.

## **11. Contact information**

Singapore-based applicants:

Enquiries to A\*STAR regarding this Call for Proposals should be sent to  
[oga\\_bilats@a-star.edu.sg](mailto:oga_bilats@a-star.edu.sg)