



Construction Industry Council

Research Policy

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Enquiries

Enquires may be addressed to the CIC Secretariat:

Address: 15/F, Allied Kajima Building
138 Gloucester Road
Wanchai, Hong Kong

Telephone: 2100 9000

Fax: 2100 9090

Email: enquiry@hkcic.org

Website: www.hkcic.org

1. Background

- a. The Construction Industry Council (CIC) was formed on 1 February 2007 in accordance with the Construction Industry Council Ordinance (Cap. 587). Under the Ordinance, one of the main functions of CIC is to encourage research activities and the use of innovative techniques and, to establish or promote the establishment of standards for the construction industry.
- b. CIC focuses on research projects that are directly related to the needs of the industry. Research projects can be further divided into applied research projects and thematic research projects. The former aims directly at problem solving and productivity enhancements. The latter aims to identify the issues related to particular themes and recommend possible solutions.
- c. CIC from time-to-time identifies the needs of the construction industry on research projects and initiates research projects through inviting appropriate service providers to conduct the research.
- d. CIC will also consider providing funding support for research projects which aim to benefit the local construction industry through practical application of the research results.

2. Introduction

- a. CIC encourages research activities through investing and/or collaborating in research studies.
- b. There are two major approaches adopted by CIC to support research:
 - i. research initiated by CIC e.g. studies on particular subject areas to facilitate policy formulation or technology advancement, preparation of references for promotion of good practices and improvement measures, collection and analysis of necessary information for comparative study on industry practices, collection of international practices on certain areas of construction works to facilitate reviewing industry-wide issues with a view to deriving local strategies, etc; and

- ii. research initiated by Research Institutes with practical values or benefits to the industry at large e.g. collaborative research between universities and the industry pertaining to industry development.
- c. This procedure applies to the research initiated by the Research Institutes. The selection of a Research Institute for the research initiated by CIC will go through an appropriate tender exercise.

3. Research Initiated by Research Institutes

a. Funding and/or Technical Support to Research Institutes

- i. To encourage more research which can benefit the local construction industry through the application of research results, CIC sets aside reserve for providing funding support for research projects.

b. Eligibility for Application

- i. All research Institutes established or registered under the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region are eligible to request funding support from CIC for conducting research in relation to the construction industry in Hong Kong.
- ii. The proposed research must relate to the construction industry in Hong Kong and the anticipated research outcomes can be put into practical use.

c. Application Procedures

- i. CIC will invite research proposals from Research Institutes twice each year, in March and September respectively. The proposals shall be returned to CIC within two month from CIC's invitation.
- ii. Research Institutes should complete the "Application Form for Research Funding from the Construction Industry Council". This form can be downloaded from the CIC website. The application form should be completed in English.

- iii. When submitting an application, Research Institutes shall provide the following documents to the CIC Secretariat by post or in person or by electronic means –
- Completed application form duly signed by the nominated Principal Investigator and endorsed by the Research Institute;
 - Letter(s) of support from collaborating organisation(s) and/or industry stakeholders, if applicable;
 - Letter(s) from sponsoring organisation(s) pledging the sponsorship, if applicable;
 - A research proposal of no more than six pages. The proposal shall include budget estimate (with a detailed breakdown of costs and expenses) and the amount of the fund requested; and
 - One page Curriculum Vitae (CV) for each of the key members of the project team including declaration of potential/actual conflicts of interests concerning CIC.
 - CIC will send an acknowledgement to the applicant within 5 working days upon receipt of an application.

d. Assessment Procedure

- i. The CIC Secretariat will conduct a preliminary screening of each application, and may seek clarification or supplementary information from the Research Institute.
- ii. The Task Force on Research (TF-RES) will evaluate the research proposals and recommend to the Committee on Administration and Finance (Com-ANF) and CIC the research funding allocation based on the importance and urgency of the proposed research and the availability of the research fund. Where necessary, comments and advices will be sought from the other relevant committees.
- iii. In the course of assessment, the Principal Investigators may be

required to present its project proposal to CIC, its committees, task forces and/or panels and, may also be requested to make revised submission.

- iv. The flowchart at Appendix A summarises the assessment procedure for the research initiated by Research Institutes.

e. Assessment Criteria

- i. A research Project itself must not be profit-making. The major assessment criteria are as follows:

- *Value of Project*
 - whether the outcome of the Project is of practical use to the construction industry in Hong Kong;
 - whether the outcome of the Project can be readily put into use by industry stakeholders;

- *Cost-effectiveness*
 - whether the Project can benefit the construction industry at large;
 - whether the cost of the Project is broadly commensurate with the expected results;

- *Project Implementation*
 - whether the project management capabilities of the project team are good, taking into account the project team's experience, qualifications, track record and resources available for the Project;
 - whether the Project programme is properly planned;
 - whether the proposed budget is reasonable and realistic;
 - whether the Project can be sustainable if it is partially funded by CIC;
 - whether there is/will be any duplication in terms of work of other institutions/organisations.

f. Notification of Results

- i. CIC will notify the Research Institutes in writing of the assessment result.
- ii. An Agreement will be signed between the Research Institute and CIC. The final research proposal will form part of the agreement.

g. Agreement

- i. Upon approval of the research by the Com-ANF and the Council, the Executive Director of CIC will sign the research agreement on behalf of CIC with the Research Institutes.

h. Funding Arrangement and Financial Management

- i. Calculating Research Budget

The research budget should be clearly stated. The budget should be broken down into detailed expenditure (and sponsorship, if any) items to be incurred between the commencement and completion dates of the Project.

The following expenses should not be included in the funding application: staff costs unless the staff is employed specifically for the Project, the costs of setting up an office, the formation or establishment of a limited company or organisation, property acquisition expenses, rental/renovation expenses for setting up an office, depreciation/ amortisation or provisions not representing actual expenses incurred, entertainment expenses, meals, local travelling expenses, cash prizes for competitions, participation fees at study/trade missions for individuals/ companies, capital financing expenses (e.g. mortgage and interest on loans/overdrafts), and other costs not related to the research.

- ii. Approved Funding

The approved funding for an Approved Project may be less than that

requested if CIC considers that any of the expenses are excessive or do not fall within the scope of funding.

Any record of mishandling of approved funds or lack of discipline in financial management is a factor which CIC will take into account in considering future requests from the same Research Institute or the same research team. CIC reserves the right to claim against the Research Institute for any loss, damages, costs, expenses and liabilities suffered or incurred by CIC in connection with or by reason of the Research Institute's failure to handle approved funds properly.

4. Implementation

a. Audit Right

i. Books and Records

The Research Institutes are required to keep proper and separate books and records for the Approved Project in accordance with the prevailing accounting standards and practice for at least two years after completion of the Approved Project unless otherwise specified by CIC. In this connection, CIC reserves the right to conduct financial audit and inspection of such books and records by CIC or its agent at any time during the research period and up to two years after the Approved Project is completed.

ii. Payment and Accounting Arrangement

Subject to the terms and conditions of the Agreement, funds will be disbursed in accordance with a payment schedule as agreed by CIC and the Research Institute.

CIC reserves the right to withhold any payments to the Research Institute if there is any delay in the submission of progress/project reports for the Approved Project.

Upon completion/ termination of an Approved Project, the Research Institute is required to submit a certified statement of project accounts

to CIC within the time specified by CIC. The project accounts should be audited by an independent auditor if so required by CIC.

b. Reporting Requirements

- i. To facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the Approved Project, the Principal Investigator will be required to submit progress and/or project reports.

- ii. Progress Reports

CIC may require the Principal Investigator to submit progress reports for the Approved Project if deemed appropriate. The format of the progress reports will be specified by CIC.

- iii. Project Reports

The Principal Investigator shall submit a project report of the Approved Project, in a format specified by CIC, within 3 months of completion of the research. Among other things, the project report should include a detailed account of the methodology of the research, quantifiable results and achievements of the research, and an evaluation of the deliverables of the research. In order to benefit the industry, information in the project report may be made public and disseminated to the relevant stakeholders as deemed appropriate by CIC.

Interim project reports may also be required by CIC, as appropriate.

- iv. In addition to the above reporting requirements, CIC may organise visits or progress review meetings, which shall be attended by the Principal Investigator and/or key members of the project team.

c. Project Evaluation

- i. Effectiveness of an Approved Project will be assessed by comparing the project results against its original objectives and deliverables as set out in the project proposal. Where appropriate, the project report

will be submitted to CIC, its committees, task forces and/or panels for consideration and comments. The Principal Investigator may be invited to meetings and to present the project results.

- ii. The outcome of each Approved Project will be evaluated and unsatisfactory evaluation results may affect the future chance of the same applicant/project team in obtaining CIC funding.

d. Other Administrative Details

- i. Contractual Requirements

The Research Institute shall be required to sign an Agreement prepared by CIC for conducting an Approved Project and on such terms and conditions as determined by CIC. The Agreement will contain the terms and conditions of the funding. The Research Institute shall comply with all the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

- ii. Prior Approval Requirements

An Approved Project shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Agreement. Any modification, amendment or addition to the Project or the Agreement, including change of the project period, project scope, and replacement of the Principal Investigator shall require prior written approval by CIC.

- iii. Suspension or Termination of Funding Support

CIC reserves the right to suspend or terminate funding support for an Approved Project if, for example, the progress of the Approved Project is unsatisfactory, or the chance of completion of the Approved Project is slim, or there is a breach of the terms and conditions of the Agreement, or if CIC sees it fit to terminate the Approved Project in the interests of CIC because of changed circumstances.

The Research Institute may have to return all/part of the funds within the time specified by CIC upon suspension or termination of an

Approved Project. CIC reserves the right to claim from the Research Institute all/part of the funds that have been granted and used.

iv. Transfer of an Approved Project

Prior written approval from CIC is required if the Research Institute intends to assign or transfer or subcontract all or part of an Approved Project to another party.

v. Intellectual Property Rights

CIC shall own all Intellectual Property Rights arising from the Approved Project. If the associated Intellectual Property Rights are partly attributed to the Research Institute's previous work not funded by CIC, the ownership of the Intellectual Property Rights shall be discussed and agreed between CIC and the Research Institute on a case by case basis.

CIC shall have the rights to freely use or publish the results arising from an Approved Project.

Subject to the consent of CIC, the Research Institute may also use or publish the data and findings obtained from the Approved Project for educational or non-profit-making purposes. This requirement of obtaining consent of CIC shall not apply to information in the public domain.

CIC can freely quote the Research Institute's name in any publications when referring to the respective Approved Project.

vi. Acknowledgment of Support and Disclaimer

Acknowledgment of the CIC support with a disclaimer as follows should appear on all publications by the Research Institute arising from the Approved Projects:

"This publication was made possible by the research funding from Construction Industry Council. Its contents are solely the

responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Construction Industry Council."

vii. Handling of Information

All personal data submitted to CIC are handled in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. In this regard, the personal data provided in relation to applications for the CIC funding will be used by CIC or its authorised agents for activities related to:

- the processing and authentication of applications for funding support, if any, payment of grants under CIC and any refund thereof; and
- statistics and research.

The personal data that the Research Institutes provided in their applications will be kept in confidence. The data may however be disclosed to third parties in Hong Kong or elsewhere, if such disclosure is necessary for the purposes mentioned above, is authorised or required by law, or if explicit consent to such disclosure is given by the Research Institutes/ data subjects.

If necessary, CIC will contact Government departments and relevant parties to verify the personal data provided in the applications with those held by them for the purposes mentioned above.

Research Institutes/data subjects whose personal data are collected by CIC may request access to them under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. A charge will be made to cover the cost of photocopying the data supplied. If the data subject considers that the data supplied to CIC is inaccurate, a request for correction of the personal data may be made in writing.

viii. Prevention of Bribery

The offer of an advantage to any officers or representatives or members of CIC with a view to influencing the approval of the

application is an offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance. Any such offer by the Research Institute or his employee(s) or agent(s) will render the application null and void. CIC may also cancel the application approved and hold the Research Institute liable for any loss or damage which CIC may sustain.

ix. Indemnity

The Research Institute shall indemnify CIC against all loss, claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses and liabilities suffered or incurred by CIC or which may be brought or established against CIC arising out of the breach of any of the terms and conditions of the Agreement by the Research Institute. The Research Institute, whether successful in seeking funding support or otherwise, or any employees, agents, servants or associates of the Research Institute shall not seek or claim any compensation, reimbursement, damages, indemnity or waiver from CIC in relation to the preparation and submission of its research proposal.

CIC Research Policy - Assessment Procedure for Research Initiated by Research Institutes

