



MINISTRY OF HEALTH SINGAPORE

Traditional Chinese Medicine Research Grant (TCMRG) – COVID-19

Application Guide (Version 01-2020)

I. Goals and Objectives

This Traditional Chinese Medicine Research Grant (TCMRG) – COVID-19 grant call seeks to harness TCM principles and scientific research methodologies and expertise to validate the use of TCM as an adjuvant therapy, for the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of mild and moderate COVID-19 patients in Singapore.

2. The TCMRG – COVID-19 serves the following objectives:
 - a) To establish the safety and possible herb-drug interaction when using TCM as an adjuvant therapy for mild to moderate COVID-19 patients;
 - b) To help healthcare professionals understand which TCM therapies for mild and moderate COVID-19 patients have been proven to be effective;
 - c) To assist policy makers in incorporating clinically proven TCM treatments for mild and moderate COVID-19 patients in Singapore.
3. The TCMRG – COVID 19 is awarded by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and is administered by the TCM Research Advisory Committee (TRAC) and supported by the TRAC Secretariat at MOH PCC Division/TCM Branch.

II. Funds Available

4. Grants shall be awarded up to **S\$300,000** (inclusive of indirect research cost) over a period of 1 year. Indirect research costs would be capped at 10% of the direct cost of each approved grant.
5. Projects would be awarded for a period of one year. Researchers may apply for extension, but for up to a maximum of six months extension only and without any additional funding, subjected to approval from the Ministry. Funding beyond the first year will be contingent upon a review and acceptance by MOH of the progress report.
6. Funding for Overseas Travel for presentation of papers will only apply for grants with approved amount greater than \$50,000 (excluding IRC). For projects eligible for overseas travel funding, it will be capped at 5% of total grant amount, and/or not more than \$5,000 per project.
7. Research Scholarships will not be funded.
8. MOH reserves the right to decide on the number of projects to award, and the final amount of grant for each approved project. An application with a project period that exceeds one year or a budget that exceeds S\$300,000 total cost will not be reviewed.
9. Payments for approved projects shall be made on reimbursement basis only.
10. The Ministry shall be entitled, without prejudice to any of its other rights, to defer or refuse payment of any sum until such time that the project targets/ requirements have been fulfilled.

III. Scope and Assessment Criteria

11. The TCMRG – COVID-19 is provided to individual researchers (the Principal Investigators) to enable them to carry out TCMR on TCM as adjuvant treatment for mild to moderate COVID-19 patients within a defined time period (1 year).
12. Grants are awarded based on:

- a) Relevance and potential impact of the work on the understanding, and the use of TCM as an adjuvant therapy for the management of mild and moderate COVID-19 patients;
- b) Scientific excellence merit, feasibility and implementability of study in local context; and
- c) Track record and overall technical expertise of PI and team.

IV. Eligibility

13. Project Teams applying for the TCMRG – COVID-19 should fulfil the following criteria:

- a. Only **one** Principal Investigator (PI) is allowed per application. PIs for TCMRG – COVID-19 must be from local public healthcare or academic institutions (i.e. Clusters/ RH&Is, Universities, HPB, or HSA) and possess a minimum academic qualification of PhD and/or MBBS/BDS/PharmD/MD and/or other appropriate Postgraduate Qualification (Associate Consultants/Consultants and above).
- b. The PI shall be the point of contact for MOH, with the stated Department and Institution as the Host Institution (for administrative and finance matters). Applicants with multiple appointments at different institutions are to select only one Host Institution for the application.
- c. PIs for TCMRG – COVID-19 should possess a minimum academic qualification of PhD and/or MBBS/BDS/PharmD/MD and/or other appropriate Postgraduate Qualification. In particular,
 - PIs should have at least one first-author publication;
 - For clinicians, applicants should be at least an Associate Consultant (or equivalent); or hold at least an adjunct position in a local public institution and salaried by the institution;
 - For proposals involving patients, the PI should be SMC registered; or should be able to demonstrate ability to access patients through SMC registered Co-Is or collaborators.
 - PI is independent with a demonstrated track record of research, as evidenced by the award of nationally competitive funding (international funding to be considered on a case by case basis), substantial publication record in the past 3 years, or PI status in research institutes.
 - Has no outstanding report from previous BMRC, NMRC grants, and other national grants.
 - Have access to laboratory services (biochemical/radiological) to conduct research in Singapore and
 - Reside in Singapore.
- d. Applications must be endorsed by the institutional heads (CEO or equivalent), to ensure institutional support, ownership, and oversight for the projects.
- e. The PIs, together with their Project Teams, are responsible for the planning, direction, and execution of their proposed projects.
- f. Co-investigators need to hold at least an adjunct position in a local public institution.
- g. Researchers from TCM VWOs, private TCM schools or companies can only participate as collaborators. **PIs must ensure that TCMP collaborators are trained in the use of PPEs and proper infection control protocols, if they need to access and assess COVID-19 patients.**

- h. TCM practitioners, fully registered with the Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board, preferably with more than 10 years of clinical experience, may lead in project teams as PIs for studies that do not involve clinical trials and/or laboratory services e.g. observational / case description type studies.
- i. Researchers from overseas institutions are not eligible to participate as collaborators.
- j. Projects which are currently already receiving support from other sources of funding will not be eligible for TCMRG – COVID-19 funding, so that there is no double funding.
- k. Any exceptions will be evaluated by the TRAC on a case-by-case basis.

V. Submission of application

14. The TCMRG – COVID-19 is open for application from 20 Apr 2020 to 1 May 2020. No late submission or revision to the submitted application will be entertained after the closing date.

15. To apply, please refer to instructions found in the following documents:

- a. TCMRG – COVID-19 Application Form;
- b. Terms and Conditions for TCMRG – COVID-19
- c. Guidelines on the Management of MOH Funding Programme (TCMRG) – COVID-19
- d. General Instructions and Checklist found in [Annex A](#)

16. Application should be routed to Host Institution Research Office for completeness check and endorsement, before it is submitted to MOH. It is the PI's responsibility to ensure that the submitted proposal is endorsed by the Host Institution Research Office. Internal Host Institution submission deadline may apply, please check with your Research Office for more information.

17. Submit 2 soft copies of the application [both in PDF (with all signatories) and WORD doc formats] and 1 hardcopy (with original signatures) through your Host Institution's research coordinator, to MOH_TRAC_Secretariat@moh.gov.sg, cc ng_jin_ju@moh.gov.sg and tan_kok_hsien@moh.gov.sg and the following, respectively:

TRAC Secretariat
 Manager (PCC Div / TCM Branch)
 Ministry of Health
 College of Medicine Building
 16 College Road
 Singapore 169854

18. Incomplete applications will be rejected. Completeness check not cleared by Research Office will also be rejected.

19. For further assistance, please contact Email: MOH_TRAC_Secretariat@moh.gov.sg.

VI. Review and Selection Process

20. Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed by the Secretariat for completeness and alignment with TCMRG – COVID-19. Incomplete applications, or applications not in line with TCMRG – COVID-19 objectives, or applications not following instructions given in this Application Guide / or in the Application Form will be rejected.

21. Applications that are complete and aligned with TCMRG – COVID-19 objectives will be forwarded for evaluation on the scientific excellence, feasibility and implementability of study in local context by TRAC.
22. Review and selection of projects would generally require 1 **month from the Closing Date**.

VII. Award Notices

23. For successful applicants, a formal notification in the form of a Letter of Award will be provided to the Applicant, through the Host Institution.

VIII. Terms & Conditions

24. All TCMRG – COVID-19 awards are subject to MOH Terms and Conditions for TCMRG – COVID-19 and Guidelines on the Management of MOH Funding Programme (TCMRG) – COVID-19. Please refer to the MOH TCMRG website¹ for the latest copy of the Terms and Conditions.

IX. Reporting

25. Successful applicants will be required to submit the TCMRG – COVID-19, 6 monthly progress Report and Yearly Audit Report. Please refer to Section 12 Reporting Requirements of the Terms and Conditions for TCMRG – COVID-19.

X. CONTACTS

26. For further enquiries, please send us an email (MOH_TRAC_Secretariat@moh.gov.sg).

¹ <https://www.moh.gov.sg/research-grants/traditional-chinese-medicine-research-grant>

General Instructions

- Complete all sections in the application.
- Follow the instructions closely in every section.
- TCMRG – COVID-19 budget is capped at **\$300,000** inclusive of indirect research cost capped at 10% of the direct cost.
- The period of support should not be more than **1** year.
- **Resubmission attempts are capped at two times. Funding is not guaranteed for resubmitted proposal.** (Resubmission refers to proposals resubmitted after earlier unsuccessful application(s). It is not a re-written proposal from a new perspective. If more than 50% of the proposal is to be revised, it should be submitted as a new application).
- There is no limit to the number of Co-Investigators or collaborators. **Please specify and describe clearly the roles of Co-Investigators and collaborators in the relevant section.**
- Include CVs of the PI, Co-Investigator(s), and Collaborators with the email addresses and contact information clearly stated. **PI's CV is limited to 2 pages. Co-Investigators and Collaborators' CV is limited to 1 page.**
- Refer and adhere to the **budgeting requirements**. Provide a breakdown for all categories with justifications and supporting documents such as quotations (if available) for all purchases. Tally and provide both a **subtotal amount** for each category and the **total amount** budgeted.
- Use **Arial font size 10** for all attachment/ text.
- Softcopy of proposal to be submitted as **2 files** including all the pictures, tables, charts and various attachments in both Word DOC and PDF formats in the relevant section(s). Adhere to the number of pages where specified. Reformat softcopy such that all blank or irrelevant pages are removed.
- The PI & Institution Director (Institutional Support) original signatures are required. The co-investigators/collaborators' signatures can be Photostatted/ faxed copies.
- Plagiarism (without permission from author or reference made to source) will be referred to Host Institution for investigation and may be subjected to disciplinary actions.

MOH TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE RESEARCH GRANT (TCMRG) – COVID-19 CHECKLIST

1. PIs are advised to familiarize themselves with the following documents before applying for TCMRG – COVID-19:

- () MOH Traditional Chinese Medicine Research Grant – COVID-19 Terms & Conditions
- () Budgeting Requirements in the Guidelines on the management of the TCMRG – COVID-19

2. Your Application Form should consist of the following:

- () Title of Research
- () Total Amount
- () Period of Support
- () Key Words
- () Ethical Considerations
- () Abstract(s)
- () Details of Research Proposal (aims, background and clinical significance , prelim studies/progress, methodology, references) - **limit to 12 pages excluding references**
- () Description of Co-Investigators and Collaborators' role in the project
- () Work Contribution of PI & Team Members
- () Biographical Sketch of PI & all Co-investigators & Collaborators
- () Budget breakdown & Justifications (Manpower, overseas travel, OOE)
- () Milestones
- () Expected Outcomes
- () Concurrent funding sources – Attach scientific **abstracts** of all grants listed in section 15
- () Institutional Support - Research Director Signature (must be original) and Comments
- () Signatories (Original signatures required)

3. Please submit through your host institution research coordinator:

- () 1 x Hard copy (with original signatures) to PCC Div / TCM Branch, Ministry of Health, College of Medicine Building, 16 College Road, Singapore 169854.
- () 2 soft copies of the application [both in PDF (with all signatories) and WORD doc formats] to MOH TRAC Secretariat (MOH_TRAC_Secretariat@moh.gov.sg)