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**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATION RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAMME  
(ERFP)  
Administrative Guidelines for ERFPA Applicants**

To begin the grant application process, we urge you to read this entire document. The information in this document will help you better understand the application process.

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Grant Categories</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	<i>Research Grants</i>	3
2.2	<i>Development Grants</i>	4
2.3	<i>Programmatic Grants</i>	4
<b>3</b>	<b>ERFP Funding Quantum</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Grant Application Process</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	<i>Submission of Grant Application</i>	5
4.2	<i>Selection of Project</i>	6
4.3	<i>Overview of ERFPP Grant Application Process</i>	6
4.4	<i>Panel of Reviewers for Projects</i>	9
4.5	<i>Eligibility Criteria for Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators and Collaborators</i>	10
4.6	<i>Roles of Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators and Collaborators</i>	11
4.7	<i>Additional Information on Roles for Programmatic Proposals</i>	13
<b>5</b>	<b>Budget Preparation Guide</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1	<i>Budget Votes</i>	16
5.2	<i>Justification of Budget</i>	16
<b>6</b>	<b>Programmatic Proposals</b>	<b>17</b>
6.1	<i>Structure</i>	17
6.2	<i>Grant Application Process</i>	18
6.3	<i>Budget Structure</i>	18
6.4	<i>Project Budget at Application</i>	19
6.5	<i>Project Budget after Approval</i>	19
6.6	<i>Grant Variation – Fund Transfers Across and Within Votes</i>	20
<b>Enclosure 1: Guidelines for the Management of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tranche Education Research Funding Programme (ERFP)</b>		<b>22</b>
<b>Annex A: Fundable Direct Costs</b>		<b>35</b>
<b>Enclosure 2: Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant</b>		<b>43</b>

## 1 **Introduction**

The Education Research Funding Programme (ERFP), a pool of research funds supported by the Ministry of Education (MOE), Singapore, is administered by NIE OER, on behalf of MOE, to researchers from within NIE and to Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL). Currently into its fourth tranche of funding (FY2018-2022), OER continues to encourage efforts to design, develop and implement strategic, evidence-based, theoretically-warranted, collaborative, scientifically-rigorous and outcomes-focused innovations in schools and classrooms.

The primary aim of ERF is to improve classroom practice, enhance student outcomes, build organizational and teacher capacities in Singapore schools, and inform MOE policies. Thus, proposals for ERF funding must demonstrate relevance to MOE/OER's mission and goals and potential benefits to Singapore's educational institutions.

Scope of the projects should fall within the following criteria:

- a. Early childhood, primary, secondary and/or JC education-related.
- b. Studies on other parts of the education system that link to the emphasis of ERF might be considered if those links are clearly articulated.
- c. May involve formal or informal learning linked to (a).
- d. Teacher education and teacher professional learning for Singapore's education system.
- e. Studies of pathways of education and/or lifelong learning which are based in or include participants from higher education are allowed (bearing in mind (b)). Projects that are limited to benefits for higher education not related to (a) are excluded.
- f. Meta-analysis/meta-synthesis studies can be submitted for funding if the studies meet all of the ERF requirements. This includes ensuring that the scope of the synthesis is well-defined and the proposed budget is clearly articulated, in line with the intended scope. Principal Investigators can refer to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses ([PRISMA guidelines](#)) as an example of crucial methodological features to discuss.
- g. International comparisons are allowed but international data collection, analysis or hiring is not supported.

## 2 **Grant Categories**

### 2.1 Research Grants

'Research' grants have the overarching purpose of producing new knowledge or addressing a theoretical issue/problem which may lead to improvements in classroom practice, enhance student outcomes, and build organizational and teacher capacities. They should be situations within a broader international understanding but have clear, local relevance.

## 2.2 Development Grants

'Development' grants must have a clear focus on developing, implementing and evaluating deliverables which are generally usable 'products' (e.g., new curriculum, educational tools, databases, etc.) in the local context. These might be translation projects that build on and evaluate an implementation from a previous grant. Development grants should recognize relevant international work but the focus is on local deliverables.

## 2.3 Programmatic Grants

- a. Programmatic research is defined by an over-arching research theme which focuses on a key educational issue, problem, phenomena or outcome, along with a number of interlinked sub-themes. The sub-themes are investigated through specific research studies (i.e. 'projects') that address important aspects or components of the over-arching issue, problem, phenomena or outcome. Programmatic research therefore has a common strand or focus, supported by a common theoretical framework, and undertakes a coherent, comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to understanding and addressing the issue, problem, phenomena or outcome.
- b. Programmatic research is characterised as follows:
  - i. Examine, describe or address a fundamental or challenging complex educational issue, problem, phenomena or outcome
  - ii. Incorporate multi-level, multi-method, multi-perspectival and multi-disciplinary approaches to examining or addressing the problem, issue, phenomena or outcome
  - iii. Comprise strong team synergies to facilitate shared expertise, knowledge exchange and collaborations
  - iv. Comprise a range of (typically, two to five) themes which are coherent, aligned, and which allows comprehensive breadth of analytical foci, research outcomes and findings that have an impact on the educational system and the various stakeholders (NIE, MOE, schools, society and international research fraternity)
  - v. Have strong translational efforts as part of its agenda, including encouraging stakeholders to be actively involved at the proposal design stage, building in time and funding for professional development, designing an innovation or intervention as part of the proposal, or hiring journalistic writers to translate findings for various stakeholders.
- c. Programmatic research is a specific category of proposals which have a funding quantum of a Tier 3 proposal. Programmatic research is not applicable to Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals.

### 3 **ERFP Funding Quantum**

TIER	QUANTUM
1	< S\$150K
2	S\$150K to < S\$350K
3 / Programmatic Proposal	≥ S\$350k

### 4 **Grant Application Process**

#### 4.1 Submission of Grant Application

**a. NIE Applicants:**

Expressions of Interest and applications for ERFPP (Tier 1 to 3) as well as Programmatic Proposal should be submitted online through Research Operation Management System (ROMS), <https://roms.nie.edu.sg>.

**b. IHL Applicants:**

Applications for ERFPP (Tier 1 to 3) as well as Programmatic Proposal are submitted directly by applicants online, via the Research Operation Management System (ROMS). Only applicants who had submitted Expressions of Interests will be able to submit applications via ROMS.

**c. Accompanying documents for grant applications include:**

- i. Case for Support Template;
- ii. Implementation Schedule/Gantt Chart Template;
- iii. CVs Template for each of the Project Team Members listed in the grant application;
- iv. Application for a MOE-Contracted Grant Form (for MOE-commissioned proposals only);
- v. Response to Committee Template (for resubmission only); and
- vi. Declaration of Significant Interest Form (if applicable)

**d. Applicants who are resubmitting their applications should use the “Response to Committee” Template and explain the changes made to the proposal in response to the comments made in the previous round. This must be uploaded into ROMS as part of the proposal. Applicants should refer to the review materials in the notification of result from the previous round.**

- e. A self-checklist for methodology is included for your reference in the “27RFP ERFP Guidelines and Application Package”. As weaknesses in the methodology section are a primary cause of unsuccessful grants, this document is intended to help applicants self-check the quality of the methodology section. This document should not be submitted along with the application – it is for your use in preparing the proposal only.
- f. Please refer to the “**27RFP ERFP Guidelines and Application Package**” document for the application forms, templates and references mentioned above. The respective templates and references contains further instructions that applicants should follow.

### 4.2 Selection of Project

- a. The general criteria for the allocation of funds for ERFP projects are:
  - i. demonstrated relevance to MOE / IHL / NIE OER’s mission and goals;
  - ii. academic and research merit of the proposed project;
  - iii. soundness of research methodology;
  - iv. relevance and timeliness of project with respect to applications;
  - v. potential benefits to Singapore’s educational Institutions, schools, economy and industries; and
  - vi. effective use of resources applied for in relation to the scope and potential of the project.
- b. Applicants should propose the project in light of the Research Priority Areas of the 4<sup>th</sup> tranche as well as useful links and synergies to prior or existing projects. Applicants should not propose the same project to other funding bodies. NIE OER encourages research collaborations among colleagues within NIE as well as with colleagues at the MOE and other Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs).

### 4.3 Overview of ERFP Grant Application Process

Timeframe	Process
<p><b>*Grant Call Announcement</b> (approximately Apr and Oct of each year).</p> <p><b>Grant Call Closure</b> (approximately 2-3 months after announcement)</p>	<p><b>Grant Call Announcement and Submission of Applications</b> NIE OER invites applicants to submit Expressions of Interest following the grant call announcement. Briefing sessions are held approximately 1 - 2 weeks after the Grant Call Announcement.</p> <p>Applicants are to follow the instructions provided in the grant call announcement and submit applications within the deadlines indicated.</p> <p><b>Grant Call Closure</b> The grant call closes approximately 2 months from announcement. Grant calls open to IHLs closes approximately 3 months from announcement.</p>

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFP Applicants

Timeframe	Process
<p><b>Initial Review</b> (approximately 2 weeks after the submission deadline)</p>	<p><b>Initial Review of Proposals</b> NIE OER conducts Initial Review of proposals after the closure of the grant call.  Applicants whose proposals do not align with ERFP objectives will be informed by NIE OER to resubmit their proposals the next round. These proposals will not be considered for funding in the current call.</p>
<p><b>Peer Review of Proposals</b> (within approximately 2 months after the close of the call)</p>	<p><b>Peer Review of Proposals</b> Proposals that have cleared the initial review will undergo External Review of the grant applications. NIE OER will invite and obtain evaluations from academics with expertise in the relevant area.</p>
<p><b>ERFP Expert Panel</b> (approximately 3 months after the close of the call)</p>	<p><b>Recommendation of Proposals by ERF Expert Panel</b> The ERF Expert Panel brings together established education research experts from international Institutions and convenes to evaluate ERF proposals and recommend them for funding to the ERF Recommending Panel.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation and Approval of Proposals by ERF Recommending Panel and ERF Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel</b> (approximately 3 months after the close of the call)</p>	<p><b>Recommendation and Approval of Proposals by Panels</b> <u>ERFP Recommending Panel Meeting (Chaired by Dean, ER)</u> Review and consider ERF Expert Panel's recommendation of Tier 1 - 3 and Programmatic Proposals Recommend and rank Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals to ERF Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel Recommend Tier 3 and Programmatic proposals to ERF Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel Recommend Tier 3 proposals to be scaled down to Tier 2 or Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals to Tier 1 (if applicable)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>MOE Directors' Evaluation Report</u> Recommended Tier 2, Tier 3 and Programmatic Proposals are sent to MOE Directors for feedback and comments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>ERFP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel Meeting (Chaired by NIE Director)</u> Approves Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals Review and consider ERF Recommending Panel's recommendation of Tier 2, Tier 3 and Programmatic proposals and MOE Director's</p>

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

Timeframe	Process
	<p>recommendation of proposals</p> <p>Recommend Tier 3 and Programmatic proposals to ERFAP Tier 3 Approval Panel (T3AP)</p> <p>Recommend Tier 3 proposals to be scaled down to Tier 2 or Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals to Tier 1 (if applicable)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>ERFAP Tier 3 Approval Panel (T3AP) Meeting [Chaired by MOE Director-General of Education (DGE) and MOE Deputy Secretary (Policy)]</u></p> <p>Approves Tier 3, MOE contracted proposals and Programmatic Proposals, up to a cap of \$1 million</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>MOE Education Research Steering Committee (ERSC) Meeting [Chaired by Permanent Secretary (Education)]</u></p> <p>Approves Tier 3, MOE contracted proposals and Programmatic Proposals exceeding \$1 million</p> <p><i>*Applicants of Recommended proposals will be required to respond to Panel's Comments/ Revise proposal in response to Panel's comments within approximately 10 working days before the next Panel Meeting.</i></p> <p><i>ERFAP Recommending Panel to ERFAP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel – Tier 1, 2, 3 and Programmatic Proposals will be required to respond to ERFAP Recommending Panel's Comments.</i></p> <p><i>ERFAP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel to ERFAP T3AP - Tier 3, Programmatic Proposals and MOE Contracted Proposals (Full Review) will be required to respond to ERFAP Recommending Panel's and ERFAP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel's comments and MOE Directors' comments, and revise proposal accordingly before ERFAP T3AP Meeting.</i></p> <p><i>ERFAP T3AP to MOE ERSC - Tier 3, Programmatic Proposals and MOE Contracted Proposals (Full Review) will be required to respond to ERFAP Recommending Panel's, ERFAP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel's comments, MOE Directors' comments and ERFAP T3AP's comments, and revise proposal accordingly before MOE ERSC Meeting.</i></p>



## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

Timeframe	Process
<p><b>Notification of Results</b></p> <p>- Tier 1 and 2: 1 month after ERFAP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel Meeting</p> <p>- Tier 3 and Programmatic below \$1mil: 1 month after ERFAP T3AP Meeting</p> <p>- Tier 3 and Programmatic exceeding \$1mil: 1 month after MOE ERSC Meeting</p>	<p><b>Notification of Grant Award Results and Feedback</b></p> <p><u>Successful Grant Applicants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email notifications will be sent to successful grant applicants.</li> <li>• PIs are provided with feedback from the reviewers and committees. PIs are given 10 working days to revise their proposals according to the feedback from the reviewers and committees.</li> <li>• After the clearance by OER management and approving panel meeting, OER informs FIN of the approved projects.</li> <li>• Letter of Award will be sent out to successful PIs and their respective Reporting Officer.</li> <li>• FIN issues Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) numbers for approved projects.</li> <li>• Successful PIs accept the grant offer by completing the <i>Grant Acceptance Form within 15 working days</i>.</li> <li>• All terms and conditions are set out in the Letter of Award.</li> </ul> <p><u>Unsuccessful Grant Applicants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIE OER informs PIs of the results. PIs are provided with feedback from the reviewers and committees.</li> </ul>

### 4.4 Panel of Reviewers for Projects

#### Research Projects

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3 and Programmatic (≥ \$350,000 and < \$1 mil)	Tier 3 and Programmatic c (≥ \$1 mil)
<b>Peer Reviewers</b>	2 reviewers	2 reviewers	3 reviewers	4 reviewers
<b>Review by MOE</b>	--	After recommendation by ERFAP Recommending Panel, Tier 2, 3 and Programmatic Proposals are sent to MOE for review		

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

### Development Projects

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3 (≥ \$350,000 and < \$1 mil)	Tier 3 (≥ \$1 mil)
Peer Reviewers	1 reviewer	1 reviewer	2 reviewers	3 reviewers
Reviewers (MOE Experts)	1 reviewer	1 reviewer	1 reviewer	1 reviewer
Review by MOE	--	After recommendation by ERFAP Recommending Panel, Tier 2, 3 and Programmatic Proposals are sent to MOE for review		

#### 4.5 Eligibility Criteria for Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators and Collaborators

##### a. PI Eligibility Requirement

- i. Full time staff (hired on the IHL's academic track / academic contract or \*research track) and funded by the institution (i.e. not funded by project funds). A full-time appointment is defined as a minimum of 9 months a year.
- ii. For research grants, applicants must have a doctorate degree.
- iii. For development grants, applicants should preferably have a doctorate degree although it is not compulsory.
- iv. Applicants applying for Tier 2 and 3 grants must have demonstrated track record in securing national grants and leading independent research as PI or co-PI.

*\*Research Fellows are eligible for Tier 1 grants only. Research Fellows are also not allowed to be the only co-PI on Tier 2 or 3 grant proposals.*

##### b. Team Member Eligibility Requirement

- i. Full time staff (hired on the IHL's academic track / academic contract and research track) can apply as team members (Co-PI and Collaborators)
- ii. Non-academic staff with expertise that is relevant to the project can be a research team member with justifications on the role. E.g. MOE Experts
- iii. All projects need to include at least one Co-PI from the same Institution who meet the PI eligibility requirement of the tier, so that the Co-PI can ensure continuity of the project should the original PI be unable to continue.

### 4.6 Roles of Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators and Collaborators

#### a. Principal Investigator (PI)

- i. The PI should play a major role in all aspects of the project. The PI is responsible for the planning, monitoring and controlling of the project expenses and addressing budgetary issues. Any request or claims, that involve disbursement of project fund, has to be approved and endorsed by the PI. The PI also ensures the timely submission of project reports, fulfilment of milestones, deliverables and completion of the project within the parameters of the grant proposal.
- ii. The PI is also responsible for the care and maintenance of equipment and software purchased from the project budget. The PI is responsible in ensuring that the project deliverables are met.
- iii. The contractual terms of Teaching Fellows, Post-Doctoral Fellows, Research Fellows or equivalent applying for grants should cover the duration of the project at the point of grant application.
- iv. ERFAP Tier 1, 2 and 3 grants only allow for one PI in each project.
- v. The PI, Co-PI and Collaborators' salaries should not be paid out of project funds.
- vi. Project-funded Research Fellows (RFs), Research Associates and Research Assistants (RAs) are not eligible to apply for ERFAP projects.
- vii. NIE OER does not encourage multiple submissions by the same PI for a particular ERFAP grant call as we would like the PIs to concentrate their efforts in submitting a high-quality proposal.

#### b. Co-Principal Investigator

- i. Co-PIs should play a major role in the project. Co-PIs are not allowed to approve or endorse any request or claims that involve disbursement of project funds, unless they are delegated in the absence of the PI. The Co-PI may well have equal intellectual rights and research input. Conference funding as in the Approved Proposal can be shared between the PIs and Co-PIs on a mutually agreed upon basis. Articles may be co-authored by PIs and Co-PIs as first authors under a mutual agreement. The inclusion of at least one Co-PI, from the same Institution as the PI is mandatory for all proposals so as to ensure continuity of the project should the PI be unable to continue.
- ii. Co-PI status should imply that the person could independently apply for a research grant. If not, they should be listed as a Collaborator (with the caveats outlined in this document).
- iii. Project-funded Research Fellows (RFs), Research Associates (RAs) and Research Assistants (RAs) employed through the project cannot be considered as Co-PIs by virtue of their employment.

- c. Collaborator
  - i. A Collaborator should have a specific, limited or relatively minor role to play in the project, such as advising on statistics, facilitating access to sites, helping design instruments, etc. A Collaborator may be someone from an external Institution or an internal staff. Collaborators are not eligible to tap Overseas Travel/ Conference and PI/Co-PIs' Professional Development budget from projects and any other project funding except for transport costs. Travel and accommodation costs are allowable for overseas External Collaborators.
  - ii. Collaborators on the project should indicate their designations, and where possible, their specific role in the project (e.g., to write the software for the model simulations or to help design the measurement system). If visiting staff or staff on short-term contracts are to be included as Collaborators, due consideration should be given to the lead-time for the project to commence, especially if purchases of equipment and software are necessary or if other preparations are needed before the commencement of a project.
- d. Consultant
  - i. A consultant is one who has expertise in the research area. A consultant does not have an automatic right to use data or findings. The consultant should seek the PI's approval for use of project data for publication. For MOE-contracted projects, MOE's approval is required for any publication. Besides honorarium (rates as per PI's Institution guidelines), direct economy return airfare and accommodation, there will be no other resource allocation (e.g., conference funding, equipment purchase) for a consultant. Upon approval of the grant, a separate request for the appointment of the consultant is still required at least 3 months before the actual visit. The consultant named in the proposal is only for indicative purposes and does not automatically constitute a contract on behalf of the Institution.
- e. Project Collaborations
  - i. Tier 2, Tier 3 and Programmatic Proposals are encouraged to include Co-PIs or Collaborators from MOE or with school-affiliation to support synergistic research partnerships.
- f. Project Commitment
  - i. In all cases, the roles and time commitments of PIs, Co-PIs and Collaborators must be spelt out in the research application. Reasons for their designation / role should be given. For example, persons may have to be a Co-PI because they already have grants on which they are a PI; therefore they cannot commit significant time to the proposed research in their workload allocation. They may also choose to be a Co-PI because they are less experienced in writing grant proposals and administering grants. In other cases, individuals may need to be listed as a Collaborator because they do not have

sufficient research credibility (minimum qualifications, research record, publications, etc.) to be listed as either a PI or Co-PI or they have insufficient workload time to be a PI or Co-PI and only want to contribute to the research in a limited manner.

- ii. Team members should consider the time committed across all projects in their different capacities as PI, Co-PI or Collaborator, and be cognisant of their other job commitments. Teams should also consider if team members contributing a very small number of hours add sufficient value to the team. Justifications to include respective team members should be explicitly stated.
- iii. PIs, Co-PIs and Collaborators can list the grant on their CVs. Efforts of all participants (e.g., participating schools, Research Staff) should be acknowledged in all reports and publications.
- iv. PIs and Co-PIs must notify their Institution and NIE OER 3 months before the commencement of their leave if they plan to be on long leave of absence (e.g. No-Pay Leave (NPL) or Sabbatical Leave). NIE OER will keep Grantor (MOE) informed of any PIs and Co-PIs with long leave plans. [Refer to Paragraph 5.16 of Enclosure 1 for more information.]

### 4.7 Additional Information on Roles for Programmatic Proposals

#### a. Lead PI

- i. A lead researcher who has the appropriate level of authority and the responsibility to direct the programme supported by the grant. The Lead PI will be actively involved in the overall management of the programme and accountable for its deliverables. The Lead PI must also be a Project PI.
- ii. During application, the Lead PI is responsible for the submission of the full application including lead project budget, individual sub projects budget and the consolidated budget as well as all individual projects' case for support. The Lead PI is also responsible for obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Data Collection (DAC) approval on behalf of the team.
- iii. Upon the grant approval, the Lead PI directs and tracks the overall progress of the Programmatic Project as a whole. The Lead PI is responsible for financial matters for the 'lead project budget' (i.e. purchase requests, invoices, claims, virements). The Lead PI should have oversight of financial claims etc. by Project PIs (e.g., purchase request by Project PI, claims by Project PI) and keeps track on the status of equipment and software purchased for the Programmatic Proposal and its projects. The Lead PI also approves transfers across projects EXCEPT when the Lead PI is also a Project PI (subject to approval by NIE OER).
- iv. The Lead PI should have oversight of HR matters such as hiring, training and oversight (e.g., annual leave, medical leave, staff development leave, annual appraisal, contract renewal).

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

- v. During the execution of the project, the Lead PI is also in charge of reporting on the project to NIE OER. This includes submitting amendment requests, progress reports, final report (including Research Brief, etc.) and preparing of final report presentations for OER, NIE, MOE as requested.
  - vi. The Lead PI also acts as the “Reporting Officer” for the Lead Co-PI, Lead RA and Project PIs for matters related to the project.
  - vii. Only the Lead PI is authorised to submit all grant variation requests (e.g., Amendment Request Form (RC5) for changes in project duration or changes in project team composition), project progress reports and final report to NIE OER.
- b. Co-Lead PI
- i. Researcher who supports the Lead PI in directing, coordinating and managing the entire programme. A Co-Lead PI is required for the proposal.
  - ii. The Co-Lead PI facilitates communication across the Programmatic Project as a whole and signs off on administrative matters (including budget and finance) in the absence of the PI.
  - iii. The Co-Lead PI also facilitates research staff recruitment and hiring (full and part-time).
- c. Project PI
- i. Researcher who has the appropriate level of authority and the responsibility to direct each specific research theme (i.e. ‘project’) supported by the grant. The Project PI is responsible and accountable for the proper conduct of the specific research theme and for regularly updating the Lead PI on all project matters. If the themes are conducted in sequence over a number of years, the Project PIs can be involved in more than one theme project. For example a Project PI can be in charge of Project A in Year 1 and Project B in Year 3 because of expertise needed for both Projects A and B.
  - ii. During application, the Project PI contributes to the full application, minimally with the case for support appendix and budget (distinct from shared budget items in lead project budget) on the specific project. The Project PI helps to draft relevant IRB documents for the Lead PI’s submission.
  - iii. Upon the grant approval, the Project PI directs the specific project and report progress of project to the Lead PI. The Project PI is responsible for financial matters for the specific project (i.e. purchase requests, invoices, claims, within project virements) EXCEPT those by the Project PI. The Project PI is responsible for the care and maintenance of equipment and software designated to this project.
  - iv. The Project PI is in charge of HR matters of hiring, training and oversight (e.g., annual leave, medical leave, SDL, annual appraisal, contract renewal) of research staff (full and part-time) for their project and acts as the RO for them.
  - v. During the execution of the project, the Project PI helps in preparation and leading (as needed) of presentations and provides content for website or other forms of social media engagement.

- d. Project Co-PI:
  - i. An individual involved in the development and execution of the project. A Project Co-PI typically devotes a higher percentage of effort to the project as compared to a Collaborator and is considered key personnel. The inclusion of a Project Co-PI, from the same Institution as the PI is mandatory for all proposals so as to ensure continuity of the project should the Project PI be unable to continue. A Project Co-PI should have a major role in the project and might have equal intellectual rights and research input. However these vary project by project. Therefore, it is essential that the Project Co-PI and Project PI work out an agreement on roles & responsibilities. This agreement should also be discussed with the Lead PI.
  - ii. A Co-PI does not have equal authority for project management with the Project PI. However, some of the project management responsibilities can be delegated to the Project Co-PI in the absence of the Project PI.
  
- e. Collaborator
  - i. An individual involved in the development and execution of the project. A Collaborator would typically devote a specific percent of effort to the project. A Collaborator can either be from an external Institution such as an international or local institute of higher learning, school, professional organization, or be an education officer of Singapore's MOE.
  
- f. Lead Research Assistant/Associate (RA):
  - i. Helps the Lead PI on research work that cuts across themes (to consolidate, integrate and rationalize the research), and/or knowledge management and mobilization work. He/she leads in the project management matters.
  
- g. Project Commitment
  - i. In all cases, the roles and time commitments of PIs, Co- PIs and Collaborators must be spelt out in the research application. Reasons for their designation / role should be given. For example, persons may have to be a Co-PI because they already have grants on which they are a PI; therefore they cannot commit significant time to the proposed research in their workload allocation. They may also choose to be a Co-PI because they are less experienced in writing grant proposals and administering grants. In other cases, individuals may need to be listed as a Collaborator because they do not have sufficient research credibility (minimum qualifications, research record, publications, etc.) to be listed as either a PI or Co-PI or they have insufficient workload time to be a PI or Co-PI and only want to contribute to the research in a limited manner.
  - ii. Team members should consider the time committed across all projects in their different capacities as PI, Co-PI or Collaborator, and be cognisant of their other job commitments. Teams should also consider if team members contributing a very small number of hours add sufficient value to the team. Justifications to include respective team members should be explicitly stated.

- iii. PIs, Co-PIs and Collaborators can list the grant on their CVs. Efforts of all participants (e.g., participating schools, Research Staff) should be acknowledged in all reports and publications.
- iv. PIs and Co-PIs must notify their Institution and NIE OER 3 months before the commencement of their leave if they plan to be on long leave of absence (e.g. No-Pay Leave (NPL) or Sabbatical Leave). NIE OER will keep Grantor (MOE) informed of any PIs and Co-PIs with long leave plans.

### **5 Budget Preparation Guide**

The Budget Preparation Guide is for reference only and can be used for budget preparation purposes. It can be found in the “27RFP ERFAP Guidelines and Application Package” document.

#### **5.1 Budget Votes**

The grant proposal budget has four categories of budget votes. The votes are Human Resources, Equipment, Consumables and Other Costs. In each vote, there are specific budget line items for the grant proposal budget planning. Where a project requires funds for equipment, consumables like office supplies and stationery, or other costs like purchase of portable hard disks or books, these need to be budgeted under the relevant categories and specific budget line items.

#### **5.2 Justification of Budget**

- a. All budgetary items should be clearly justified. Budgetary items which lack proper justification will not be funded.
- b. Show the breakdown of the proposal budget and the detailed justification for each budget line item in ROMS. Detailed justifications must be provided in ROMS for all resources required to successfully complete the project (e.g., explanation of why budget items are needed, how they will be used, why specific items are preferred over other items of a similar type). Adherence to budgetary norms is expected in all areas. Otherwise, the proposal may be rejected.
- c. The Gantt chart should be detailed and should align with justification of budget line items to show which work is undertaken when, how it relates to the budget, and especially to research team (e.g. RA) costs.

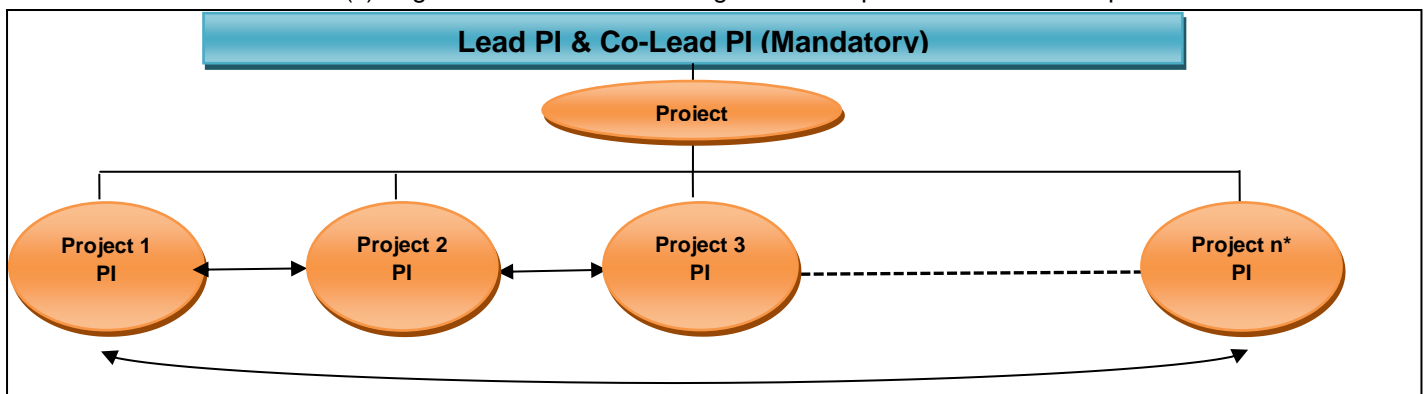


- d. Applicants are expected to make an accurate assessment of their requirements so that the respective approving committees are fully aware of the cost implications when deciding whether proposals are worthy of funding. Expenditures should be budgeted inclusive of any prevailing Goods and Services Tax (GST) payable.
- e. Note that application grants, once approved, cannot be increased. Hence, potential PIs are advised to prepare their budgets carefully. PIs are accountable for the accuracy of the final figures and must therefore check the calculations before submitting the proposal.
- f. PIs are advised to estimate budget for future cost increases over the entire lifespan of the project. Note that variations/fund transfers across each of the categories of approved budget votes and specific budget line items, such as buying new equipment or adding manpower, have to be requested by PIs and approved by NIE OER or PI's Institution, even if funds are available.
- g. Project spending/invoice should incur only from the start date till end date of the project. No expenditure is allowed after project ends.

## 6 Programmatic Proposals

### 6.1 Structure

- a. A programmatic research project structure consists of a Lead PI, Lead Co-PI and Project PIs (managing individual projects). Each Project PI will be supported by Project Co-PI(s) and/or Collaborator(s). Figure 1 below shows a diagram that explains this relationship.



*\*The average number of themes for a typical programmatic research is between two to five*

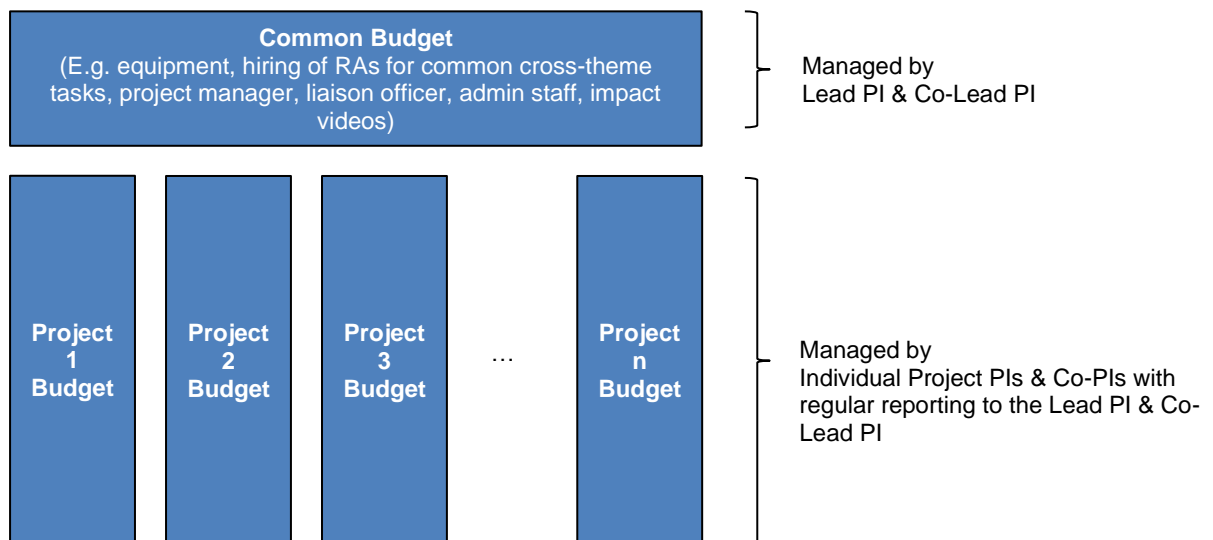
**Figure 1:** Diagram showing the relationship of Programmatic Project and its Projects

## 6.2 Grant Application Process

- a. The programmatic research proposal must be submitted and approved in the same call i.e., no additional projects can be added at a later date. All Co-Lead PI, Project PIs, Project Co-PIs, and Collaborators must agree to participate in the programmatic research at the point of submission.
- b. Due to the extensive planning needed, NIE OER recommends that team members start planning about one year in advance.
- c. The structure of the Case for Support for a Programmatic Proposal will be:
  - i. Case for Support: 25 pages
  - ii. Appendices to include information for each project: 5-7 pages for each project. Information should be included so as to facilitate the evaluation of the entire Programmatic Proposal as a coherent project.

## 6.3 Budget Structure

- a. The Lead Project budget will include (equipment, hiring of RAs for common/cross-theme tasks, etc.) and the consolidated project budget (the overall budget including the lead project budget and the project budgets). Each Project should have an individual project budget. Figure 2 below shows the budget structure.



**Figure 2:** A graphical overview of the programme's budget structure

### 6.4 Project Budget at Application

- a. The Lead PI and the respective Project PIs are accountable for the budgeting and proper use of funds approved for their research projects. PIs are to complete the budgeting form, indicating the project budget in details and submit together with the application form. When utilizing the project's fund, the Lead PI and the respective Project PIs can only spend on items specifically listed in the approved budget.
- b. Please refer to the respective Budget Preparation Guide in the 27RFP ERFAP Guidelines and Application Package for the Budget Preparation Guide for ERFAP Tier 1 - 3 and Programmatic Proposal.

### 6.5 Project Budget after Approval

- a. WBS and Expenditure Tracking
  - i. Each Programmatic Project will have one WBS number (for example 04MNPXXXXXA640) to allow for tracking. The Lead PI will maintain a "lead project" budget which includes funding to engage a Lead RA to conduct research work that cuts across themes, and/or knowledge management and mobilisation work. The lead project and its respective projects will be assigned with individual WBS numbers to ensure that tracking of expenditures can be done at both the project level and overall Programmatic Project level.
  - ii. It is the responsibility of Project PIs to ensure that the Lead PI is regularly updated on the financial status of their respective projects. It is up to the Lead PI and the Project PIs to mutually agree and decide on the frequency of such financial updates. This should be discussed as part of the proposal planning and any revisions should be documented in writing.
  - iii. The Project PIs are authorized to endorse all purchase requests, invoices and claims submitted by research and support staff from his or her project.
- b. Human Resources
  - i. The Project PI is authorized to endorse all HR submissions (for example annual leave, staff medical leave, staff development leave and annual appraisal and contract renewal matters) by his or her research and support staff from the same project.
  - ii. The Lead PI should have oversight of all HR matters of his/her programmatic project. The Project PIs will ensure that the Lead PI is regularly updated on the HR activities of their respective projects. It is up to the Lead PI and the Project PIs to mutually agree and decide on the frequency of such updates of HR activities. This should be discussed as part of the proposal planning.

### 6.6 Grant Variation – Fund Transfers Across and Within Votes

- a. The expenditure from one project cannot be charged to another project. Each Project PI is responsible for tracking the expenditure for his or her project.

#### Classification of Votes

There are 4 Project Budget Votes:

- i. Human Resource (HR) Costs Vote (04MNPXXXXXXA640EOMXX)
  - ii. Equipment (EQ) Costs Vote (04MNPXXXXXXA640EQTXX)
  - iii. Consumables (CO) Costs Vote (04MNPXXXXXXA640MACXX703012)
  - iv. Other Costs (OC) Vote (04MNPXXXXXXA640OOEXX)
    - Overseas Travel (04MNPXXXXXXA640OSTXX)
    - For the Overseas Travel line item, while it is still within the Other Costs (OC) Vote, it has its own WBS number as indicated above.
- b. If there are insufficient funds under any of the 4 budget votes in a project, a request can be submitted to transfer funds from 1 vote to another to cover the shortfall. Fund transfers made across votes *within* the same project and *across* projects will follow the current practices and guidelines at OER with a cumulative virement limit up to 10% of total direct cost of that particular project. Respective Project PIs can submit such requests for approval by NIE OER. Lead PI's endorsement is not required for fund transfers within projects.
  - c. If the fund transfer is across any of the projects, the respective Projects PI can submit a fund transfer request and the Lead PI will endorse. Only the Lead PI can endorse the funds transfer across the respective projects. Not more than 10% of the original approved budget of a project can be transferred to or be received from another project.

For example, a lead project with an approved budget of \$1M, can vire up to \$100k to other projects. However, each project can only receive up to 10% of their original approved budget. For a project with an approved budget of \$100k, a maximum of \$10k can be vired into the project and not receive \$100k from the lead project.

Once Lead PI has endorsed, respective Project PIs have to submit the fund transfer request to NIE OER and will be subjected to approval by NIE OER (or Grantor (MOE) where applicable, refer to Enclosure 1, Paragraph 5.3 to 5.7 for details on fund virement).

- d. If the fund transfer is across the lead project and involves any of the projects where the Lead PI is also a Project PI, the Lead PI will endorse and is subject to NIE OER's approval.
- e. For funds set aside within a project budget vote for any of the projects, respective Project PI will endorse followed by NIE OER.

- f. Please refer to Enclosure 1, Section 5 for additional details on fund variation.

## Enclosure 1: Guidelines for the Management of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tranche Education Research Funding Programme (ERFP)

### 1. General Fund Management and Disbursement (Financial Management)

- 1.1. The Principal Investigators (PIs) shall submit their claims to the Office of Education Research of the National Institute of Education (NIE OER) for collation and submission to the Ministry of Education (MOE) for reimbursement on a quarterly reimbursement basis. The Quarterly Requisition will include detailed schedules of expenditure incurred for the previous quarter which are certified by the Director of Research and Chief Financial Officer or equivalent (or an authorised nominee) of the PI's Institution, and audited by NIE's appointed auditor based on the established audit scope and procedures for ERFPP. The auditor fees will be borne by the PI's Institution.
- 1.2. The list of fundable direct cost items is provided in **Annex A**. Only items specified in the approved budget will be funded.
- 1.3. All expenditure should be incurred (based on goods or service rendered date) during the approved project duration (i.e. on or after the project start date and on or before the project end date). The only exception is for payment of Performance Bonuses (PB) for work done prior to the project completion date and FlexBen charges for research staff, as these payments may occur after project completion.
- 1.4. All expenses listed in the Quarterly Requisition must be incurred and paid within the 3 months before the submission date to NIE OER. No projections should be included.
- 1.5. PIs are to adhere to their Institution's procurement procedures, guidelines and policies to ensure that all purchases made using ERFPP grant funds are fundable, value-for-money, necessary and reasonable for the conduct of the Research, and processes are transparent. In general, prudence should be exercised for the use of resources.
- 1.6. Disbursement of funding shall be subject to the due performance of and compliance with these ERFPP guidelines. Disbursement of funds by NIE OER to PI's Institution will only be made after receipt of such funds from MOE. (Refer to Section 8 of the Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant for more information).

- 1.7. PIs are responsible and accountable for the proper management of project funds and ensuring compliance with their Institution's existing financial and administrative procedures. Such responsibilities include ensuring the following:
  - a. Project expenses incurred must be checked for accuracy.
  - b. Expenses and financial claims made against the four project votes (Human Resources / Manpower, Equipment, Consumables and Other Costs) must be accurately made.
  - c. PIs must ensure there is sufficient funds in the four project votes before committing to any purchases or payments.
  - d. The utilization of budget must comply with financial guidelines. Proper approvals must be sought prior to purchases.
  - e. Monthly salaries for all full time research staff must be checked to ensure that they are accurately charged to the project.
  
- 1.8. Budget Utilization
  - a. PIs are expected to exercise careful budget planning and management of their project funds.
  - b. Project budget phasing figures are used for original cash flow projection figures to MOE and are to be keyed in via the Research Operation Management System (ROMS). This is treated as the cash flow projections for the current financial year. MOE will use these cash flow projections to determine the budget utilization rate for ERFAP projects. PIs will inform NIE OER if there are any changes in the project budget phasing figures via email to oer.hrf@nie.edu.sg.
  - c. When utilizing the project's fund, PIs and project team members can only purchase goods and services specifically listed in the approved budget. Purchases, including equipment, must comply with PIs' Institution's procurement procedures, budgetary guidelines and norms. On completion of the project, such equipment should be retained by PI's Institution.

## **2. Manpower Hiring Policies (Human Resource Management)**

- 2.1. Funding of Research Personnel under the grant must comply with prevailing and consistently applied human resource guidelines of the employing Institution(s).
  
- 2.2. This will extend to PI's Institution prevailing policies on associated human resources costs (e.g. staff insurance, employment benefits, employment levy, employment pass, pre-examination medical check-up, service award and recruitment associated cost).
  
- 2.3. 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.

- 2.4. PIs are responsible for the management of research staff employed for the project. Such responsibilities include:
  - a. Sourcing and liaising with their Institution's Human Resource Department on the recruitment and selection of full time research staff;
  - b. Processing monthly invoices for the employment of temporary research staff;
  - c. Overseeing research staff's training and development (where applicable);
  - d. Managing research staff's work and performance and conducting research staff's performance appraisal.
- 2.5. For manpower-related fund requisitions, PI's Institution will keep a record of all staff employed, including those whose employment has ended. PI's Institution will provide the necessary records to NIE OER upon request.
- 2.6. PI's Institution must adhere to the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices. (Please refer to [www.mom.gov.sg](http://www.mom.gov.sg) for details of the Fair Consideration Framework.)
- 2.7. PI's Institution is 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 PI's Institution policies and does not exceed the EOM vote.
- 2.8. Claims for staff performance bonus should be submitted within six (6) months following the end of the Term. For PI's Institution 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, PI's Institution 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.

### **3. Equipment**

- 3.1. PI's Institution / PIs 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
- 3.2. For high value equipment purchase, PIs are required to update the list of equipment acquired, as part of the Half-Yearly Progress Report submission. Grantor (MOE) may require PI's Institution / PIs to allow approved Third Parties to access and use the equipment, subject to the availability of the equipment.



## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

- 3.3. PI's Institution is allowed to make changes within the Equipment 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.
- 3.4. Equipment budgeted should be purchased at the start of the project and not when the project is closing. PIs should avoid purchasing equipment in the 3 months before the completion date of the project.

### 4. Institutional Indirect Research Costs (IIRC)

- 4.1. 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 PI's Institution to support such projects (e.g. providing research space, research administration and utilities, and not through the actual performance of activities under the projects).
- 4.2. To support the extension of ERFAP to other institutes of higher learning (IHLs), the ERFAP grant will support the IIRC at a flat rate of 20% of the total direct costs of each approved project conducted by a non-NIE PI (including NTU). IIRC will be allocated to the PI's Institution.
- 4.3. Non-NIE PIs would need to budget for the IIRC in the overall project budget in their proposal during grant application. The total project cost (i.e. including both direct and indirect cost) will be used to determine the funding tier of the proposal as shown in the Table below.

Funding Tier	Total Project Cost (Direct + Indirect Cost)
1	< S\$150K
2	S\$150K to < S\$350K
3 / Programmatic Proposals	≥ S\$350K

- 4.4. For 'Programmatic Proposals' costing more than and equal to \$350,000 and comprising PIs from different Institutions working on different sub-projects, IIRC can be apportioned to the respective Institutions of the non-NIE PIs, if and only if the proposal specifies the direct costs for each sub-project. Specifically, the overall or Lead PI must submit the proposed allocation of direct costs for each sub-projects and the corresponding indirect costs to be allocated to the respective non-NIE Institutions during grant application. This allocation must be endorsed by the Tier 3 Approval Panel. NIE OER should work with the overall or Lead Institution of the Tier 3 programmatic project to collate the expenses of all sub-projects from the various Institutions, and submit a consolidated claim for the project to NIE OER for reimbursement.

- 4.5. Grantor (MOE) does not manage indirect cost funding. PIs should refer and adhere to their Institutions' policy of managing indirect cost funding.
- 4.6. IIRC funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis based on 20% of the actual direct cost incurred during each claim schedule.

### 5. Variation Requests

- 5.1. No material amendments, alterations or changes shall be made to the project without approval from the relevant panel as indicated below.

Funding Tier	Approving Panel
Tier 1	ERFP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel
Tier 2	ERFP Tier 1 and Tier 2 Approval Panel
Tier 3 / Programmatic Proposals capped at \$1mil	ERFP Tier 3 Approval Panel
Tier 3 / Programmatic Proposals exceeding \$1mil	MOE Education Research Steering Committee

“Material amendments, alterations or changes” shall mean those amendments, alterations or changes that have a material effect on the scope, nature, direction or purpose of the project.

- 5.2. Grantor (MOE) and NIE OER reserve the rights to reject any claims that have resulted from changes to Research without prior approval from Grantor (MOE) and items found not to be fundable, not necessary, not reasonable, not relevant or not used for the Research.

#### Virement between Votes (Fund Transfer)

- 5.3. Any deviation from the budget or additional purchase would require approval by NIE OER. For this purpose, please complete the [Request for Funds Transfer/Set Aside \(RC7\) Form](#). A request for transfer of funds between the four project votes should only be made under justifiable circumstances. A justification for transfer of funds must be provided.
- 5.4. Request for fund virement should be made at least 3 months before the project end date. Retrospective fund virement requests will not be allowed, unless there is compelling justification for the late request. All fund virement (fund transfers/set aside) must be fully approved before purchases can be made.

5.5. Fund virements are subject to the following limits:

Funding Tier	Virement
Tier 1	Cumulative virement up to 20% of total direct cost
Tier 2	Cumulative virement up to 15% of total direct cost
Tier 3 / Programmatic Proposals	Cumulative virement up to 10% of total direct cost

5.6. NIE OER to approve virement within projects and across projects (for programmatic proposals) up to the limits detailed in paragraph 5.5.

5.7. Grantor (MOE's) approval should be sought through NIE OER for all project-specific virements beyond the approving limits of NIE OER.

### Virement within Votes (Set Aside)

5.8. A set aside is when funds are moved within a vote of a project.

5.9. Set aside is not required for (i) Human Resource Vote and (ii) General Other Cost Group.

(i) Human Resource Vote consists of:

- Full-time RA;
- Hourly Rated RA/Transcriber;
- And Visiting Consultant's Honorarium/Fee.

(ii) General Other Cost Group consists of:

- Local transport
- Consultant expenses (Accommodation, Airfares and Local Transport + Airport Transfer)
- Tokens of appreciation
- Refreshments for Focus Group Discussion/Workshop/Seminar
- Computer & AV accessories (NON-IT) Not requiring ACIS approval
- Research instruments
- Closure report related charges
- Page charges for publication costs

### Variation and Grant Extension

- 5.10. The project is awarded based on the premise that the research questions and the aims stated in the Approved Proposal will be fulfilled. It is the duty of all PIs to ensure that grant extension and any amendments, e.g., change in team composition or scope of project are endorsed by NIE OER through RC5 (Project Amendment / Variation Request) via Research Operation Management System (ROMS) in order to effect all changes. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the project.
- 5.11. PIs are to seek NIE OER's approval for grant extension 6 months before the original project end date. Any grant extension requests submitted less than 6 months from the project end date will require compelling justification. The PI must ensure sufficient funds in each vote to support the extension request. Any virement requests necessary to meet the extension period must be made known as part of the extension request.
- 5.12. Each project extension should not be more than a total of 6 months. An extension beyond 6 months will require compelling justification. No additional funds, beyond the originally approved budget, should be given for any extensions.

### Change in PI/Co-PIs

- 5.13. Request for a change in the PI/Co-PIs must be endorsed by NIE OER. NIE OER will keep Grantor (MOE) informed of any PI changes during NIE OER's quarterly submission of the progress report. The new PI/Co-PIs must be an expert in that area and possess the necessary expertise to continue with the research work.
- 5.14. In the event that the PI is leaving the Institution or is unable to fulfil his/her obligation as the project PI, a proper handover of the project to the new PI is mandatory to ensure the continuity of the funded project. It is the duty of the project PI to ensure that the transfer of the PI-ship is submitted through RC5 (Project Amendment/Variation Request) via Research Operation Management System (ROMS) and endorsed by NIE OER. The RC5 for such change requests are to be sent to NIE OER at least 1.5 months before the leaving PI's contract end date. Grantor (MOE) reserves the right to suspend / terminate the Research if the mitigation plan is not satisfactory.
- 5.15. Grantor's approval (MOE) will be required should there be a change in PI's Institution. The request must be made to Grantor (MOE) and be endorsed by the Director of Research (or equivalent) of both the existing and new PI's Institutions.

- 5.16. PIs and Co-PIs shall be responsible for ensuring PI's Institution and NIE OER are immediately notified in writing if they plan to be on long leave of absence for more than three contiguous months in a year (e.g. sabbatical). NIE OER will keep Grantor (MOE) informed of any PIs and Co-PIs with long leave plans.

PI must submit a mitigation plan to NIE OER at least 3 months before the commencement of their leave or as soon as reasonably possible (for resignation cases), to explain how the project will be kept on track. The mitigation plan must be endorsed by the Reporting Officer, Director of Research (DoR) or equivalent and the Institution.

PI must jointly develop a mitigation plan with NIE OER to sustain the project, including:

- setting new milestones/KPIs
- taking steps to ensure project is not disrupted
- committing to put in all necessary resources and time
- sign off by the existing PI and the covering PI (if applicable)
- endorsed by the Reporting Officer, Director of Research (DoR) or equivalent
- approved by NIE OER if it is assessed to be sound in sustaining the project

### Change in Research Scope

- 5.17. NIE OER'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. The approval is to be sought through RC5 (project Amendment/Variation Request) via Research Operation Management System (ROMS). No material amendments, alterations or changes shall be made to the Research without prior approval of the relevant ERC.
- 5.18. If an activity/task initially meant to be carried out by the PI's Institution / PIs is subcontracted or entrusted to a third-party, this would also constitute a change in Research and NIE OER's prior approval will be required.

## **6. Audit and Progress Reports**

- 6.1. PI's Institution shall keep and maintain full and detailed records and accounts relating to the funding and the project, including all items of expenditure incurred for or in connection with the project.
- 6.2. PI's Institution shall be wholly responsible for monitoring the expenditure of the funding by the Institution, ensuring that the funding is utilised in accordance with these ERFAP guidelines.

- 6.3. NIE's appointed auditor for ERFAP will conduct on-site reviews and audits to ensure that the terms and guidelines of ERFAP are complied with by PI's Institution and that the reports submitted to MOE are an accurate statement of compliance by the respective Institutions.

### Half-Yearly Progress Report

- 6.4. PIs are required to submit half-yearly progress reports via the Research Operation Management System (ROMS) to NIE OER by January and July of each year for the entire duration of the project.
- 6.5. NIE OER will update MOE on the status of the half-yearly progress reports and submit copies of the reports on a quarterly basis.
- 6.6. NIE OER is required to collate the half-yearly progress reports of on-going projects by 31 Jan for the reporting period Jul to Dec of the preceding year and 31 Jul for the reporting period Jan to Jun of the current year. NIE OER could grant approval on a case-by-case basis to exempt a PI from submitting the progress report if the project start date falls within the last 3 months of the reporting period or if a project end date falls within the last 3 months of the reporting period. Any delay in the report submission may disrupt the fund disbursement for the project.
- 6.7. NIE OER will review the half-yearly progress report against the objectives and deliverables of the project. The PI may be required to give additional information about the progress of the project if the information submitted is deemed to be inadequate.
- 6.8. The PIs shall inform NIE OER of any development that will adversely affect the progress of the PIs' projects in a timely manner. NIE OER will keep MOE informed of any such developments.

### Final Report

- 6.9. PIs are required to submit their final reports for ERFAP via the Research Operation Management System (ROMS) to NIE OER within 2 months following their respective project end dates. The reports will then be routed to the Reporting officer and then to NIE OER for review and endorsement via ROMS. Final Reports for Tier 1 to 3 are submitted via ROMS. Final Reports for Programmatic Proposals by IHLs and NIE PIs with IHL members as project Principal Investigators (PIs) are submitted via softcopies.
- 6.10. The NIE Research Brief Series must be submitted as part of the final report submission package. Please refer to this link for more information on how to write a Research Brief.
- 6.11. NIE OER will update MOE on the status of the final reports and submit copies of the reports on a monthly basis.

- 6.12. PIs will be asked to give a presentation to NIE OER and/or MOE on the project. The presentation may be recorded with PI's consent for archival and dissemination purposes.
- 6.13. All final reports for completed projects will be tabled at the relevant Committees for closure. During Tier 3 Approval Panel, the final reports for Tier 3, Programmatic and MOE Contracted projects will be circulated for assessment by MOE's relevant divisions.

### Comprehensiveness of Reports

- 6.14. PIs will be required to give additional information about the progress and outcomes of any Research if the information submitted in the half-yearly Progress Reports and/or the Final Report is deemed to be inadequate.

### Debarment of Principal Investigators

- 6.15. PIs who fail to submit the Final Report and/or Final Statement of Account within the stipulated timelines will be debarred. Debarred PIs will not be eligible to submit new grant applications as PIs 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 NIE OER. E.g. If the Final Report is due on 31 Jan 2021 and a PI submits the Final Report on 15 Feb 2021, the PI will not be eligible to submit ERFAP grant applications for 1 year between 15 Feb 2021 and 14 Feb 2022.

### Final Statement of Account

- 6.16. PI's Institution shall obtain and maintain the final statement of account for each completed project within three (3) months of the 'End Date' of the project. The PI shall send a copy of the record to NIE OER. NIE OER will send the Final Statement of Account to Grantor (MOE) upon request.

## **7. Publication of Results and Findings**

- 7.1. The dissemination and publication of findings from MOE-contracted projects is subject to MOE's approval.

- 7.2. For all other ERFAP projects, PIs may publish, at any symposia, national, international or regional professional meeting or in any scientific publications, books, journals, articles, newsletters, brochures, posters, websites, conference materials, case studies and reports of their own choosing, the findings, methods and results derived from the research. All PIs should abide by their Institution's guidelines on publications. Any research presentation or publication that attempts to make generalisable claims on confidential data or matters that are racially, religiously or socially sensitive must be reported to and cleared by NIE OER and Grantor (MOE).
- 7.3. PI's Institution shall ensure that all publications arising from the project is made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication. A copy of the publication shall be deposited in PI's Institution open access repository (or any other Institutional/subject open access repository), in accordance with the Institution's open access policy.
- 7.4. All publications shall acknowledge the funding support provided by Grantor (MOE) and, where appropriate, the contributions of the other Institutions and research staff in accordance with established norms.

It is necessary to acknowledge the source of funding for all conference presentations and publications arising from the project (whether the PI is still with the Institution or has left the Institution at the point of writing and submission), in the following manner:

*This study was funded by Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE) under the Education Research Funding Programme (OER xx/xx ABC) and administered by National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Singapore MOE and NIE NTU, Singapore.*

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

## **8. Intellectual Property Rights**

- 8.1. Background intellectual property (BIP) is any existing intellectual property (IP) brought by the Institutions and/or any collaborators into the project. Unless expressly agreed otherwise, the project shall have no effect on BIP.
- 8.2. All IP howsoever arising from the research (Research IP) shall, at the first instance, be the property of the Institutions in such proportions as they may determine. This is without prejudice to any agreement that the Institutions may enter into with the PIs or research staff on ownership and exploitation of Research IP.



- 8.3. For MOE-contracted projects, all resulting findings and research / postground IP or resulting products (including the right to publish) will be owned by MOE.
- 8.4. The PI's institutions should reserve a royalty-free irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual and non-exclusive right for the Government and public sector agencies to use any licensed or assigned Research IP for their statutory functions, non-commercial, R&D, and/or educational purposes only.
- 8.5. Refer to Section 16 of the Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant for more information.

### **9. Research Integrity Policy**

- 9.1. PIs are required to abide by their respective Institution's research integrity policy.
- 9.2. PIs are required to seek ethics clearance before collecting any data from human subjects or for studies that involve the usage of data from human subjects, including those that do not involve data collection from human subjects. A copy of the approved ethics clearance letter from the PI's Institution is to be provided to NIE OER for filing.
- 9.3. PIs are advised to check whether ethics clearance for amendments are required by the respective Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) if there are changes to their projects in the following areas:
  - Issuance of tokens of appreciation.
  - Methodology arising from data collection (including change in sampling type such as Primary School student to Secondary School student, change in mode of data collection).
  - Extension of the project.
  - Change in team composition (including change in PI).
  - Change in project title.

### **10. Research Data Management Policy**

- 10.1. PIs are required to abide by their respective Institution's research data management policy.
- 10.2. NIE PIs applying for ERFAP grants must have completed the Epigeum Research Integrity Course (ERIC) and have a valid certification prior to the issue of Letter of Award.

### **11. Approval from MOE for all collection of data from schools**

- 11.1. PIs who wish to collect data in local schools are required to submit a data collection application along with a copy of the IRB approval via the Data Collection Site module on the Research Operation Management System (ROMS) at least 4 weeks prior to data collection. The application will be processed by the School Liaison Officer (SLO) and sent to the MOE Corporate Research Office (CRO) for approval. PIs will be notified by the SLO once approval has been given. Please note that the entire process could take up to a month after submission of documents. Should there be any changes to the list of participating schools, PIs are to notify MOE through the SLO on the Research Operation Management System (ROMS). For further clarification, you may approach the SLO at [erfp.dac@nie.edu.sg](mailto:erfp.dac@nie.edu.sg). For more information on schools, please visit the School Information Service (SIS).

### **12. Data Sharing to MOE for Tier 3 and Programmatic proposals**

- 12.1. All Tier 3 and Programmatic Proposals (PP) PIs should discuss possible data sharing arrangements with MOE Corporate Research Office (CRO) before the project starts. In some cases, Tier 1 or Tier 2 projects might also be identified at the ERC for discussion of data sharing due to high interest in the project or types of data.
- 12.2. If PIs would like support to discuss with CRO, please let NIE OER know at [erfp.rgmu@nie.edu.sg](mailto:erfp.rgmu@nie.edu.sg).
- 12.3. PIs are also reminded to include the data sharing arrangement with MOE in the project's IRB.

### **13. Others**

- 13.1. All PIs shall adhere to the Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant for matters relating to (i) access to premises and records; (ii) ownership and use of assets; and (iii) termination (Refer to Enclosure 2).

## Annex A: Fundable Direct Costs

### (A) EOM Related Expenses

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
A1.	General Policy	Allowed only for expenses that are directly related to the project. Does not cover salary and related expenses for PIs/Co-PIs/Collaborators.
A2.	Salaries, CPF contributions and fringe benefits including medical, dental, staff insurance covered by NIE, Long Service monetary awards, contribution to welfare fund for Research Staff (Project Officer/Manager /Software Programmer /Research Assistant/Associate and project-funded Research Fellows).	<p>Allowed as part of overall compensation to staff hired under the project.</p> <p>The salaries offered to the staff should be reasonable, in line with local market benchmarks, and comply with the respective Institution's formal established pay scale.</p> <p>Overtime cost is not allowed.</p> <p>Overseas-based Research Staff is not allowed to be employed by project. Research Staff employed has to be based in Singapore.</p>
A3.	Merit increment	Allowed as part of overall compensation to full-time research staff. Respective Institution's HR Policy applies.
A4.	Annual leave	<p>Allowed for full-time research staff hired by the project. The number of days of leave to the staff will be in accordance with the HR Policy of the respective Institution.</p> <p>Provision for unconsumed leave is not allowed, except for service exigencies, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p>
A5.	Temporary staff (hourly rated, transcription, and translation)	<p>Allowed, including administration fee for the engagement of manpower agencies.</p> <p>Overseas-based Temporary Staff is not allowed to be employed by project. Temporary Staff employed has to be based in Singapore.</p>

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

A6.	Staff recruitment and related cost	<p>Allowed</p> <p>Examples of such costs include advertisement and recruitment agencies' admin fees, etc.</p>
A7.	Visiting Consultant/Professor honorarium	<p>Allowed</p> <p>The Visiting Consultant/Professor must be identified and their contribution to the project must be clearly defined and described in the proposal.</p> <p>The budget to be supported will be decided based on prevailing rate of PI's Institution HR Policy (terms of payment for visiting scholars &amp; consultants).</p> <p>Requests can be raised to change the names of the consultants subsequently with compelling justification, subject to NIE OER's approval. PIs are not allowed to include any additional visiting consultants/professors after the grant is approved.</p>

### (B) Equipment Related Expenses

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
B1.	General policy	<p>Allowed only for expenses that are directly related to the project. Does not cover common office equipment, such as furniture and fittings, office software, photocopiers, scanners and office supplies.</p> <p>PIs should avoid purchasing equipment in the 3 months before the completion date of the project.</p>
B2.	ICT equipment	<p>Purchase of ICT equipment must be in accordance with NIE ACIS ICT Equipment Listing and Policy or similar IT policy of the respective Institution as applicable.</p>

### (C) Consumables Related Expenses

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
C1.	General policy	Allowed only for expenses that are directly related to the project.
C2.	Stationery, printing charges, photocopying charges, thumb drives, batteries, toner cartridge, courier services, compact discs (CD), digital video discs (DVD), digital video discs rewritable (DVD-RWs) and external DVD writer drives	Allowed.

### (D) Other Costs Related Expenses

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
D1.	General policy	Allowed only for expenses that are directly related to the project.  Does not cover expenses such as audit fees (internal and external), late payment interest charges, fines and penalties, insurance premiums not covered by PI's Institution, legal fees, staff retreats, professional membership fees, IP related and commercialisation expenses (including patent application, patent maintenance and other related costs).
D2.	Bank charges	Allowed as long as it is specifically related to the payments for goods and services incurred for the use of the project.  Late payment interest charge for credit card bill is not allowed.
D3.	Goods and Services Tax (GST)	Allowed for expenses incurred for the project.
D4.	Customs and import duties, shipping charges	Allowed as long as it is specifically related to importation of goods and services used in the project.

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
D5.	Professional Development (For Full time RA/RF)	Allowed for up to 2% of the original HR full-time budget only if the training is directly relevant to the project. Can only be used for local conferences/workshops/seminars, and local courses/online courses.
D6.	Overseas Travel/ Conference and PI/Co-PIs' Professional Development	<p>Overseas Travel and Conference are only allowed for PIs, Co-PIs, Research Fellows and Research Assistants from Singapore-based Institutions if these are directly related to the project.</p> <p>Not allowed for PI, Co-PI, Research Fellows and Research Assistants from Non-Singapore Based Institutions.</p> <p>Not allowed for collaborators.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of PI's Institution / PIs to ensure that all travel expenses are in line with the Institutions' consistently applied policy on travel. PI's Institution is to ensure that any travel undertaken is in relation to the Research only and for no other purpose.</p> <p>The purpose of the travel should be directly relevant to the Research and necessary to accomplish the Research objectives</p> <p>Virement of Funds into the Overseas Travel/ Conference and PI/Co-PIs' Professional Development line item is not allowed.</p> <p>Local conferences/seminar/workshops are allowed for PI and Co-PI if these are directly related to the project. This also includes books, reference materials, lab manuals, specialized journals subscription. PIs should avoid purchasing books, reference materials or lab manuals 3 months before the completion date of the project.</p> <p>Specialized journals subscriptions are allowed only if these are directly related to the project and are not available in the libraries of the respective Institution. The funding for journal subscription would be restricted to within the duration of the project.</p> <p>The total funding for (i) overseas travel/conference for allowable personnel; and (ii) professional development (including purchase of reference materials) for PI and Co-PI, will be pegged at 5% of total</p>

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
		<p>project direct costs, subject to a cap of \$100,000 (for PP, cap is applied to the project as a whole).</p> <p>The respective Institution's Staff Development Leave guidelines applies.</p>
<b>General Other cost</b>		
D7.	Local Transport	Allowed for taxi / private-hire fares incurred directly relevant to the project including current booking fee, mileages, parking, ERP incurred and train/bus services. Advanced booking fees and admin charges are not allowed.
D8.	Visiting Consultant/professor airfare, accommodation and local travel expenses	<p>Allowed, if specifically provided for in the proposal and approved by the relevant Education Research Committee. The visiting consultant/professor must be identified and his/her contribution to the project must be clearly defined and described in the proposal. Requests can be raised to change the names of the consultants subsequently with compelling justification, subject to NIE OER's approval. PIs are not allowed to include any additional visiting consultants/professors after the grant is approved.</p>
D9.	Refreshments for Focus Group Discussions / Workshops / Seminars	<p>Allowed for focus group discussions / workshops / seminars directly related to the project. Refreshments are capped at \$4 per pax per day (including GST and delivery charges).</p> <p>Not allowed for project team discussion and meeting, or one-to-one interview with research participants.</p> <p>Entertainment expenses are not allowed.</p>
D10.	Tokens of appreciation	<p>Allowed, capped up to the equivalent of \$10 per survey per person per project. Cash token is not allowed.</p> <p>Tokens of appreciation given to the research participants must be cleared by the respective Institutional Review Board (IRB).</p> <p>School personnel are approached to participate in the study on account of their official position or their official work. Therefore the</p>

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
		school personnel should not receive any gift offered to them. "Gift" includes money, goods, services, passage or any form of benefit
D11.	Computer accessories and AV accessories (Non- ICT) such as external portable hard disk and its maintenance, keyboard, mouse, headphone, webcam, laptop batteries and cable	Allowed only if these items are directly related to the project.
D12	Research Instruments such as educational test kits, science material etc	Allowed only if these items are directly related to the project.
D13.	Closure report related costs such as closure report printing and binding and proofreading	Allowed for closure report printing, binding and proofreading cost.
D14.	Page charges for publication of manuscript	<p>Allowed up to \$3,000 for page charges of publication of manuscript in scientific publications, books, journals, articles, newsletters, brochures, posters, websites, conference materials, case studies and reports as well as cost related to publication in open access journals which are directly related to the project.</p> <p>The costs of reprints and publishing in other media, such as books, monographs and pamphlets are not allowed.</p> <p>Costs related to publication in open access journals are subject to approval on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Justification will need to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of papers that the project intends to submit</li> <li>• Name of journals in which the PI intends to submit the paper to</li> <li>• Impact factor upon publishing in respective journal</li> <li>• Cost of producing 1 manuscript.</li> </ul>



## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
		Titles of journals alongside with evidence that they are peer reviewed must be submitted with the grant proposal.
<b>Other Cost ( ICT related )</b>		
D15.	Software and software licenses	<p>Allowed, if software is necessary to accomplish the project objectives and specifically provided for in the proposal and approved by the relevant Panel.</p> <p>Purchase must be in accordance with the ICT and procurement policy of the respective Institution as applicable.</p> <p>Software license period should not be longer than project duration. If license exceeds the project duration, the amount claimable will be pro-rated up to the project duration.</p>
D16.	Computer accessories and AV Accessories (ICT Related)	<p>Allowed.</p> <p>This includes items such as portable routers, stylus and wireless microphone etc.</p> <p>Purchase must be in accordance with NIE ACIS ICT policy or the ICT and procurement policy of the respective Institution as applicable.</p>
<b>Other Cost- Others</b>		
D17.	<p>Including the following goods and services.</p> <p>Non ICT related goods and services engaging external vendor (e.g. Translation Services, etc.)</p> <p>ICT related goods and services (e.g. Other Software Licenses not under NIE ACIS's or respective Institution IT department's common</p>	Allowed if goods and services are necessary to accomplish the project objectives.

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

No.	Type of Expenses	Description
	ICT listing, web design services, web hosting, NAS, etc.)	
D18.	Repairs and maintenance of research equipment	<p>Allowed</p> <p>The period of maintenance funded from the grant should be restricted to the duration of the project. For new equipment, maintenance should not be budgeted for the duration the equipment is under warranty.</p>
D19.	Expenses related to mobile subscription/data plan	<p>Allowed if the data plans subscriptions are directly related to project and must be in accordance with respective Institution's policy.</p> <p>Mobile subscription and data plan should not be longer than project duration. If the subscription exceeds the project duration, the amount claimable will be pro-rated up to the project duration.</p>

## Enclosure 2: Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF A COMPETITIVE GRANT**

#### 1. Definitions

1.1 In this Contract, unless the contrary intention appears: -

- "Acceptance Form" means the Research Grant Acceptance Form accompanying the Letter of Award which is to be completed by PI's Institution and PIs;
- "Application" means the application for the Funding submitted to Grantor (MOE) through NIE OER by the PI's Institution for and on behalf of the Institutions collectively and given the grant number specified in the Letter of Award;
- "Approved Proposal" means the Application to undertake the Research described therein as approved by Grantor (MOE) (together with all modifications, amendments and revisions required by Grantor (MOE));
- "Approved Third Parties" means the Grantor (MOE), any publicly funded research institute, research centre, university, polytechnic or other institute of higher learning based in Singapore;
- "Assets" means all equipment, computer software, goods, products, databases, accessories, hardware and any other asset purchased or acquired using the Funds but do not include Research IP or consumables;
- "Background IP" or "BIP" has the meaning set out in Clause 16.1.
- "Collaborator" means any company, Institution, incorporated body or other industry or academic collaborator, which is not an Institution or a PI but is to be engaged in the Research in collaboration with the Institutions or any of them;
- "Co-Funder" means any other Organisation, Institution, body, Association (unincorporated or otherwise) or corporation which co-funds any part of the Funding under this Contract whether through or together with Grantor (MOE);
- "Co-Principal Investigator" means any person named in the Approved Proposal as a "Co-Principal Investigator" for the Research;

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

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- “Contract” means collectively these Terms and Conditions of a Competitive Grant, the Letter of Award, Application, Approved Proposal, Guidelines and Policies (which shall be communicated to the Institutions as applicable);
- “Deliverables” means the tangible outcomes of the Research to be achieved by the Institutions and PIs as specified in the Approved Proposal;
- “Final Report” means the report described in Clause 12.7; “Final Statement of Account” has the meaning set out in Clause 10;
- “Funding” or “Funds” means the amount or amounts payable under this Contract for each project as specified in the Letter of Award;
- “Guidelines” means the applicable guidelines for application for grants from the Grantor (MOE) and includes all instructions to applicants (if any) and all application forms which are in use from time to time;
- “PI’s Institution” means the body or Institution or administering organisation named in the Letter of Award as the “PI’s Institution” as the body responsible for undertaking and managing the Research;
- “Host Institution” refers to the Institution the Lead PI belongs to for a Programmatic Proposal involving Project PIs from more than one institution;
- “Intellectual Property (IP)” means all copyright, rights in relation to inventions (including patent rights and unpatented technologies), plant varieties, registered and unregistered trademarks (including service marks), registered designs, confidential information (including trade secrets and know-how), mask-works and integrated circuit layouts, and all other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields;
- “IRB” means Institutional Review Board;
- “Principal Investigator” means the investigator identified in the Letter of Award as the overall lead in the conduct of the Research;
- “Letter of Award” means the letter issued by NIE OER, on behalf of the Grantor (MOE), preceding these Terms and Conditions of A Competitive Grant under which the grant of the Funds is made to the Institutions;

## Administrative Guidelines for ERFAP Applicants

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- “Materials” means documents, anonymised patient samples (including tissue and sera), compilation of x-ray results, information and data stored by any means but excluding confidential patient data collated or acquired for the purposes of the Research;
- “Milestones” means the agreed milestones that PI’s Institution and PIs shall achieve as specified in the Approved Proposal;
- “Office of Research” means the office established by the PI’s Institution in accordance with Clause 4.2;
- “Partner Institution” means the bodies or institutions named in the Letter of Award as the “Partner Institutions” as the bodies responsible for working together with the Host Institution to undertake a Programmatic Research involving Project PIs from more than one institution.
- “Policies” means any policy, instruction, standard operating procedure, regulation or rule issued by Grantor (MOE) by itself or on behalf of or together with any Co-Funder in relation to the Funding provided under this Contract;
- “Quarterly Requisition” means the requisition sent to the Grantor (MOE) and NIE OER as described in Clause 8.1a.
- “Research” means the project approved by Grantor (MOE) as described in the Approved Proposal subject to any modifications or amendments thereto made in accordance with Clause 13;
- “Research IP” has the meaning set out in Clause 16.2;
- “Research Personnel” means the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, Collaborators, Consultants, Lead PI, Lead Co-PI and all other employees, consultants and agents of the Institutions who will be engaged in and/ or perform the Research;
- “Revenue” means gross consideration received by Institutions and/or Grantor (MOE) and/or Research Personnel (as the case may be) from the licensing and commercialisation of any Research IP;
- “Term” means the term of this Contract, beginning with the project start date for the duration of the Funding as specified in the Letter of Award / Research Grant Acceptance Form;
- “Yearly Audit Report” means the report described in Clause 12.3;
- “Half-Yearly Progress Report” means the report described in Clause 12.5.

### 2. Funding

- 2.1 The Funding will be provided by the Grantor (MOE) and used by PI's Institution during the Term in accordance with this Contract.
- 2.2 PI's Institution shall use the Funds for the Research only and not for any other purpose.
- 2.3 Each PI shall faithfully and diligently carry out or cause to be carried out all necessary research and development work and to devote all necessary time, resources and support to ensure the successful conduct, implementation and completion of the Research in accordance with this Contract and consistent with internationally recognised good research practices and ethical standards. PI's Institution shall ensure that the Research Personnel within their employ undertake and properly discharge the foregoing obligations.
- 2.4 Other than expressly allowed under the Contract, the Funds or any part thereof shall not be channelled to fund research and development activities overseas.
- 2.5 PI's Institution shall not solicit or receive any funds or such other means of support for carrying out the Research from any other person, company, body, organisation, Institution or agency (governmental or non-governmental) without Grantor's (MOE) prior written consent, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld.

### 3. Accuracy of Information

PI's Institution warrant that the information contained in the Application, all reports referred to in this Contract and any other information submitted to Grantor (MOE) relating to the Research or the Funding are complete, accurate and not misleading. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following are examples of incomplete, inaccurate and/or misleading information:

- (a) false or improper reports of financial accounts;
- (b) improper claims;
- (c) false or improper documents;
- (d) fictitious track records;
- (e) inflated reports of funds obtained from other sources for the Research;
- (f) omission of information on other funding sources for the Research;
- (g) false or inaccurate claims that proper approvals (including IRB approvals) have been obtained;
- (h) false or inaccurate reports on the progress of the Research and achievement of Milestones and Deliverables;
- (i) false or inaccurate reports on the status of collaborations with third parties relating to the Research; and

- (j) false claims in the publication record, such as, describing a paper as being published even though it has only been submitted for publication.

#### 4. Administration of the Funding

4.1 PI's Institution shall ensure that the Research is carried out with due care, diligence and skill and that the Funds are used in accordance with this Contract.

4.2 The PI's Institution shall be responsible for administering and co-ordinating all matters relating to the Research, use of the Funds, communications with Grantor (MOE), and reporting requirements for and on behalf of all the Institutions. For this purpose, the PI's Institution shall be represented by its chief executive officer or equivalent office holder and establish an Office of Research, led by a Director of Research, to facilitate such responsibilities. Where its chief executive officer or Director of Research is also the Lead Principal Investigator, the PI's Institution shall appoint another non-conflicted person from its management to represent the PI's Institution. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Grantor (MOE) reserves the right to communicate directly with PI's Institution or PI on matters relating to this Contract.

4.3 The PI's Institution shall be responsible for: -

- (a) ensuring that all Institutions and Research Personnel are aware of their respective responsibilities and that they comply with this Contract;
- (b) providing and/or procuring the basic facilities needed to carry out the Research as detailed in the Approved Proposal;
- (c) ensuring that the PIs adopt the highest achievable standards, exhibit impeccable integrity and follow all prevailing guidelines on good research practices in Singapore (or internationally established guidelines, where applicable) in the conduct of the Research;
- (d) monitoring the scientific progress of the Research towards achievement of the Milestones and Deliverables and reporting to Grantor (MOE) any deviations or anticipated problems which may materially affect the Research;
- (e) ensuring, where applicable, that local IRB, research ethics committee and multi-centre research ethics committee approvals are granted for the Research and that no activities requiring such approval is initiated before it has been granted;
- (f) ensuring, where applicable, that the Institutions put in place proper procedures and guidelines to ensure regular and effective monitoring of the Research by the IRB or research ethics committee;
- (g) ensuring, where applicable, that all ethics approvals for the conduct of studies using animals are granted including approvals of the relevant institutional animal care and use committee or such other body appointed to deal with ethical issues relating to the care and use of animals in research;

- (h) ensuring, where applicable, that all necessary regulatory licences or approvals for the Research have been granted prior to the commencement of any work under the Research;
  - (i) ensuring, where applicable, that any clinical trials (as defined under any applicable Singapore law) conducted as part of the Research are conducted in accordance with the applicable regulations;
  - (j) ensuring that the work under the Research complies with all relevant current laws, government rules and regulations and other applicable guidelines and procedures including those introduced while the work is in progress;
  - (k) ensuring that all Research Personnel involved in animal research and in the breeding, housing and care of animals, are properly trained and supervised;
  - (l) ensuring that Grantor (MOE) is immediately notified in writing of any development that will adversely affect the progress of the Research;
  - (m) ensuring that Grantor (MOE) is immediately notified in writing upon cessation by any PI of active involvement in the Research or long leave of absence (e.g. sabbatical); and
  - (n) ensuring that Grantor (MOE) is immediately notified in writing if any work carried out using the Funding diverges materially from the Approved Proposal.
- 4.4 PI's Institution must have in place adequate systems for ensuring the integrity of research carried out by its staff so that scientific misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, falsification of data, improper selection of data) and unethical behaviour can be prevented. PI's Institution shall implement effective mechanisms for identifying scientific misconduct and/or unethical behaviour and have in place clearly publicised and agreed procedures for investigating allegations of such scientific misconduct and/or unethical behaviour. PI's Institutions shall report to Grantor (MOE) all incidents or allegations of such scientific misconduct or unethical behaviour at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.5 Without prejudice to the PI's Institution's obligations under this Contract, the Institutions and PIs shall do all things necessary to enable compliance by the Institution of its obligations under this Contract.
- 4.6 The PI's Institution shall manage the use of the Funding for indirect cost in accordance with the Guidelines. PIs should refer to their Institution for their policy of managing such use. The Grantor (MOE) does not directly manage indirect cost funding.
- 4.7 The PI's Institution (or Host Institution for Programmatic Proposal involving Project PIs from more than one institution) shall be responsible for monitoring the expenditure of the Funding by PI's Institution and Partner Institution and ensuring that the Funding is utilised in accordance with this Contract. In the event that the Funding is not utilised in accordance with this Contract, the PI's Institution (or Host Institution) shall immediately inform the Grantor (MOE) through NIE OER and provide full details of the same, and take all action necessary to minimise further use of the Funding and inform Grantor (MOE) through NIE OER of the action taken.



### 5. **Commencement of Research**

- 5.1 The Principal Investigator shall inform Grantor (MOE) through NIE OER if scientific work on the Research is unable to commence within three (3) months from the beginning of the Term.

### 6. **Research Personnel**

- 6.1 PI's Institution shall ensure that the Research Personnel conduct the Research with due care, diligence and skill and comply with this Contract.
- 6.2 The PI's Institution shall ensure the Institution and PI submit the Acceptance Form together with all other required documents to NIE (OER) (either electronically or in hardcopy) within the time stipulated. NIE OER will send the Acceptance Form to Grantor (MOE) upon request.
- 6.3 If any PI is unable to continue the Research, the Institution engaging such PI shall, subject to the written approval of NIE OER, appoint a successor within a reasonable time. In seeking approval, PI's Institution must satisfy NIE OER that the proposed successor has the requisite qualifications and skills to continue the Research. In the event that PI's Institution is unable to appoint a successor acceptable to NIE OER within a reasonable time, NIE OER should inform Grantor (MOE). Grantor (MOE) shall have the right to terminate the Funding and/or the Contract.

### 7. **Milestones and Deliverables**

- 7.1 PI's Institution and the PIs shall endeavour to achieve the Milestones and Deliverables within the timelines set out in its Approved Proposal.

### 8. **Disbursement of Funds**

- 8.1 Disbursement of Funds to PI's Institution shall be made in accordance with the following provisions:-
- (a) PI's Institution shall submit requisitions for direct and/or indirect costs for which the Funding is permitted to be used to Grantor (MOE), through NIE (OER), for approval on a quarterly basis ("Quarterly Requisition").
  - (b) PI's Institution shall include, with its Quarterly Requisition, detailed schedules of expenditure incurred for the previous quarter which are certified correct by its DoR and chief financial officer (or an authorised nominee).
  - (c) NIE OER will only disburse the approved Quarterly Requisition amounts to the PI's Institution / Host Institution after receipt of said funds from Grantor (MOE).

- (d) For Programmatic Proposal involving Project PIs from more than one institution, Partner Institutions shall issue a requisition to the Host Institution, and the Host Institution shall be responsible for collation of the requisitions and disbursement of funds to the Partner Institutions.
- (e) Disbursement of the Funding shall be subject to the due performance of and compliance with this Contract by Institutions including, but not limited to, the securing of any necessary ethics approvals (e.g. IRB for the Research). PI's Institution shall furnish satisfactory documentary evidence to Grantor (MOE), through NIE OER, that aforementioned requirement has been met.

### 9. **Accounts, Audits and Monitoring**

- 9.1 PI's Institution shall keep and maintain full and detailed records and accounts relating to the Funding and the Research, including all items of expenditure incurred for or in connection with the Research.
- 9.2 The PI's Institution shall be wholly responsible for monitoring the expenditure of the Funding by the Institutions, ensuring that the Funding is utilised in accordance with this Contract and certifying in the Yearly Audit Report the amount of Funding actually utilised and that the progress of the Research is satisfactory. In the event that the Funding is not utilised in accordance with this Contract, the PI's Institution shall immediately inform the Grantor (MOE) through NIE OER and provide full details of the same, and take all action necessary to minimise further use of the Funding and inform Grantor (MOE) of the action taken. (Refer to Paragraph 12.3 to Paragraph 12.4 for reporting requirement).
- 9.3 Grantor (MOE) is entitled from time to time to conduct ad hoc on-site audits to ensure that the terms of this Contract are being, or were met by PI's Institution and that the reports and all information submitted to Grantor (MOE) by PI's Institution is accurate, correct and not misleading. In such event, Clause 11 shall apply.

### 10. **Final Statement of Account**

- 10.1 PI shall submit a final statement of account ("Final Statement of Account") to NIE OER within three (3) months of the completion of the Research, or termination of this Contract, or the end of the Term, whichever is the earliest failing which Grantor (MOE) may refuse to make further disbursements of the Funding and/or disallow further claims from the project.

10.2 PIs who fail to submit the Final Statement of Account within the stipulated timelines will be debarred. Debarred PIs will not be eligible to submit new grant applications as PIs for a period starting from the Final Report submission and/or Final Statement of Account, and ending one year from the date the overdue Final Report and/or Final Statement of Account is received by NIE OER.

### 11. Access to Premises and Records

11.1 Pursuant to Clause 9.3, PI's Institution shall, at all reasonable times during the Term and for five (5) years after the expiration or termination of this Contract, grant Grantor (MOE) and its authorized representatives: -

(a) unhindered access to: -

- (i) the Research Personnel;
- (ii) premises occupied by PI's Institution;
- (iii) the Assets and Materials;
- (iv) all accounts, records and documents in relation to the Research and Funding and its administration kept by PI's Institutions in accordance with Clause 9.1; and

(b) reasonable assistance to:

- (i) inspect the performance of the Research;
- (ii) make copies of any accounts, records and documents in relation to the Research and Funding and its administration and remove those copies; and
- (iii) make copies of Materials (where applicable) and remove those copies.

11.2 The access rights in Clause 11.1 are subject to: -

- (a) the provision of reasonable prior notice by Grantor (MOE); and
- (b) the applicable PI's Institution reasonable security procedures.

11.3 In the event that Grantor (MOE) is investigating a matter which, in its opinion, may involve an actual or suspected unethical conduct, or breach of the law or breach of the terms of this Contract, Clause 11.2 (a) will not apply.

11.4 Upon receipt of reasonable written notice from Grantor (MOE), PI's Institution and PIs shall provide the Grantor (MOE) with all reasonable cooperation and assistance in connection with the audits.

### 12. Reporting Requirements

- 12.1 PI's institution shall submit the reports and statements set out in this Clause 12 in accordance with the format required by Grantor (MOE). Notwithstanding Clauses 12.2 to 12.8, the Grantor (MOE) may vary the reporting requirements of PI's Institution in the Letter of Award. This includes but is not limited to requiring PI's Institution to provide reports and statements within different deadlines or at more regular intervals. The provisions of this Clause 12 shall apply (together with any necessary adjustments) to such reporting requirements.
- 12.2 Time is of the essence with respect to the obligations set out in this Clause 12. In the event that PI's Institution fails to fulfil any requirement set out in this Clause 12 within the stipulated timeline or to demonstrate satisfactory progress in the Research, Grantor (MOE) may discontinue further disbursements of the Funding.

#### Yearly Audit Report

- 12.3 PI's Institution shall submit on an annual basis, an audit report ("Yearly Audit Report") containing all relevant financial information on the Research within a month from the preceding year ending 31 December, including but not limited to: its use of Funds disbursed by Grantor (MOE);
- 12.4 The Yearly Audit Report must be prepared by PI's Institution's and certified as correct by its Director of Research, Chief Financial Officer (or their authorised nominees) and NIE's appointed auditors. In particular, PI's Institution shall confirm and state in the Yearly Audit Report that such Institution's requisitions for the Funding are made in accordance with the terms of this Contract. Any auditor fees incurred would be borne by the PI's Institution.

#### Half-Yearly Progress Report

- 12.5 PI shall submit to NIE OER, Half-Yearly Progress Reports in respect of the scientific progress and results of Research ("Half-Yearly Progress Report"). Half-Yearly Progress Reports shall be submitted by January and July of each year or on such earlier date as reasonably required by Grantor (MOE). The requirement to submit a Half-Yearly Progress Report is waived if the Term starts less than three (3) months or ends less than three (3) months from the due date.
- 12.6 NIE OER will review the Half-Yearly Progress Report against the objectives of the Research as stated in the Approved Proposal. The PI will be contacted for further information if the Half-Yearly Progress Report is deemed inadequate or unsatisfactory by the Grantor (MOE) and NIE OER.

### Final Report

- 12.7 PI shall submit to NIE OER a final report (“Final Report”) within 2 months from the project end date. NIE OER will review the outcomes against the objective(s) of the Research as stated in the Approved Proposal.
- 12.8 If PI fails to submit the Final Report in accordance with Clause 12.7 the Principal Investigator will not be eligible to submit new grant applications as Principal Investigator for a period starting from the final report submission deadline, and ending one year from the date the overdue Final Report is received by NIE OER. E.g., If the Final Report is due on 31 Jan 2021 and a PI submits the Final Report on 15 Feb 2021, the PI will not be eligible to submit ERFAP grant applications for 1 year between 15 Feb 2021 and 14 Feb 2022.

### 13. **Changes in Research**

- 13.1 No material amendments, alterations or changes shall be made to the Research without prior written approval of the relevant ERC. Save as aforesaid, the PI’s Institution shall notify Grantor (MOE), through NIE OER, in writing of all other amendments, alterations or changes made to the Research as soon as possible. For the purposes of this Clause 13, “material amendments, alterations or changes” shall mean those amendments, alterations or changes that have a material effect on the scope, nature, direction or purpose of the Research.

### 14. **Insurance**

- 14.1 PI’s Institution shall effect and maintain adequate insurance policies to cover any liability arising from its participation in the Research including, but not limited to, those required under any applicable legislation. If requested, PI’s Institution shall provide Grantor (MOE) with a copy of such insurance policies.

### 15. **Publications of Results and Findings**

- 15.1 Subject to the provisions of this Clause 15, PI’s Institution may publish, at any symposia, national, international or regional professional meeting or in any journal, thesis, dissertation, newspaper or otherwise of its own choosing, the findings, methods and results derived from the Research.

15.2 PI's Institution shall ensure that all publications arising from the Research is made publicly available no later than twelve (12) months after the official date of publication. A copy of the publication shall be deposited in PI's Institution open access repository (or any other institutional/subject open access repository), in accordance to the Institution's open access policy.

15.3 PI's Institution shall ensure that all publications shall acknowledge the funding support provided by Grantor (MOE) (ERFP Funding) and, where appropriate, the scientific and other contributions of the other Institutions and Research Personnel in accordance with established norms.

### 16. **Intellectual Property Rights**

16.1 Background Intellectual Property ("BIP") is any existing IP brought by PI's Institution and/or Collaborators into the Research. Unless expressly agreed otherwise, this Research shall have no effect on BIP.

16.2 All Intellectual Property howsoever arising from the Research ("Research IP") shall, at the first instance, be the property of PI's Institution in such proportions as they may determine. This is without prejudice to any agreement that the Institutions may enter into with the Collaborators, PIs or Research Personnel on ownership and exploitation of Research IP.

16.3 The PI shall identify and disclose to the Institutions details of all such Research IP. PI's Institution shall make such details of Research IP available to Grantor (MOE) for inspection at any time.

16.4 Management of all Research IP shall have reference to and be guided by the key principles of the Singapore National IP Protocol for Publicly Funded R&D.

16.5 PI's Institution shall use best efforts to ensure that Research IP is properly managed and wherever feasible, fully exploited and commercialised. When required to do so by Grantor (MOE), PI's Institution shall attend such meetings as Grantor (MOE) may direct to discuss the potential for exploitation and commercialisation of Research IP.

16.6 PI's Institution shall keep and maintain a full, comprehensive and updated set of statements, records and accounts documenting the Revenue from the commercialisation and exploitation of the Research IP.

16.7 The PI's Institution should reserve a royalty-free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual and non-exclusive right for the Government and public sector agencies to use any licensed or assigned Research IP for their statutory functions, non-commercial, R&D, and/or educational purposes only".

### 17. Ownership and Use of Assets

- 17.1 Subject to this Clause 17, title and ownership of the Assets and Materials will vest in PI's Institutions in such manner as to be determined amongst themselves. Save as provided in Clauses 17.2, 17.3 and 17.4, the Assets and Materials shall be used only for the Research. All Assets and Materials shall be physically located in Singapore or other locations approved by the Grantor (MOE) and maintained within the control of the applicable Institutions during the Term.
- 17.2 PI's Institutions shall permit Approved Third Parties to access and use the Assets at no charge upon prior appointment provided that: (i) such access and use shall be subject to the availability of the Assets and there are no third party licensing terms restricting such use; and (ii) PI's Institutions shall be entitled to impose charges for the supply of materials, other services and utilities charges connected with the use of the Assets by the Approved Third Parties.
- 17.3 PI's Institution may allow its employees to use the Assets for purposes other than the Research provided always that such use shall: (i) be allowed only during the times when the Assets are not being used for the Research; and (ii) not impede the Institutions from meeting its obligations and undertakings under this Contract.
- 17.4 Upon the expiry or termination of this Contract or end of the Research and for a period of five (5) years thereafter, Grantor (MOE) may require PI's Institution to grant access for the use of any of the Assets and Materials by Grantor (MOE) or any party identified by Grantor (MOE) at no charge to the Grantor (MOE).

### 18. Completion/Extension

- 18.1 Unless earlier terminated in accordance with this Contract or if an extension of time is approved, this Contract shall end upon the expiry of the Term. Unless otherwise specifically provided in the Letter of Award, any application for extension of time shall be submitted no later than six (6) months before the original end of the Term.

### 19. Termination

- 19.1 Grantor (MOE) may terminate the Funding or this Contract upon the occurrence of any of the following events: -
- (a) any breach of this Contract by PI's Institution or any Research Personnel which is incapable of remedy;

- (b) failure to remedy any breach of this Contract (where such breach is capable of remedy) by PI's Institution or any Research Personnel within ninety (90) days of written notification of such breach by Grantor (MOE);
- (c) breach of ethics by PI's Institution or Research Personnel in the conduct of the Research including, but not limited to, ethical rules on patient safety;
- (d) work carried out by PI's Institution using the Funding diverges materially from the Approved Proposal;
- (e) misconduct relating to the Research;
- (f) any corruption and/or fraud by PI's Institution and/ or Research Personnel and/ or other staff relating to the Research or Funding;
- (g) stoppage of work on the Research;
- (h) cessation of any PI's active involvement in the Research;
- (i) ceasing or threatening to cease to carry on business by PI's Institution; or
- (j) Grantor (MOE) is of the opinion that the continued performance of the Research is not or no longer viable.

19.2 The PI's Institution shall immediately inform the Grantor (MOE) upon its becoming aware of the occurrence of any of the above events.

19.3 In the event that this Contract is suspended or terminated, the Grantor (MOE) shall meet any further amounts incurred under the Funding for work done under the Research up to the date of suspension or termination, based on the stipulated disbursement guidelines under ERFAP.

19.4 In the event that this Contract is terminated, Grantor (MOE) may, but shall not be obliged to, meet any further amounts incurred under the Funding for work done under the Research up to the date of suspension or termination. The provisions of Clause 8 shall apply (with the necessary adjustments) to such claims. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, in the event of termination, PI's Institution agree that Grantor (MOE) may require the Institution to return all or some of the Funds previously disbursed by Grantor (MOE).

19.5 Upon termination of this Contract, the PI's Institution shall take all necessary actions to minimise further expenditure on the Research (up to the termination date).



- 19.6 If PI's Institution is unable to comply with any term or condition of this Contract by reason of a Force Majeure event beyond the reasonable control of such Institution, all Institutions' obligations hereunder shall be suspended during the time and to the extent that the first Institution is prevented from complying therewith by the Force Majeure event provided that the PI's Institution shall have first given written notice to Grantor (MOE) specifying the nature and details of such event and the probable extent of the suspension. The affected PI's Institution shall use reasonable efforts to minimize and reduce the period of suspension occasioned by the Force Majeure event and to remove or remedy such cause with all reasonable dispatch. Grantor (MOE) may forthwith terminate the award by written notice to the PI's Institution if such Force Majeure event continues for more than sixty (60) days. The following events shall be considered "Force Majeure" events, namely, national emergencies, war, embargoes, strikes, lock-outs or other labour disputes, civil disturbances, actions or inactions of government authorities, earthquakes, fire, lightning, flood or any other catastrophic event in Singapore caused by the forces of nature.
- 19.7 All applicable guidelines for ERFAP shall survive expiration or termination of this Contract howsoever caused.

### 20. **Disclaimer of Liability**

- 20.1 The Grantor (MOE) shall not be liable to PI's Institution or any Research Personnel involved in the Research or any other person whatsoever by reason of or arising from this Contract or its approval of the Research or the provision of the Funding or the conduct of the Research by, or any breach, act or default of, the Institutions and Research Personnel. PI's Institution shall assume all responsibility and liability for: -
- (a) all claims, losses, demands, actions, suits, proceedings, costs, or expenses whatsoever arising, suffered or incurred directly, from or out of any breach, act or default of such Institutions and/or its Research Personnel; and
  - (b) all claims, losses, demands, actions, suits, proceedings, costs, or expenses whatsoever arising out of or in connection with any claim that the intellectual property rights of third party have been infringed as a result of the carrying out of the Research by such Institution and/or its Research Personnel.
- 20.2 The Grantor (MOE) shall have no liability to PI's Institution or the Research Personnel merely by reason of its provision of the Funding and PI's Institution shall be responsible for all acts and conduct relating to the Research, including all IP, human and animal ethical issues.

### 21. **Compliance with Law**

21.1 PI's Institution and Research Personnel shall, in performing this Contract, comply with the provisions of any relevant laws, statutes, regulations, by-laws, rules, guidelines and requirements applicable to it as the same may be amended or varied from time to time.

### 22. **General**

22.1 The grant of the Funding and this Contract is personal to PI's Institution. PI's Institutions shall not assign or otherwise transfer any of their rights or obligations hereunder whether in whole or in part without the prior written consent of Grantor (MOE).

22.2 No partnership or joint venture or other relationship between Grantor (MOE) and PI's Institution shall be constituted as a result of this Contract.

22.3 Any notice given hereunder shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been duly given when it has been delivered personally at or posted to the address of the party to which it is required or permitted to be given at such party's address hereinbefore specified or at such other address as such party shall have designated by notice in writing to the party giving such notice.

22.4 No failure or delay by a party in exercising any of its rights under these provisions shall be deemed to be a waiver of that right. No waiver by a party of a breach of any provision shall be deemed to be a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same provision unless such waiver so provides by its terms. The rights and remedies provided herein are cumulative and not exclusive of any rights or remedies provided by law.

22.5 Singapore law shall govern this Contract in all respects.

22.6 PI's Institution, PIs and all Research Personnel shall be bound by and will conform with all Guidelines and Policies relating to the Funding and the Research as may be in force from time to time. The terms and conditions of all Guidelines and Policies are hereby expressly incorporated into this Contract by reference. The terms of the Guidelines and Policies are subject to revision from time to time at the absolute discretion of Grantor (MOE) and it is the duty of PI's Institution and PIs to be updated on the terms thereof following the Grantor's (MOE) communication of such revisions to the Institutions.

22.7 Grantor (MOE) shall be entitled to disclose or otherwise make available to any Co-Funder any information, reports or other subject matter pertaining to the Research that it receives from PI's Institution or any Research Personnel.

### 23. Entire Agreement and Variation

23.1 This Contract constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior communications, negotiations, arrangements and agreements, whether oral or written, between the parties with respect to the subject matter of this Contract.

23.2 Save where expressly superseded, if any part of this Contract conflicts with any other part, that part higher in the following list shall take precedence: -

- (a) the terms and conditions contained in the clauses of these Terms and Conditions of A Competitive Grant;
- (b) the Annex(es);
- (c) the Letter of Award;
- (d) Approved Proposal;
- (e) Application;
- (f) Guidelines; and
- (g) Policies.

24. Save as expressly stipulated by Grantor (MOE) in this Contract or in any Policy issued hereunder, the parties hereto do not intend that any term of this Contract should be enforceable, by virtue of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act (Cap 53B) or otherwise, by any person who is not party to this Contract.