

State Key Laboratory of Climate Resilience for Coastal Cities (SKL-CRCC) at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology: Policy Paper for the Establishment and Management of Open Fund Projects

Introduction

Global climate change and rapid urbanisation have caused more frequent and intense extreme weather events, adversely affecting ecosystems, agriculture, urban activities, and human health. To implement effective national strategies and regional policies, foundational research on climate change and urban resilience is urgently needed. With support from the Ministry of Science and Technology of China and the Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Commission, the State Key Laboratory of Climate Resilience for Coastal Cities (SKL-CRCC) has been established by The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST, as the Collaborative Party) and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU, as the Leading Party). Initiating open funds within the SKL-CRCC at HKUST aims to facilitate collaborative research, support innovative projects, and foster partnerships with academia, industry, and government stakeholders. By supporting targeted research initiatives, the fund aims to enhance the capacity of researchers and contribute to the sustainable development of coastal urban environments.

Objectives of the Open Fund

- To support innovative research projects addressing climate resilience challenges in coastal cities.
- To foster partnerships among researchers, industry stakeholders, and governmental bodies.
- To provide funding for the training and development of researchers and students in relevant fields.
- To ensure that research findings are disseminated effectively to stakeholders and the community.

Eligibility and Criteria

- The call-for-applications for Open Fund projects at SKL-CRCC (HKUST) will be issued annually. A maximum of 5 projects will be supported each year, with funding of HK\$100,000 for each project.
- Each application for the Open Fund project must be submitted by an external applicant in collaboration with at least one member of SKL-CRCC serving as the internal Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI). The internal Co-PI (SKL-CRCC member) will collaborate with the external applicant on responsibilities including funding management, project outputs and report coordination.
- The research projects must align with the mission and objectives of the SKL-CRCC. In particular, the proposed research projects should demonstrate potential impacts on climate resilience in coastal cities.
- All applications will be assessed by the Management Committee of SKL-CRCC, with emphasis on the quality of the proposal, the applicant's track record, and collaboration with existing laboratory members. Each applicant may hold only one active funded project at a time within SKL-CRCC at HKUST.

Application Process

- **Submission:** Researchers must submit proposals using the application form in collaboration with SKL-CRCC members by the specified annual deadline.
- **Review:** Proposals will be reviewed by the SKL-CRCC Management Committee and may also include external reviewers as deemed necessary.
- **Funding Decision:** Successful applicants will be notified within a specified timeframe, including the approved project amounts and durations.

Fund Management

- **Oversight Committee:** An Oversight Committee will be established to manage the Open Fund, ensuring transparency and accountability in fund allocation.
- **Use of Funding:** The Open Fund will operate on a reimbursement basis, initiated by the key collaborating member (internal Co-PI) of the SKL-CRCC. Funds can be used to cover the following project-related expenses: experimental test costs; publication fees and other general expenses as specified by the SKL-CRCC.
- **Reporting:** Fund recipients (external and internal members) must submit regular reports on project progress and financial expenditures.
- **Auditing:** Annual audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with financial regulations and effective use of funds.

Dissemination of Results

- Relevant research outputs (including papers, monographs, and other materials) supported by the Open Fund project should clearly indicate the affiliated institution as follows (please choose one option as applicable):
 - English Outputs: State Key Laboratory of Climate Resilience for Coastal Cities (SKL-CRCC), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology;
 - Chinese Outputs: 香港科技大学，沿海城市气候韧性全国重点实验室；or 香港科技大学，沿海城市气候韧性全国重点实验室.
- The deliverables for each Open Fund project in the final report must include at least one SCI JCR Q1 paper per year or equivalent outputs related to the primary topics of the SKL-CRCC, with the affiliated institution indicated as specified above, along with the following acknowledgement:
 - This work was supported by the Open Fund of the State Key Laboratory of Climate Resilience for Coastal Cities (SKL-CRCC) at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.