

HKUST-KTH Global Knowledge Network Awards 2026

Request for Proposals and Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline for Applications: 16 October 2026 (23:59 HKT / 17:59 CEST)

Purpose

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and KTH Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) have identified each other as strategic partners to foster deep collaboration in research and education. The HKUST-KTH Global Knowledge Network Awards have been established to facilitate and support joint initiatives that will strengthen the two universities' strategic priorities as well as develop multi-disciplinary cutting-edge research to create academic and societal impact. We invite proposals from researchers in all disciplines at HKUST and KTH, priority will be given to proposals in the areas of (i) Advanced Material Physics, (ii) Renewable Energy Technology, (iii) Robotics, (iv) Smart Cities, and (v) Sustainable Biotechnology & Green Chemistry.

Applicants are encouraged to submit funding proposals for innovative and sustainable programs built around collaborative research linking HKUST and KTH. Proposals should be sustainable in the long-term with a plan for engagement that includes leveraging external funding and publication outputs.

In this round of awards, up to four (4) proposals will be funded, each with two Principal Investigators (one from HKUST and one from KTH). Each successful proposal may receive up to HKD 40,000 from HKUST and SEK 50,000 from KTH.

1. Eligibility

- 1.1. Applications are open to tenure-track Principal Investigators at HKUST and KTH-eligible Principal Investigators. For HKUST, full-time tenure-track faculty members from all disciplines are eligible to apply. Faculty in non-tenure-track positions (e.g., research or teaching tracks) are not eligible.
- 1.2. Previously awarded Principal Investigators who reapply in a subsequent round of the same Award will be given lower priority.
- 1.3. Emeritus and honorary faculty members, graduate students, post-docs, and research assistants/associates are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigators.

2. Duration

Funding is available for awarded projects running from 1 December 2026 to 30 November 2027.

3. Important Dates

Applications open	15 September 2026
Applications close	16 October 2026 23:59 HKT / 17:59 CEST
Successful applicants notified	By 16 November 2026
Projects Start Date	1 December 2026
Projects End Date	30 November 2027
Final Report Due Date	15 December 2027

4. Eligible Grant Activities/Costs

Activity/Cost	HKUST	KTH
Travel expenses: Airfare (only travel on economy class is allowed) and other travel expenses (e.g., train, rental car, lodging, meals)	eligible	eligible
Cost for hosting seminars/conferences or workshops	eligible	eligible
Accommodation and subsistence	eligible	eligible
Conference registration (related to collaborative research)	eligible	eligible
Consumable materials and supplies	eligible	eligible
Publications and printing (related to collaborative research)	eligible	eligible
Hiring graduate students to assist in research project	not eligible	eligible
General teaching or instructional programs	not eligible	not eligible
Salaries or salary supplementation for faculty or staff: salaries and associated fringe-benefit costs for tenured and tenure-track faculty (including effort for faculty in soft-money positions), teaching buyout, staff and post-doc salary)	not eligible	not eligible
Stipend payments to non-HKUST, non-KTH individuals	not eligible	not eligible
Student scholarships	not eligible	not eligible
Venue/space rental fee if event held on campus	not eligible	not eligible
Mobile phone cards	not eligible	not eligible
Entertainment costs	not eligible	not eligible
Computers, including laptops (excluding access to high-performance computers or other specialized applications that are justified by the project) and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software	not eligible	not eligible
Indirect cost (non-required for this grant)	not eligible	not eligible

5. Scoring and Selection Criteria

5.1. Criteria do not have weightings. Proposals are assessed holistically. Each proposal will be assessed according to the selection criteria described below.

Score	Category	Justification
6	Excellent	Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion to an exceptional standard. No significant shortcomings are present.
5	Strong	Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.
4	Very Good	Proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
3	Good	Proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
2	Fair	Proposal addresses the criterion to some extent, but significant shortcomings are present.
1	Weak	Criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

Selection Criteria	Description
Quality & Relevance	- Clearly describe the objectives and methodology to be employed with the project. The alignment with strategic priorities and the objectives of the funding scheme will be considered in combination with the soundness of the concept and credibility of the proposed methodology. - Explain the composition of project team and track record, including short bios for group members, a summary of how individuals' expertise will contribute to achieving the project aims, and highlights from any previous engagement, if applicable. 1,000-word maximum
Execution, including sustainability plan	- Elaborate on the workplan and milestones outlined in the timeframe (there are separate sections in the application form for an outline of activities in the Timeline and Budget). Proposed timeframes and budget estimates should be realistic and appropriate. - This section should also address the appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and there are adequate resources in the project to enable them to fulfil that role. - Sustainability: The long-term plan for engagement to attract research funding. Proposals must include a specific and concrete plan for how the project will become sustainable. Provide a list of opportunities for future extramural funding to continue the project following the seed grant and elaborate on why the project will be competitive for future external funding. 500-word maximum
Impact	- Outline what the participants will gain from the project and how it will contribute to the discipline and field of research. - Explain how the project will establish or strengthen a durable cooperation between the universities and participants. - Explain how the project will impact beyond the academic sphere (i.e., benefit society, address global challenges, etc). - Explain how the project activities and results will be communicated to different groups of target audience (e.g., publications, blogs, events, teaching/training materials, new educational collaborations, policy briefs, external funding bids etc.). 500-word maximum

6. Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the selected proposal will result in the following outcomes:

Category	Outcome
Research quality and influence	The research: - will advance knowledge in the field which addresses an issue of importance - may result in fundamental outcomes - is innovative in concept - will use well established approaches to good effect
Publications	At least one (1) referred publication in a nationally/internationally recognized scholarly journal
External funding	At least one (1) national/international competitive grant submission
Training & education	Supervision and mentoring of visiting PhD students/postdoctoral researchers/junior scholars
Joint workshop	Organise at least one (1) joint workshop at either institution

7. Assessment Process

Award selection will be made by a joint committee formed by members of both universities, which reserves final authority over the selection of projects taking into account, university and faculty strategic priorities, and the availability of funds.

8. Application Submission

- 8.1. All applications must be jointly developed by a Principal Investigator from HKUST and a Principal Investigator from KTH.
- 8.2. All applications must be submitted online via the [HKUST-KTH Global Knowledge Network Awards 2026 – Application Form](#).

Please prepare the following documents before submission:

- Project Details*
- Project Budget*

*Templates for both documents can be downloaded from the cover page of the [online application form](#).

- 8.3. Only complete submissions will be considered.
- 8.4. Late applications will not be considered.

9. Notification of Application Outcomes

Successful applicants will receive a letter of award outlining the process to accept the award. Feedback on individual applications will not be provided.

10. Change of Investigator

Applicants should contact the Program Coordinator at each institution. Such changes will need to be approved and documented.

11. Extensions

Under exceptional circumstances, extensions will be approved for a maximum period of six months. Applicants seeking an extension must submit a revised budget and timeline of activities to the Program Coordinators for approval.

12. Forfeiture of Grants

Grants not spent by November 2027 must be returned so that unspent balances can be re-allocated.

13. Financial and Reporting Obligations

The funding should only be used for the approved project and in accordance with the proposal and the budget plan. It must not be used for any other purposes and prior approval is needed for any variation in the budget items. Request for variations from original proposals must be submitted to both universities.

Awardees must adhere to the purchasing guidelines of the respective universities.

Recipients must submit a final report by 15 December 2027. Failure to submit a completed report will result in all members of the project team being ineligible to submit future funding applications.

The activation of research funding accounts is not tied to ethics/other approvals being obtained. It is the responsibility of Principal Investigators to ensure that no work requiring approval is commenced until such approvals are in place.

14. Marketing and Communications

Recipients may be contacted by HKUST and KTH for the purposes of promoting their successful funding application and informing others of their collaborative research works.

15. Publications

Any publications (e.g., abstracts, articles) or dissemination (e.g., public presentations) arising from activities supported by the awards should acknowledge assistance received from the awards. The standard acknowledgment is “HKUST–KTH Global Knowledge Network Awards”.

For further information please contact the Program Coordinators:

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