

Hong Kong Empowerment Fund – FAQ

last updated on 21/03/2024

Eligibility criteria

Can my project be outside of London?

Your project delivery must be in London, targeting at supporting BN(O)s in London. This is a requirement of the funding we receive from DLUHC. If your organisation is registered outside of London, we would expect to see your planned activities take place in London for BN(O)s residing in London.

However, there may be a case where one or two activities need to happen outside of London with participants recruited from the BN(O) community living in London. If this is the case, please provide as many details and justification as possible in your application form and project plan.

I don't know if my group is an equity-led group because I do not meet the exact percentages suggested OR I do not have paid staff.

Even if your group is not legally constituted, or do not have paid staff and/or Trustees, you can still be an equity-led group. Please see [Programme Prospectus](#) p. 10 for some examples of equity-led groups and organisations.

We would still encourage you to apply even if your group/organisation does not fit the percentage criteria. Please provide as much detail as possible in the application form about the make-up of your group/organisation and include details of partnering organisations (if any).

Queries about BBGM platform

I've forgotten my password for BBGM, how do I reset it?

Please email Groundwork London at HKEmpowermentfund@groundwork.org.uk. We will be able to reset your password for you.

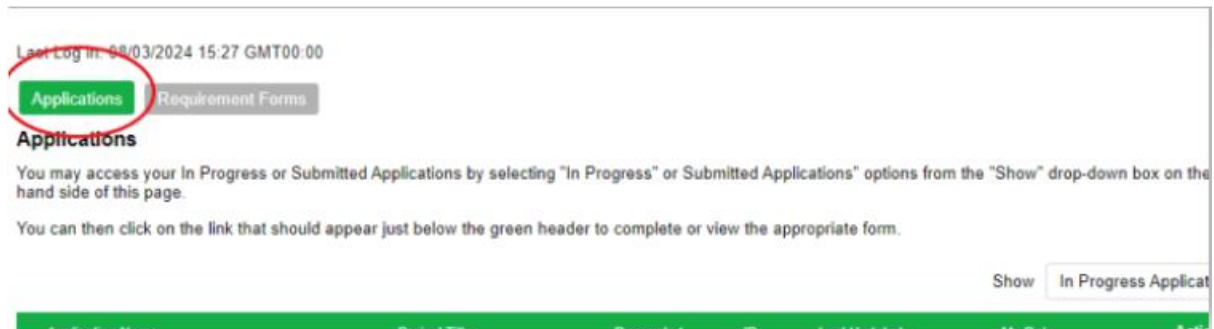
You will receive an email that contains a temporary password. Please log in via the link [here](#) with your temporary password.

Please check your junk and spam folders, as the temporary password email may be sent there. Please allow five minutes for this email to arrive in your inbox.

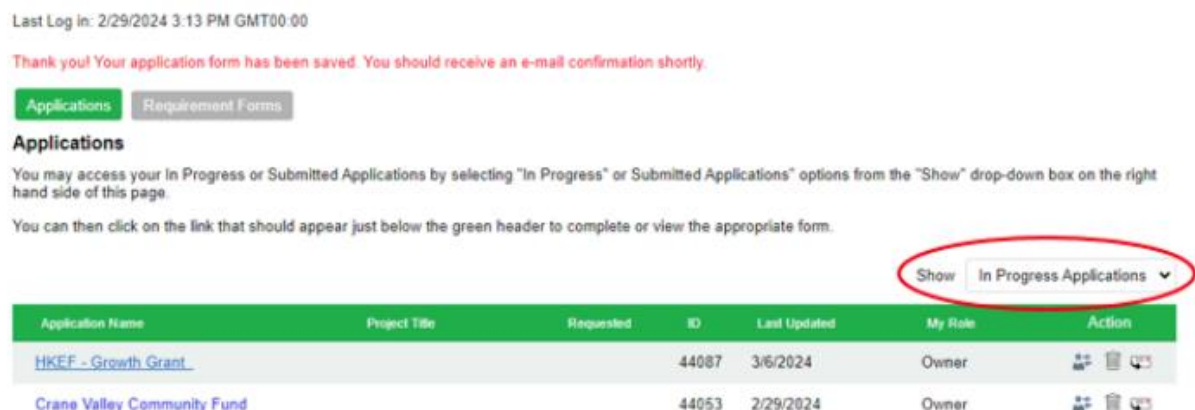
I can't see my application form on BBGM, please help.

Please use the link [here](#) to access BBGM platform, as accessing via other links may cause documents not to show.

Once you have logged into the application portal, please make sure you are on the 'Applications' tab – please see screenshot below.



Please also make sure you have selected 'In progress applications' in the drop-down menu – please see screenshot below.



If you still can't find it, please contact HKEmpowermentfund@groundwork.org.uk and we will be able to help.

Growth Grant

Do I need a sponsor organisation if I am an established organisation and want to apply for Growth Grant?

No, you don't need a sponsor organisation if you are registered and a legally constituted group. You will still need to meet the other eligibility criteria for Growth Grant. Please see [Programme Prospectus](#) p. 10 for more information.

What is the difference between a sponsor organisation in Growth Grant and a lead organisation in Collaboration Grant?

For Growth Grants, applicants will need to apply with a sponsor organisation if the group is not legally constituted. Please refer to [Programme Prospectus](#) p.11 for details about requirements of a sponsor organisation. For Collaboration Grants, we encourage applying organisations to work in collaboration and partnership to deliver their project. Applications will be assessed on whether the division of work between lead and partnering organisations has been clearly stated in the proposed project plan. We also ask for details on how the collaboration/partnership was formed, and if these organisations had experience working with each other.

I don't know if my group is an equity-led group because I do not meet the exact percentages suggested OR I do not have paid staff.

Even if your group is not legally constituted, or do not have paid staff and/or Trustees, you can still be an equity-led group. Please see [Programme Prospectus](#) p. 10 for some examples of equity-led groups and organisations.

We would still encourage you to apply even if your group/organisation does not fit the percentage criteria. Please provide as much detail as possible in the application form about the make-up of your group/organisation and include details of partnering organisations (if any).

If my group has a constitution now and are working towards formally being registered with Companies House/Charities Commission, can I act as a sponsor organisation in Growth Grant/a lead organisation in Collaboration Grant/ apply in my own group's name without a sponsor organisation for Growth Grant?

An organisation is legally constituted when they are registered on Charities Commission/Companies House. Having a constitution is one step during the process of becoming a constituted organisation. We understand the process of becoming legally constituted can take time. Hence, if at the stage of application writing, your registration process is not completed, please provide as much detail as possible to explain the steps you will be taking to ensure this process is completed by the time you start project delivery, should your application be successful.

Your planned approach will be clarified at interview if shortlisted, and the deliverability of this will form part of the decision-making process. Project activities will not be permitted to begin until all necessary due diligence documentation is in place.

Can expenses incurred before grant approval be reimbursed?

No. We won't be able to cover retrospective costs. Please see [Programme Prospectus](#) p. 12 for more information on 'what we won't fund' as part of this programme.

Will it be possible to start project delivery later than end of May 2024?

Yes. As long as you can complete delivery by November 2024, you may start delivering your project later than end of May 2024. For proposed projects with a delivery period shorter than 6 months, please ensure you have a realistic and proportionate delivery plan, as this is one of the criteria that your application will be assessed against.

If granted funding, how will payments be made?

If successful, the agreed funding amount will be paid to grantees via several milestone payments. We will provide more information about this at the grant agreement signing stage. We expect grantees to provide timely reports and utilise the grant funding based on actual expenses. Any outstanding funding amounts at the end of project delivery i.e. underspend/overspend, should be resolved with HKEF grants team before project completion.

Can a sponsor organisation in Growth Grant be an applicant for Collaboration Grant, either as a lead or partnering organisation?

Yes.

Can an organisation be a sponsor organisation for several Growth Grant applications?

Yes. Please refer to [Programme Prospectus](#) p.11 for requirement of a sponsor organisation.

If two organisations/groups are applying for the same type of project, will sustainability be a determining factor for the assessors?

We will judge all applications on their merits based on how they meet the eligibility and assessment criteria. There are many factors that will inform our decision and we would not exclude the possibility of funding more than one project providing the same or similar activities. However, we do have to consider the best use of funding and we may wish to avoid the duplication of services across different providers. If you feel your type of project or activity may be one that other organisations may also wish to deliver, we advise you to include information in your application about any elements of your project or service that you think are unique or particularly strong. You may also wish to consider partnering with other organisations and applying for the Collaboration Grant, if you meet the criteria.

Are there any restrictions on the percentage of funding being used for staff salaries?

No, as we do not wish to be prescriptive with how projects are being designed and run, we would encourage applicants to provide as much information as possible in their proposed

budget, e.g. salary cost per hour and number of working hours expected. We do require all staff to be paid at least the London Living Wage or higher.

My project idea is to connect BN(O)s with people from other countries in the local community. Is there a requirement for the minimum percentage of Hong Kong participants?

There is no requirement on how many Hong Kong participants you should have in your event. However, a reasonable percentage is expected. Your plan and ability to reach out to Hong Kongers to participate in your events will be assessed when considering your application, and at interview stage if appropriate.

What is the definition of a ‘newly established organisation’ for Growth Grant? I am a legally constituted group and am thinking of applying for Growth Grant but am worried I may not be considered as ‘newly established’.

There is no fixed definition of what a ‘newly established’ group is. For Growth Grant applicants, if your organisation is legally constituted, you are still required to meet all the following criteria (more details can be found on [Programme Prospectus](#) p.10):

- Available for non-established, newly established or smaller grassroots groups or organisations run by and/or for Hongkongers and their partners;
- Have an annual turnover of £200,000 or under in their last published annual financial accounts;
- All applying organisations must have at least two Trustees/Directors/ Management Committee members who are not related and have a charitable dissolution clause within their governing document.

Our intention this year is to encourage more groups and organisations to work in partnership as we believe this could better maximise the impact of our resources.

If you are unsure whether your group would be classified as ‘newly established’ but think this is the most appropriate application in your circumstances, we encourage you to apply and provide as much detail as possible in the application form about why you think this is the correct fund to apply for.

Collaboration Grant

Can I apply in collaboration with a university as part of my proposed project includes an in-depth evaluation to the activities we hope to deliver? I am asking because you stated in the Programme Prospectus that you won’t fund ‘school or formal educational settings’

Yes. Please explain in detail why you choose to collaborate with this organisation. You may also wish to utilise the question on delivery team and experience to provide information how this collaboration would add value and benefit the overall project delivery.

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Your planned approach will be clarified at interview if shortlisted, and the deliverability of this will form part of the decision-making process. Project activities will not be permitted to begin until all the required documents and registrations are in place.

Can a sponsor organisation in Growth Grant be an applicant for Collaboration Grant, either as a lead or partnering organisation?

Yes.

Can an organisation be part of several Collaboration Grant applications?

Yes. Please be mindful of your organisation's capacity if you are planning to participate in several Collaboration Grant application, as one of the HKEF assessment criteria is likelihood of success. The panel will be looking for evidence of having a sufficient and experienced staff team with the appropriate capacity and resources to deliver the proposed project.

Would you provide a list of organisations to partner with on the collaboration grant?

Unfortunately, we can't collate a list of potential organisations for you to partner with because gathering the required consent to share this information would not be practical within the time available. Also, and more importantly, we are looking for collaboration grant proposals which are based on genuine partnerships. This could include previous collaboration experience between the partner organisations, or an understanding of shared objectives and how the different strengths of the organisations could complement each other. If there is no prior collaboration with the said partner, it would be helpful to understand the reason why the partnership has been formed. We recommend that

potential lead organisations reach out to organisations they know and/or trust in their community to partner with.

We will partner with another organisation to bid for a collaboration grant. In terms of Due Diligence, do we need to provide four letters of recommendation, two for each?

The Due Diligence documents will only be required from the lead organisation of the collaboration grant. This applies to the letters of reference and other documents. However, please remember that the application form will need to be completed jointly and signed by all partners involved.

Proposed project plan, budget, activities and expenses

Can expenses incurred before grant approval be reimbursed?

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Successful applicants

If granted funding, how will payments be made?

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When setting my proposed budget, I am worried I may over-/under-budget for certain items, which may lead to having an over-/under-spend on my project. If that were to happen, what should I do?

Any changes to budget must be approved by the GLA. Please email HongKongVCSE@london.gov.uk stating the change that you would like to make and your reason for it. If you have an underspend, we may suggest for you to allocate these funds to another budget item. We allow flexibility in internal reallocation funds, but this action requires approval first. Please be aware that you then must declare these changes in your reporting.

Can I change some elements of my project in delivery?

All changes to project plans in delivery must be approved by the GLA. Please email HongKongVCSE@london.gov.uk stating the change that you would like to make and your reason for it. We allow flexibility in our projects and understand that circumstances can change affecting delivery dates, participant targets and potentially budget items. Please communicate your request for project amendments to the GLA and upon approved you will be able to make the required changes to your delivery.

Other

Will you publicise the information of applying organisations and funded organisations?

We won't publicise information organisations that submit applications, apart from the total number of applications we received.

As part of the GLA's commitment to be transparent about how we spend public money, we publish grants that we have awarded on the 360Giving website. However, if your application is successful and if you have concerns about your organisation's and/or project's data being published, please let us know, so we can explore alternatives where possible.

How will applications be assessed?

A panel from GLA and GWL will review applications and shortlist among them based on the assessment criteria which can be found in the programme prospectus at p.15 and p.16. A Hong Kong Empowerment Fund Advisory Group will meet to assess the grant applications shortlisted by the scoring panel. This group will be comprised of community leaders with diverse backgrounds who have the appropriate knowledge and professional and/or lived experience related to the Hong Kong BN(O) visa and community. The role of the Advisory Group is to advise on whether projects will be accessible, inclusive and relevant to Hongkongers.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview with a scoring panel consisting of GLA and GWL.

Who do you recommend that we use as a referee?

It is up to you to choose the referees to support your application. But as you will see in p.13 of the prospectus, two letters of reference are required for the applying organisation in the Growth Grant, and the lead organisation in the Collaboration Grant. The referees should be known to the applicant and lead organisations and be able to confirm that your organisation/group meets the requirements to receive our grant. The reference should be given from a trusted authority or from a civic position and not in a personal capacity. If you can't find a reference that meets all the criteria by the application closing date, provide the references that you can and explain the situation in the application form. We can then consider the application and current references and, if necessary, request further references before we make a final decision.