

Green and Sustainable Fintech Proof-of-Concept Funding Support Scheme (the “Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme”)

Guide and Notes for Applicants

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Applicants should:

- Read this Guide and Notes for Applicants (“the Guide”) related to the Green and Sustainable Fintech Proof-of-Concept Funding Support Scheme (the “Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme”) before submitting an application.
- By submitting an application under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme, consider themselves bound by the provisions of the Guide.

1. Objectives

- 1.1 The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB) launches the “Green and Sustainable Fintech Proof-of-Concept Funding Support Scheme” aiming to provide funding support to technology firms and research institutes to implement innovative and high-impact Green and Sustainable Fintech solutions and expedite their commercial adoption in Hong Kong.

2. The Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme – General Principles

- 2.1 The Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme provides early-stage funding support for the pre-commercialisation of leading-edge Green and Sustainable Fintech technologies that help to improve the adoption of Green and Sustainable Fintech technologies in Hong Kong. An illustrative list of Green and Sustainable Fintech solution categories recognised by the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme is presented in Appendix 1 which is not meant to be exhaustive. The eligibility of applicants and proposed Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC projects will be separately verified and assessed where necessary.
- 2.2 An applicant to the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme (the “Applicant”) is required to have a qualified sponsor defined in paragraph 5.6 as a Project Sponsor to be eligible for funding. The Project Sponsor need not necessarily have a direct financial contribution to the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project but must exhibit active engagement and commitment to see the project to completion, which includes but is not limited to the Project Sponsors’ formal agreement or other forms of documentary evidence (e.g., Letter of intent) to Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited (the “HKCMCL”)’s satisfaction (the “sponsorship agreement”). A Project Sponsor may provide additional financial resources for the subsidised Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project without having to fulfil a specific matching ratio. HKCMCL may reserve the right to request the Applicant and Project Sponsor to provide evidence on proof of partnership/commitment/relationship and a formal signed agreement (if not yet provided) at a later stage.

- 2.3 An application can be made by one or more Applicants partnering with one or more Project Sponsors to put forth solutions that can tackle the pain points faced by different industry sectors in Hong Kong.
- 2.4 To be eligible for financial support under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme, the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC core project scope, new components and overall use cases must not be commercially adopted for production use by the Project Sponsor before submission of the application, yet with enormous potential for commercialisation and wider adoption.
- 2.5 Each approved Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project will be provided with a 100% grant with a maximum approved funding support of HKD150,000 per project. The funding support will be disbursed by HKCMCL to successful Applicants in two instalments following project approval and acceptance of Funding Agreement terms and final project submissions by HKCMCL. The funding support will be paid in accordance with paragraph 9 below.
- 2.6 An approved Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project is required to be commenced within one month from the date of approval and be completed in four months from the commencement. An extension can be granted for high-impact projects (e.g., a project that belongs to a high-impact project Green and Sustainable Fintech solutions, see section 6.2(a) and appendix 7 for details) at the discretion of HKCMCL on a case-by-case basis in accordance with paragraph 11.1. For any approved application, if the Applicant is unable to commence the PoC project within one month after application approval, the funding support will be cancelled in accordance with paragraph 9.2.4 below.

3. Applicant Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility of the Applicant

Applicants applying for funding under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme must fulfil the following requirements:

- (a) Be registered in Hong Kong under the Business Registration Ordinance (Cap. 310) (“BRO”);
- (b) Be registered and commenced its business in Hong Kong before the submission of their application;

- (c) Technology Companies or Research Institutes (see Appendix 6¹ for a List of recognised research institutes) that conduct substantive Green and Sustainable Fintech activities² in the relevant scope of Green and Sustainable Fintech Solution Categories (see Appendix 1) or participation in well-established incubation programs in Hong Kong³

3.2 Applicants are expected to make adequate efforts in contributing to the development of the Green and Sustainable Fintech community locally.

3.3 Notwithstanding the requirements in Paragraph 3.1, HKCMCL shall have the final discretion on the eligibility of an Applicant and a Project Sponsor.

4. Qualifying projects (Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project Eligibility)

4.1 Under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme, a Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project is defined as a project which involves the following:

- (a) Development of viable Green and Sustainable Fintech technological ideas/concepts but shall not cover development areas which are deemed too early stage, for example, basic research, generation of pure scientific and technological knowledge, and the development of research ideas, hypotheses, and experimental designs without application; and
- (b) Validation of the commercial merit of the Green and Sustainable Fintech product/solution by seeking reference customers or external funding. A valid use case must be defined clearly in the proposal to highlight the merit of the solution.

4.2 In addition to Paragraph 4.1, qualifying Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC projects must:

- (a) Directly related to the recognised Green and Sustainable Fintech Solution Category⁴;

¹ The list in Appendix 1 and Appendix 6 is not meant to be exhaustive. The eligibility of applicants will be separately verified and assessed on a case-by-case basis where necessary based on their company activities and incubation program membership proof.

² Applicants that conduct substantive activities in other mainstream technologies with a plan to adopt Green and Sustainable Fintech technologies to tackle existing business challenges may also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

³ Overseas incubation programs may also be evaluated and approved on a case-by-case basis.

⁴ Please refer to Appendix 1 for a List of Recognised Green and Sustainable Fintech Solution Categories.

- (b) Address a practical issue or a pain point faced by the different industry sectors in Hong Kong (e.g., banking, insurance, securities, construction/real estate, energy, carbon credit trading, environmental protection and sustainability and others) with no prior use case in the market.;
- (c) Be governed by a sponsorship agreement in writing between the Applicant and the Project Sponsor; and
- (d) Demonstrate strong potential for commercial adoption.

4.3 HKCMCL shall have final discretion on the eligibility of a proposed project under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme.

5. Application – Timeframe and Requirements

5.1 Applications will be accepted starting from the 28th of June 2024.

5.2 The applicant registration⁵ and the grant application process will begin on the 28th of June 2024 and end on the 20th of September 2024. Applicants should submit the proposals associated with a grant application by the 12th of September 2024. Late submissions will only be processed on a case-by-case basis. Above are the key target dates⁶ of the program and HKCMCL's records of the receipt dates and times⁷ shall be final. To ensure applicants and eligible sponsors have sufficient time to prepare the submission of sponsorship agreements, the deadline for valid sponsorship agreement submission will be the 20th of September 2024.

5.3 Each application shall cover only one PoC project. An Applicant (including its affiliated entities⁸) may submit up to five applications provided that the projects are of different and distinct components and/or functions for different sponsors'

⁵ Applicant eligibility will be reviewed before we grant the rights for application submission and an applicant should submit their registration request one week before the deadline for proposal submission specified in section 5.2. Late registration approval will only be granted on a case-by-case basis.

⁶ The dates listed in this section may be subject to change and we will use the updated schedule announced on our website as primary reference dates. If we accept an additional intake of Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Funding Support grant proposals, the application timeframe on the website will be adjusted accordingly.

⁷ The closing submission time for all target dates will be midnight on corresponding dates. (e.g. The sponsorship agreement submission deadline is midnight close to the end of the 20th of September 2024 (around 11:59 pm on the 20th of September 2024).

⁸ An affiliated entity is an organisation that directly or indirectly controls another entity, is directly or indirectly controlled by another entity or is under common control alongside another entity, entities which share the same shareholders will be considered as affiliated entities no matter how many shares he/she has owned. In other words, an affiliated entity could be a parent company or a subsidiary company, and the concept of control is considered to imply that one could alter the direction of management policies. For the avoidance of conflict of interest, affiliated entities shall include but not be limited to companies, non-governmental organisations, and non-profit organisations.

adoptions, and the applications will be considered separately. Please note that the maximum number of five applications per applicant should count any joint applications made by the applicant as well.

- 5.4 Applicants must submit their applications through the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme dedicated application submission email channel of HKCMCL with the required documents listed in Appendix 2. HKCMCL reserves the right to seek additional information from the Applicant and/or Project Sponsor at its discretion. The application would be considered withdrawn if the additional information/clarification requested by HKCMCL is not provided within one month⁹; in the case of such withdrawal, the Applicant may however submit a new application once all the necessary documents and/or requested information are available, provided the relevant deadlines for application have not passed. Unless requested by HKCMCL, supplementary information provided after submission of the application will not be accepted and will not form part of the application. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be considered as voluntary withdrawal from the scheme.
- 5.5 Applicants should declare that they have not received any grants previously and will not be applying for other grants for the same Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project. Acceptance of prior grants from other government-related agencies for the same project scope and development activities will render the project ineligible for the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme.

⁹ The one-month deadline start date is based on the date the first request for submission of information is issued to the applicant.

5.6 A sponsorship agreement must have been signed between the Project Sponsor and the Applicant before the deadline of application submission specified in section 5.2. Applicants must submit the said sponsorship agreement as part of the overall application. A Project Sponsor (Please refer to Appendix 8 for more details regarding Project Sponsor eligibility) must be:

- A licensed, regulated, supervised firm registered under the regulatory remit of Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”), Securities and Futures Commission (“SFC”), Insurance Authority (“IA”) and Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (“MPFA”); or
- A well-established¹⁰ local firm¹¹ that can benefit from Green and Sustainable Fintech adoption (e.g., a Company listed on the mainboard that can benefit from green and sustainability fintech solutions ... etc.); or
- Company that actively facilitates Green and Sustainable Fintech ecosystem growth and adoption (e.g., Third-party emission reduction verifier, Climate risk modelling advisory firm...etc.)

The sponsorship agreement must include details of the PoC project, including but not limited to the project scope, project timeline, deliverables, and IT support to be provided by Project Sponsor before project commencement.

5.7 The Applicant should assign a person as the project coordinator of the application who will act as the main contact point between the Applicant and HKCMCL. To ensure the smooth implementation and completion of the project, the project coordinator should be able to fully represent the Applicant and be conversant with the operation and business processes of the Applicant. As such, the project coordinator must be the responsible personnel of the Applicant. Likewise, the Project Sponsor should assign a person as the business representative and as an IT coordinator who will act as the main contact point between the Project Sponsor and HKCMCL.

¹⁰ Nature of business, Turnover, Years of business establishment, proposed use cases relevance and the number of staff will be considered during sponsor eligibility under this category. (e.g., a non-manufacturing company with 500 or more employees will be considered well-established and these criteria will be reviewed in a case-by-case manner).

¹¹ Overseas Sponsor actively engaged in Green and Sustainable Fintech related activities (e.g., Incubator and investor) with investment or other presence in Hong Kong will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis based on their relevance to the objective of this program.

6. Evaluation

6.1 Assessment mechanism

- 6.1.1 Applications are assessed by HKCMCL based on the stated eligibility criteria as set forth in paragraphs 3 and 4, the required information and documents set forth in paragraph 5 and appendix 2 and the assessment criteria stated in paragraph 6.2. Each application is assessed separately. During the assessment process, HKCMCL may seek clarification or supplementary information from the Applicant or Project Sponsor if it is considered necessary. Recommendations endorsement by an Advisory Panel (the “Panel”) will be sought before approval is granted by HKCMCL and relevant external stakeholder(s).
- 6.1.2 The Panel is composed of members from regulatory bodies, academia and other relevant external entities (e.g., trade associations).
- 6.1.3 Forms of non-disclosure protection have been established with members of the Panel. Separate non-disclosure agreements with Applicants / Project Sponsor will not be signed. Ultimately, the onus is on the Applicant to exercise discretion and caution, and to provide sufficient and necessary information about proprietary know-how/IPs/technology development to allow the Panel to perform the required evaluation.
- 6.1.4 To avoid conflict of interest, members of the Panel will be required to declare their general pecuniary interests on appointment, in addition to the report of conflicts of interest that may arise from any application on which they may be asked to advise. Where considered appropriate, the Chairman of the Panel may request the member concerned to refrain from participating in discussion and assessment of the relevant application.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

Each eligible application will be assessed based on individual merits and considered on a case-by-case basis. The assessment criteria and weights are stated in the following:

- (a) **High Business/Green and Sustainable Fintech Technology Impact (30%)** –
 - Demonstrates the potential for a significant contribution to efficiency improvement, revenue growth or cost savings.
 - Enhances business performance and improves customer experience by utilising Green and Sustainable Fintech technology.
 - The use case of the proposal demonstrates a high potential to transform or enhance existing Green and Sustainable Fintech services.
 - Capable of addressing key limitations of existing Green and Sustainable Fintech technologies using the proposed solutions.
- (b) **Innovation, Creativity and Validity of Conceptual Architecture (30%)** –
 - Integrates existing technology and Green and Sustainable/Fintech-related technologies uniquely and innovatively to enhance green and sustainability-related objectives.
 - Creates new business opportunities by leveraging Green and Sustainable Fintech-related technologies.
 - The proposed Conceptual Architecture can deliver new and innovative services.
- (c) **Potential for Commercial Adoption (20%)** –
 - The proposed project should be easily deployable in an actual commercial environment with minimal adaptation.
 - The proposed project should be adoptable by different organizations within applicable industries.
 - It is preferable for the solution to have a high potential for deployment in a live environment after the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme completion.
- (d) **Relevance of Project Functionalities (10%)** –
 - The proposed functionalities should contribute to improving service delivery in the industry they serve.
 - Demonstrates good alignment with the business requirements defined by the Project Sponsor.
 - Offers substantial improvements in turnaround time or usability of services for the target customers.

(e) **Reasonableness and clarity of the implementation details (10%) –**

- The proposal and supporting application documents should adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document, including a reasonable and clear breakdown of:
 - project cost breakdown.
 - project scope, deliverables, and schedule.
- Covers all requirements specified in this document and the "Project Proposal Writing Guideline" available for download from our website (greenfintechpoc.cyberport.hk).

6.3 The funding support grant eligibility of a Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project will be assessed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

6.4 HKCMCL reserves the right to disqualify or reject an application on grounds including but not limited to:

- (a) a petition is presented, or a proceeding is commenced, or an order is made, or a resolution is passed for the winding up of the Applicant; or
- (b) a false, inaccurate, or incomplete statement or representation is contained in the application or a promise or a proposal is made knowingly or recklessly to unduly influence the decision-making process; or
- (c) the Applicant is in default of its obligations under another grant agreement entered into with any other local public funding sources whether or not in relation to the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme.
- (d) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Application Documents, the Government reserves the right to disqualify an Application on the grounds that the Applicant or Project Sponsor has engaged, is engaging, or is reasonably believed to have engaged or be engaging in acts or activities that are likely to cause or constitute the occurrence of offences endangering national security or otherwise the exclusion is necessary in the interest of national security, or is necessary to protect the public interest of Hong Kong, public morals, public order or public safety.
- (e) the occurrence any events defined in section 12.1 (j) to 12.1 (l) of this document.

7. Notification of Result

7.1 Applicants will be informed by HKCMCL of the result by email within six weeks after the end date of the application. HKCMCL's decisions on the application results are final and are not subject to any review or appeal.

7.2 Successful Applicants may be required to revise the application to fulfil the conditions for approval set by the Panel and/or HKCMCL, if any. A successful Applicant is also required to enter into a funding agreement (the “Funding Agreement”) with HKCMCL. If a successful Applicant refuses to sign the Funding Agreement, the application will be considered withdrawn. Basic information about the approved projects (e.g. project name and Green and Sustainable Fintech solution category) will be posted on the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC website when we publish the funding support approval result announcement.

7.3 Applicants who wish to re-apply based on a proposal previously submitted should do so only after they have adequately addressed the issues or concerns highlighted in the notification email¹², subject to the applicable deadlines.

8. Project Implementation

8.1 An approved PoC project is required to be commenced within one month from the date of approval and be completed within four months from the date of commencement. An extension can be granted at the discretion of HKCMCL on a case-by-case basis in accordance with paragraph 11.1.

8.2 The project activities for which the funding is being applied must not have commenced at the time of the application, i.e., before the proposal is received by HKCMCL. However, Applicants can start their projects on the day following the submission of the application at the earliest.

8.3 If the application is successful¹³, funding will be provided upon project approval and Funding Agreement signing. However, if the application is not successful, HKCMCL will not disburse any funding to the Applicant regardless of whether any cost has been incurred for the project.

8.4 The Applicant may not be granted the full amount of funding requested in accordance with the prevailing funding guidelines, for reasons such as items listed in the cost breakdown are considered not essential to the project, or if the proposed PoC project cost is unreasonably high. As approval of the application and the amount of grant is not guaranteed, Applicants are advised to secure HKCMCL’s approval before commencing their projects. If the Applicants decide to commence their projects before knowing the results of their applications, they cannot make

¹² Normal notification emails will only (1) provide approval results with approval status (project that isn’t covered in the successful application web announcement or email notification will enter the waiting list of the grant program) or (2) a request for supplementary information submission or (3) email clarification request relevant to this scheme. HKCMCL reserves the right to adjust the results notification or other communication approaches.

¹³ Applicant should regard their application as successful only after signing the funding agreement.

any claims from HKCMCL for any losses, risks and/or costs if their applications are eventually rejected or the applied-for funding is not granted in full. Applicants have the sole responsibility of assessing and bearing their financial risks in relation to their proposed Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC projects and their applications under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme, and HKCMCL gives no warranties whatsoever and disclaims any liabilities.

8.5 Successful Applicants who have signed the Funding Agreement that commenced their projects under the circumstances specified in paragraph 8 before Funding Agreement signing date will be entitled to receive the initial instalment subject to the fulfilment of the conditions set out in paragraph 9.2 below.

8.6 An approved Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project is required to be carried out strictly in accordance with the sponsorship agreement and the Funding Agreement as approved by HKCMCL. It is the responsibility of the Applicant and Project Sponsor to monitor the progress of the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project and the implementation of the project to ensure proper completion of the project for the purpose of seeking disbursement of the final payment. HKCMCL may also conduct random checks on individual projects as mentioned in paragraph 9.3.

9. Funding Support instalments and monitoring

9.1 The Funding Support will be disbursed by HKCMCL to successful Applicants in two instalments. Each successful PoC project will be funded separately.

9.2 Funding Support award model

9.2.1 Upon project approval, an initial instalment of 50% of the approved amount will be made to the Applicant (within 6 weeks after signing of the Funding Agreement and all required supporting documents are properly submitted) to help kick-start the development. The final instalment will be made to the Applicant within 1 month after completion of the project and acceptance of the following reports by HKCMCL:

- (a) A final report is submitted by the Applicant indicating the completion of the project, which should cover all project deliverables mentioned in the PoC project proposal and/or sponsorship agreement.
- (b) A commercial adoption viability report survey provides the following details:
 - a. Assessment of the chance of commercial adoption of the solution by the Project Sponsor with relevant supporting

- b. Assessment of potential for commercial adoption of the proposed solution by other companies in the future
 - c. If applicable, the target schedule or roadmap for commercialization of the proposed solution
 - d. Supporting documents for the above such as:
 - i. Project schedule for the proposed solution with go-live date accepted by Project Sponsor
 - ii. Letter of intent for commercialization of the solution from Project Sponsor
 - iii. Email endorsement for the adoption of the solution from the Project Sponsor
 - iv. Any other relevant support for commercial adoption of the proposed solution
 - (c) Supporting for user acceptance testing completion or project acceptance of corresponding Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project endorsed by the Project Sponsor; and
 - (d) An audited report by an independent auditor submitted by the Applicant upon request by HKCMCL at its discretion (further details in paragraph 10).
 - (e) The applicant should declare through email that none of the events that can cause the termination of the grant has occurred (for details associated with those events, please refer to section 12.1).
- 9.2.2 The initial instalment for an approved project will only be deposited into the designated bank account of the Applicant after the signing of the Funding Agreement and HKCMCL's verification of proof (e.g., Bank statement) showing the bank account belongs to the Applicant. If the Applicant fails to provide a designated bank account or evidence showing its due contribution to the designated bank account, the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme funding will be disbursed in one lump sum upon project completion and HKCMCL's acceptance of the final reports and completion of verification of bank account information.
- 9.2.3 The final instalment will be made to the Applicant upon project completion and HKCMCL's acceptance of the final reports [See note on 9.2.5] as stated in paragraph 9.2.1. To expedite the final payment process, all successful Applicants are recommended to submit all required reports and supplementary information via the greenfintechpoc@cyberport.hk email the final reports within 30 calendar days after the completion of the PoC project.

- 9.2.4 Late commencement of the approved project, or late submission of the required documents specified in paragraphs 9.2 and 9.3 may lead to withholding, reduction, or cessation of the Funding Support for the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project. HKCMCL reserves the right to request a full refund of the initial instalment.
- 9.2.5 HKCMCL reserves the right to seek clarifications and/or additional information from the Applicant and/or Project Sponsor regarding the PoC project, and the right to withdraw the Funding Support if, in any event, the successful Applicant is not able to carry out the responsibilities stated in the Guide. Under normal circumstances, the final instalment will be made upon submission of all the required documents/supplementary information and HKCMCL's acceptance of the final reports.

9.3 Monitoring

- 9.3.1 Successful Applicants are required to provide a progress report and related supporting documents 8 weeks after the Applicant has commenced the project. The progress report should review the work completed, work in progress, and work remaining to be done on the project. These sections must include:
- (a) Direct reference to milestones or deliverables established in the application related to the project.
 - (b) Timeline for when remaining work will be completed; and
 - (c) Any problems encountered or issues that have arisen that might affect completion, direction, requirements, or scope.
- 9.3.2 The progress report should be endorsed by the Project Sponsor. The progress report and the Project Sponsor endorsement should send to the email address greenfintechpoc@cyberport.hk.
- 9.3.3 HKCMCL may conduct progress reviews upon acceptance of progress reports, in the form of a field visit, to interview the Applicant and/or the Project Sponsor for monitoring purposes. Depending on circumstances, HKCMCL may at its discretion elect for a meeting or interview with the Applicant and the Project Sponsor through online, telephone or other means in lieu of or in addition to a field visit.

- 9.3.4 Late submission¹⁴ of the progress report may lead to withholding, reduction, or cessation of the Funding Support for the PoC project. Unless reasonable justification is provided and approved, the progress report should be submitted within 8 weeks after project commencement.
- 9.3.5 Applicant should seek email endorsement or sign-off of the final report from the Project Sponsor as evidence for project completion within one month after the project completion.
- 9.3.6 The applicant should submit a summary of project expenditure and corresponding audit trail (e.g., Payslip and/or MPF record and invoice, partial name masking for payslip and MPF record is acceptable).

10. Auditing Requirement

- 10.1 To ensure that a PoC project is duly carried out, an audited statement of expenditure may be required for successful Applicants upon request by HKCMCL at its discretion on a case-by-case basis. The audit fee can be covered in the final instalment subject to a limit of HKD3,000 maximum. Applicant shall absorb any excess fee of more than HKD3,000. The required audit report should be conducted by an independent auditor who must be a Certified Public Accountant holding a practising certificate registered under the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Cap. 50) (the “auditor”). The Applicant shall specify in the engagement letter for the employment of the auditor that the auditor shall strictly follow the requirements stipulated in the latest version of the “Notes for Auditors” issued by HKCMCL in conducting the audit and preparing the auditor’s report for each project. The engagement letter shall also specify that HKCMCL or representatives of HKCMCL or authorized government agencies shall have the right to communicate with the auditor on matters concerning the project deliverables, and the auditor shall provide HKCMCL with access to such project reports and supporting statements for inspection, verification and copying from time to time upon reasonable notice being given by HKCMCL. In conducting the audit, the auditor must comply with the relevant Standards and Statements of Professional Ethics issued and updated from time to time by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants. In the auditor’s report, the auditor is required to express an audit opinion as to whether the Applicant has complied, in all material respects, with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement and to make full disclosure of any material non-compliance. The applicant should submit the audit report within 45 calendar days after receiving the request from HKCMCL.

¹⁴ The progress report should be submitted within 8 weeks after the commencement date of the project (the commencement date should be the same as the project start date documented in the funding agreement).

10.2 To maintain a high level of integrity of the projects under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme, HKCMCL may conduct random checks on individual PoC projects. Successful Applicants are required to keep a proper and separate set of books and records for each PoC project for 7 years after the completion of the project and produce such books and records for checking by HKCMCL or representatives of HKCMCL or authorized government agencies upon request.

10.3 If an Applicant fails to comply with any requirements in the Guide and the terms and conditions stipulated in the Funding Agreement, HKCMCL may cease disbursement of all or any part of the Funding Support to the Applicant and/or shall have the right to claim for repayment of the disbursed Funding Support in full or in part together with all administrative, legal and other costs incurred and interest accrued up to the date of repayment from the Applicant. Under such circumstances, HKCMCL will inform the Applicant of its decision and reasons. One example of those scenarios that might call for a refund includes cases where total actual spending reported in the expenditure¹⁵ the breakdown is less than the initial cost estimation provided or the grant approved, HKCMCL reserves the right to request a refund¹⁶ from the Applicant.

10.4 The Applicant is not entitled to charge any interest or claim any compensation or relief of whatsoever nature against HKCMCL for any payment of Funding Support made or in the event of any withholding of payment of Funding Support for any reason whatsoever.

11. Changes of Approved Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Project

11.1 Extension of time

¹⁵ The applicant should allocate the Funding Support grant and related expenses towards the development and deployment of the Green and Sustainable Fintech Proof of Concept (PoC) project (e.g., developer salary payment, external entity operating expenditure...etc. All expenditures should have corresponding salary proof/invoice that can be provided to HKCMCL as supporting).

¹⁶ The refund is applicable to the first instalment of funding also. For example, if (a) the valid spending verified by the expenditure breakdown and audit trail is HKD 50,000 for an approved grant of HKD 150,000 and (b) we disbursed a total of HKD 75,000 in the first instalment, HKCMCL reserves the right to ask for a refund of HKD 25,000 (plus other expenses in accordance with section 10.3, $\text{HKD } 25,000 = \text{HKD } 75,000 - \text{HKD } 50,000$) from the Applicant. If (c) the 2nd instalment of HKD 75,000 was disbursed to the applicant already for this case, the corresponding refund will be HKD 100,000 ($\text{HKD } 100,000 = \text{HKD } 75,000 + \text{HKD } 75,000 - \text{HKD } 50,000$).

11.1.1 Extension of approved PoC project periods is discouraged and generally not allowed. However, successful Applicants may lodge requests for change in the project completion date upon submission of the progress report because of developmental challenges or external environmental shifts during the implementation period of the project. Such changes need to be strongly justified with valid reasons with a sufficient level of detail and supplemented with a revised project plan. The Applicant should submit a change request electronically through the email greenfintechpoc@cyberport.hk. Recommendations by the Panel may be sought before approval is granted by HKCMCL on a case-by-case basis.

11.1.2 Depending on the circumstances of the PoC project, an extension of the project duration shall be granted at the discretion of Cyberport on a case-by-case basis.

11.1.3 HKCMCL shall have the discretion in deciding whether or not to accept any time extension¹⁷ requests.

11.2 Change of project scope

Change of PoC project scope is not allowed. For any change of project scope before project approval, an Applicant should withdraw the application and submit a new application (provided that the applicable deadlines have not expired). After project approval, no change of project scope is allowed.

12. Termination

12.1 HKCMCL may at any time terminate all or any part of the Funding Support by giving written notice to the Applicant with immediate effect on the occurrence of any of the following events¹⁸:

- (a) The Applicant is in breach of any of the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement;
- (b) the project fails in a material way to progress in accordance with the approved proposal;

¹⁷ The maximum extension granted for the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project is 1 month. Extension exceeding this threshold will require endorsement by an additional internal or external reviewer and may lead to withholding, reduction, or cessation of the Funding Support for the PoC project if such endorsement cannot be obtained.

¹⁸ The applicant is responsible for providing updates to HKCMCL through email in case any events specified under this section occur any time after the submission of applicant registration, the applicant should inform us within 10 working days after said event (e.g. new litigations events after submission of grant Application) occurred.

- (c) HKCMCL forms the opinion that:
 - i. It is unlikely that the project will be completed in accordance with the approved proposal and other requirements in the Funding Agreement; or
 - ii. The project should be terminated in the public interest.
- (d) the Applicant or Project Sponsor has terminated the PoC project (the Applicant should notify HKCMCL in writing immediately to explain the reasons of termination);
- (e) any material change occurs in the management, ownership, or control of the Applicant;
- (f) the Project Sponsor does not meet the criteria in paragraph 5.6, or any material change occurs in the composition of the Project Sponsor;
- (g) any relevant existing or new litigation that will potentially affect the grant approval, grant recommendation, project execution or grant payment approval¹⁹;
- (h) the Applicant engages in any conduct prejudicial to HKCMCL or the project;
- (i) the passing of any resolutions, the initiation of any proceedings, or the making of any order which may result in the winding up or dissolution of the Applicant (other than for the purpose of reconstruction or amalgamation) or if a receiver, provisional liquidator, liquidator or administrator is appointed in respect of the whole or any part of its assets or if the Applicant makes an assignment for the benefit of or composition with its creditors generally or threatens to do any of these things or any judgement is made against the Applicant or any similar occurrence under any jurisdiction that affects the Applicant;
- (j) the Applicant or Project Sponsor has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
- (k) the continued performance of the Applicant or Project Sponsor is contrary to the interest of national security; or
- (l) the Government and/or HKCMCL reasonably believe that any of the events mentioned in (j) and (k) are about to occur.

12.2 Any approved project extension or termination should be documented in the progress report and/or final reports which should be submitted duly to HKCMCL.

¹⁹ Relevant litigations include all legal proceedings that can potentially affect the reputation of the Applicants because of misconduct performed by individual staff or responsible officers of the Applicant that can cause loss or harm to its customers, staff or investors. Examples of relevant litigation would include but are not limited to misconduct and malpractices such as fraud, and misappropriation of funds or other assets of the company.

Evaluation of such cases will be made by HKCMCL at its discretion on a case-by-case basis to determine the disbursement of final payment. HKCMCL reserves the right to withdraw the Funding Support or request full refund of initial payment at its discretion if in any event the successful Applicant or Project Sponsor is not able to carry out the responsibilities stated in the Guide. Depending on the extent of the requested changes and the impact of the proposed changes on the outcome of the project, recommendations by the Panel may be sought before approval is granted by HKCMCL on a case-by-case basis.

13. Handling of Information

13.1 Subject to the provisions below, information provided by the Applicants in their applications and final project reports will be kept by HKCMCL in confidence and all personal data will be handled in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). In this regard, HKCMCL shall have the right to disclose, without further reference to the Applicants, whenever it considers appropriate, information and personal data to other Government bureaux/departments, statutory bodies or third parties for the purposes of processing the application, conducting research and survey, compiling statistics, meeting requirements of the law and/or performing their functions, and if the application is approved, monitoring the project, disbursing funding or related purposes. A summary of approved projects will also be posted on the PoC website for reference. Disclosure may also be made where the explicit consent to such disclosure is given by the Applicant and Project Sponsor. In submitting the application form and signed sponsorship agreement, each Applicant and Project Sponsor irrevocably and unconditionally authorises HKCMCL to make and consents to HKCMCL making any of the aforesaid disclosure.

Regarding the use of personal data, HKCMCL will handle it in accordance with the requirements of the Personal Data Privacy Ordinance. For details, please see the “Privacy Policy” of the Cyberport website at http://www.cyberport.hk/en/privacy_policy.

13.2 By submitting an application, an Applicant is regarded to have agreed to, and to have obtained from the project coordinator, the business representative, the IT coordinator and each individual whose information (including personal data) is provided in the application, his/her consent for the disclosure, use and further disclosure by HKCMCL of the information (including personal data) for the purposes set out above.

14. Accuracy and completeness of applications

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to complete an application form, progress report and the final reports timely and truthfully, and to provide all supporting documents for the application and for the disbursement of the Funding Support. Inaccurate and incomplete information will affect the processing of applications or disbursement of funding. Any omission or misrepresentation of information may lead to rejection of applications, cancellation of applications approved, and part or full recoument of funding awarded.

15. Probity policy for Applicants

15.1 To ensure the openness, fairness and integrity of the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme, each Applicant shall:

- a) Comply with the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Hong Kong Legislation – Cap. 201) and advise its employees, agents, subcontractors and other personnel who are in any way involved in its application/project (the “Personnel”) that they shall comply with the same, and that they are not allowed to offer, solicit or accept from any person any advantages as defined in the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance in relation to the application/project;
- b) Not offer or give or agree to give any person employed by HKCMCL, or any members acting on its behalf, any gift, or favour during the Funding Support Scheme period or as an inducement or reward for such person’s doing or forbearing to do or for having done or forborne to do any act in relation to the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme or for showing or forbearing to show favour or disfavour to any person in relation to the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme;
- c) Promptly declare and notify HKCMCL in writing of any potential or actual conflicts of interest upon becoming aware of the same. “Conflicts of interest” shall include (but are not limited to) any situation where the private interest of an Applicant or its Personnel, conflict or compete, or may be expected to conflict or compete, with the role, duties and/or impartiality of such Applicant or Personnel under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme (e.g., Any relative of any directors and/or employees working in HKCMCL);
- d) Apply the funding prudently, efficiently, and solely for the purpose of the project approved under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme.
- e) Abide by the principles of openness, fairness, and competitiveness in the procurement of any goods/services in connection with the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme.
- f) Take all necessary measures (including by way of a code of conduct or contractual provisions) to ensure that its Personnel are aware of and comply with the requirements under this policy; and

- g) When doing business overseas and/or set up legal entities in foreign locations to support local operations, all Applicants are required to comply with anti-bribery laws and regulations in other jurisdictions when conducting business there or where applicable.

It is an offence in law to obtain property/pecuniary advantage by deception or assisting persons to obtain property/pecuniary advantage under the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme. Any person who does so may be liable to legal proceedings.

16. Compliance with the laws of Hong Kong and in other jurisdictions

Applicants and Project Sponsors in the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme must comply in all respects with all legislations (including the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), regulations and by-laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and also those in other jurisdictions when conducting business there or where applicable.

17. Disclaimer

HKCMCL serves only as an administrator of the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme. By assessing or approving an application, HKCMCL does not provide any guarantee or endorsement regarding the Applicant or its project. The Applicant shall be solely responsible for ensuring the suitability of the Applicant itself and the Project Sponsor for the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC Scheme. HKCMCL reserves the right to change the eligibility criteria and details of the arrangements as set out above from time to time without prior notice. HKCMCL disclaims any responsibility or liability over any dispute as between the Applicant and the Project Sponsor.

18. Warranties and Indemnity

18.1 By submitting an application, the Applicant warrants that:

- a) It has provided true, full and accurate information to HKCMCL.
- b) It has complied and will comply with the provisions of the Guide.
- c) It has obtained all relevant consent from the Project Sponsor in relation to the use and provision of Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC project-related data to HKCMCL.

18.2 The Applicant shall indemnify HKCMCL against all liabilities, costs, expenses, damages and losses (including but not limited to any direct, indirect or consequential losses, loss of profit, loss of reputation and all interest, penalties and legal costs and all other reasonable professional costs and expenses) suffered or incurred by HKCMCL arising out of or in connection with any breach of the Guide, including but not limited to any breach of the warranties contained in this paragraph 18.

19. Governing Law

The validity, performance and construction of the provisions of the Guide shall be governed by the laws of Hong Kong and be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Hong Kong.

20. Third Party Rights

No third party may enforce any provision of the Guide by virtue of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Ordinance.

21. Enquiries

Contact HKCMCL for any queries about applications.
Email: greenfintechpoc@cyberport.hk

Appendix 1 - List of Recognised Green and Sustainable Fintech Solution Categories

Categories	Application Domains
<p>Green & Digital Finance and Investment</p> <p>Digital solutions and platforms that primarily assist financial institutions and companies in providing digital green and sustainable finance products, including payments, loans, deposits, financial instruments, investments, and insurance. They may also facilitate compliance monitoring and reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green tokenized bonds. • Green financial planning. • Digital savings solutions linked to green behaviour. • Green insurance products. • Green derivatives. • Green investment funds. • Performance tracker for green and sustainability-linked products and loans. • Digital loan and mortgage products linked to green and ESG behaviour. • Credit scoring algorithms that integrate ESG data. • Investment and trading products, tools and platforms focused on green assets.
<p>ESG Disclosure, Compliance & Regulatory Reporting</p> <p>Digital solutions that primarily facilitate companies and financial institutions in making ESG, climate and nature-related disclosures, and meeting relevant compliance and regulatory reporting requirements. They may also facilitate regulatory bodies and non-governmental organisations in monitoring the ESG performance, compliance and disclosures of regulatees and companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed company disclosure and compliance. • Financial regulatory and supervisory reporting and compliance. • Regtech. • Regulatory and supplier reporting.
<p>Carbon Trading, Analytics and Technology</p> <p>Digital solutions that primarily support the development and trading of carbon products, and assist companies and financial institutions with collecting and analysing internal and external carbon emissions data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon products • Carbon credit trading • Carbon registry and trading infrastructure • Carbon accounting • Emissions tracking
<p>ESG Data, Intelligence and Analytics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESG data collection and aggregation. • ESG rating of companies & funds. • Digital green and ESG indexing.

Categories	Application Domains
Digital solutions that primarily offer ESG data and analytics, ESG ratings, and ESG indexing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply chain modelling.
ESG / Climate Risk Modelling & Assessment Digital solutions that primarily facilitate the assessment and management of ESG and climate-related risks (including physical risks and transition risks).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank climate modelling. Insurance underwriting climate analysis. Scenario analysis and stress testing. Risk assessment tools and platforms that consider ESG / climate factors. Investment portfolio analysis and modelling.

Remarks:

- The Green and Sustainable Fintech solution category and application domain above are not meant to be exhaustive.
- Eligibility of applicants will be separately verified and assessed where necessary.

Appendix 2 - Documents Required for Application Submission

- Initial Application Registration
 - Bank statement for one of the last three months as of application date.
 - Any one of the proofs of business operation listed below issued in one of the last three months as of application date.
 - Copies of the documentary evidence proving that the Applicant has substantive Green and Sustainable Fintech activities¹ in Hong Kong such as:
 1. Signed client agreement with the name of the client and scope of service.
 2. Proof of concept of prior Green and Sustainable Fintech projects.
 3. Fundraising record – for Green and Sustainable Fintech companies that have not yet generated any revenue.
 4. Company membership of recognised Green and Sustainable Fintech industry organisations and associations (see Appendix 3).
 5. Green and Sustainable Fintech or mainstream technology activities related award or business recognition (see Appendix 5).
 6. Other equivalent proof of mainstream technology activities.
- Proposal Submission
 - Application Form.
 - Project Proposal (refer to Project proposal writing guideline document available on the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC scheme website).
 - Signed PoC sponsorship agreement(s) with Project Sponsor(s).
 - Proposal pitch video ² which explains the proposed solution through a walkthrough the proposal pitch deck and/or executive summary and/or the key use cases of the solution to highlight areas such as business impact, design and benefits of the solution.

¹ Applicants focusing on mainstream technologies with a plan to adopt Green and Sustainable Fintech and have a sound adoption plan may also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

² You can record the video using software such as Zoom and walkthrough the pitch deck (preferred) and key sections of the proposal. The video should be 3-10 minutes in length and focus on the relevant information that explains the advantages, key use cases, conceptual design, business impact and benefit.

Appendix 3 - Recognised Green and Sustainable Fintech-related industry organisations and associations

This is by no means an exhaustive description of valid organization and association, but it gives an indication of the type of eligible entities.

Recognized entities includes: (1) well-established startup incubators (2) Green and Sustainable Fintech Related associations (e.g., Hong Kong Green Finance Association) (3) Other trade associations with similar or equivalent nature)

Appendix 4 - Recognised regulators

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Recognised bodies generally refer to the regulators as follows:

- Hong Kong Monetary Authority
- Hong Kong Insurance Authority
- Securities and Future Commission
- Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority

Appendix 5 - Awards or Business Recognition

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it gives an indication of relevant awards and business recognition which includes:

- Alibaba Jumpstarter
- AppWorks
- Brinc accelerator program
- Deloitte Technology Fast and Rising Star Program awards
- Helix Blockchain Accelerator
- Hong Kong ICT Award
- Hong Kong Business Technology Excellence Awards
- Innovation and Technology Awards (I&T Awards)
- Red Herring
- RegTech 100
- Smart Living Partnership Awards 2022
- SparkLabs
- SuperCharger
- Other awards, business recognitions or accelerators with similar or equivalent nature

Appendix 6 – List of recognised research institutes

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it gives an indication of the recognized research institute includes:

- Local universities (including all University Grants Committee-funded institutes)
- Self-financing degree-awarding institutes registered under the Post-Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320)
- Public research institutes, such as the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, Hong Kong Productivity Council, Vocational Training Council, etc
- Green and Sustainable Fintech Laboratories established by private entities in Hong Kong

Remarks:

- Eligibility of recognized research institute applicants will be separately verified and assessed where necessary.

Appendix 7 – High Impact Green and Sustainable Fintech Solutions

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it indicates Solutions that demonstrate the high and broad impact on the Green and Sustainable Fintech Technology landscape:

- Facilitate adoption of Green and Sustainable Fintech technologies by enterprises / traditional industries
- Improve efficiency, governance, safety and adoption of Green and Sustainable Fintech-related technologies.

The proposed Green and Sustainable Fintech categories/applications should:

- Demonstrate active sponsor co-creation activities and participation.
- Help enhance the green and sustainable fintech infrastructure in Hong Kong.
- Address pain points in the Green and Sustainable sector development through innovative fintech services.

Appendix 8 – Project Sponsor Eligibility

An Applicant is required to have a Qualified Sponsor¹ as a Project Sponsor (the “Project Sponsor”).

Eligible Project Sponsor’s should either be:

- A financial institution licensed under the regulatory remit of HKMA, SFC, Insurance Authority, MPFA; or
- A well-established² local firm³ that can benefit from Green and Sustainable Fintech innovation and use cases (e.g., Companies listed in the main board that can benefit from green and sustainability fintech solutions ... etc.); or
- An organisation actively facilitating Green and Sustainable Fintech adoption (e.g., Third-party emission reduction verifier, Climate risk modelling advisory firm...etc.)

Remark:

- Project Sponsors should be registered and commence their business in Hong Kong before the submission of their application and have sufficient resources and know-how to participate in the Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC co-creation and monitoring activities.

¹ Please note that the project sponsoring organisation and applicant organisation should not be affiliated companies (e.g., shared board membership, shared responsible officer, investor relationship, holding companies ... etc.).

² Nature of business, Turnover, Years of business establishment, proposed use cases relevance and the number of staff will be considered during sponsor eligibility under this category. (e.g., a non-manufacturing company with 500 or more employees will be considered well-established and these criteria will be reviewed in a case-by-case manner).

³ Overseas Sponsor actively engaged in Green and Sustainable Fintech -related activities (e.g., Incubator and investor) with investment or other presence in Hong Kong will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis based on their relevance to the objective of this program.

Appendix 9 – High-quality proposal characteristics

During past proposal vetting and assessment experience, some of the best Green and Sustainable Fintech PoC proposals should have the following characteristics:

- Have a wide impact on the Green and Sustainable Fintech community or industry stakeholders.
- Significant Project Sponsor involvement to enrich the business case and commercial value of the project.
- Can accelerate Green and Sustainable Fintech adoption or Green and Sustainable Fintech community growth.
- Address the important pain point of the Project Sponsor and have a significant research contribution.
- Have much better clarity in terms of key use cases/technology and how they can benefit the project sponsor or other stakeholders.
- Have a realistic and achievable outcome.