

**Priority Areas for
the 2025 Funding Exercise of
Beat Drugs Fund (BDF) Regular Funding Scheme (RFS)**

Given the imminent threat posed by etomidate and its popularity among some high-risk youths, top priority would be given to applications that directly deal with this problem, ranging from targeted prevention to treatment of abusers. Thoughts should be given to how the application can contribute to curbing the problem from spreading and in helping abusers to rehabilitate. Potential applicants are strongly advised to take this into account when preparing their applications.

Treatment and Rehabilitation (T&R)

- (a) Projects that comprise targeted treatment and outreaching programmes which take into account the latest demographic characteristics of drug abusers and cater for their varying needs in quitting drugs. They may include abusers of psychotropic substances (especially those of cocaine, “Ice”, cannabis and etomidate); young adult drug abusers (aged 21 – 35) who could be tertiary students, working adults, professionals or the non-engaged; drug abusers of the non-Chinese-speaking community; drug abusers of older age (aged 65 or above); men who have sex with men with drug abuse problem; “chem fun/sex” participants; drug abusers with family members also at risk of drug abuse or with young children, etc.
- (b) Projects that promote the involvement of family members of drug abusers in the T&R process and aftercare support services. Relationship between drug abusers/rehabilitees and their family members could be fragile and challenging. On the other hand, family support is pivotal throughout the T&R and recovery process. Involvement of family members of drug abusers throughout and after the T&R process could help identify and engage hidden drug abusers, strengthen the motivation of drug abusers to quit drugs and maintain abstinence, rebuild family relationship, render emotional support to drug abusers/rehabilitees, as well as prevent inter-generational drug abuse patterns.

- (c) Projects that involve and strengthen collaboration among various sectors and disciplines as well as at various levels to help identify and engage drug abusers and help them quit drugs, especially those involving “Ice”, cocaine, cannabis, ketamine and/or etomidate abuse. Drug abusers of various backgrounds encounter multi-faceted needs straddling health and emotion, work, finance and relationship with family, etc. Strengthened collaboration involving different key players such as community-based service units, residential drug treatment and rehabilitation centres, medical and allied health service units, law enforcement agencies, other welfare service units as well as non-drug social service and community units are encouraged to facilitate concerted efforts for effective delivery of drug treatment.
- (d) Projects that facilitate early identification of drug abusers and intervention through adoption of innovative means and wider use of technology. Amid the evolving social environment and changing lifestyles, there is a need for adoption of innovative means and wider use of technology for identifying, reaching out to and engaging, among others, youngsters and hidden drug abusers, and also providing them with T&R services and other support, with due regard to the reliability and effectiveness of such tools.
- (e) Projects that strengthen or provide early medical intervention and support to drug abusers, especially those with drug-induced psychiatric and/or severe emotional issues, to manage their withdrawal symptoms and stabilise their mental condition which is essential and complementary to more effective drug treatment. Such medical intervention and support could involve treatment in a hospital/clinical setting or in an outreaching mode.
- (f) Projects that strengthen aftercare services for those who have quitted drugs so as to support them to remain completely abstinent, facilitate their reintegration into society and enhance their employability. Examples include counselling and life planning at post-treatment stage, occupational therapies, vocational training, provision of job placement opportunities, job counselling, mentoring programmes, promoting and facilitating acceptance of drug rehabilitees by the community to provide them with more opportunities to engage in meaningful career and community activities, and, where justified, professional intervention, to help drug rehabilitees review their own capabilities, and set realistic life and career goals, etc., with a view to helping them settle in stable employment, enhance their self-recognition and self-esteem, thus empowering them to resist the

temptation of drugs and stay abstinent from drugs.

- (g) Projects that provide structured training or platforms for experience sharing on drug-quitting therapeutic approaches among anti-drug social workers, peer counsellors who are drug rehabilitees, medical professionals and related personnel to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for helping psychotropic drug abusers to quit drugs. These projects may also involve other relevant streams of social or medical services to help foster a better understanding of the needs of drug abusers, and share good practices or techniques in helping them quit drugs.
- (h) Projects that prominently feature International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as World Drug Day, June 26 each year, as a means to publicise drug harms and raise public awareness of global anti-drug issues.

Preventive Education and Publicity

- (i) Projects that mobilise the community to stand against cocaine, cannabis, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) products, particularly through raising awareness, providing correct information of harms and rectifying mistaken concepts about the above drugs, publicising the legal consequences of drug trafficking, countering the advocacy for legalising the use of cannabis, addressing the challenges presented by the relaxation on the legal use of cannabis in some foreign jurisdictions and imparting drug refusal skills among members of the public, especially young people, high-risk youths, parents and specific target groups.
- (j) Projects that enhance awareness of the harms of other popular drugs, especially “Ice”, ketamine, lysergide (LSD), cough medicine, etomidate and other new psychoactive substances, among members of the public, especially young people, parents and specific target groups, particularly through promoting attitudinal change towards drugs, building a drug-free culture in schools and workplaces, encouraging early help-seeking and facilitating identification of hidden drug abusers and awareness of harms of new psychoactive substances.
- (k) Projects that enhance the awareness of families, especially at-risk families (e.g. teenage mothers, parents or family members being

ex-drug abusers, and family members being high-risk youths), of drug harms, and strengthen the role and abilities of family members in preventing drug abuse, identifying and persuading drug-abusing family members for early help-seeking.

- (l) Projects that engage members of various sectors and relevant stakeholders (e.g. frontline security guards, staff in forwarding business, property management staff, cleaning workers, hostel staff, members of owners' corporations, operators/employers of bars/Internet cafés or amusement game centres and their employees, as well as workers of professional sectors, such as legal, banking, accounting, etc.) to develop correct understanding of drug harms, identify drug abuse and/or drug trafficking situations, and seek help from their supervisors, community resources or law enforcement agencies as appropriate.
- (m) Projects that encourage and engage the public to take more proactive actions in spreading anti-drug messages to people around, which could serve as an important pull factor to discourage relevant persons in drug abuse or drug trafficking.
- (n) Projects that promote help-seeking, community acceptance of T&R services and facilities and reintegration of rehabilitees into society.
- (o) Projects that enhance the awareness of the dire consequences of engaging in drug trafficking activities among members of the public, especially young people, socially disadvantaged groups (e.g. ethnic minorities groups) and at-risk individuals through online or offline means.
- (p) Projects that prominently feature International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as World Drug Day, June 26 each year, as a means to publicise drug harms and raise public awareness of global anti-drug issues.

Research

- (q) Research studies on the characteristics of psychotropic substance abuse, particularly on psychotropic substances which have relatively higher or gained prevalence in Hong Kong such as cocaine, "Ice", cannabis and other emerging drugs (e.g. etomidate) to provide more information about the drug harms and to identify suitable treatment

methods and develop effective treatment models for application in Hong Kong's context.

- (r) Research studies on the behavioural patterns (e.g. reasons for hidden drug abuse, drug-taking subculture, relapse and its prevention, and impacts of inter-generational drug abuse) of different groups of drug abusers (e.g. female drug abusers, pregnant drug abusers, working drug abusers, and drug abusers of diverse races and sexual orientations).
- (s) Studies on identifying and collating good practices or protocols based on the findings of the completed BDF RFS projects with a research element.

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