Funding Scheme for Research Platforms – Joint Platforms

Science and Technology Development Fund of Macao & Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province

Application Guidelines for Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Joint Laboratories (2026)

To thoroughly implement the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and other documents, fully leverage the scientific, technological, and industrial advantages of Guangdong and Macao, and promote the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) into an international innovation and technology hub, the Science and Technology Development Fund (hereinafter referred to as the "FDCT") and the Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province (hereinafter referred to as the "GDST") have jointly introduced a funding scheme for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao joint laboratories (hereinafter referred to as "joint laboratories") under the Work Plan between the GDST and the FDCT on Jointly Funding Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Joint Laboratories.

The FDCT, through consultation with the GDST, has drawn up these application guidelines pursuant to Article 2(b), Chapter II of the FDCT's Funding Scheme for Research Platforms.

I. Competent Authorities

1. The competent authorities for this joint funding scheme are the FDCT for the Macao side, and the GDST for the Guangdong side.
2. Application, acceptance, evaluation, approval, implementation, administration, and project conclusion of Macao applicants shall be governed by the prevailing Funding Regulation of the Science and Technology Development Fund.
3. Joint laboratories approved for funding are required to sign a Consent to Funding with the FDCT and comply with the requirements of relevant documents of the GDST.

II. Supported Fields and Scope of Development

1. One joint laboratory in the field of artificial intelligence and big data will be supported this year.
2. Scope of development: Combining national strategies with the actual conditions of innovation and technology and socio-economic development in the GBA, and focusing on the needs of cross-border data development, the joint laboratory shall carry out applied research and tackle key core technologies in Macao's advantageous disciplines, promote the transfer and transformation of research outcomes, introduce and cultivate talent teams, and carry out extensive collaboration and exchanges. It shall actively build high-level innovation and technology carriers and platforms to serve the cross-border flow of data elements and the development of the digital economy in the GBA.

III. Funding Amount

A joint laboratory will receive RMB 10 million from the GDST, and MOP 13 million from the FDCT within a 3-year development period.

IV. Application Period

From 26 October 2026 to 25 November 2026.

V. Application Eligibility

1. The leading applicant of the joint laboratory shall be an entity from Macao (hereinafter referred to as the “Macao leading applicant”), which shall fulfil the requirements of Articles 3(a) and 3(b) of Chapter I, and Article 1(e) of Chapter II of the FDCT’s Funding Scheme for Research Platforms (2026).
2. The Macao leading applicant shall apply jointly with tertiary institutions, research institutions or enterprises from Guangdong, or from both Guangdong and Hong Kong. At least one co-applicant shall be from Guangdong.
3. Priority will be given to applications led by entities that have not yet established a joint laboratory as the Macao leading applicant.

VI. Collaboration Partners

1. The Guangdong-side partners should be enterprises, public institutions, research institutions or tertiary institutions registered in Guangdong Province with separate legal personality. They should possess a certain

level of R&D competence and foundation with sound operation and management.

2. The Hong Kong-side partners should be research institutions, tertiary institutions, or technology enterprises registered in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, with a certain level of R&D competence and foundation.

VII. Supplementary Contribution

If commercial enterprise owners or commercial enterprises participate as co-developing partners, they are required to provide a supplementary contribution of no less than 50% of the funding granted by the FDCT. The specific percentage shall be stipulated in the Consent to Funding.

VIII. Application Requirements

1. Joint laboratories shall conduct applied research and tackle key core technologies in relevant fields, promote the transfer and transformation of research outcomes, bring in and cultivate talent teams, and engage in extensive collaboration and exchanges.
2. The Macao leading applicant should commit to the long-term operation of the joint laboratory with support in terms of human, financial, and material resources. Its financial contribution shall not be less than the amount of funding granted by the FDCT. Each participating entity should possess relatively independent and centralized laboratory sites, instruments, and equipment, among other research and laboratory conditions to support the development of the joint laboratory.
3. The director of the joint laboratory should be a regular employee of the Macao leading applicant, with a certain level of academic influence in the research field of the joint laboratory. The Macao leading applicant should grant the director autonomy in decision-making on research work organization, use of funding, recruitment, and transformation of outcomes. The joint laboratory may adopt a joint-directorship system by appointing a co-director from the Guangdong or Hong Kong side as needed.
4. The project team of the joint laboratory shall consist of no less than 30 researchers, of whom no less than 15 core researchers shall actually participate from the Macao leading applicant (including at least 10 full-time researchers), and no less than 15 core researchers in total shall actually participate from the co-developing partners.

5. Each project team member may participate in only one joint laboratory application. Members of a joint laboratory already approved for funding are not allowed to participate in new joint laboratory applications.

IX. Collaboration Requirements

1. Over the past 3 years (since 2023), the Macao leading applicant and the Guangdong-side partner(s) are required to have carried out substantive collaborative research, establishing a relatively sound collaboration mechanism, with platform institutions, research personnel, technology exchanges, and joint research outcomes for in-depth collaborative research. The partnership should demonstrate strong collaborative innovation capacity between academia, research, and industry, with a solid foundation and promising prospects in areas such as personnel exchange, postgraduate training, and innovation and entrepreneurship.
2. Collaboration with enterprises in Macao or in the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin is encouraged, especially with key technology enterprises certified under the Technology Enterprise Certification Programme.
3. The leading applicant should sign a joint development agreement with the co-applicant(s) regarding the development of the joint laboratory, clearly defining the mode of collaboration, division of tasks, funding allocation, and ownership of research outcomes.

X. Requirements on Outputs

1. During the 3-year development period, no less than 10 research projects shall be jointly undertaken by the Macao and Guangdong sides of the joint laboratory.
2. No less than one research outcome of the Macao side shall be transformed within the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.
3. No less than 60 joint academic papers shall be published by the Guangdong and Macao partners, and no less than 5 joint intellectual property outcomes shall be filed.
4. Researcher exchange visits between Guangdong and Macao totalling no less than 50 person-times shall be organized, and no less than 10 major academic exchange events shall be held.
5. No less than 20 postgraduates shall be jointly trained by the Guangdong and Macao sides.

XI. Application Method

1. Before the application deadline, the Macao leading applicant shall file the application to the FDCT. Application materials shall include a hard copy of the application proposal and materials on the collaboration foundation and supporting evidence. The materials shall be bound together, signed by the legal representative, and affixed with the official seal of the applicant.
2. Each leading applicant shall submit no more than one joint laboratory application per field.
3. Application for this scheme shall be filed simultaneously to the GDST. The specific requirements shall be implemented as provided in the relevant documents of the GDST.

XII. Formal Examination

After the application deadline, the FDCT and the GDST will conduct their respective formal examinations, followed by jointly verifying and reconciling their respective lists of projects that have passed their respective formal examinations. Projects included in both lists will be recognized as "valid Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao joint laboratory projects".

XIII. Assessment Method

1. The FDCT conducts assessment based on the following criteria:

- Feasibility and foundation of the joint laboratory's development plan;
- Rationality of the budgeting and utilization of funding;
- Team building and management competence;
- Research competence;
- Expected outcomes;
- Applicant's qualifications;
- Foundation of collaboration with partners.

2. Upon conclusion of assessment, the FDCT will finalize with the GDST the joint laboratories proposed for support among the projects that passed the assessments of both parties.
3. The supervising entity of the FDCT shall decide on the applications filed by Macao applicants.

XIV. Other Matters

Matters not stipulated in these Guidelines shall be governed by the prevailing Public Financial Support Regime of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the administrative regulation titled Science and Technology Development Fund, the Funding Regulation of the Science and Technology Development Fund, the Funding Scheme for Research Platforms (2026), the Guidelines for Inspection of Funded Activities or Projects and the Guidelines on Agreed Procedures for Research Projects issued by the Public Assets Supervision and Administration Bureau, as well as the Consent to Funding signed upon approval.