Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Eligibility

Question 1: What are the Jockey Club Joy of E-Reading Scheme ("Scheme") eligibility requirements? Can private schools, international schools, kindergartens, English Schools Foundation (ESF) Schools, special schools, education centres and tertiary institutions apply?
Answer: This Scheme is only open for all publicly funded primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, and they are government schools, aided schools, caput schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS).

Question 2: If a school has both primary and secondary sections, can the school apply twice?
Answer: Yes. The school may submit two applications for each of the primary and secondary sections. Please select the corresponding "School Type" (i.e. either Primary or Secondary) in the Application Form.

Question 3: If a school has more than one campus, can the school apply once for each campus?
Answer: No. Each school can only apply once, regardless of the number of campus.

Question 4: If a school has already joined other e-Reading promotion programme or other funding schemes (e.g. Promotion of Reading Grant provided by EDB), can the school still apply?
Answer: Yes. However, school is reminded that approved The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust's ("Trust's") donation are used exclusively for the purpose of carrying out the project under this Scheme, and expended in accordance with the approved project budget and for the agreed purposes. The school shall also ensure that all project expenses under this Scheme should only be claimed and reimbursed once, which means, they should not be reimbursed again by any other third party. Similarly, resources from other programmes or funding schemes should not be used to cover any project components supported by the Trust under this Scheme.

Question 5: Can a school use the funding to continue/extend existing e-reading services?
Answer: Yes, but we encourage schools to explore new e-reading services/ platform on top of existing reading service to enhance school's capacity to promote e-reading.

Application Method

Question 6: What are the application procedures?
Answer: Interested school should (1) submit an online application <u>and</u> (2) upload required documents via the Scheme designated website. Upon submitting the application, an acknowledgment email with application number will be sent to the school to acknowledge the receipt of application, request further information, if applicable, and communicate the expected timeline for next steps.

Question 7: Upon submitting an application, why does the contact person not receive an acknowledgement email?
Answer: The contact person should be able to receive an acknowledgement email within 2 working days upon submitting an application. If the acknowledgement email is not received within 2 working days, please check the "Junk Email" folder of the email account. If our email is located in the "Junk Email" folder, school is also suggested to select "Not Junk" in order to avoid spam filters in the future.

Question 8: Is there any reference for filling in the application form?
Answer: A sample application form is appended in the [Application Form](#) for your reference. School must fill in information as per EDB's official records, i.e. information shown on the "School Information Search & School Lists" of EDB's website ([EDB - School Search](#)). For details, please refer to the [Application Guidelines](#) for details.

Question 9: What supporting documents do school have to submit?
Answer: (1) [Application Form](#) including a school information form, project budget, and signed Bank Electronic Payment Information Form with school chop, (2) Bank statements or other official document issued by the bank no more than 3 months before the application date that indicates the bank account name and number, and (3) School Registration Certificate. Please refer to the [Application Guidelines](#) for detailed requirements.

Question 10: Will applications be approved on a first-come-first-served basis?
Answer: After submitting all necessary documents, applications will be processed according to the order of application received.

Question 11: Can a school choose when to apply?
Answer: Applications will be accepted during the period from 8 July 2022 to 30 November 2022. We encourage interested school to fully understand the objectives of the Scheme, and carefully plan the details (e.g. project duration, target group, items to be purchased, reading-related activities, etc.) before submitting an application.

Question 12: What if the school has questions when filling in the application?
Answer: The school may email its questions to us at info@jcereading.com, or filling in the [contact us form](#) on this website, we shall reply within two working days.

Question 13: Not applicable.

Question 14: Does the Scheme accept e-signature/ e-school chop?
Answer: Yes, instead of printing and signing the forms, the school may choose to use e-signature and e-school chop.

Application results, duration and related arrangements

Question 15: How will an application be assessed?
Answer: Each application will be assessed according to the Trust's acceptance criteria. The Trust reserves the right of the final decision should there be any disputes arisen.

Question 16: How long does it take to assess an application?
Answer: Upon receiving all received information and documents, school will be notified of the application result within approximately 15 working days.

Question 17: How does the school know the result of the application?
Answer: Application result will be announced through email, regardless of whether the application is successful or not.

Question 18: Once an application is approved, when will the school receive the donations?
Answer: Payment will be disbursed to the school's designated bank account within 5 – 10 working days upon result announcement. The school will also be required to sign a Donation Acceptance & Acknowledgment of Payment Letter and return the letter to the Trust within 5 working days. Please be reminded that the said letter should be endorsed by the Supervisor or the Chairman of School Management Committee of the school. Endorsement by the School's Principal alone will not be accepted.

Question 19: How should a school determine the project period? Is there any maximum project period supported by the Trust?
Answer: The school will be required to provide project start date and completion date in the Donation Acceptance & Acknowledgement of Payment Letter. The project period should include all preparation work (e.g. tendering) and free trial periods. The project should last for 12 to 18 months and the project completion date should be no later than 31 December 2023. Please be reminded that the Trust will only recognise expenses incurred during the project period.

Question 20: If a school's application is rejected, is there an appeal mechanism?
Answer: If there are any questions regarding the result of the application, the school can submit enquires with justifications and application number by email to info@jcereading.com within 2 weeks after the application result is issued.

Question 21: How to make enquiries?
Answer: The school can make an enquiry by sending an email to info@jcereading.com or filling in the contact form on this website.

Question 22: Is there a chance for a school to make a direct enquiry?
Answer: Yes. Interested schools can attend the information sessions, and raise questions during the Question & Answer sessions.

Question 23: Why is a staff who is not an employee of the Trust contacting the school?
Answer: The Trust has engaged Deloitte Advisory (Hong Kong) Limited ("Deloitte") for the management and administration of the Scheme. Authorised representatives from Deloitte will contact school on various Scheme's matters, including but not limited to, follow-up on the submitted application, notification of application results, submission of Final Report and arrangement of audit (if any). If the school have any suspicion over the identity of the parties involved, please contact the Trust immediately.

Question 24: Why does this Scheme collect personal data?
Answer: Personal data provided by school in this Scheme is solely collected for application assessment and Scheme-related arrangements. They will be kept confidential and solely used to serve the Scheme's purposes.

Question 25: Is the school required to keep project-related documents?
Answer: Yes, approved schools should retain all accounting-related books and records, payments and receipts for a minimum period of 7 years after completion of the project, and project implementation and operational records, including attendance records for reading-related activities, for a minimum of 3 years after completion of the project. Please refer to Records Retention Guidelines (Annex B of Application Guidelines) for details.

Project Execution

Question 26: Once an application is approved, what should the school do if it intends to change the project plan, budget, deliverables, timeline, etc.?
Answer: Please obtain the Trust's prior approval in writing before implementing (1) any project extension, and/or (2) changes in budget and/or output over 20% variances by category. School may submit such request (template available upon request) by email (info@jcereading.com). Please also be reminded that, in any circumstances, the spending in Category A and D should not exceed 50% and 20% of the total budget respectively.

Question 27: Not applicable.

Question 28: Does this Scheme support Smart Book Cabinet?
Answer: This Scheme aims to support schools to promote e-reading. If a Smart Book Cabinet (or other similar device) is for distributing e-books, its cost can be included in "Category A – E-Readers". If a Smart Book Cabinet only provides physical books, the relevant expenses are not within the scope of funding in this Scheme.

Question 29: Does the Scheme support the purchase of tablets as e-Reader?
Answer: We do not impose restriction on the brand and model of the reading devices. Expenditures on tablets can be included in Category A "E-Readers". However, we believe there are other e-Readers in the market that can achieve similar objectives at a much lower cost, and hence can maximize the outcome of the funding and benefit more students. Schools should ensure optimal use and cost-effectiveness of the donation. When purchasing e-Readers, schools are recommended to benchmark the price of popular e-Readers in the market. Their prices range from HK$600 to HK$2,000, and these devices should have already included the basic functionality of e-reading. In addition, when vetting an application, we will consider the number of expected beneficiaries, whether the proposed reading device is mainly used for reading and whether the price is comparable to the market.

Question 30: Does this Scheme support the shipping cost incurred when purchasing e-Readers?
Answer: Yes. "Category A – E-Readers" includes reasonable transportation costs, reasonable accessories, and maintenance costs within the project period.

Question 31: Can schools retain the e-Readers funded by this Scheme after the project period?
Answer: Schools are not required to return the hardware (including e-Readers) funded by the Scheme to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust after the project period. Schools can retain the devices. However, schools have the responsibility to properly to safeguard all assets funded by this Scheme during the project period.

Question 32: Does this Scheme support the purchase of audible book?
Answer: Yes, relevant expenditures can be included in "Category B – E-Books".

Question 33: Does this Scheme support subscription to online newspapers? Is there any specific requirement over publisher of newspaper?
Answer: Schools can use the funding for online newspaper subscriptions, corresponding cost falls under "Category C – e-Reading Subscription". There is no restriction over the contents of the books/subscriptions in this Scheme, however the contents must comply with relevant laws and regulations, be appropriate and beneficial to the students.

Question 34: How to define reading-related activities and other operating costs in budget Category D? Does it support paper-based reading activities?
Answer: The activities should be utilising the e-Readers, e-books and/or subscriptions funded by the Scheme, and with the objective to promote reading in schools, such as reading competitions, award programmes, reading workshops, book sharing sessions, parent-child storytelling, etc. Schools can formulate different types of reading activities to meet their needs. The Scheme expects that the activities should be related to e-reading as far as practicable, however we also support paper-based reading activities.

Question 35: Does this Scheme support the purchase of robots for reading-related activities?
Answer: We do not impose restriction on the purchase of robots, long as the core function of the robots is for promotion of reading. Expenditures on robots can be included in "Category D – Reading-related activities and other operating expenses". Schools are reminded to ensure optimal use and cost-effectiveness of the donation. When vetting an application, the number of expected beneficiaries and whether the proposed reading device is mainly used for reading will be considered.

Question 36: Is there any specific requirements regarding the procurement procedure in purchasing goods or services for this Scheme?
Answer: When purchasing goods or services for this Scheme, the school is advised to make reference to *Education Bureau Circular No. 4/2013: Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools*, and observe the principles of openness, fairness and competitiveness.

Question 37: How long should a school purchase an e-Reading subscription for?
Answer: The school is suggested to purchase a 12-month e-subscription from the project start date. However, if the school plans to purchase an e-subscription for a period longer than 12-month (e.g. 24-month) for any reason, this Scheme only supports the subscription cost till the end of your stated project period or 31 December 2023.

Question 38: If a school purchases a 12-month e-Reading subscription from the project start date and there is an additional 2-month free trial period before the subscription begins, does this Scheme still support the total cost of the 12-month subscription?
Answer: Yes. As long as the 12-month subscription is purchased from the project start date, the Scheme will support the total cost of the 12-month subscription even if the school is using free trial in the first 2 months of the project.

Project Reporting

Question 39: Upon project completion, what should a school do?
Answer: The school is required to submit the following documents within 3 month of project completion:
1. **Final Report** in MS Excel or PDF format, which covers the project descriptions, expenditure summary (refer to (a) below), deliverables (refer to (b) below) and other information.
   (a) **Expenditure Summary** in MS Excel format, which summarises the total actual expenditures in each cost item and its variances as compared with the respective approved budget. Justification for budget variance above 20% in each category is required.
   (b) **Deliverables (i.e. Output Form)** in MS Excel format, which records the actual output for the project. For output variance over 20%, justifications are also required.

Sample of this Final Report is available for (download) in this website.

In addition, school is required to submit:

2. **Project outcome surveys** via online survey platform to be completed by project coordinator and teachers engaged, of which the surveys' link will be provided to schools by email.

3. *(If audit is required)* **Expenditure Breakdown Form** in MS Excel format, which lists out all individual transactions aggregated to arrive at the reported total actual expenditures in each cost item in Expenditure Summary (i.e. 1(a) above), and the certified true copies of supporting documents in PDF format.

Templates of these documents will be provided at the time of project approval, and also be available upon request.

Question 40: Where can a school access the link of project outcome surveys?
Answer: The link of the surveys will be provided to the school 1 month before the project completion date via email.

Question 41: Will the Trust conduct an audit of the use made of its donation?
Answer: Yes, the Trust may conduct an audit of the use made of its donation. All schools are therefore reminded to retain accounting and non-accounting records of the project for a minimum of 7 and 3 years respectively after project completion.

Question 42: What is the audit arrangement?
Answer: The Trust appointed auditor will contact the selected school for submission of certified true copies of supporting documents (including the accounting and non-accounting records of the project) in PDF format. No physical document is accepted. After the auditor's review, written email enquiry would be sent to the contact email address provided by the school, if there is any outstanding information or clarification needed.

Payment Arrangement

Question 43: Can a school move budget from one category to another budget category?
Answer: The school should adhere to the approved budget of each budget category, as far as possible. If there are any foreseeable changes to the approved expenditure plan, leading to budget variation over 20% of its original budget, the school is required to seek the Trust's prior approval by submitting a budget variation application before implementation of such changes and justification in the Final Report and Expenditure Summary will be required. However, Category A and D spending should not exceed 50% and 20% of the total budget respectively. The school should be responsible for any deficit or cost overrun for each budget category. The Trust is not liable for and has no obligation to recognise or fund any deficit or cost overrun.

Question 44: Can a school apply for adjustment to an approved budget?
Answer: As a general rule, the school is required to adhere to the scope and budget as approved by the Trust including individual cost items and pledged output as far as possible. However, the Trust also acknowledges that adjustment to budget may be necessary due to operational needs. If a school has strong justifications for any category change of above 20%, school can complete the Budget Variation / Project Extension Form, summarising the revised expenditure plan, proposed revised amount of each category, with their impact on the pledged output indicators (if any), and submit it via email (info@jcereading.com). All adjustment requests must be well justified to demonstrate the needs for such adjustment. Application result will be announced by email, in around 10 working days.

Question 45: In what circumstances that adjustment to the approved budget is not allowed?
Answer: No budget adjustment is allowed for the following circumstances:
- The adjustment adversely affects the quantity and quality of the programmes and activities in this Scheme;
- Devices (including e-readers) and reading-related activities take up more than 50% and 20% of the total fund applied respectively;
- The variation in a budget category exceeds 20% of its original cost, without reasonable justification; OR
- Total proposed revised amount exceeds the total approved budget.

Question 46: If a school has purchased goods/ services online, what supporting document(s) should I retain?
Answer: The school is required to retain both the invoices and receipts for each purchase. If receipt is not available, please retain payment proof (e.g. bank remittance advices, credit card statements).

Question 47: If the receipt is denominated in foreign currency (e.g. USD), how can a school report the expenditure in HKD?
Answer: Please retain the receipts in foreign currency and the proof of exchange rate (e.g. credit card statements, etc.).

Question 48: Does a school need to refund the unutilised fund? If yes, how to refund?
Answer: Yes. The school is required to refund the unutilised fund by mailing a cheque to the Trust within 3 months after project completion. A detailed instruction with Trust's bank details will be sent to school 1 month before project completion.

Question 49: Can a school request a reimbursement if the total project expenditure is more than the applied fund but less than $100,000?
Answer: No, the Trust will not make any reimbursement in addition to the approved budget and is not liable for and has no obligation to fund any cost overrun.