



Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia
Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

2021 - CYCLE 2

DIGITAL SOCIETY RESEARCH GRANT

APPLICATION GUIDE

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DSRG
DIGITAL SOCIETY RESEARCH GRANT

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Section 1: ABOUT DIGITAL SOCIETY RESEARCH GRANT

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) Digital Society Research Grant (“DSRG”) was conceived to contribute towards the enhancement of information resources that are necessary in line with changing community expectations as we navigate the transition towards a sustainable digital civil society.
- 1.1.2 In meeting these aspirations, beyond the provisioning of infrastructure and communications services, there is a corresponding imperative that users possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively harness the potential of digital media and communications. Accordingly, digital media literacy has increasingly become a key competency in the twenty-first century for citizen and user participation across the economy and society. This has become exceedingly clear in the wake of the pandemic, which has heightened our dependence on digital technologies.
- 1.1.3 An important consideration that underpins MCMC’s initiatives has been to ensure that the access and benefits of the Information Age are equally shared by all Malaysians. Now, more than ever, coherent and incisive insights are required to address issues of inequitable opportunity, access, knowledge and skill. It is vital that the efforts are directed at ensuring the readiness and resilience of communities in as the nation strives to overcome the challenges wrought by a global pandemic.
- 1.1.4 In this regard, the current pandemic crisis has added a new dimension of urgency for research to inform, illuminate, navigate, and evaluate the country’s response to the pandemic. Studies that will look at the intersections of the digital world with policies, governance and technologies and capture the social and behavioural dimensions of the issues that are sought to be understood.
- 1.1.5 The outcomes of research should nonetheless align to National Policy Objectives to promote a civil society where information-based services will provide the basis of continuing enhancements to quality of work and life post-pandemic even as we endeavor to manage the realities of life today.

1.2 Objective

- 1.2.1 The objective of this grant is to grow the evidence base that is necessary for the nation to optimize on the advancements made in the deployment of communications infrastructure and

service. This will in turn inform policy, programmes and interventions aimed at promoting the inclusion and participation of all segments of the population as the nation transitions towards being a fully digitally connected and informed society.

1.3 Frequency

For 2021, two cycles of Call for Proposals are to be announced, with the first cycle and second cycle scheduled for March and August of 2021, respectively.

1.4 Research Focus Areas

1.4.1 Interested researchers are invited to submit project proposals on one of the 6 research titles within the two research focus areas below:

Table 1 - List of Digital Citizenship and Cyberwellness Research

No	Code	Research Category and Gap Area	Research Title
1	DCC-1	Guided Research for User Rights and Protection gap	User Rights and Protection for Subscribers of Telecommunications Services through the Provision of an Automatic Compensation Framework
2	DCC-2	Open Research for User Rights and Protection gap	Understanding the Behavioural Aspects of Cyberbullying and Interventions for Victims, Perpetrators, Parents and Stakeholders
3	DCC-3	Guided Research for User Rights and Protection gap	Effectiveness of Initiatives and Enforcement of Laws in handling, managing and countering false news proliferation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4	DCC-4	Guided Research for Competency and Capacity Development Gap	Communications and Multimedia (C&M) Industry Compliance Competency Gap Analysis

Table 2 - List of Digital Inclusion Research

No	Code	Research Category and Gap Area	Research Title
1	DI-1	Guided Research for Impact Assessment and Evaluation	Impact of Internet Access and Accessibility Initiatives in facilitating Students' M40 and B40 groups' needs during COVID-19 prevention measure period
2	DI-2	Guided Research for Programme Evaluation, Assessment and Impact gap	An Impact Study of Klik Dengan Bijak (KDB)

1.4.2 For Open Research mode, different research themes are available for selection with recommended Research Objectives (ROs). As for Guided Research mode, the predetermined ROs are to be achieved with the option for the researchers to recommend research design.

1.4.3 For further information on gap area, targeted research subjects, research problem and context together with desired research aims and objectives please refer to **Appendix 1**.

1.5 Duration of Project

1.5.1 The term of a project is up to nine (9) months including six (6) months of research activities until the submission of the research report at the end of the 6th month.

1.5.2 All research must commence within two (2) weeks of the date of the signing of the Letter of Award. The project shall be completed according to the duration and deadlines stipulated in the Letter of Award. Applicants shall indicate the project duration in the proposal including each phase of work.

1.6 Grant Amount

1.6.1 The grant amount shall depend on the type and scope of the research project and subject to the guidelines herein and may be of a sum of up to Ringgit Malaysia ten thousand (RM10,000).

SECTION 2: APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

2.1.1 The grant is open to full-time academic faculty member in schools of communications, social sciences, humanities or related fields of private and public institutions of higher learning (IHLs). Each proposal must have a Lead Researcher who will be subject to the general terms and conditions for granting.

2.1.2 The following rules apply to applicant:

- Lead Researcher must hold a doctoral degree;
- Lead Researcher must hold an appointment with a local IHL for (at least) the duration of proposed research project;
- The salary of the researcher(s) cannot be financed from this grant;

- The researcher(s) requests the grant on her/his own behalf and on behalf of any possible project consortium; and
- The researcher(s) is responsible for research and financial matters.

2.1.3 Researchers can only submit one proposal as Lead Researcher within this call and each researcher can act no more than twice as applicant (as Lead Researcher or co-researcher).

2.1.4 The research team must be comprised of at least two researchers (a Lead Researcher and a co-researcher). Researcher(s) in professions other than academia are allowed to be part of the research team to complement the expertise and with the expectation that the product of the research will contribute to the wider body of knowledge on the topic specified.

2.2 Research Proposal

2.2.1 Proposals must be submitted using the Proposal Submission Form which include the following sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Problem Statement
- Research Aims and Objectives
- Literature Review and Bibliography
- Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
- Research Methodology
- Budgetary requirements
- Project Timeline and Deliverables

2.2.2 The form is available for download via this link [<https://www.mcmc.gov.my/en/grants/2021-digital-society-research-grant-call-for-propo>].

2.2.3 The research proposal must also take into consideration and include a contingency plan for disruptions such as those arising from movement control restrictions. This is a precaution to ensure that such risks are mitigated. Any requests for extension of project deadlines is discouraged and all reasonable attempts must be made to preserve the timely completion of deliverables.

2.3 Expenditure Details

2.3.1 *Remuneration and allowances*

This extends to wages and allowance for temporary and contract personnel who are directly engaged in the project.

Period of employment and hourly/monthly rate for research assistant must be clearly stated and justified.

2.3.2 *Travel and transportation*

Only travel expenses (domestic) directly related to the project are claimable.

2.3.3 *Rental*

Only rental expenses for building space, equipment, transportation and any other item directly related to the project should be included.

2.3.4 *Research materials and supplies*

This extends to expenses for research materials and supplies directly related to the project such as books, magazines, computer software, photocopying, printing binding, filming, consumables (stationeries, etc.), charges from postage, telephone, fax and other expenses necessary to complete the project. The purchase of mobile phones is not claimable.

2.3.5 *Special Services*

Consultancy, translation, payment of research subjects, data gathering and processing costs are claimable.

2.3.6 *Conference*

Only for defraying conference costs for the Lead Researcher; not more than 10% of total grant amount, whichever is lower.

2.3.7 *Publication*

Publication fees for peer-reviewed journals only; allocation is not more than RM2,000.

2.4 Proposal Submission

2.4.1 The proposals may be in English or Bahasa Melayu and shall be presented clearly and submitted together with the following:

- Proposal Submission Form – **both in pdf. and word.doc formats;**
- Curriculum vitae of the Lead Researcher and team member(s) involved;
- Certified true copies of highest academic certificates; and
- Other relevant materials to support the proposal.

2.4.2 The electronic copy of the proposal and other documents should be emailed to the Secretariat with '**DSRG 2021 Research Proposal**' in the subject line and addressed to dsrg@mcmc.gov.my, **no later than 5:00pm, Wednesday, 8 September 2021.**

2.4.3 An acknowledgement will be sent once the proposal has been received by the Secretariat. Those submitting proposals and

NOT receiving an email confirmation within a week should contact the Programme Secretariat.

2.4.4 All applicants are advised to adhere to the requirements therein, submissions that do not follow the requirements will risk to being disqualified from consideration. **Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered.**

2.4.5 If so required by the university, applicants can submit the proposals through the respective universities' Research Management Centre (or equivalent department) and the researchers are not required to submit directly to the Secretariat to avoid multiple submissions.

2.5 Evaluation of Proposals

2.5.1 Proposals will be evaluated by the DSRG Technical Panel based on open competition and merit, and taking into consideration the following criteria:

- *Quality*: Rationale and justification are presented coherently and logically and is within the context of the research focus and key growth areas. Ethical considerations have also been identified and addressed;
- *Impact of research*: The analysis of the research problem identified an opportunity to contribute to the implementation or the evolution of one or more MCMC policies or initiatives. The proposed study is also potentially significant for offering new insights in the subject area and other relevant sectors;
- *Alignment to internal requirement*: The need and relevancy of the research in contributing towards departmental specific works and potentially provides useful and relevant data for knowledge base.
- *Suitability of applicant*: The degree to which the researchers have the experience, expertise, skills and knowledge in the proposed area of research and with the proposed methodology to accomplish the stated aims of the project; and
- *Feasibility*: The appropriateness of the proposed activities, methods, planned activities and resources to accomplish the project within the timeframe stated. The proposal also identifies the challenges in implementing the project and measures to overcome the challenges.

2.5.2 The Lead Researcher may be invited to present their proposal to the Technical Panel as part of the evaluation process.

2.6 Award/Rejection of Proposals

2.6.1 The various factors contributing to the poor suitability of submitted proposals include the following aspects:

- Researchers do not understand MCMC's role and functions, thereby submitting proposals outside MCMC's regulative scope or too remote of that impacting key regulatory partners or stakeholders;
- Proposed research is based on the study of research questions with existing high research work and publications and does not provide new insights, value or new knowledge;
- Research scope may not be feasible in view of the grant amount and limited duration allowed for under the DSRG;
- Researchers' expertise does not match the research field of the proposal and/or lacks past research experience in the proposed area of study.
- The literature review and theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks underpinning a proposed study were not included; and
- Submissions were of non-research proposals such as the development of prototype or application development.

2.6.2 The Technical Panel reserves the right to consider any other factors that it may deem relevant in the process of evaluation. The Technical Panel reserves the right to reject proposals that do not meet the submission and evaluation criteria.

2.6.3 Successful applicants will be informed in writing. The Technical Panel may suggest changes to the proposals which may include cost/funding, scope and research timelines. The successful applicant is required to sign a Letter of Award to indicate the acceptance of the grant and the terms and conditions thereof.

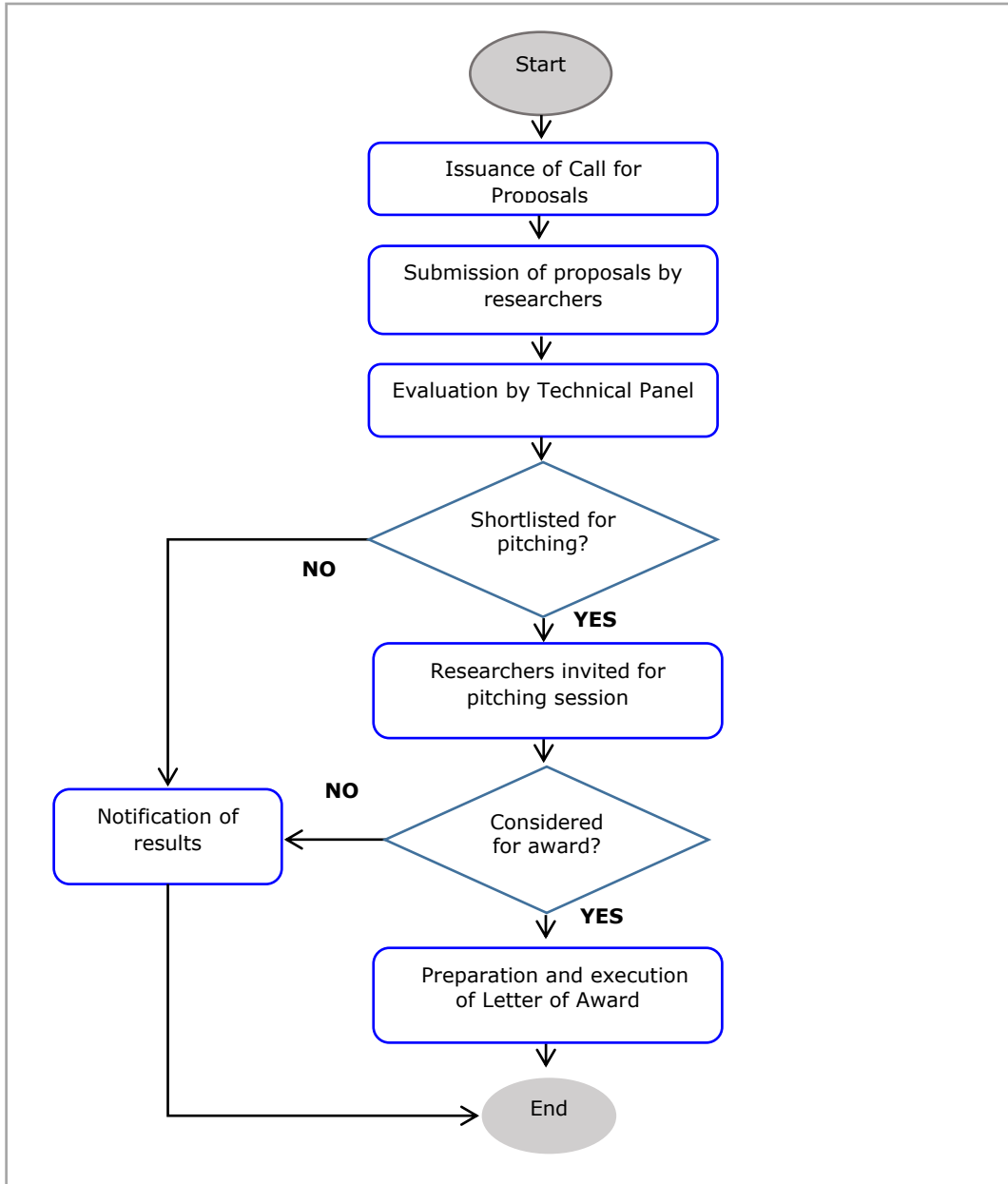
2.7 Submission, Evaluation and Award Process Timeframe

2.7.1 An overview of the DSRG 2021 (Cycle 1) timeframe is as tabulated below:

Process	Date
Issuance of Call for Proposal	9 Aug. 2021
Deadline for submissions	5:00pm, 8 Sept. 2021
Information session with researchers	3 rd week of Aug. 2021
Evaluation process	3 rd week of Sept. – Oct. 2021
Notification period	End of Oct. 2021
Preparation & execution of Letter of Award	Early Nov. 2021
Project commencement	3 rd week of Nov. 2021

2.7.2 Figure 1 below is the flowchart for the submission, evaluation and award process of DSRG.

Figure 1: Process flow chart for submission, evaluation and award of DSRG



SECTION 3: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

3.1 Disbursement of Funds

3.1.1 The grant will be disbursed according to the following schedule:

Disbursement phase	Quantum (%)	Description
First disbursement	50	Upon signing of Letter of Award
Second disbursement	40	Upon submission and acceptance of Interim Report
Final disbursement	10	Upon submission and acceptance of Project Report and Manuscript

3.2 Submission of Reports and Manuscript

3.2.1 Interim Report (IR)

The Lead Researcher is responsible for the successful implementation of the project according to agreed timelines and for the timely submission of the IR. It is required for the IR to be submitted in a timely manner (not more than 7 days) upon achieving 50% of project completion.

The IR is to be submitted together with the expenditure report. Templates for both the IR and expenditure report will be provided by the Secretariat.

The reports will be evaluated against the deliverables to determine whether the project is on track and the conditions for disbursement are met.

3.2.2 Research Report (RR)

The RR is required to be submitted within 7 days after research activities completion (end of 6th month) to the MCMC. The RR shall include (but not limited to) the following:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Research Objectives
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Direct outputs of the Research
- Achievements based on the original Research objectives
- Implications and recommendations for regulatory and policy considerations
- Recommendations for future research

The RR is to be submitted together with the expenditure report according to the template provided by the Secretariat.

3.2.3 Manuscript

The manuscript will be published in MCMC's research publication known as Media Matters. The manuscript is to be submitted upon completion of research (end of 6th month) according to the template to be provided by the Secretariat.

3.2.4 Financial Report (FR)

The FR is to be submitted within three (3) months of research completion/submission of RR with a verified financial statement from the university. Template for the FR will be provided by the Secretariat.

3.3 Dissemination of Findings

3.3.1 The MCMC may elect to publish and distribute all or portions of the research report and/or manuscript without restriction.

3.3.2 Researchers will be invited to present their research findings at MCMC meetings/seminar/symposium and may be invited to participate in media engagement activities arranged by MCMC as a spokesperson for the research project.

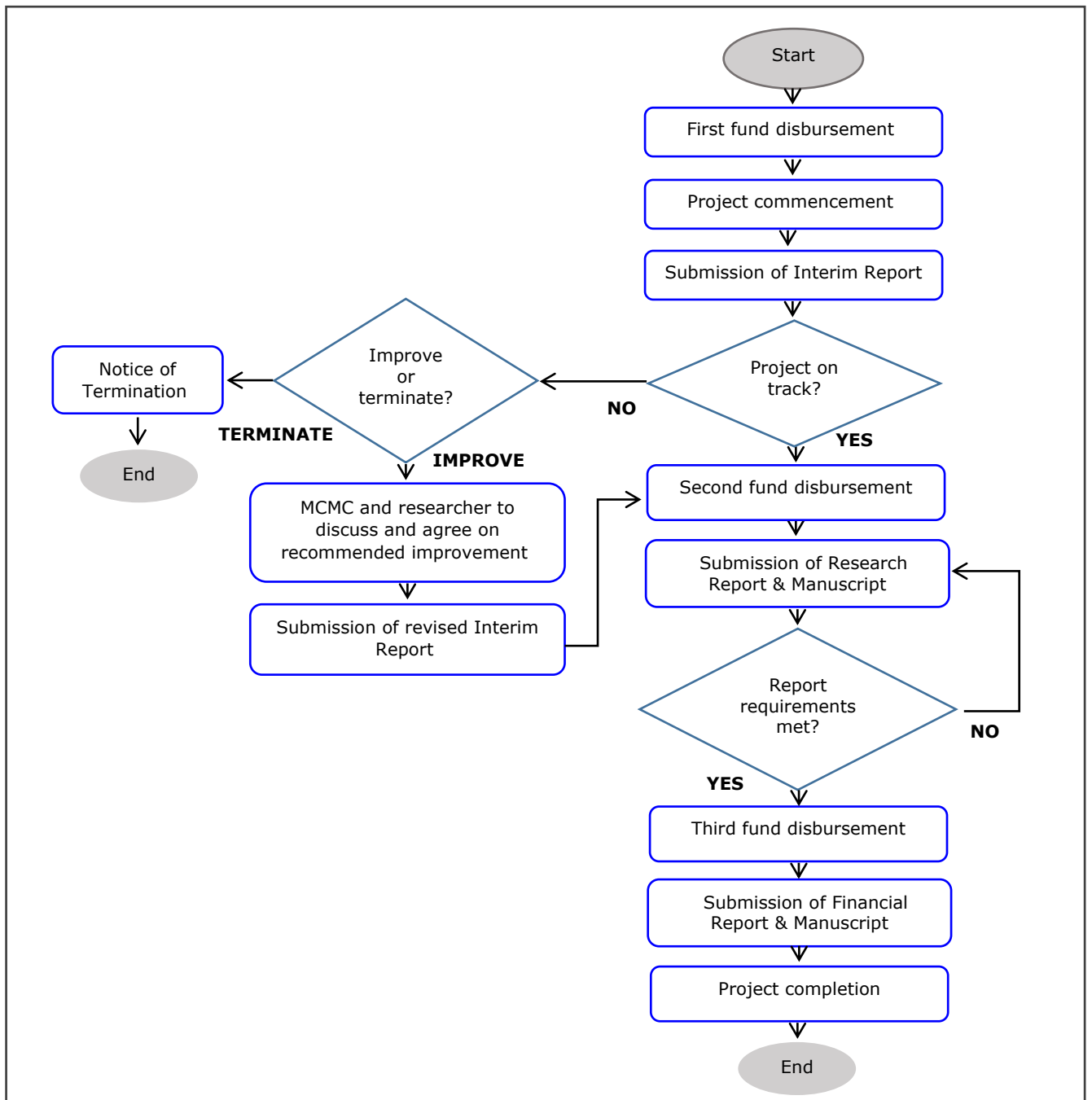
3.4 Project Completion Notification

3.4.1 An acknowledgement of project completion will be sent to the Lead Researcher once the requirement for proper project closure and conditions such as satisfactory submissions of reports and financial statements are met.

3.5 Project Implementation and Monitoring Process Flow

3.5.1 An overview of the project implementation and monitoring process is provided in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Process flow chart for project implementation and monitoring



SECTION 4: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

4.1 Intellectual Property (IP)

4.1.1 Ownership and management of IP, royalties and any other forms of fees received by the institution resulting from the findings or outputs of the research such as licensing of the IP or

any other forms of commercialization, shall be governed in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions outlined in the Letter of Award.

4.2 Publishing Rights

4.2.1 The MCMC is entitled to publish the research reports in any form as it deems fit, for the purpose of education or knowledge transfer. This notwithstanding, the Lead Researcher is required to contribute through publishing and presenting research findings in local or international events/media, subject to the prior approval of the MCMC. Copies of all publications are to be submitted to the Secretariat.

4.2.2 The Lead Researcher shall denote and acknowledge the source of research funding and support for the project and the contribution of the various entities.

-End of document-

APPENDIX 1 - 2021 DSRG RESEARCH TITLES

Table 1 - List of Digital Citizenship and Cyberwellness Research

No	Code	Research Category and Gap Area	Research Title
1	DCC-1	Guided Research for User Rights and Protection gap	User Rights and Protection for Subscribers of Telecommunications Services through the Provision of an Automatic Compensation Framework
2	DCC-2	Open Research for User Rights and Protection gap	Understanding the Behavioural Aspects of Cyberbullying and Interventions for Victims, Perpetrators, Parents and Stakeholders
3	DCC-3	Guided Research for User Rights and Protection gap	Effectiveness of Initiatives and Enforcement of Laws in handling, managing and countering false news proliferation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4	DCC-4	Guided Research for Competency and Capacity Development Gap	Communications and Multimedia (C&M) Industry Compliance Competency Gap Analysis

1. DCC-1: User Rights and Protection for Subscribers of Telecommunications Services through the Provision of an Automatic Compensation Framework

i. Category, Gap and Target Group

The research falls within the Guided Research Category addressing the gap area of **User Rights and Protection** and targets service providers and commercial and non-commercial users.

ii. Research Problem/Context

Today, the trend and requirement to use telecommunications services have shown an increase in the number of users and network traffic utilisation. Subscribers are increasingly dependent on telecommunications services and when service disruptions do occur, it can have significant repercussions on the user's ability to manage their daily lives. Over the past three years, service disruptions have consistently appeared amongst the top five types of complaints lodged with MCMC. Complaints with regards to affected services are also directed to the Communications and Multimedia Consumer Forum (CFM).

As a designated forum under the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, CFM has been given the powers to draw up specific provisions on General Principles of Compensation under the General Consumer Code of Practice (GCC Code) 2003. To date, these have yet to be developed as a specific code on the compensation and protection of consumers of telecommunications and internet services.

iii. Research Aims

This Call for Proposal is desirous of research providing insights in identifying the viability of the following items:

- a. forms of compensation (monetary vs. non-monetary);
- b. modes of compensation (automatic compensation vs. case by case process based compensation);
- c. basis and methods of compensation calculation; and
- d. recommendation as to suitability of form, mode and calculation method for different types of services.

Researchers are requested to consider the above areas from perspective of both:

- a. the potential impact of the compensation from an industry perspective; and
- b. the potential regulatory impediments and requirements for implementing a potential compensation duty and mechanism on licensees.

iv. Research Objectives

Researchers are invited to submit research objectives aligned to one or a combination of the identified research aims guided by the following overarching research objectives (ROs):

- a. RO 1 - Conduct comparative studies (industry benchmark, best practices and metrics) of a general compensation duty and model in other countries and recommendations for Malaysia.
- b. RO 2 - Identify consumers' satisfaction level with complaints and compensation process; and compensation and remedy received.
- c. RO 3 - Review consumers' perspective on the need for an automatic compensation framework and potential identification of compensation provisions for the General Consumer Code of Practice for the Communications and Multimedia Industry Malaysia (GCC).
- d. RO 4 - Propose the necessary features of a fair and effective automatic compensation framework for Malaysia.

2. DCC-2: Understanding the Behavioural Aspects of Cyberbullying and Interventions for Victims, Perpetrators, Parents and Stakeholders

i. Category, Gap and Target Group

The research falls within the Open Research Category addressing the gap area of **User Rights and Protection** and targets victims and perpetrators. Potential stakeholders may include the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, parents, the general public and media.

ii. Research Problem/Context

Cyberbullying can have adverse negative psychological effects for both the victim and perpetrator long into adulthood.

Various research have studied the nature of the risk, with data identifying the platforms and user behaviours, which increase the susceptibility of victims and amplify the opportunities for predation for online perpetrators. Past research have also studied the perceptions of online users on cyberbullying, related to its inherent risks and risk mediation approaches.

iii. Special Consideration

This research shall build upon prior and complement the prior DSRG research entitled the ***Study on Adequacy of Malaysian Laws in Regulating Cyberbullying***. Apart from supporting the desirability of further legislative and administrative measures to curtail and manage cyber bullying issues and incidences, the research also touched on operating definitions including bullying, cyber bullying and harassment. All intending applicants in this research area are therefore invited to refer to this prior research and may obtain the same by requesting a pdf copy from the DSRG Secretariat.

iv. Research Aims

This Call for Proposal is desirous of eliciting research proposals that go beyond the current body of research focusing on the risk factors of the phenomena of cyberbullying in Malaysia. In providing the context and background for cyberbullying in Malaysia, researchers are invited to conduct a meta-analysis on the current body of research currently available pertaining to risk and harm.

In moving beyond risk, researchers are requested to select one or a combination of the following themes for their research proposals:

- a. Understanding of cyberbullying related attitudinal and behavioural factors;
- b. Detection of cyberbullying incidences;
- c. Interventions for cyberbullying incidences;
- d. Awareness and prevention of cyberbullying incidences; and
- e. Efficacy of legal remedies and instruments.

v. Research Objectives

Potential researchers are invited to submit research aligned to one or a combination of the identified research themes (RTs) guided by the following overarching research objectives (ROs):

- a. **RT 1 - Understanding of cyberbullying related attitudinal and behavioral factors.**
 - RO 1 – Investigate, compile, identify general research themes and categories, and highlight important research work through metadata research;
 - RO 2 –Prioritise, rationalise and recommend areas requiring administrative and legislative intervention citing international and localized evidences and trends.
- b. **RT 2 - Detection of cyberbullying incidences.**
 - RO 1 – Identify and categorise attitudinal/behavioural models and data variables and sub items adopted for the utilisation of different forms of detection of cyberbullying incidences
 - RO 2 – Assessment of different methods to preempt, monitor and/or report cyberbullying incidences
 - RO 3 – Rationalise and recommend potential mode of detection for consideration citing international and localized evidences and trends
- c. **RT 3 - Interventions for cyberbullying incidences.**
 - RO 1 - Identify prevention and intervention strategies, aimed at perpetrators or victims in coping or assisting the recovery from cyberbullying incidences
 - RO 2- obtain views and perspectives from the parties affected by, responsible for or responsible for the administration of cyberbullying treatment, response and management
 - RO 3 – Optional objective on testing and validation of intervention(s) aimed at victims, perpetrators, and stakeholders of cyber bullying

d. **RT 4 - Awareness and prevention of cyberbullying incidences.**

- RO 1 – Metadata on the classification and comparative merits of pre-emptive approaches to prevent and reduce the incidences of cyberbullying
- RO 2 – Benchmarking and comparison of best practices of socializing and communicating on cyber bullying and preventative approaches together with a consideration of platforms and methods of delivery

3. DCC-3: Effectiveness of Initiatives and Enforcement of Laws in handling, managing and countering false news proliferation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

i. **Category, Gap and Target Group**

The research falls within the Guided Research Category addressing the gap area of **User Rights and Protection** and targets general users of communications and multimedia services.

ii. **Special Consideration**

Submitted proposals for this research are requested to be submitted in bilingual format (English and Malay) using the Malay form of the title ***“Keberkesanan Inisiatif dan Penguatkuasaan Undang-Undang Dalam Usaha Menangani Berita Palsu Berkaitan COVID-19”***. Successful recipients for this research area will also be required to submit both Malay and English versions of the Interim and Final Report for this project. Therefore, apart from the potential multi-disciplinary make-up of research members, it is advised that membership of the research team shall include the services of a translator able to translate and edit from Malay to English and vice-versa.

iii. **Research Problem/Context**

In combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, an important impediment in ensuring the right information, advisories, advisories and communication of precautionary measures and Standard Operating Procedures have been the proliferation of false news about COVID-19. The speed, sophistication and viral nature of false news production and distribution have created uncertainty, distrust, fear and confusion about the various initiatives, communications and efficacy surrounding efforts to curtail COVID-19.

In responding to the rise in false news, the Government has taken unprecedented measures to employ legal, administrative and holistic

communications measures to both ensure the curtailment of the spread and recovery measures of COVID-19, but also to address, manage and halt the spread of COVID-19 false news through legislative and administrative instruments.

iv. Research Aims

This Call for Proposal is desirous of eliciting research proposals providing insights to understand and ascertain the nature and severity of COVID-19 false news and efficacy of the Government's counter measures in addressing this issue.

v. Research Objectives

Researchers are invited to submit proposals guided by the following overarching research objectives (ROs):

- a. RO 1 - To understand the extent, nature and impact of COVID-19 false news in Malaysia
- b. RO 2 - To examine the conceptual, theoretical and legal frameworks of false news in Malaysia
- c. RO 3 - To examine the administrative and communication aspects of the Government's COVID-19 management and COVID-19 false news counter-measures
- d. RO 4 - To investigate the effectiveness of the initiatives and enforcement of the law in curbing COVID-19 false news in Malaysia and propose appropriate instrument/index to indicate the effectiveness level
- e. RO 5 - To analyse the initiatives in curbing COVID-19 false news in other jurisdictions for lessons to be learned, if any
- f. RO 6 - To propose appropriate governing modalities for curbing COVID-19 false news in Malaysia

***4. DCC-4: Communications and Multimedia (C&M) Industry
Competency Gap Analysis***

i. Category, Gap and Target Group

The research falls within the Guided Research Category addressing the gap area of **Competency and Capacity Development** and targets identified C&M industry and its value chain services, PBTs and related government agencies/bodies (e.g. Law Enforcement Agencies), existing workforce, young executives (1-3 years in service).

ii. Research Problem/Context

In furtherance of MCMC's regulatory and developmental function and of the 10 National Policy Objectives under the Communications and Multimedia Act (1998) (CMA), two are related to efficient allocation of resources and industry competency development respectively. Section 3(2)(h) and (i) of the CMA is related to MCMC's objective to facilitate the efficient allocation of resources and development of capabilities skills within industry respectively. Therefore, in meeting these two related objectives there is a need to address competence gaps for the improved:

- a. delivery of national C&M initiatives and improved regulatory compliance efficiency; and
- b. regulatory compliance efficiency and impact.

iii. Research Aims

This Call for Proposal is desirous of eliciting research proposals providing insights to understand and ascertain the skills and competency gaps throughout the Communications and Multimedia (C&M) value chain.

The research findings will be an important input and consideration for the development of capacity, capability, knowledge sharing and awareness programs by MCMC Academy to be offered to the public or targeted MCMC stakeholders especially in support of the deployment of C&M services and infrastructure and awareness/compliance/adherence to C&M regulatory requirements, guidelines, code etc.

Researchers are invited to conduct a **gap analysis related to one or a combination** of technology and regulatory competencies or by workforce pool required to deploy the MCMC programs and agenda below:

- a. JENDELA, including infrastructure projects funded by Universal Services Fund Provision Fund;
- b. 5G implementation;
- c. JENDELA Portal and Mobile App;
- d. Disaster Recovery Centre Project;
- e. Small Entrepreneur Digitalisation Empowerment Programme (Program Pemerkasaan Pendigitalan Usahawan Kecil - PUPUK);
- f. National Courier Accelerator Plan (PAKEJ);
- g. Malaysia Government SuperApp (especially MySejahtera App);
- h. National Experience Centre (NEX); and
- i. in support of Dasar 4IR, DSTIN2021-2030 and 10-10MySTIE Framework.

iv. **Research Objectives**

Researchers are invited to submit proposals guided by the following overarching research objectives (ROs):

- a. RO 1 - To understand **compliance challenges** arising from regulatory processes that require competency bridging;
- b. RO 2 - To propose and identify **competencies areas** that promote the **development/delivery of national C&M agenda or initiatives**;
- c. RO 3 - To propose and identify **competencies areas** that promote the **compliance of regulatory processes**; and
- d. RO 4 - To propose and identify the required subject matter areas (including any professional certifications wherever possible) for C&M project deployment (e.g. for existing network planners, technologists, professional engineers, government/PBT/LEA officers, as well as for new executives (1-3 years in service) etc.)

Table 2 - List of Digital Inclusion Research

No	Code	Research Category and Gap Area	Research Title
1	DI-1	Guided Research for Impact Assessment and Evaluation	Impact of Internet Access and Accessibility Initiatives in facilitating Students' M40 and B40 groups' needs during COVID-19 prevention measure period
2	DI-2	Guided Research for Programme Evaluation, Assessment and Impact gap	An Impact Study of Klik Dengan Bijak (KDB)

1. DI-1: Impact of Internet Access and Accessibility Initiatives in facilitating Students' M40 and B40 groups' needs during COVID-19 prevention measure period

i. Category, Gap and Target Group

The research falls within the Guided Research Category addressing the gap area of **Impact Assessment and Evaluation** and to target primary, secondary, tertiary students, and general users from the M40 and B40 groups.

ii. Research Problem/Context

Internet usage in Malaysia has surged in the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic prompting people to turn to the internet for their educational, work, information seeking, entertainment, retail and communication requirements. According to a joint report from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) published in 2020, two thirds of the world's school-age children, corresponding to 1.3 billion children between the age of 3 to 17 do not have internet connection in their homes. This lack of internet connectivity amongst children globally has had a follow-on impact on hampering students' participation in home-based teaching and learning especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where virtual learning has become the default learning mode necessitated by physical closure of schools.

In meeting this increased usage and higher reliance on the internet for study, work and social purposes, major Malaysian telecommunications providers have announced various initiatives including free data, free online tuition classes (*Tuisyen Rakyat, Jom Tuisyen, E-Kelas* and *i-LEARN Ace*) and bill rebates to all internet subscribers. Additionally, special subscription data packages have been offered to students at secondary schools and Institutions of Higher Learning. These offerings differ slightly based on the terms and conditions of the respective providers.

Further, users comprising the B40 (Bottom 40), M40 (Middle 40) and students are offered data and device subsidies as well as free Wi-Fi access at selected Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) residences and extended operating hours at selected Pusat Komuniti (PIK) to encourage the use and access of internet.

iii. Research Aims

This Call for Proposal is desirous of eliciting research proposals providing an understanding of the extent, usage pattern and impact of internet access incentives on the identified groups, namely students, M40, and B40 and identification of strengths, weaknesses and potential improvements in its coverage and efficacy.

iv. Research Objectives

Researchers are invited to submit proposals guided by the following overarching research objectives (ROs):

- a. RO 1 – Modes of access, level of take up of services and contributing factors and impediments vis-à-vis the different user groups
- b. RO 2 – Impact of offerings in facilitating a shift to new norms namely communications for work, study, information access and social cohesion
- c. RO 3 – Recommendations for improved targeting of offerings, data allocation, access, type and duration to facilitate usage patterns and requirement during the new norm.

2. DI-2: An Impact Study of Klik Dengan Bijak (KDB) Programme

i. Category, Gap and Target Group

The research falls within the Guided Research Category addressing the gap area of **Programme Evaluation, Assessment and Impact** and targets participants who have attended KDB training sessions.

ii. Research Problem/Context

The Internet has become an important medium for education, communication, information sharing, and personal growth of every individual including target groups such as adolescents etc. But along with its many positive uses and benefits, the ubiquity of internet connectivity has also seen risk-taking behaviours especially adolescents.

In order to promote positive usage and curtail undesirable online behaviours MCMC continues to run the *Klik Dengan Bijak* (Click Wisely) initiative aimed at educating and raising public awareness about Internet safety and security. MCMC launched the KDB initiative in 2012 as a response to the need to raise awareness among Internet users in Malaysia and to curb online abuse. The initiative seeks to create awareness, promote, and educate the public on the positive and ethical use of the Internet while stressing on the importance of self-regulation. The programming of the initiative is based on Rukun Negara with the main thrust being safe, secure and responsible.

KDB implementation includes development of online safety modules, training of trainers with state offices and *Pusat Internet Komuniti* (PIKs) as well as public talks, contests, and offline and online promotions. From 2012 until 2020, KDB has achieved more than 6 million in audience reach, 85,000 followers on social media platforms, and trained 1,730 PIK staff at 873 PIKs. KDB covers topics such as Introduction to telecommunications technologies; user rights and the laws on online offences; cyber bully; online sexual grooming; digital parenting; parental control tools; oversharing; scam; false information; computer security; cyber terrorism; and self-regulation.

iii. Research Aims

Research findings are aimed at providing an understanding of the vital role of awareness and educating the public such as parents and young children

In relation to this educational and outreach role MCMC is desirous of research to provide insights and recommendations on how to improve the KDB program and ensure a higher level of effectiveness amongst the public in the future.

iv. Research Objectives

Researchers are invited to submit proposals guided by the following overarching research objectives (ROs):

- a. RO 1 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the KDB programme.
- b. RO 2 - Conduct comparative studies (benchmark, best practices and metrics and indicators for digital literacies) and models in other countries.
- c. RO 3 - Examine whether the programme has brought about a positive change in the population's attitudes and has contributed to safe, secure and responsible use of the internet.
- d. RO 4 - Assess and provide recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the KDB programme.

-End of Appendix I-