

Achievements and Grants

ACHIEVEMENTS
GRANTS



ACHIEVEMENTS

Prof. Naubahar SHARIF Reappointed to Membership of the Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) Expert Group



Prof. Naubahar SHARIF

The Division of Public Policy at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) is proud to announce that Professor Naubahar Sharif has been appointed to the membership of the Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) Expert Group. This appointment reflects his expertise and contributions in the field of public policy, particularly in innovation and technology, and underscores his ability to provide valuable insights on strategic and long-term policy issues.

Professor Sharif is a Professor of Public Policy at HKUST, with a Ph.D. from Cornell University (2005). His research interests span science, technology and innovation (STI) policy in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, automation in China, and the Belt and Road initiative, aligning closely with the focus areas of the CEPU Expert Group. He is a dedicated educator, having received multiple teaching awards at HKUST, including the Interdisciplinary Programs Office's Teaching Excellence Award (2020) and the School of Humanities and Social Science Best Teacher Award (2009 and 2016). His research has made a notable impact, with his work being featured as a sole-authored "impact case study" for HKUST's 2020 Research Assessment Exercise, and he frequently contributes opinion pieces to local newspapers and appears in local media.

The CEPU Expert Group, established by the Government on 30 May 2023 with 56 members from diverse backgrounds including business, finance, professionals, think-tanks, and academia, aims to provide expert views and new ideas to the CEPU on various topics. It is organized into three streams: Economic Advancement, Social Development, and Research Strategy, with a one-year term ending on 29 May 2024. The CEPU, operational since 28 December 2022, focuses on in-depth studies of Mainland and global developments, forward-looking research on strategic issues, coordination of the Chief Executive's Policy Address, and support for policy formulation, among other key functions.

Professor Sharif's appointment to the CEPU Expert Group is a testament to his profound knowledge and experience in public policy, especially in innovation policy. The Division of Public Policy at HKUST celebrates this significant appointment and looks forward to his continued contributions to bridging academic research and public policy, both through his role in the Expert Group and his ongoing work in academia.

Congratulations, Professor Sharif, on this well-deserved appointment!

**Prof. Kira MATUS,
Prof. Alex Jingwei He and
Dr. Nicolo LUDOVICE Awarded the
General Research Fund (GRF)**

Prof. Kira MATUS



Prof. Alex Jingwei He



Dr. Nicolo LUDOVICE



The Division of Public Policy (PPOL) is delighted to announce that three of its distinguished faculty members have been awarded the General Research Fund (GRF) by the University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong.

The UGC is a prestigious body that supports and promotes research excellence in higher education institutions across Hong Kong. Each year, the UGC receives a significant number of applications, making the competition intense and the selection process highly rigorous. Securing a GRF is a notable achievement that reflects the quality and impact of the research conducted by our faculty.

Congratulations to Prof. Kira Matus, Prof. Alex Jingwei He, and Dr. Nicolo Ludovice on this remarkable accomplishment! This recognition not only highlights their individual excellence but also underscores that PPOL has become the best-performing division within the Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS) this year.



Prof. Alex Jingwei He Awarded the Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship



Prof. Alex Jingwei He

We are thrilled to announce that Prof. He, Professor of the Division of Public Policy and Acting Director of the Institute for Public Policy, has been awarded the Humanities and Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS) 2025-26 from Hong Kong's Research Grants Council (RGC), recognizing his academic excellence, contributions to policy research, as well as social and economic applications.

With this fellowship, Prof. He will receive HK\$669,200 to support his research project "Understanding China's Huge and Complex Health Policy Reform: A Governance Approach". This project aims to contribute to scholarly knowledge on health policy through an integrative interdisciplinary approach. It examines China's complex health policy reforms initiated in 2009, which impact 1.4 billion people. Traditional analyses often focus on health economics, leading to a narrow understanding that overlooks the vital roles of governance and political economy. By highlighting these aspects, this project provides a more comprehensive understanding of health policy reforms in a country of continental scale.

The HSSPFS was first launched in 2012/13. It aims at granting extended time-off and supporting funds to outstanding investigators with a proven track record of research and publication under the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel to enable them to focus on research work and writing. Each year, the HSSPFS awards a maximum of 10 fellowships.

This recognition adds to Prof. He's growing accolades, including his recent appointment by the WHO's Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies to lead a regional consortium focused on digital health innovation, and the IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025, among others.

Congratulations, Prof. He, on this well-deserved recognition! Your contributions are invaluable to our division and the field of public policy.

Prof. Alex Jingwei He Receives the IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025



Prof. Alex Jingwei He

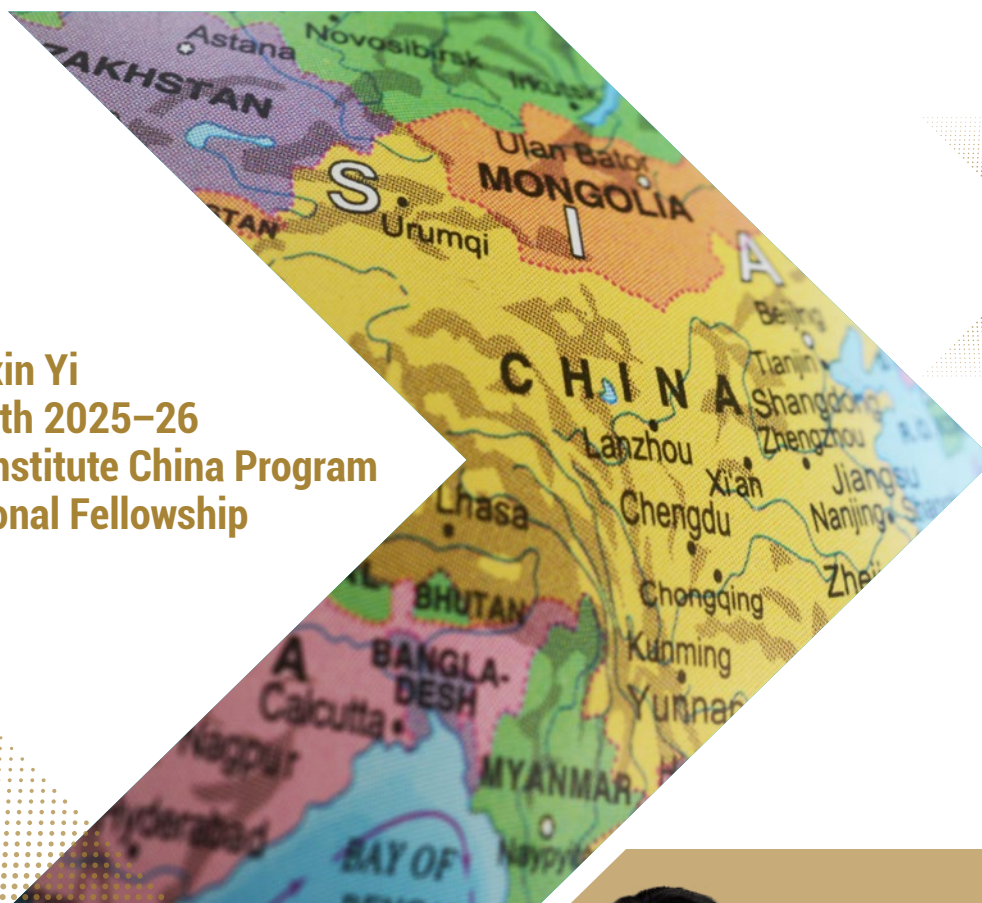
The Division of Public Policy (PPOL) is proud to share that Professor Alex Jingwei He has been awarded the Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025 by the International Public Policy Association (IPPA).

Professor He is the first Chinese scholar to receive this prestigious honour since the award's establishment in 2021. He has been recognised for his significant scholarly contributions to health policy, policy design and innovation, population ageing, and social policy, with a particular emphasis on advancing public policy in developing country contexts.

The award will be officially presented at the 7th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP) to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in July 2025.

This recognition underscores PPOL's continued commitment to excellence in public policy research and its global impact.

Dr. Fangxin Yi
Awarded th 2025–26
Lincoln Institute China Program
International Fellowship



Dr. Fangxin Yi



The Division of Public Policy proudly announces that Dr. Fangxin Yi has received the 2025–26 Lincoln Institute China Program International Fellowship for her research titled “Fiscal Decentralization and the Strategic Embedding of Land-Centered Urbanization: Three Decades under the Tax-Sharing System.”

Her project was recognized among the top initiatives addressing urban and fiscal policy challenges in the recently announced 2025–2026 International Research in China program.

This prestigious fellowship supports outstanding scholars researching urban development, land policy, and fiscal governance in China. It fosters academic excellence and provides resources and networks to enhance understanding of China’s complex systems.

The fellowship promotes interdisciplinary research on sustainable urbanization and fiscal decentralization, bridging academic knowledge and practical policymaking for better urban governance in China and beyond.

Congratulations, Dr. Yi, on this remarkable accomplishment!



Dr. Fangxin Yi Leads Team to Win 2025 Best Publication Award from the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSPA)



Dr. Fangxin Yi

We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Fangxin Yi led an international research team in a three-year project that conducted a large-scale field experiment involving over 20 million residents in Chengdu, examining the impact of participatory budgeting on behavioral change. This work, which explored the effectiveness of participatory mechanisms at scale, was published in *Nature Human Behaviour* and received the 2025 Best Publication Award from the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSPA) globally.

The 2025 Best Publication Award from the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSPA) recognizes an outstanding scholarly contribution that advances the rigorous application of behavioral and social science to policy and practice. BSPA is a globally recognized interdisciplinary organization dedicated to promoting evidence-based policymaking by bridging the gap between research and real-world impact. This prestigious award highlights the association's commitment to fostering research that is not only methodologically sound but also highly relevant to pressing societal challenges.

Congratulations, Dr. Yi, on this well-deserved recognition! Your contributions are invaluable to our division and the field of public policy.

GRANT

LEADING FACULTY

Naubahar SHARIF

PROJECT TITLE

Bottom-Up Dragons: How China's Borderland SOEs are Reshaping the Go Global Strategy in Southeast Asia

Prof. Naubahar SHARIF



FUNDING AGENCY

the Li & Fung Supply Chain Institute

AMOUNT AWARDED

HK\$150,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This research examines how China's borderland state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are reshaping the "Go Global Strategy" through a bottom-up approach, focusing on three Yunnan province SOEs' infrastructure and energy investments in Southeast Asia. The study investigates how these local SOEs have leveraged geographical proximity, cultural ties, and local government connections to successfully compete with central SOEs in neighboring markets. The research challenges conventional understanding that central government SOEs dominate overseas investments, demonstrating how China's "Go Global Strategy" has evolved to incorporate diverse implementing agents, suggesting a more nuanced model of Chinese state capitalism where local actors play pivotal roles in expanding China's economic influence abroad.

