Four research projects on ageing awarded grants

By KEITH CHEE

THE National Research Foundation (NRF) yesterday awarded grants worth up to $10 million each to four research programmes on ageing.

The awards come under NRF’s Competitive Research Programme (CRP) Funding Scheme to help identify and develop core capabilities for industries of the future.

With more than 25 per cent of Singapore’s population expected to be above the age of 65 by 2020, the research projects “will lead to a better understanding of the biological processes of ageing and may lead to future treatments of specific ailments related to ageing”, said James Foley, acting chairman of the International Evaluation Panel (IEP) that assessed and recommended the projects for funding.

Forty-eight preliminary contenders for the grants were whittled down to 14 selected to be developed into full proposals, and four were eventually chosen by IEP for funding.

Target research areas include age-related issues of the impairment of nerve cell function in the brain and the progressive and involuntary loss of muscle mass, proposed by Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory and Nanyang Technological University respectively.

Two other programmes involving the use of cell therapy were also selected.

The National Heart Centre will look into the potential regrowth of heart tissue using reprogrammed cells, and the National University of Singapore will research the mechanism, diagnosis and treatment of stroke.