

## SYDNEY SOUTHEAST ASIA CENTRE INCUBATOR GRANT GUIDELINES 2026

The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (SSEAC) is passionate about supporting outstanding collaborative research in Southeast Asia. The 2026 SSEAC Grants will enable emerging and established researchers to grow their collaborative research in Southeast Asia, and address challenges of significance to the region. The grants will support successful University researchers undertaking collaborative research in Southeast Asia that will lead to highly-competitive funding applications for research programs that will have transformative impact.

For the purposes of these grants, Southeast Asia includes the following eleven countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

### INCUBATOR GRANTS

The Incubator Grants aim to support research focused upon Southeast Asia that will:

1. Enable the development of a research program leading to significant research outcomes for Southeast Asia.
2. Facilitate the development of an outstanding application for external funding.
3. Further strengthen the capacity of University researchers to undertake outstanding research in Southeast Asia.
4. Grow productive research partnerships in the region that will lead to research with meaningful impact on the ground in Southeast Asia.

SSEAC plans to provide grants valued at up to \$25,000 each. Co-contributions from Faculties or other Centres (including Faculty-based and Multidisciplinary Initiatives) will be considered favourably.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration by the SSEAC Grants Panel when assessing applications to the Incubator Grants:

Criteria	Description
Alignment with <a href="#">SSEAC Grand Challenges</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Climate change resilience and the clean energy transition</li> <li>– Agricultural development and sustainable use of natural resources</li> <li>– Healthy and resilient societies</li> <li>– Digital transformation and AI</li> <li>– Shared pasts and shared futures</li> </ul>
Significance	Evidence that the planned project will have significance for Southeast Asia, with reference to clearly demonstrated global, regional or national priorities.
Quality	The proposed research is of outstanding quality.
External funding potential	The research will lead to the development of an outstanding application for external funding for research in Southeast Asia.
Collaboration	There is evidence of an existing or emerging collaboration between the applicants and an institution(s) in Southeast Asia, evidenced by a letter of support from a regional partner.*
Track record	The research team has a strong emerging or established research track record that is relevant to the application.
Multidisciplinary	The research team includes individuals from at least two different disciplines.

\* Note: SSEAC can help with identifying research partners for those that do not yet have an identified partner. Please contact [sseac@sydney.edu.au](mailto:sseac@sydney.edu.au) prior to submitting your application if you need help in this regard.

## KEY DATES FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

Applications will be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel appointed by SSEAC. The following figure shows the application deadline and timeline for grant review, award and implementation.



Applicants must submit a written application to [sseac@sydney.edu.au](mailto:sseac@sydney.edu.au) by **5:00pm (AEDT) Monday 2 March 2026**. Late submissions will not be considered.

## ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS FOR INCUBATOR GRANTS

- Applicants may only submit one application.
- Applicants must be [SSEAC members](#).
- Members of the SSEAC Grants Panel are ineligible to apply.
- The Lead Investigator academic for a grant application must be employed at the University of Sydney in a full-time or fractional (0.5+ FTE) role that includes a research component. Applicants must hold a continuing position or a contract that continues until at least 30 June 2027. Academics on recurring annual research contracts will need to provide a letter of intent of employment signed by the head of their academic unit indicating they expect the applicant will continue to be employed until 30 June 2027.
- At least one Partner Investigator must be external to the University of Sydney.
- University Investigators must hold a PhD.

### Grant recipients will commit to:

- Submitting the results of their research in a quality academic journal or similar (if collaborating with an academic partner) or equivalent output within a year of completing the grant (i.e. 30 June 2028).
- Submitting to SSEAC a 1-page research proposal pitch for external funding by 30 September 2026.
- Submitting an application to an external research funding scheme or philanthropic foundation by 30 June 2027, where the Lead Investigator of that application is an academic employed at the University of Sydney.
- Disseminating their research findings through SSEAC, including participating in a SSEAC podcast.
- Submitting six monthly progress reports and a final report (including expenditure report) by 15 December 2026 as follows:
  - **Progress Report 1:** due 15 June 2026
  - **Progress Report 2:** due 15 December 2026
  - **Final Project Report:** due 15 June 2027
- Attending a brief check-in session with SSEAC's Deputy Director Research Development in August 2026.
- Providing evidence of all relevant approvals for the project, in Australia and the region, by 1 April 2026. Special consideration may be provided by the SSEAC Director, if delays in approvals occur that are beyond the control of the applicant(s).

By applying, applicants confirm their ability to attend all program components and meet the desired outcomes. In cases where these requirements are not fully met, applicants will be ineligible to apply for any future financial support from SSEAC.

## BUDGET

The following items may be funded by the SSEAC Incubator Grants:

- Direct research costs, defined as:
  - The cost must be integral to achieving the objectives and outcomes of the proposal.
  - The cost must be directly related to the grant proposal.
  - The cost must not be for facility, administrative or other indirect costs that would be provided by an institution in the normal course of undertaking and supporting the research.
- All costs are expected to be managed and agreed to by the named Lead Investigator.
- Field work undertaken in Southeast Asia, including travel required to complete the project.
- Expenditure to facilitate a meeting or workshop related to the project.
- Simultaneous language interpretation, or translation and certification of research materials.
- Other reasonable expenses required to implement the submitted project proposal.

The following items **may not be funded** by the SSEAC Incubator Grants:

- Items of recurrent funding (salaries for continuing positions that have existing funding, PhD scholarships).
- Equipment (unless permission is explicitly provided by the Grants Review Panel prior to application submission).
- Costs to fund the salaries or participation costs of academics from other institutions (aside from locally hired research assistants or equivalent, for research undertaken in Southeast Asia).
- Conference attendance or travel to conferences.

The SSEAC Grants Panel reserves the right to approve how the awarded funds may be used. Funds must be fully spent by the end of November 2026 at which time any unspent money will be returned to SSEAC for reinvestment in future grant schemes. The SSEAC Director may approve short-term project extensions on a case-by-case basis.

## MORE INFORMATION

If you have any queries about this grant round, would like to discuss your proposal or require assistance identifying possible partners, please contact [sseac@sydney.edu.au](mailto:sseac@sydney.edu.au).