

SYDNEY SOUTHEAST ASIA CENTRE 2027 GRANT SCHEME GUIDELINES

The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (SSEAC) is passionate about supporting outstanding collaborative research in Southeast Asia. The 2027 SSEAC Grants Round will enable emerging and established researchers to grow their collaborative research in Southeast Asia, strengthen research partnerships and develop competitive external funding applications with transformative impact. The projects will address issues of significance to Southeast Asia, support SSEAC's [Strategic Plan 2024–2029](#) and align with the five [SSEAC Grand Challenges](#).

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.

GRANT SCHEMES

INCUBATOR GRANTS

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

- Enable the development of a research program leading to significant research outcomes for Southeast Asia.
- Facilitate the development of applications for external funding by the research team.
- Further strengthen the capacity of University researchers to undertake high-impact research in Southeast Asia.
- Grow productive research partnerships in the region that will lead to research with meaningful impact on the ground in Southeast Asia.

Funding **up to A\$20,000 per project** is available. Expenditure must be clearly justified in the application. Applicants need not request the maximum amount. Co-contributions from Faculties, Schools, Centres, Multidisciplinary Initiatives or other sources will be viewed favourably.

LARGE GRANT SUPPORT SCHEME

The Large Grant Support Scheme is designed to support established researchers who demonstrate strong potential for success in external grant calls and who are planning applications for major national or international funding. It aims to assist multidisciplinary teams to develop high-quality proposals for submission to a specific external funding opportunity by 30 June 2028. The scheme will support activities that:

- Translate a strong research proposal into a competitive submission to an externally funded large grant call.
- Assist multidisciplinary research teams across Faculties and Schools, bringing together the capacity and expertise needed to be successful in the targeted call for external funding.
- Strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration among University of Sydney researchers and grow productive and equitable research partnerships with researchers and institutions in Southeast Asia.

Funding up to **A\$25,000** per project is available. Expenditure must be clearly justified in the application. Applicants need not request the maximum amount, and co-funding or in-kind contributions may be included.

Applicants should ordinarily be preparing an application for an external grant call valued at approximately **A\$1 million or more**, although other strategically significant opportunities may be considered. For the purposes of this scheme, a “Large Grant” may include but is not limited to the following schemes: Wellcome Trust Discovery Awards, Wellcome Trust Climate Impact Awards, Google.org Impact Challenge, Cooperative Research Centres, ARC Centres of Excellence, ACIAR grants and other national or international schemes. Applications targeting Horizon Europe calls will be viewed favourably.

SSEAC can provide a strategic review of the proposal for a large grant, liaise with the University's Research Portfolio, and assist with the submission of the proposal for your targeted large grant.

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 by **5:00pm (AEDT) Monday 19 October 2026**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Project implementation: Projects under both schemes will run from January to December 2027, and all grant funds must be expended by 15 December 2027. Large Grant Support Scheme recipients must submit their external grant application by 30 June 2028.

ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

FOR BOTH SCHEMES

- Applicants may only submit one application.
- Applicants must be [SSEAC members](#).
- The Lead Investigator academic 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 2028. 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 2028.
- Applications must align with at least one of the SSEAC Grand Challenges.
- At least one Partner Investigator must be external to the University of Sydney.
- Applications must include Investigators from at least two different disciplines.
- Research must be undertaken in Southeast Asia or with a primary focus upon Southeast Asia.
- University Investigators must hold a PhD.
- All applicants must have fulfilled the reporting requirements of any previously awarded SSEAC grants.
- Applicants must provide supporting documentation (letterhead or email) from their Head of School confirming they support their submission.
- Members of the SSEAC Grants Panel are ineligible to apply.

FOR LARGE GRANT SUPPORT SCHEME ONLY

- The applicant must commit to submitting a proposal for a large, externally funded grant by 30 June 2028. Applicants who do not submit a proposal by that date may be ineligible for subsequent SSEAC funding for 5 years.
- Applications must include investigators from at least two Faculties or University Schools.

SSEAC members who have received internal funding through previous SSEAC schemes must demonstrate, within their application, how they have delivered the outcomes proposed in their prior application.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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

Criteria	Description
Alignment with SSEAC Grand Challenges	– Climate change resilience and the clean energy transition – Agricultural development and sustainable use of natural resources – Healthy and resilient societies – Digital transformation and AI – Shared pasts and shared futures (topics in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences)
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	Incubator Grants: Project will lead to the development of an application for external funding for research in Southeast Asia. Large Grant Support Scheme: Project will lead to the submission of a proposal to an externally funded call for a large grant (as defined in these guidelines) that has a high likelihood of success.
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	Incubator Grants: The research team has a strong emerging or established research track record that is relevant to the application. Large Grant Support Scheme: The research team has an outstanding research track record that is relevant to the application, with demonstrated capacity for success in national and international competitive research grant calls.
Multidisciplinary	Incubator Grants: The research team includes Investigators from at least two different disciplines. Large Grant Support Scheme: The research team includes Investigators from at least two Faculties or University Schools.

* Note: If you need help identifying research partners, please contact sseac@sydney.edu.au prior to submitting your application.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

FOR INCUBATOR GRANTS, grant recipients commit to:

- Providing evidence of all relevant approvals for the project, in Australia and the region, by 1 April 2027. Special consideration may be provided by the SSEAC Director, if delays in approvals occur that are beyond the control of the applicant(s).
- Providing evidence of submission of the results of their research to a quality academic journal or similar (if collaborating with an academic partner) or completion of an equivalent output within a year of completing the grant (i.e. 31 December 2028).
- Submitting to SSEAC a 1-page research proposal pitch for external funding (a brief description of the rationale for future research funding, whose audience is the potential funder) by 30 September 2027.
- Providing evidence of submission of an application to an external research funding scheme or philanthropic foundation by 30 June 2028, where the Lead Investigator of that application is an academic employed at the University of Sydney.
- Submitting six monthly progress reports and a final report as follows:
 - **Progress Report 1:** due 15 June 2027
 - **Progress Report 2:** due 15 December 2027
 - **Final Project Report, including final expenditure report:** due 15 June 2028
- Attending a brief check-in session with SSEAC's Deputy Director Research Development in August 2027.
- Disseminating their research findings through SSEAC, including participating in a SSEAC podcast.
- Expending all grant funds by 15 December 2027.

FOR LARGE GRANT SUPPORT SCHEME, grant recipients commit to:

- Providing evidence of submitting an application for an external research funding scheme or philanthropic foundation (ideally greater than A\$1 million) by 30 June 2028, where the Lead Investigator is an academic employed at the University of Sydney.
- Providing SSEAC with evidence of submission of the large grant application, including the submission title, scheme name and date of submission.
- Attending an in-person or online check-in meeting with the SSEAC Deputy Director Research Development in September 2027.
- Submitting a final report, including an expenditure report, by 31 January 2028.
- Expending all grant funds by 15 December 2027.

By applying for either grant stream, applicants confirm their agreement 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 financial support from SSEAC in the next 5 years.

BUDGET

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

- Direct research costs, defined as costs that are:
 - Integral to achieving the objectives and outcomes of the proposal.
 - Directly related to the grant proposal.
 - Not for facility, administrative or other indirect costs that would be provided by an institution in the normal course of undertaking and supporting the research
- Field work undertaken in Southeast Asia, including travel required to complete the project.
- Expenditure to facilitate a meeting or workshop related to the project.
- 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**:

- Items of recurrent funding (salaries for continuing positions that have existing funding, PhD scholarships).
- Equipment (unless permission is explicitly provided by the SSEAC Grants 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. All costs are expected to be managed and agreed to by the named Lead Investigator. Funds must be fully spent by 15 December 2027 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.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must submit the prescribed SSEAC Application Form to sseac@sydney.edu.au by **5:00pm (AEDT) Monday 19 October 2026**. Late submissions will not be considered.

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.