

## SYDNEY SOUTHEAST ASIA CENTRE INCUBATOR AND IGNITION GRANT GUIDELINES 2025

The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (SSEAC) is passionate about supporting outstanding collaborative research in Southeast Asia. The SSEAC Incubator and Ignition Grant schemes will enable emerging and established researchers to grow their collaborative research in Southeast Asia, and address challenges of significance to the region. These schemes will equip successful University researchers to undertake collaborative research in Southeast Asia that leads to highly-competitive funding applications with transformative impact.

**Incubator Grants** will support early- and mid-career researchers at the University of Sydney to implement formative research to address challenges of significance to Southeast Asia through multidisciplinary collaboration. These grants will position researchers to develop and submit highly-competitive applications for external funding (page 1).

**Ignition Grants** will support University researchers with established research partnerships in Southeast Asia, whose research has a rapid upward trajectory. These grants will provide larger award funding that enables researchers to scale up their work and position them for ambitious, large-scale external research funding (page 2).

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 Grant scheme aims to support research focused upon Southeast Asia, led by early- and mid-career researchers (up to 10 years post PhD, relative to opportunity), that will:

1. Lead to significant research outcomes for Southeast Asia.
2. Contribute to developing outstanding applications for external funding applications.
3. Build 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.

The Incubator Grant scheme plans to provide up to five grants valued at up to **\$20,000** each. If a proposal is not selected for the Incubator Grant scheme, applicants may elect to have their submissions considered for the Ignition Grant scheme (the larger-scale grant scheme, below).

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

- *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 proposal is likely to 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 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 early- and mid-career researchers 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.

## IGNITION GRANTS

The Ignition Grant scheme aims to support research focused upon Southeast Asia, led by researchers with a demonstrated track record of research engagement in Southeast Asia, that will:

1. Lead to highly-significant research outcomes for Southeast Asia.
2. Provide the basis for outstanding applications for ambitious, large-scale externally funded research projects.
3. Significantly strengthen existing research partnerships between the University and Southeast Asia.
4. Align with [SSEAC's 2025 Grand Challenges](#) – major research themes of significance to the region, outlined below.

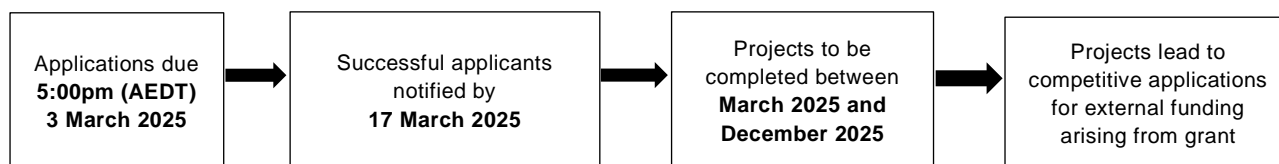
The Ignition Grant scheme plans to provide up to two grants valued at **up to \$50,000 each**. If a proposal is not selected for the Ignition Grant scheme, applicants may elect to have their submissions considered for the Incubator scheme (above).

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

- *Significance*: Evidence that the planned project will have great 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 proposed research is highly likely to lead to an outstanding application for a large-scale externally funded research project in Southeast Asia.
- *Collaboration*: There is verifiable evidence of an established research collaboration between the applicants and an institution(s) in Southeast Asia.
- *Impact*: The proposal demonstrates clear pathways for research translation and impact.
- *Track record*: The research team has a strong research track record that is relevant to the application.
- *Multidisciplinary*: The research team includes individuals from at least two different disciplines. Inclusion of academics from two or more Faculties or University Schools will be an advantage.
- *Alignment with at least one of [SSEAC's 2025 Grand Challenges](#)*. These five themes are:
  - *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*

## 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 3 March 2025**. Late submissions will not be considered.

## ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS FOR INCUBATOR AND IGNITION GRANTS

- Applicants may only submit one application per round. Applicants may nominate for their application to be considered by both the Incubator and Ignition Grant scheme.
- Applicants must be [SSEAC members](#).
- Members of the SSEAC Grants Panel are ineligible to apply.
- Applications for projects that have already been funded from other sources are ineligible.
- 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 2026. 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 2026.
- 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 2027).
- Submitting an application to an external funding scheme by 30 June 2026, where the Lead Investigator of that application is an academic employed at the University of Sydney.
- Disseminating their research findings through SSEAC (such as through SSEAC podcasts, public events, newsletters, etc).
- Submitting six monthly progress reports and a final report (including expenditure report) by 15 December 2026.
- Providing evidence of all relevant approvals for the project, in Australia and the region, by 1 April 2025. 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 or Ignition 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 or Ignition 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 2025, 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.