

ASEAN-Australia Centre Grants Program

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Grant Program

What are this year's grant streams?

▪ Stream 1 – Economic engagement

- Initiatives to support networking and engagement, exchange of information and opportunities, awareness-raising, business matching and Asia capability for Australian business that:
 - Focus on a priority sector identified in [*Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*](#)
 - Demonstrate an inclusive approach - led by private sector but engaging state and territory governments, peak bodies, chambers and councils and Southeast Asia diplomatic representatives.

OR

- Initiatives that support Australian First Nations businesses to build economic engagement with Southeast Asia, in line with [*Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*](#).

Stream 2 – Creative industry and cultural connections

- Creative industry exchanges, residencies and capacity-building
- Professional development, skills sharing and creative collaboration
- Initiatives that support export pathways and market development for arts workers, businesses and organisations.

Stream 3 – Asia capability

- Proposals that draw from the skills and knowledge of students from Southeast Asia studying in Australian higher education institutions to support Southeast Asia literacy in the education and business sectors

OR

- Establish benchmarking and accreditation tools for Australian professionals in higher education, research and business to demonstrate their Southeast Asia literacy, and establish mechanisms to support Australians to maintain this important professional capability.

OR

- Develop resources and initiatives aligned to the Australian Curriculum to support teaching about Southeast Asia in primary and secondary schools in Australia, which may include materials that support alignment of community-based language learning with school-based language learning.

Who is eligible to apply?

The Grants Program is open to a range of applicants, including business, not-for-profit organisations, research organisations, local government, state and territory government and incorporated associations. Applicants must hold a current ABN and have an account with an Australian financial institution. Individuals may also apply. Please refer to the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for the full eligibility requirements.

Why do the grant streams change from year to year?

The grant streams may change from year to year to reflect the Centre's priorities and objectives.

See the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for more information about the grant streams.

What countries are covered by the Grants Program?

The Grants Program supports activities that build connections between Australia and Southeast Asia. Eligible activities must involve at least two Southeast Asian countries. Eligible countries are the ASEAN Member States: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

What does the Centre mean by Southeast Asia literacy?

The Centre supports activities that strengthen Australians' understanding of Southeast Asia. This may include activities that encourage and equip Australians to engage with Southeast Asia. Activities may be delivered in Australia, Southeast Asia, or both, across a range of sectors including business, higher education, sport, civil society and the media.

Is this a new grant program?

The ASEAN-Australia Centre Grants Program was established in 2024, and the first grant round held in 2024-25. It replaced the grants program previously administered by the Australia-ASEAN Council and reflects the Australian Government's commitment to strengthening ties between Australia and Southeast Asia.

What activities have previously been awarded grants?

The ASEAN-Australia Centre has funded activities across a range of sectors, including business, education, culture, research and community engagement.

To learn more about activities funded in previous rounds, please visit the Centre's [website](#).

How often does the Centre offer grant opportunities?

The Centre currently offers one grant opportunity each year.

Grant Streams

Stream 1 – Economic Engagement

What does "private sector-led" mean?

For Stream 1, applicants should demonstrate that the private sector plays a significant role in the design, delivery and outcomes of the activity.

Can my Stream 1 activity focus on a sector that is not identified in *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*?

Stream 1 activities must focus on a priority sector identified in [Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#).

Can a chamber of commerce, industry association, peak body or not-for-profit organisation apply under Stream 1?

Yes. Organisations such as chambers of commerce, industry associations, peak bodies and not-for-profit organisations may apply under Stream 1, provided they meet all eligibility requirements and the proposed activity aligns with the objectives of the stream.

Stream 2 – Creative industry and cultural connections

In Stream 2, what does the Centre mean by "creative industries"?

For the purposes of Stream 2, creative industries include activities in the arts, media, heritage, music and design. Activities could be creative industry exchanges, residencies, capacity-building, professional development, skills sharing, creative collaboration, export pathways and market development for arts workers, businesses and organisations.

Does a Stream 2 activity need to involve professional artists, arts workers or creative practitioners?

Stream 2 is intended to support activities involving artists, arts workers, creative practitioners, creative businesses or creative organisations.

Are cultural exchange activities eligible if they do not include a residency component?

Yes. Residency activities may be supported under Stream 2, but they are not mandatory.

Can Stream 2 activities focus on professional development and skills sharing without producing a public outcome or performance?

Yes. Professional development, skills sharing and creative collaboration activities may be supported under Stream 2.

Must Southeast Asian organisations or creative practitioners be directly involved in a Stream 2 activity?

Applications should clearly identify the Southeast Asian partners involved in the activity.

Can an organisation apply under Stream 2 on behalf of a group of artists, arts workers or creative practitioners?

Yes. Organisations may apply on behalf of a group of artists, arts workers or creative practitioners, provided they meet all eligibility requirements and are responsible for managing and delivering the activity.

Stream 3 – Asia capability

Must activities involving students from Southeast Asia be led by a higher education institution?

No. Activities involving students from Southeast Asia do not need to be led by a higher education institution.

Can organisations other than higher education institutions apply under the student engagement component of Stream 3?

Yes. Organisations other than higher education institutions may apply, provided they meet all eligibility requirements and the proposed activity aligns with the objectives of the stream.

What does the Centre mean by "benchmarking and accreditation tools" in Stream 3?

For the purposes of Stream 3, benchmarking and accreditation tools are mechanisms to support Australians to demonstrate and maintain Southeast Asia literacy as an important component of their professional skills.

Can activities under the benchmarking and accreditation component be delivered by professional associations, industry bodies or other non-education organisations?

Yes. Professional associations, industry bodies and other organisations may apply, provided they meet all eligibility requirements and the proposed activity aligns with the objectives of the stream.

What does the Centre mean by resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum?

Resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum are resources designed to support teaching about Southeast Asia in Australian primary and secondary schools.

Can activities supporting community-based language learning be delivered outside formal school settings?

Yes. Stream 3 may support activities that align community-based language learning with school-based language learning.

Funding

What funding is available?

Applicants may apply for grants of between \$50,000 and \$200,000 per year. A total of \$2.2 million will be available over two years for the Grant Opportunity.

Can I apply for multi-year funding?

Yes. The Centre will consider applications for multi-year grants of up to two years. Applicants may request between \$100,000 and \$400,000 in total across both years.

What can I spend my grant funding on? Can I use it to pay for organisational overheads or salaries?

Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the Guidelines explain what grant funding can and cannot be used for. We encourage you to review these sections carefully when preparing your budget.

Grant funding cannot be used to cover ongoing salaries and wages or the routine operating and administrative costs of your organisation.

Can I apply for funding for an activity that is already underway?

Yes. You may apply for funding for future activities or future stages of an existing activity. Grant funding cannot be used for retrospective costs.

Eligibility

Do I have to meet all eligibility criteria or just some?

Yes. To be eligible for funding, you must meet **all** eligibility criteria. Applications that do not meet all eligibility requirements cannot be considered for funding.

You can find the full Eligibility Criteria in Section 4 of the Guidelines.

My organisation is based overseas. Can I apply?

To be eligible, the Lead Applicant must meet all eligibility requirements outlined in Section 4 of the Guidelines, including holding a current ABN and an account with an Australian financial institution.

If your organisation is based overseas, you need to partner with an eligible Australian organisation that can apply as the Lead Applicant.

Can I or my organisation apply if it already receives funding from another Australian Government grants program, including a DFAT or a Centre grant?

Yes. Your organisation may apply even if it currently receives funding from another Australian Government grants program, including DFAT or the Centre.

You may also hold other ongoing grants at the time of applying. Existing grants do not need to be acquitted before you submit an application for this Grant Opportunity.

What is the National Redress Scheme eligibility requirement?

This requirement only applies to organisations that have been requested to join the [National Redress Scheme](#).

If your organisation has not been requested to join the Scheme, please select "No" in the application form. If you are applying as an individual, please select "Not applicable".

Further eligibility information is available in Section 4 of the Guidelines.

Applying for a Grant

Can I apply under more than one stream?

If your activity aligns with more than one stream, you should apply under the stream that it most closely aligns with.

Must my activity involve more than one country in Southeast Asia?

Yes. Activities must involve at least two Southeast Asian countries. Bilateral activities are not eligible under this Grant Opportunity.

Can my activity be delivered entirely in Southeast Asia?

Yes. Your activity may be delivered entirely in Southeast Asia, provided it supports engagement between Australia and Southeast Asia and aligns with at least one grant stream.

Eligible locations are outlined in Section 5.2 of the Guidelines.

Can my activity be delivered entirely in Australia?

Yes. Your activity may be delivered entirely in Australia, provided it contributes to strengthening ties between Australia and Southeast Asia and supports at least one grant stream.

Can I submit more than one application?

Yes. You may submit more than one application, provided each application relates to a different activity.

What supporting documentation do I need to provide? Where do I upload it in the application?

The documents you are required to provide are outlined in Section 7.1 of the Guidelines.

You must provide a letter of support or reference that outlines your capability and capacity to deliver the activity. Please note that referees cannot be ASEAN-Australia Centre staff or ASEAN-Australia Centre Advisory Board members.

These documents may be uploaded on the Eligibility and Applicant Details page. You may also choose to upload additional documents that support your application at the end of the application under the File Upload section.

If I am part of a consortium, what supporting documentation do I need to provide? Where do I upload it in the application?

If you are applying as part of a consortium, you must provide letters of support from each partner organisation.

These letters should clearly describe each partner's role, contribution, relevant expertise and level of involvement in the activity.

Further information on joint (consortia) applications is available in Section 7.2 of the Guidelines.

If your application is successful, you will need to demonstrate that all activity partners have agreed to their roles and responsibilities before the Grant Agreement can be executed.

Letters of support may be uploaded on the Eligibility and Applicant Details page.

You may also choose to upload additional documents that support your application.

Why is the word count in SmartyGrants different from the word count in Microsoft Word?

The word count displayed in SmartyGrants may differ from word counts shown in other programs, including Microsoft Word. Please use the word count displayed in SmartyGrants when completing your application.

What is the deadline for submitting my application?

Applications **must** be submitted by 1300 AEDT on 28 October 2026 via the [SmartyGrants application form](#).

The Centre will not accept late applications. Please ensure you allow sufficient time for submitting your application to avoid potential lodgement issues.

Preparing a competitive application

What can I do to strengthen my grant application?

We understand that preparing a grant application takes time and effort. As this is a competitive grant opportunity, we encourage you to take the time to prepare the strongest application possible. Some things you may wish to consider include:

- Read the Grant Opportunity Guidelines carefully before starting your application.
- Clearly explain how your activity aligns with the objectives of the Grants Program and the stream under which you are applying.
- Demonstrate the outcomes you hope to achieve and how they will contribute to stronger engagement between Australia and Southeast Asia.
- Provide a realistic and well-considered plan for delivering your activity.
- Prepare a clear and transparent budget that demonstrates value for relevant money. Your budget must categorise expenditure under:
 - Wages and fees (for activity delivery only, not ongoing salaries).
 - Travel costs.
 - Event and production costs.
- Ensure your budget balances before attempting to submit your application. Applications cannot be submitted unless the budget balances.
- Enter your budget directly into the application form. Budget tables or spreadsheets cannot be copied and pasted into the application.
- Explain the role of your partners and any financial or in-kind contributions they will make.
- Provide supporting documentation that demonstrates your capability and capacity to deliver the activity.

- Please note that referees cannot be ASEAN-Australia Centre staff or ASEAN-Australia Centre Advisory Board members.
- Proofread your application carefully before submitting it.
- Allow plenty of time to complete and submit your application before the closing date to avoid potential lodgement issues. Late applications cannot be accepted.

Partnerships and Consortia

Can I partner with more than one organisation? How do I demonstrate our partnership?

Yes. There is no limit on the number of organisations you may partner with.

Your application should clearly describe your partnership with at least one Southeast Asian partner and explain how you will work together to deliver the activity.

Partnership arrangements may vary. Documents such as letters of support, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), or evidence of established networks can help demonstrate the strength of your partnership.

If your application is successful, you will be required to provide evidence of the agreed arrangements between all partner organisations. These arrangements must be in place before the Grant Agreement is executed.

Can organisations with ASEAN officials on their governing board be partners on an application?

Yes.

If an organisation involved in your activity includes ASEAN officials on its governing board, you should clearly explain their role and level of involvement in your application. This helps us understand the nature of the partnership and the contribution the organisation will make to the activity.

Assessment and Outcomes

How will you decide which grants are successful?

Your application will be assessed against the Assessment Criteria outlined in Section 6 of the Guidelines.

Applications are assessed on their merits, including their alignment with the objectives of the Grant Opportunity, the proposed outcomes, value for relevant money, and your capability and capacity to successfully deliver the activity.

Can I receive feedback on my application?

Individual feedback will not be available for this Grant Opportunity. However, the Centre will hold a general feedback session following the announcement of successful grants. Further information about the session will be provided at a later date.

How will the Centre use AI through the assessment process?

Applications will be assessed by the assessment committee and funding decisions will be made by the Program Delegate, in accordance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The Centre may use Microsoft Copilot as an internal support tool to assist with administrative tasks and consolidation of data.

When and how will I be notified of the outcome of my application?

The anticipated timing of the Grant Opportunity process is outlined in Section 7.3 of the Guidelines.

We will notify both successful and unsuccessful applicants by email using the Lead Applicant's contact details recorded in SmartyGrants.

To ensure you receive updates, please keep your contact details up to date throughout the application process.

Successful Grants

If I am successful, when do I have to use my funding?

The maximum grant period is two years. If your application is successful, you must complete your activity and spend your grant funding within the grant period specified in your Grant Agreement. If you do not expect to fully expend your funding before your activity completion date, please contact the ASEAN-Australia Centre as early as possible to discuss your options. Any unspent funding must be returned to the Australian Government.

When can successful applicants start their activity?

Successful applicants may commence their activity once their Grant Agreement has been fully executed. Activities must commence before 30 June 2027.

When will grant outcomes be announced and when will grant funding be paid?

We expect applicants to be notified of the outcome of their application from December 2026. Successful applicants will then work with the ASEAN-Australia Centre to finalise and execute their Grant Agreement. We anticipate initial grant funding will be paid within 90 days of the Grant Agreement being executed. Grant payment arrangements will be outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Will I need Working with Vulnerable People registration or a Working with Children Check?

Depending on the nature of your activity, relevant personnel may be required to hold:

- Working with Vulnerable People registration.
- Working with Children Check.

Further information is available in the sample [Grant Agreement](#) available on our [website](#).

Further Information

How can I learn more about the ASEAN-Australia Centre and the Centre's activities?

You can learn more about the Centre and its activities by visiting our [website](#), [registering](#) to receive updates and following us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

Where can I find more information?

You can find more information about the ASEAN-Australia Centre Grants Program, including the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, on the Centre's [website](#), [SmartyGrants](#) and [GrantConnect](#).

If you have questions during the application process, please contact the ASEAN-Australia Centre at aseanaustraliacentre.grants@dfat.gov.au. We are happy to help.

Applicants may speak with the Centre in their first language by telephoning the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 (local call anywhere in Australia) and asking to be connected with the Centre on 02 6261 1333.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) on the following 24-hour relay call numbers:

- **TTY/voice calls:** 133 677
- **Speak and Listen:** 1300 555 727
- **SMS relay:** 0423 677 767

If you encounter any accessibility issues while using the [GrantConnect](#) website and application process, please contact the Grant Connect Helpdesk at [Contact Us: GrantConnect](#). Information about the accessibility of the Grant Connect website is provided at [Accessibility Statement: GrantConnect](#).

First Nations Australian applicants may wish to access assistance in submitting an application where English is not their first language. In these cases, applicants may contact their [preferred Indigenous language centre](#) for assistance.