Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE COLLABORATION AND DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

GRANT FUNDING GUIDELINES

CONTENTS

1. Objectives of the Grant Program 2
2. Grant Period and Funding 2
3. Eligibility criteria 2
    a. Who is eligible to apply for a grant? 2
    b. Who is not eligible to apply for a grant? 3
    c. Eligible career interruptions 3
4. Use of Grant Funds 4
    a. Priority Themes 4
    b. Eligible expenditure 4
    c. What grant funds cannot be used for 4
5. Grant selection process 5
    a. Assessment criteria 5
    b. Priority researcher categories 6
6. Application Process 6
    a. How to apply 6
    b. Preparing your application 7
    c. Attachments to the application 7
    d. Expected timing of the grant process 7
    e. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in your application 8
    f. Questions during the application process 8
7. Successful grant applications 8
    a. The grant agreement 8
    b. How we pay the grant 9
    c. Reporting Requirements 9
8. Probity 9
    a. Complaints and Enquiries 9
    b. Conflict of Interest 10
    c. Privacy 10
    d. Confidential Information 10
    e. Ethical considerations 10
    f. Liability 10
    g. Responsibilities 10
9. Example Application Form 12

Association of
Asian Social Science
Research Councils

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE GRANT PROGRAM

The objective of the Association of Asian Social Science Research Council (AASSREC)'s International Social Science Collaboration and Development Grant Program is to enable and support international collaboration between social science researchers in the Asia-Pacific region with a focus on capacity building through support for Early to Mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) and underrepresented scholars from the region.

This program is designed to support research activities involving EMCR researchers from two or more countries in the Asia Pacific region working together on a social science research project. The proposal may include:

- Activities to support collaboration in an ongoing research project, where such activities are not possible with existing funding (details of the project and existing funding must be provided)
- Activities that help to develop or pilot a new collaborative research project.

Importantly, the research project must be led by a researcher from a low or middle-income country, and at least one of the project participants must involve a researcher from an AASSREC member country.

The program is suited to early-career researchers and scholars from low and middle-income countries and underrepresented or minority communities who wish to pursue research opportunities with an international colleague/s, with the intention this may lead to larger collaborative research projects.

This grant program is funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as part of AASSREC's 'Boosting Social Sciences and their Contribution to Better Lives across the Indo-Pacific' program. The Boosting Social Sciences program is a collaborative partnership between AASSREC and the Global Development Network (GDN), focused on mapping and understanding the current state and opportunities for social science, supporting high-priority research initiatives through strategic research grants; and connecting and empowering social science research organisations, councils and funders across the region to collaborate and engage with policy-makers to enhance research impact and improve lives. More information about the program and its components is available at: https://aassrec.org/boosting-social-sciences/

2. GRANT PERIOD AND FUNDING

Grants available through this program are for a maximum of up to $5,750 AUD.

Funding is available to support activities within a 12-month timeframe. Grant recipients must complete the funded activity by the end date designated in the grant application unless an approved extension, applied for to the AASSREC Secretariat in writing, is provided.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

a) Who is eligible to apply for a grant

The person submitting the grant application will be identified as the 'Principal Applicant '.

To be eligible to apply, a Principal Applicant must be:

- A social science researcher who, at the time of submitting the grant application, is no more than six years beyond their most recent postgraduate qualification (Masters, PhD, or equivalent degree), excluding eligible career interruptions (as defined in Item 3a);
- A resident of a low or middle-income Asia-Pacific country/territory
- Either a resident of an AASSREC member country/territory OR proposing direct collaboration with a researcher in an AASSREC member country/territory; and

- Employed by a research organisation (university, research institute or government research agency) with capacity to administer and support the proposed project (a letter of endorsement from a supervisor or other official is required)

The Principal Applicant will be the recipient of the grant funds (generally through their employing institution) and is responsible for their acquittal. The Principal Applicant is responsible for the completion of the project/activity as described in the grant application. Only one Principal Applicant can be listed in an application. A maximum of five additional project participants can be included in the application.

A list of AASSREC members can be found on the AASSREC website here: https://aassrec.org/members/

b) Who is not eligible to apply for a grant

Applicants will be deemed ineligible for consideration if:

- They are more than six years beyond their most recent postgraduate qualification (excluding eligible career interruptions) at the time of application;
- They are not social scientists and/or are requesting funding for a non-social science project;
- They are not a resident of a low or middle-income Asia-Pacific country/territory;
- They are EITHER not resident of an AASSREC member country/territory OR not proposing collaboration with a researcher in an AASSREC member country/territory

c) Eligible Career Interruptions

The number of years between the conferral year of eligible postgraduate qualifications and the closing date for applications is a key element of eligibility for the grant program.

AASSREC recognises career interruptions can have a significant impact on the period between conferral of a researcher's postgraduate qualification and the submission of an application. AASSREC allows the eligibility periods for the grant program to be extended where specified career interruptions have occurred.

Only the following significant and non-overlapping career interruptions will be eligible:

Reason for career interruption	Time which can be claimed (minimum period of one month)
International relocation	Time commensurate with the interruption, not exceeding three months per international relocation.
Child-care as primary carer (including parental leave and part-time work while caring for one or more children)	Up to two years per dependent child
Other caring responsibilities (including care of a dependent family member)	Time commensurate with the interruption.
Medical condition or disability	Time commensurate with the interruption.
Non-research employment (if not concurrent with research employment) or unemployment	Time commensurate with the interruption.

Evidence of any career interruptions must be submitted in the application form by the applicant. Evidence may include leave forms, medical certificates, or a letter from the applicant's relevant institution confirming the interruption/s.

4. USE OF GRANT OF FUNDS

a) Priority Themes

To be eligible, the proposed activity outlined in the application must be aligned with one or more of the objectives of the program as outlined in Section 1 above.

All social science project proposals will be considered but priority consideration will be provided to those social science activities aligned with the following themes:

- Climate change, sustainability and human mobility
- Public health and disaster response
- Technology and digital transformations
- Equity, gender, and indigeneity

Applications that demonstrate priority social science research themes from a regional perspective are encouraged.

b) What Grant Funds Can Be Used For

Proposed budgets must be reasonable and directly related to supporting project activity.

Eligible use of grant funds, where demonstrably critical to achievement of project outcomes, include:

- Travel and accommodation costs (economy travel and modest-to-standard accommodation only)
- Visa costs for project-related travel
- Research publication and dissemination charges (where relevant to the project activities)
- Research meeting expenses (e.g., venue hire and catering), where relevant to the project activities
- Other research expenses, including costs associated with field research, data collection (videotapes, web survey preparation), data preparation and coding, communication or translation of research materials, software licenses, research consumables, ethics applications, and salaries or wages for casual research staff contracted to work solely on the project described in the application (excluding the Principal Applicant)

c) What Grant Funds Cannot Be Used For

Grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Salaries or wages of the Principal Applicant
- Indirect costs or overheads that institutions incur in supporting research, but which cannot be directly attributed to individual research projects
- Capital expenditure (i.e. real estate, vehicles)
- Purchase or construction of a building
- Collateral on mortgage financing and payment of interest charges
- Costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application
- Rental costs for space or equipment for research/activities for a specific program of research not associated with funded research project

- Purchase or lease of land
- Purchase of furniture
- The covering of retrospective costs or recurrent funding of activities (this includes any expenses already incurred or work already undertaken prior to the grant application)
- Release from teaching duties (i.e., costs to backfill a teaching position)
- Cost of alcoholic beverages
- Costs for general administration such as electricity, phone and/or rent
- Business travel
- Purchase of animals for research purposes, or
- Costs for safe disposal of waste from research/activities for which the funds were awarded.

5. GRANT SELECTION PROCESS

a) Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be considered through an open, competitive grant process. Applications will be assessed on:

- The research track record (relative to opportunity) of the Principal Applicant
- Alignment of the proposed activity with the strategic priority areas identified in these guidelines
- The relevance and feasibility (including research methodology and budget feasibility) of the proposed collaborative project;
- Statements from the Principal Applicant and the Principal Applicant's institution about the need for and value of the support sought for the proposed project and how it would benefit the Principal Applicant's research career.

Applications will be evaluated carefully against the selection criteria by an international panel comprising of invited experts within relevant fields. Applications will be ranked based on the relative merit of the proposal in comparison to other applications. Even if an application meets all the assessment criteria, a grant is not guaranteed.

The AASSREC Secretariat is not able to enter into discussion or correspondence regarding the reasons why an application is successful or not. There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of the above listed criteria, weighted as follows:

1. Research track record relative to opportunity of the Principal applicant (30%). Assessment will consider:
    - Academic qualifications, prizes and awards;
    - Academic publications (journal articles, books and book chapters);
    - Successful research grants;
    - Conference presentations (oral and poster presentations), including invited presentations;
    - Research service activities, including committee and editorial service;
    - Research mentoring and supervision activities;
    - Academic teaching; and
    - Other relevant activities.

2. Alignment of the proposed activity with the strategic priority areas (30%)

3. Relevance and feasibility of the proposed activity (40%). Assessment will consider:

- The overall scientific value and rigour of the proposed activity as outlined in the proposal, including the potential to establish and consolidate social science research collaborations in the Asia Pacific;
- Statements from the Principal Applicant and the Principal Applicant's institution regarding the need for support and the value of the proposed activity to the Principal Applicant and the development of their research collaborations; and
- An assessment of the proposed budget for the activity.

b) Priority researcher categories

All applications from eligible social science researchers in the Asia-Pacific region are welcome. Priority, but not exclusive, consideration will be given to applicants designated as potentially underrepresented, under the intent of the grant program including:

- Women researchers
- Researchers from minority/marginalised communities. This includes communities that experience discrimination and exclusion on the basis of economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.
- Researchers from low and lower-middle-income countries
- Researchers who have had limited opportunities for international engagement and have yet to establish a track record of external funding

Priority will also be given to interdisciplinary research projects.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

a) How to apply

Grant applications must be completed in English and submitted via the online application portal by **20 September 2025**.

The Application Portal can be found at the following link: https://aassrec.org/development-grants/

Please complete the online application form and provide all information required for consideration of funding support through the grant program.

The AASSREC Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of your grant application by email.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact the AASSREC Secretariat immediately. If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. The AASSREC Secretariat does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

If you experience any technical difficulties in submitting your application, please contact the AASSREC Secretariat via email at info@aassrec.org

b) Preparing your application

The Principal Applicant is responsible for ensuring the application is complete and accurate. Only the Principal Applicant will enter into a grant agreement with AASSREC (generally through their employing institution) and be responsible for the grant.

Applications are expected to include details of contributing activities from all project participants. This includes:

- The name, position title, institution, country, and qualifications of additional project participants
- Details of how the project participants will contribute to the proposed project (role/responsibilities to achieve project goals)
- The project participants' priority status with regard to Section 5b of these application guidelines

Submitted applications with false or misleading information may be excluded from further consideration by the grant selection committee.

c) Attachments to the application

The following documents must be submitted via the online application form:

- The curriculum vitae (CV) of the Principal Applicant
- Evidence of any relevant career interruptions of the Principal Applicant
- A signed letter of support from the Principal Applicant's institution. The letter must be from the Principal Applicant's supervisor or other university official and should:
  - Confirm the employment of the Principal Applicant with the institution
  - Confirm the applicant's capacity to undertake the proposed project and the institution's support for the proposed project
  - Describe how the grant would benefit the applicant's research career and the opportunity that has been afforded them so far to advance their career (and/or any limits on that opportunity)

d) Expected timing of grant process

The grant timeline, for the second round of grant funds in 2025, is outlined below.

Activity	**Timeline**
Applications Open	8 August 2025
Closing Date for Applications	20 September 2025
Assessment of applications	20 September to 5 October 2025
Notification of successful applicants	10 October 2025
Notification of unsuccessful applications	10 October 2025
Negotiation of grant awards	October to November 2025
Grant activity commences	November to December 2025
Duration of Grant	12 months

e) Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in your application

Where applicants use generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process in preparing the grant applications, these technologies should only be used to improve readability and language of the work. Applying the technology should be done with human oversight and control and applicants should carefully review and edit the result, because AI can generate authoritative sounding output that can be incorrect, incomplete, or biased. Applicants are ultimately responsible and accountable for the contents of the work.

Applicants should not list AI and AI-assisted technologies as an applicant or author of the application, nor cite AI as an author. Authorship implies responsibilities and tasks that can only be attributed to and performed by humans. Each applicant is accountable for ensuring that the accuracy and integrity of the application are appropriately addressed. Applicants are also responsible for ensuring that the work is original, that the stated applicants qualify for eligibility, and the work does not infringe third party rights before they submit.

f) Questions during the application process

Applicants, with any questions during the application period, are encouraged to please contact the AASSREC Secretariat on +(61) 2 6249 1788 or by email at info@aassrec.org.

7. SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATIONS

a) The grant agreement

The AASSREC Secretariat will enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the successful applicant's institution/organisation. However, where discretionary consideration is provided by the AASSREC Secretariat through the application process, the grant agreement can be made directly with the individual Primary Applicant.

The AASSREC Secretariat must execute a grant agreement with successful applicants before payments can be initiated. The AASSREC Secretariat is not responsible for any project expenditure prior to the execution of a grant agreement ('execution' means both grant recipients and the AASSREC Secretariat have signed the agreement). To avoid risk, successful applicants are advised to not commence project activities until the execution of the grant agreement.

The grant agreement, based on budget forecasts provided by successful applicants, will state the maximum grant amount to be paid for individual projects.

The AASSREC Secretariat may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Successful applicants will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute the grant agreement with the AASSREC Secretariat. This period facilitates a time for the AASSREC Secretariat to negotiate and finalise grant project details with successful applicants.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time and awarded to a different applicant.

Grant recipients should not make financial commitments towards the project until a grant agreement has been executed.

b) How we pay the grant

Funding for International Social Science Collaborations and Development grants will not exceed $5,750 AUD as stipulated at Section 2 of these guidelines. All additional costs, outside of those expressed in the grant agreement, must be met by grant recipients.

The AASSREC Secretariat will pay 100 per cent of the grant on execution of the grant agreement and on receipt of a valid invoice.

It is the preference to provide grant funds to the grant recipient's (Principal Applicant) institution/organisation. However, where discretionary consideration is provided by the AASSREC Secretariat through the application process, a payment can be made directly to the Principal Applicant.

Applicants should also note that IDRC has conducted general agreements for scientific and technical cooperation with a number of governments. These agreements establish the framework for IDRC cooperation with that country by defining the rights and obligations of both IDRC and the government. As such, the applicant institution may be required to obtain country approval in accordance with these agreements prior to receiving funding.

Grant recipients will be required to report how grant funds were spent at the completion of the grant project/activity.

c) Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants are required to submit a report of the research activities funded by the program (approximately 2000 words or less in English), and an acquittal of grant funds within two months following the completion of the funded activity. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed grant activity and outcomes
- the objectives of the project/activity and details of international visits or meetings
- how the project complied with meeting ethical standards across its duration
- project outcomes, and research findings to date
- contributions of participants directly related to the grant activity
- progress in the international collaboration undertaken more generally
- directions for future research, and
- any other details of interest.

The report and any other outputs of the project must comply with IDRC's Open Access Policy and Open Data Statement of Principles.

Grant recipients should advise the AASSREC Secretariat, as soon as possible, if anything is likely to affect your grant activity.

8. PROBITY

The AASSREC Secretariat will ensure the grant selection process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities, and other inappropriate conduct.

a) Complaints and enquiries

All complaints and/or enquiries about the grant process must be lodged in writing with the AASSREC Secretariat.

The AASSREC Secretariat will not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

b) Conflict of interest

Any conflict of interest could affect the performance of the grant. This may be understood as a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest. Areas of actual, or perceived conflicts of interest may involve:

- Relationship (professional, commercial, personal) with grant assessors
- Relationship with an organisation that may interfere, restrict or inhibit proposed project activities
- Relationship with an organisation identified through the project proposal for which they have a commercial interest.

Grant recipients are required to advise the AASSREC Secretariat, in writing immediately following the commencement of project activities, if there is the identification of actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest related to project activity.

Grant assessors must declare any actual, or perceived, conflicts of interests to the AASSREC Secretariat before the assessment of applications.

c) Privacy

The AASSREC Secretariat treats applicants' personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles.

d) Confidential information

The AASSREC Secretariat will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential.

e) Ethical considerations

It is the policy of the AASSREC Secretariat that work involving human subjects or animals be carried out in accordance with high ethical standards. Successful applicants must comply with applicable domestic and international laws and ethics requirements, including obtaining any permits or permissions required for them to lawfully and ethically conduct the research in the jurisdiction(s) where it is to be conducted. The signature of the Principal Applicant on the Agreement signifies that the Principal Applicant and Project Participants fully comply with these standards.

Grant recipients shall immediately report to the AASSREC Secretariat any difficulties it encounters in complying with ethical standards. In the final report, the grant recipients shall describe how the funded grant project complied with meeting ethical standards across its duration.

f) Liability

The AASSREC Secretariat assumes no liability with respect to any accident to any person or any loss or damage to any person or Property arising from the Project. Applicants are responsible for determining their own tax liability, if any, in relation to receipt of the grant.

g) Responsibilities

The AASSREC Secretariat will:

- Meet the terms and conditions set in the grant agreement;
- Provide timely administration of the grant;
- Monitor project progress through assessing reports by grant recipients; and
- May, if required, seek an independent audit of claims and payments of project funds.

It is understood that all grant funds provided for the supported activity will be received and administered by the Principal Applicant (generally through their employing institution). Grant recipients shall assume all the financial administration, reporting and other contractual obligations for the activity contained within the grant agreement.

The successful Principal Applicant and Project Participants shall conduct the activity in a diligent and timely manner, and in a manner that promotes principles of research integrity.

Grant recipients must:

- Submit grant activity reports in accordance with requirements in the grant agreement;
- Submit a final report as stipulated in the grant agreement;
- Meet the Terms and Conditions of the grant agreement and commit to meeting agreed project objectives efficiently and effectively;
- Comply with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the grant agreement;
- Be responsible for all administrative requirements and insurance responsibilities associated with the funded project; and
- Comply with applicable domestic and international laws and ethics requirements, including obtaining any permits or permissions required for them to lawfully and ethically conduct the research in the jurisdiction(s) where it is to be conducted.

Association of
Asian Social Science
Research Councils

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE COLLABORATION AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT
EXAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

Applications must be submitted online via the AASSREC website.

The online application form includes the following fields. The following form and the examples contained within are for reference only.

Principal Applicant Details	
Salutation	Professor/Dr/Mr/Ms/Mx
First Name	
Last Name	
Gender	☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Non-Binary/Unspecified/Prefer not to say
Email	
Phone (including international code)	
Institution	
Position Title	e.g. Research Associate
Primary Social Science Discipline	e.g. Economics
Nationality	e.g. Cambodian
Country/Territory of Residence	e.g. Cambodia
Personal Address	
Institution Address	

Most recent postgraduate qualifications		
Qualification Name	**Institution**	**Date Conferred**
		dd/mm/yyyy

Career Interruptions		
AASSREC allows extension of the postgraduate qualification eligibility periods for specified career interruptions. If you wish to claim one or more career interruptions, please list them below. Career interruptions listed must not overlap.		
Interruption Type	**Year(s)**	**Month(s)**
e.g. Child-care as primary carer (including parental leave and part-time work while caring for one or more children)	e.g. 0, 1, 2, 3	0, 1, 2, 3
Total Career Interruptions		
Postgraduate Qualification Period		

Association of
Asian Social Science
Research Councils

Adjusted Postgraduate Qualification Period	

Priority Researcher Status

Explain (if applicable) how the Primary Applicant meets the priority researcher status for this program.
(See section 5b of grant guidelines) (Character limit: 2000 including spaces, approx.200 words)

e.g. female researcher/researcher from a low-income country

Details of Proposed Activity

Project Title	
Project Start Date	dd/mm/yyyy
Project End Date	dd/mm/yyyy
Social Science Field of Research	Indicate the discipline/s, field, or area of specialisation of the research project

Project Summary

Outline the significance of the project including rationale, aims and objectives, research design and methodology, timeline, and expected outcomes (Character limit: 8000 including spaces, approx. 800 words).

Role/Responsibility of Principal Applicant

Outline the project role/responsibility of the Principal Applicant (Character limit: 1000 including spaces, approx. 100 words)

Value of Proposed Activity to Principal Applicant

Describe the context for the Principal Applicant's need for support (e.g. challenges and barriers to international collaboration), and how the project will contribute to researcher capacity building. (Character limit: 2000 including spaces, approx. 200 words)

Contributing Project Participants

Please provide details of additional researchers or collaborators who will be contributing to the proposed project. A minimum of one international collaborator/project participant is required. A maximum of five project participants can be added.

Salutation	
First Name	
Last Name	
Gender	☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Non-Binary/Unspecified/Prefer not to say
Email	
Phone	

Association of
Asian Social Science
Research Councils

Institution	
Position Title	
Primary Social Science Discipline	
Nationality	
Country/Territory of Residence	

Most recent postgraduate qualifications

Qualification Name	Institution	Date Conferred
		dd/mm/yyyy

Project Role/Responsibility

Character limit: 1000 including spaces, approx. 100 words)

How (if applicable) does this project participant meet the priority researcher status for this program.

(See section 5a of guidelines, character limit: 1000 including spaces, approx. 100 words)

Budget

The maximum grant funding available to successful applicants through this program is $5,750AUD.

Total grant funding requested (funds must be displayed in AUD only):

Enter the numeric amount here. You do not need to specify a dollar sign ($)

Proposed Budget

Provide itemised detail of proposed expenditure. Please refer to eligible expenditure in Section 4b of the grant guidelines. (Character limit: 5000 including spaces, approx. 500 words)

Application Attachments

The following documents must be submitted (in PDF format) through this online application form:

- Curriculum vitae (CV) of the Principal Applicant
- Evidence of any relevant career interruptions (if applicable, see Section 3b of grant guidelines for requirements)
- Signed letter of support from the Principal Applicant's institution (see Section 6c of grant guidelines for requirements)

Agreement

By submitting your application, you acknowledge and agree to the following:

☐ Successful applicants, generally via their institution, will invoice the AASSREC Secretariat for the awarded amount prior to 31 December 2025.

☐ Successful applicants will comply with all requirements and responsibilities set out in the grant guidelines and grant agreement.

☐ Successful applicants will submit a report of the project activities funded by the program and an acquittal of funds within two months following the completion of the funding activity.

☐ Successful applicants will comply with applicable domestic and international laws and ethics requirements, including obtaining any permits or permissions required for them to lawfully and ethically conduct the research in the jurisdiction(s) where it is to be conducted.