

Terms of Reference: Grants Manager for the Developing Research Excellence and Mentorship in Southeast Asia (SEA DREAM) Programme

Location:	Bangkok, Thailand
Organisation:	SEAMEO Secretariat
Department:	Programme and Development
Duration:	01.04.2025 – 31.01.2028 <i>The initial contract is set for a duration of three years, with the option to be extended for the full programme duration until September 2031.</i>
Benefits:	Competitive salary commensurate with experience; relocation package; health insurance; professional development opportunities.

Background:

About the Developing Research Excellence and Mentorship in Southeast Asia (SEA DREAM) Programme

Southeast Asia (SEA), a region composed of 11 nations and over 670 million individuals, shares a disproportionate burden of disease and mortality, with an estimated 5.6 million lives lost per year to endemic and emerging communicable diseases and even more to non-communicable diseases. Additionally, given the high population density and geographic location, SEA faces a significant healthcare burden and is vulnerable to natural disasters, putting it at high risk of the negative effects of climate change. As a result, there is a significant need to enable scientific collaboration and develop research leadership to tackle the region's emerging health threats.

The SEA DREAM programme, running from November 2024 until September 2031, will fund regional consortia through grants to produce excellent and outcome-focused discovery and translational research that addresses existing national and regional health priorities as well as emerging issues. SEA DREAM will enable the development of research excellence through generating impactful research that is translated into real-world solutions, policies and interventions, nurturing research leaders, fostering networks that enable regional collaboration, and strengthening equitable research ecosystems. A successful programme will see at least 8 regionally led consortia funded over an initial duration of 5 years to produce high quality scientific research on priority health themes for Southeast Asia. Anticipated themes include infectious diseases, climate change and health, mental health, and strengthening health systems and access to care.

About SEAMEO, Wellcome, and FCDO

The **Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization** (SEAMEO) strives to accelerate the use of science and technology solutions to address social, health, and environmental issues. SEAMEO works towards these results by generating evidence to inform policy making, implementing on-the-ground projects, creating platforms for regional collaboration and mutual learning, fostering partnerships between stakeholders, and by enhancing the capacity of key personnel in ministries, institutions, and

organisations. Within its mandate given by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education, SEAMEO places specific focus on enhancing research on health and climate priority themes. Therefore, SEAMEO aims to act as a regional partner to **Wellcome Trust** and the **UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)** to implement the SEA DREAM programme.

Wellcome, as a global charitable foundation established in 1936, supports science to solve urgent global health issues. Wellcome has proposed to work in collaboration with regional partners and the FCDO to fund, develop, and implement a programme focused on health research excellence and research leadership development particularly in low and middle income (LMIC) settings in Southeast Asia. The goal is to fund thematic research consortia to respond to shared strategic priorities where these align with national and regional priorities.

With the UK government's strategy for international development 2022, the UK has made a commitment to leadership on climate change and global health. The **FCDO** oversees cross-government efforts to deliver the strategy and aims to partner with LMIC and cooperate with sovereign wealth funds, international organisations and civil society to ensure LMIC can access the funding and support needed for them to deliver on their climate ambitions and to invest in the research and innovations needed to tackle national, regional, and global health challenges.

Position Overview:

The Grants Manager will play a critical role in supporting consortia and researchers in their pursuits and advancing the SEA DREAM's objectives through management and administration of strategic grants.

The Grants Manager oversees the entire lifecycle of SEA DREAM grant applications, from initial submission to final reporting. Your role involves guiding the grants team, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement of grant processes and policies.

You will monitor grant budgets and expenditures, ensuring compliance with funding guidelines and regulations, evaluating and reviewing funding policies, and ensure effective implementation of programmes. Furthermore, you will facilitate interactions with research consortia and create awareness of award policies and funding opportunities within the research community.

You will be reporting to the SEA DREAM Head of Programme and work closely with the SEA DREAM Team consisting of Head of Programme, Grants Officer, Administration Officer, Finance Officer, Communications Officer and Compliance, Risk and MEAL Officer.

Key Responsibilities:

1. End-to-End Grant Management and Administration:

- Oversee the end-to-end management of SEA DREAM grants, including application, review, award, implementation, and reporting processes.
- Design and implement transparent, fair, and accessible grant application processes, including creating application forms, guidelines, and evaluation/assessment criteria.
- Oversee the recruitment and management of review committees.
- Ensure the integrity of the application process through standardised procedures and workflows.
- Ensure the effective implementation of funded activities by interacting with consortia, evaluating and reviewing funding policies, and raising awareness of funding opportunities within the research community.
- Collaborate with the Grants Officer and finance teams to develop and monitor grant budgets and expenditures, identify variances, take corrective action as needed, and ensure accurate allocation and financial reporting.
- Design terms of references for, oversee procurement of, and lead service providers contracted to fulfil specific grant management functions based on programme needs.

2. Grant Evaluation, Impact Assessment, and Strategic Alignment:

- Develop thematic funding call strategies aligned with SEA DREAM's research priorities and stakeholder needs.
- Assess the effectiveness of grant programmes using performance metrics and ongoing evaluations. For this you will be supported by the Grants Officer and Compliance, Risk, and MEAL Officer.
- Use data and feedback to inform programme improvements and demonstrate outcomes to stakeholders. You will work with the Communications Officer to develop materials that showcase the outcomes of funded research consortia for internal and external stakeholders.

3. Compliance and Reporting:

- Stay informed about relevant regulations, policies, and compliance requirements related to grant funding.
- Ensure all grant activities adhere to regulatory guidelines and funding requirements.
- Monitor project progress and expenditures, and prepare regular reports on grant activities, impact metrics, and compliance status for internal and external stakeholders. For this you will be supported by the Grants Officer, Compliance, Risk, and MEAL Officer, and Finance Officer.
- Organise feedback collection from consortia, reviewers, partners, and committee members as required.

4. Grant Management Process Improvement:

- Conduct evaluations of grant management processes and systems to identify areas for improvement including opportunities to leverage technology to enhance efficiency and productivity.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams to implement streamlined procedures and best practices, including overseeing the adoption of grant management software and tools.

5. Team Guidance, Training and Capacity Building:

- Guide the SEA DREAM grants team, ensuring effective task delegation and performance. You will be specifically responsible in leading the Grants Officer(s).
- Facilitate collaboration between SEA DREAM team members as well as SEAMEO Secretariat staff.
- Provide training and technical assistance to staff involved in grant management, ensuring clarity on grant requirements and procedures.
- Design and lead capacity-building initiatives for (potential) SEA DREAM consortia to enhance their ability to secure and manage grants.
- Foster a culture of compliance, accountability, and continuous improvement within SEAMEO Secretariat's and SEA DREAM's grant management processes.

6. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Cultivate relationships with grantees, funding partners, and other stakeholders to promote collaboration and communication, including leading efforts to identify and cultivate partnerships with external stakeholders to support research consortia and expand funding opportunities.
- Contribute insights and recommendations to strategic planning efforts related to funding priorities, resource allocation, and programme growth. You will collaborate with the Head of Programme to identify funding gaps and funding opportunities based on organisational and strategic partner goals.
- Represent SEA DREAM in regional and global forums to enhance visibility and attract additional funding opportunities.

7. Risk Management:

- Identify risks and maintain an updated Risk Register and Issue Log to mitigate potential challenges in collaboration with the Compliance, Risk, and MEAL Officer.

8. Other Duties

- Undertake other tasks as assigned by the Head of Programme to support the effective delivery of the SEA DREAM Programme.

Qualifications:

Education:

- Ph.D. or equivalent degree in a relevant field such as biomedical sciences, public health, or a related discipline.

Experience and Skills:

- Minimum five (5) years of experience in grants management, or programme management, preferably within a funding agency, research institution, or a not-for-profit organisation with international reach. Experience in Southeast Asia is a strong advantage.
- Extensive experience leading teams and managing complex projects. Experience working in regional or international context is a plus.
- In-depth understanding of grant lifecycle management and proven track record of implementing standardised procedures for grant application design, call, review, evaluation, approval, and ensuring compliance with funding guidelines and regulations.
- Proficiency in grant management software.
- Strong project management skills to plan, execute, and evaluate complex research initiatives.
- Exceptional skills in research methodology, data analysis, and interpretation.
- Experience with monitoring grant budgets and expenditures and preparation of regular reports to leaderships, including financial reports, programmatic reports, and progress updates.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English; proficiency in a Southeast Asian language is an advantage.

Attributes:

- Strong proactive problem-solving abilities, sound decision-making, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build relationships and collaborate with stakeholders at all levels.
- Detailed knowledge of ethical standards, regulatory requirements, and best practices in research governance, and familiarity with global professional protocols.
- Highly organised, with attention to detail in record-keeping and reporting, and with the ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Culturally sensitive and able to work effectively in diverse environments.

HOW TO APPLY:

Applicants are required to submit their CV and cover letter to job@seameo.org by **7 March 2025**.