

Terms of Reference: Grants Officer 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 Officer will play a critical role in supporting consortia and researchers in their pursuits and advancing the SEA DREAM's objectives through administration of strategic grants.

The Grants Officer coordinates and executes the entire lifecycle of grants, from initial application and submission to final selection, record of proceedings, reporting, ensuring compliance with funding guidelines, and post-award administration throughout the full duration of the grants.

The role includes implementing standardised procedures for grant application review, evaluation, and approval, monitoring grant budgets, and ensuring adherence to funding guidelines and regulations.

With awareness of relevant regulations, policies, and compliance requirements related to grant funding, the Grants Officer will be responsible for the overall successful coordination of the pre-award process for any funding call. You will ensure timely reviews and coordinate interactions with selection panels, working closely with stakeholders and applicants to guarantee a smooth pre-and post-award process.

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

Key Responsibilities:

1. Pre- and Post-Award Grant Administration:

- Assist in drafting calls for funding applications and ensure compliance with regulatory and programmatic requirements.
- Manage grant applications, including reviewing submissions for eligibility, maintaining records, and ensuring compliance throughout the lifecycle of grants.
- Coordinate the review process for grant applications, which may involve forming review committees, soliciting external reviewers, organise review committee meetings, and evaluating eligible applications based on established criteria.
- Manage the awarding process for grant and fellowship applicants, including communicating decisions to applicants, and providing ongoing support and guidance for the activation of awards.
- Oversee administrative tasks during pre-award, active grant implementation, and post-award stages to ensure continuous compliance and efficiency.
- Provide technical assistance to grantees in preparing reports or fulfilling documentation requirements.
- Post award management including monitoring, reviews and evaluation, regular communication to grantees and stakeholders, review and accommodation of requests from grantees and research consortia.
- Support the Grants Manager and collaborate with finance teams to develop and monitor grant budgets and expenditures, identify variances, take corrective action as needed, and ensure accurate allocation and financial reporting.
- Support the Grants Manager in writing terms of references for, procurement of, and engage with service providers contracted to fulfil specific grant management functions based on programme needs.

2. Compliance and Reporting:

- Ensure that all grant activities adhere to regulatory guidelines and funding requirements.
- Stay informed about relevant regulations, policies, and compliance requirements related to grant funding.
- Monitor project progress and expenditures on grants funded and prepare regular progress and financial reports on grant activities, impact metrics, and compliance status for internal and external stakeholders. For this you will work with the Grants Manager and be supported by the Compliance, Risk, and MEAL Officer, and Finance Officer.
- Address post-award issues such as amendments, extensions, or special requests in collaboration with stakeholders.

- Organise feedback collection from consortia, reviewers, partners, and committee members as required.

3. Grant Management Process Improvement:

- Conduct regular evaluations of grant management processes and systems to identify bottlenecks and areas for improvement. You will collaborate across the SEA DREAM Team to implement process improvements and best practices.
- Support the implementation and maintenance of grant management systems and technology tools. Provide training and support to staff on the use of grant management software and other technology platforms. Identify opportunities to leverage technology to streamline processes and enhance productivity.

4. Team Guidance, Training and Capacity Building:

- Provide training and technical assistance to staff, ensuring a clear understanding of grant requirements and procedures. Foster a positive and collaborative work environment that encourages teamwork, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- Conduct briefings and workshops for applicants on the application and compliance process.
- Foster a culture of compliance, accountability, and continuous improvement within SEAMEO Secretariat's and SEA DREAM's grant management processes.

5. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Act as a point of contact for applicants, grantees, and reviewers, providing timely guidance and support pre-and post-award.
- Facilitate communication between grantees and SEA DREAM to ensure clear understanding of requirements and expectations. You will work closely with the Communications Officer to achieve this.
- Coordinate interactions with selection panels and committees to ensure smooth and time-bound review of proposals and decision-making processes while adhering to approved protocols and guidelines for engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

6. 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.

Qualifications:

Education:

- Postgraduate degree in a relevant field such as biomedical sciences, public health, or a related discipline, or comparable experience in an academic research environment.

Experience and Skills:

- Minimum three (3) 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.
- Experience with coordinating funding calls and the full life cycle of grant applications, with proven track record of implementing standardised procedures for grant application, review, evaluation, approval, and ensuring compliance with funding guidelines and regulations.
- Strong understanding of processes related to grant development, grantsmanship, including proposal review, selection criteria, impact assessment, and proficiency in grant management software.
- Proven capability to communicate with stakeholders and applicants during the full award process and experience in organising and delivering training or workshops for stakeholders.
- Demonstrable project management skills and experience with monitoring grant budgets and expenditures and preparation of regular reports, including financial reports, programmatic reports, and progress updates.
- Expertise in research methodology, study design, data analysis, and interpretation are desirable.
- 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.
- Creative and innovative thinker with the ability to create engaging and impactful content.
- 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**.