



Australia Awards

Australia Awards

Sri Lanka and
the Maldives

Grant Guidelines
December 2021



1. Background

Australia Awards are provided to build the skills and knowledge of individuals so that they can contribute to their country’s development, and to support the ongoing development of links between Australia and the countries to which it provides aid. Australia Awards are an important part of the Australian Government’s focus on public and economic diplomacy, and provide Scholarships and Short Courses, supported by a range of other capacity-building and professional development modalities. In the South Asia and Mongolia region, Australia Awards are offered in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

2. Overview

Grants are an enabling modality for [Australia Awards – South Asia & Mongolia](#) (the Program) to assist Australia Awards scholars and alumni (including Short Course alumni) working towards sustainable development in their country.

Australia Awards grants aim to provide grant recipients with the skills and knowledge to drive change and influence economic and social development of the country. There are numerous challenges in bringing about such changes. Grants aim to address some of these challenges.

Some grants (e.g. for internships) also provide current scholars additional opportunities for professional development and networking to improve their Australia Awards experience.

Grants are targeted in line with Program outcomes and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) approved development sectors. They are offered on a competitive basis and deliver value for money in public and economic diplomacy objectives for DFAT. With the unprecedented global disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, grants have been an effective way for DFAT to deliver local outcomes.

Australian alumni in Sri Lanka and the Maldives have been instrumental in providing significant contributions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Aligned with priorities identified in the [Partnerships for Recovery: Australia’s COVID-19 Development Response](#), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) intends to support and build on these alumni initiatives through offering a small grant scheme that can be accessed by Australia Awards alumni in Sri Lanka.

In responding to recovery initiatives connected to the impact of COVID-19, alumni proposals that are linked to the below priority sectors highlighted in the Partnerships for Recovery: Australia’s COVID-19 Development Response will be given priority in the selection process.

Health Security	Stability	Economic Recovery
Health and hygiene Mental health Women and disability Issues connected to children (abuse/disability etc) Gender-based violence	Food security Social security Employment security Economic security	Economic recovery Managing the economic slowdown Reducing the impact of the economic crisis on the most vulnerable

Funding will be available for a maximum of AUD 5,000 per grant project that support COVID-19 response and recovery efforts initiated by alumni. All projects must be completed within 4 months of grant signing.

3. Objective

Grants are designed to assist proactive Australia Awards beneficiaries to implement development activities that complement the Australian Government’s priorities throughout Program locations. Applicants can propose development activities that support their country to achieve [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The objectives of grants are to:

- increase sustainability in the development objectives of Sri Lanka
- combine capacities of skilled professionals to achieve common development objectives
- establish a platform for sector specialists/organisations to develop linkages/consortiums that can continue to work without the support of a grant
- provide scholars and alumni with professional development activities to make them better leaders for development
- support scholars and alumni to establish and maintain networks with Australians and Australian organisations
- develop the virtual event management and digital communication skills of scholars and alumni to prepare them for the changed working environment precipitated by COVID-19
- enhance the Australia Awards experience of scholars and participants to make them more engaged as alumni.

4. Types of Grants

Grants can broadly be categorised into the following types:

- **DFAT Priority Area / Thematic grants**
DFAT Priority Area / Thematic grants will vary depending on development and assessment needs. Examples of Thematic grants include disability inclusion, COVID-19 recovery, environmental protection / climate action and research grants.
- **Professional Development grants**
Professional Development grants aim to assist recipients to supplement and extend their formal academic studies.
- **Asset Acquisition grants**
Asset Acquisition grants are uncommon but provide DFAT with a mechanism to support local development needs that are consistent with DFAT priorities. As the risk profile is different from the other grant activities covered by these Grant Guidelines, Asset Acquisition grants will be treated as an exception, assessed on a case-by-case basis, and will require approval by the delegated A-based Personnel at Post. Assets purchased using an Asset Acquisition grant will be the property of the grant recipient. All Asset Acquisition grant applications will at a minimum describe the asset's intended purpose, intended location and cost, and include a thorough risk assessment.

Alumni may apply for grants as individuals or as groups (formal or informal).

5. Types of Applicants

Alumni may apply for a grant as:

- an individual alumnus/alumna
- a group consisting of up to five global alumni (the principal applicant must be an Australia Awards Scholarships or Short Course scholar/alumni)

6. Eligibility Criteria

Grants are aimed at Australia Awards Sri Lanka and the Maldives alumni who are committed to:

- contributing to development in their home countries using their Australia Awards experience, knowledge, networks and leadership competencies

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- organising networking and professional development among alumni from different sectors
- pursuing professional and leadership development activities

To be eligible, applicants of grants will:

- (alumni) reside and be employed in Sri Lanka and the Maldives
- submit applications that are carefully targeted to achieve maximum impact and measurable outcomes
- submit complete applications with required documentation during the call for proposal period
- propose an activity that does not exceed four months from the time the grant is awarded
- agree to acquit funds according to the Grant Agreement, which will be provided if you are selected for a grant.

As part of the application, applicant(s) of a grant will:

- Confirm a simple and effective approach to monitor and evaluate the grant activity
- Identify any potential risks associated with the delivery of the activity
- Provide a tentative budget in a format agreed with Australia Awards Sri Lanka and the Maldives (this format will be determined according to the requirements of each grant)
- Participate in further monitoring, evaluation and learning processes of Australia Awards Sri Lanka and the Maldives as part of the Program's broader impact assessments.

Grants can be used for the following:

- delivering or organising an in-country professional development opportunity (such as an online or face-to-face symposium, workshop, conference or training course)
- conducting advocacy activities aimed at improving community awareness of issues relevant to advancing development
- attending professional development activities and internships
- supporting publication of research outputs
- assisting and supporting marginalised groups such as women and girls; people with disability; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual people; children and youth; the elderly; and local indigenous communities
- supporting local development efforts.

These grants will not support:

- pre-investment/feasibility studies or pilot demonstration projects related to potential commercial activities
- overseas travel
- payments to nationals of non-Program locations for services rendered
- fees/salaries to scholars or alumni who are involved in the implementation of the approved grant activity
- compensation to scholars or alumni for writing the application, regardless of the application being approved or not
- activities that will only benefit the applicant or the group of applicants.

Unless pre-agreed, grant proceeds cannot be used to purchase equipment or build physical infrastructure.

An individual or group can only submit one application in a single grant cycle. Applicants may apply again in the next grant cycle whether they have been awarded a grant previously or not.

7. Application Process

Grant applications may be submitted by an alumnus/alumna, or a group of alumni of Australia Awards Sri Lanka and the Maldives working towards a common development goal. All applications will be assessed under the defined criteria, standards, and procedures in line with the objectives of Australia Awards Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The proposed activity for the grant must be completed within a period of up to four months.

An individual or group of alumni can only submit one proposal in a single grant cycle. Applicants may apply again in the next grant cycle whether they have been awarded a grant previously or not.

The process of acquiring a grant is as follows:

Submission of application: From the date of announcement of the grant, applicants will have a period of four weeks to submit their application to Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Submissions will be accepted via email submitted to alumni@australiaawardsrilanka.org by 15 January 2022. Hard copy applications will not be accepted. The Grant Application must be complete and **MUST** include all required documentation at the time of submission to be eligible for evaluation.

Shortlisting of applications: The shortlisting will be done using an 'Evaluation Matrix and Scoring Sheet'.

8. Application Assessment

All applications will be assessed using the below defined criteria, standards and procedures in line with the objectives of Program country locations.

The assessment of grant applications will consider:

All Australia Awards alumni currently residing in Sri Lanka are invited to submit applications, including those who studied in Australia through an Australia Awards Scholarship or Short Course, an Endeavour Scholarship or Fellowship.

The small grants are designed to assist proactive alumni in implementing activities contributing to sustainable development in Sri Lanka. Alumni can propose a development-related activity that supports Sri Lanka to address challenges in the wake of COVID-19, with a particular focus on gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, health security, stability, social cohesion and economic recovery connected to the effects of COVID-19

The Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives office will conduct an initial assessment of the grant applications. This assessment will indicate which applications are recommended for funding. DFAT Colombo will make the final decision of which applicants will receive funding from the Program.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that:

- contribute to the empowerment of women and girls, water security, agriculture, infrastructure and inclusive economic development
- include a financial contribution and/or a contribution in kind from the applicant(s) alumnus/alumna employing organisation.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning and Reporting

The following reports will be required from grant recipients once the approved activity has been initiated:

- **Grant Progress/Interim Report** to be submitted at the mid of duration of the activity.

The report should provide a brief overview of the achievements against the expected outcomes anticipated in the application. Any significant challenges that are encountered should also be detailed along with action(s) taken to overcome the said challenges. In addition, recipients are required to inform Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives about issues that may delay or hinder the proposed activity in any way. Failure to register such issues may be held against the grant recipient.

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- **Grant Completion Report** to be submitted within one month of activity completion.

Each grant recipient must submit a completion report for their proposal using the Grant Completion Report template. Where a group of alumni are the recipients of a grant, a single Grant Completion Report will be sufficient.

Grant recipients may be contacted by the Program at any time to seek information on the implementation and progress of activities for audit/review purposes. If, for any reason, the proposed activity or related activities proposed in the application cannot proceed as originally approved, the grant recipient must inform the Program country office immediately in writing. In such situations, Australia Awards will require any unexpended funds to be returned.

The Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives can decide at any time during the term of the agreement, to conduct monitoring and/or require additional reports/documentation from the recipients, such as:

- exception reports
- online surveys
- periodic meetings
- videos and photos taken during implementation
- physical outputs (for example, training manuals).

10. Funding

The value of a grant for a single activity will be up to AUD 5,000. A detailed budget of activities must be provided using the template provided along with the application.

11. Financial Requirements and Disbursements

Where possible, Program country teams will make direct payments to suppliers, to reduce the risk of fraud. Grants will be disbursed in Sri Lankan Rupees in two instalments as follows:

- 60% of the grant amount will be disbursed to the grant recipient following approval of their application
- The remaining 40% (or actual outstanding funds required, whichever is the lesser) will be disbursed following the approval of the Grant Completion Report and the Financial Acquittal Report. The Financial Acquittal Report must include original receipts for each approved item of expenditure.

The grant funds will be transferred to grantee's bank account, depending on the category of the selected recipient:

- if the grant recipient is an individual, his/her bank account will be used
- if the grant recipient is a group of people, the group will nominate one member whose bank account will be used.

12. Fraud and Misuse of Funds

The Australian Government has zero tolerance to fraud and has robust systems and procedures in place to protect public money and property from fraud and corruption. Australia Awards – South Asia & Mongolia plays a crucial role in minimising exposure of Australian aid funding to fraud and corruption.

All grant recipients must attend a Fraud Briefing, either face-to-face or virtually, delivered by the relevant Program country office before funds are transferred to the grant recipient.

Misuse of funds will be treated in accordance with [DFAT's Fraud Control Toolkit](#).

13. Project Delivery

If any grant-funded activity is not delivered, the Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives office will carry out a thorough investigation to assess the cause(s).

The situation will be considered under the following guidelines:

- If the activity failed due to force majeure, the grant recipient(s) will not be liable to return the grant amount. However, if there are any unexpended funds, the grant recipient(s) will be obligated to return these to the Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives office.
- If the activity needs to be rescheduled, the grant recipient(s) must provide substantial evidence to support the request in order to hold the unexpended funds.
- If the activity has failed due to negligence by the grant recipient(s), the grant recipient(s) may be required to return the total grant amount, including any unexpended funds. Alternatively, if it is possible for the activity to take place at a future date, the grant recipient(s) will be expected to complete the activity without any additional funding.
- If grant recipient(s) misuse the grant funds for personal benefit, the grant recipient(s) will be blacklisted from all future activities and the Program will initiate a process to recover the full amount of the grant, in accordance with the Program's Fraud Control Strategy.

14. Communications and Public Diplomacy

Grant recipients must follow the appropriate branding guidelines in implementing the activity. They must also respond to requests from the Australia Awards - Sri Lanka and the Maldives team or DFAT Post for information and other requests (for example, facilitating photos or videos during activities or arranging/hosting public diplomacy visits).

Grant recipients must comply with the Australia Awards branding requirements specified in the Grant Agreement. They **must not use** the Australia Awards or Australia Global Alumni logos without the written consent of the Program.

15. Submitting an Application

Grant Applications are open from 15 December 2021 – 15 January 2022. Please email your complete application to Alumni@australiaawardssrilanka.org.

For queries, please email Alumni@australiaawardssrilanka.org

