



ENGAGED RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

Engaged Research Considerations for SEA DREAM Full Proposals

Generating Impactful Research

SEA DREAM will fund 'excellent' science and research which is responsive to regional health priorities and that translates into real-world solutions, policies, and interventions. SEA DREAM will support discovery and translational research that addresses national and regional health research priorities and emerging issues, including under-served areas of research, across horizontal and vertical topics, and encourage innovation and multi-disciplinary research.

Question	Why this is relevant to Generating Impactful Research
Does the consortium demonstrate that the people most affected by the research are meaningfully involved in shaping it across the research lifecycle?	Research shaped by those closest to the issue is more likely to address real needs, fill genuine gaps, and produce findings that translate into real-world solutions
Does the consortium demonstrate that engagement methods are appropriate to the research context and the communities involved?	Methods that are not appropriate to the setting or population risk producing evidence that cannot be applied, replicated, or trusted.
Does the consortium demonstrate that key stakeholders are identified and their relevance to the research is clearly explained?	A credible impact strategy requires knowing who will use the findings, if stakeholders cannot be named and justified, the pathway from research to policy or practice is unclear

Supportable?	Definition	Examples	Score	Adjective
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear evidence of meaningful and sustained involvement of affected communities and stakeholders across multiple stages of the research lifecycle. Clear evidence that engagement methods are appropriate to the 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communities or stakeholder groups named and described as informing research design; engagement methods justified in relation to the specific populations and settings involved; 	4	Outstanding

	<p>research context, settings, and populations involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that key stakeholders are named, justified, and connected to the research in a way that strengthens both the science and its real-world application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • named stakeholders connected to both the research process and the impact strategy 		
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence of stakeholder involvement at multiple stages with some demonstration of how this has shaped the research. • Engagement methods are appropriate to context with some justification provided. • Key stakeholders are identified and their relevance to the research is explained. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders involved at more than one stage of the research; • engagement methods described with some contextual justification; • stakeholders named with an explanation of their role in the research 	3	Excellent
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of stakeholder involvement but limited to specific stages or activities. • Engagement methods are described but justification for their appropriateness to context is limited. • Stakeholders are named but their role in the research is not fully explained. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders mentioned in dissemination plans only; • engagement methods listed without contextual justification; • stakeholders named but with no described role in the research process 	2	Good
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence of meaningful stakeholder involvement. Engagement 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no named stakeholders or communities involved in shaping the research; 	1	Not Fundable

	<p>appears tokenistic, one-off, or confined to dissemination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods are not appropriate to context or are not described. • Key stakeholders are not identified or their relevance to the research is unclear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement limited to end-of-project dissemination; • no consideration of whether methods are appropriate to the populations or settings involved 		
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Nurturing Research Leadership and Talent

SEA DREAM research consortia will provide research career pathways to develop research talent and promote research leadership within Southeast Asia.

SEA DREAM seeks to expand opportunities for early- and mid-career researchers and associated research staff, build mentorship relations, provide career transition opportunities and foster the next generation of competitive research leaders.

Question	Why this is relevant to Nurturing Leadership
Does the consortium demonstrate that its leadership development plan extends beyond academic career progression to include skills for engaging with communities, policy makers, and equitable research partnerships?	Research leaders in Southeast Asia need to operate across academic, policy, and community settings to generate real-world impact. Leadership development that focuses only on academic progression risks producing researchers who are technically strong but unable to translate their work into practice
Does the consortium demonstrate that early and mid-career researchers have meaningful opportunities to lead across research, training, and community or policy-facing activities?	SEA DREAM explicitly seeks to expand opportunities for early and mid-career researchers. If leadership opportunities are concentrated at senior levels or limited to technical strands, the consortium is not fulfilling this objective or developing the rounded research leaders the programme aims to produce
Does the consortium demonstrate that knowledge and learning flows across all partners (including health	Equitable and sustainable research ecosystems in Southeast Asia require relationships that extend beyond academia. Consortia that build knowledge exchange across different types of partners are more likely to

system actors and civil society) and not only within academic institutions?	produce research that is relevant, trusted, and used. This includes ensuring that learning flows in multiple directions across the consortium, not only from senior academic partners downward
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Supportable?	Definition	Examples	Score	Adjective
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that leadership development extends beyond academic progression to include community, policy, and equity skills. • Clear evidence that early and mid-career researchers are leading meaningfully across research, training, and community or policy-facing activities. • Clear evidence of knowledge exchange across all consortium partners including health system actors and civil society, with structured opportunities for mutual learning. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • named early career researchers leading specific research strands and policy engagement activities; • structured mentorship arrangements that include training in community engagement and policy navigation; • health ministry officials or community organisations named as active partners in learning and development activities 	4	Outstanding
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that leadership development includes some community and policy-facing skills alongside academic progression. • Early and mid-career researchers have identifiable leadership opportunities across more than just technical strands. • Knowledge exchange extends beyond academic partners with some evidence 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early career researchers leading training workshops or community liaison activities; • mentorship plans that reference policy engagement alongside technical skills; • health system partners named in the consortium with some described role in knowledge sharing 	3	Excellent

	of structured involvement of health system or civil society actors.			
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of leadership development but largely focused on academic career progression. • Early and mid-career researchers have some opportunities to lead but these are primarily technical. • Knowledge exchange is largely confined to academic consortium members with limited involvement of wider partners. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training plans focused on research methods and grantsmanship only; • early career researchers named as co-investigators but with no described leadership role beyond data collection or analysis; • health system or community partners mentioned but with no described role in learning or development 	2	Good
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence of meaningful leadership development beyond senior academic staff. • Early and mid-career researchers have no identifiable leadership opportunities or are limited to supporting roles. • Knowledge exchange is one-directional or confined entirely to academic institutions with no involvement of health system actors or civil society. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training plan consists of attendance at conferences only; • early career researchers not named or described only as research assistants; • no evidence of partnerships with health system actors, community organisations, or civil society in any capacity 	1	Not Fundable

Fostering Regional Collaboration

SEA DREAM aims to support and build equitable partnerships that leverage regional expertise and enable the sharing of resources to achieve common goals. The programme will support cross-border collaboration to strengthen research linkages and generate impact at scale. By connecting leading and emerging research institutions, SEA DREAM aims to facilitate joint agenda-setting, resource-sharing, and learning.

Question	Why this is relevant to Fostering Regional Collaboration
Does the consortium demonstrate that all are genuinely involved in decision-making and agenda-setting, and not only in implementation?	SEA DREAM explicitly requires equitable and meaningful partnership. Collaboration limited to implementation without shared decision-making or agenda-setting is not equitable partnership - it risks reproducing extractive research dynamics and power imbalances that the programme is designed to avoid. Partnerships should demonstrate awareness of how power operates between institutions of different sizes, resources, and country contexts, and show how this has been actively addressed
Does the consortium demonstrate that findings and knowledge are shared back with communities and partners in formats and through approaches that are appropriate and accessible to them?	Regional collaboration only generates impact at scale if learning flows back to the people and settings it concerns. Findings shared only through academic publications or in English-only formats may be technically open access but practically inaccessible to the communities, health system actors, and LMIC partners the research is intended to serve

Supportable?	Definition	Examples	Score	Adjective
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that all partners are genuinely involved in decision-making and agenda-setting across the research lifecycle, with demonstrated awareness of and response to power dynamics between partners. • Clear evidence that findings and knowledge are shared back with communities and partners through multiple formats and approaches that are appropriate and accessible to them. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners named in governance structures with defined decision-making roles; • evidence of how power imbalances between partners have been identified and addressed; • findings shared through local language materials, community briefings, or policy dialogues alongside academic outputs 	4	Outstanding

Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that partners and named stakeholders have some involvement in decision-making beyond implementation, with some acknowledgement of power dynamics between partners. • Knowledge sharing plans extend beyond academic outputs with some consideration of accessibility and appropriateness for different audiences. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners involved in research design with some governance role; • some acknowledgements of differing partner capacities and how these will be managed; • plans for policy briefs or summary materials alongside academic publications 	3	Excellent
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of partner involvement but largely limited to implementation roles. • Little acknowledgement of power dynamics between partners. • Knowledge sharing plans exist but are primarily focused on academic outputs with limited consideration of accessibility or appropriateness for communities and partners 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners described primarily as data collection sites; • no discussion of how power or resource differentials between partners will be managed; • dissemination plan consists mainly of journal publications and conference presentations 	2	Good
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence of genuine partner involvement in decision-making or agenda-setting. • No acknowledgement of power dynamics between partners. • No credible plan for sharing knowledge and findings back with 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partners listed but with no described governance or decision-making role; • no consideration of how power or resource differentials will be addressed; 	1	Not Fundable

	communities or partners in accessible formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dissemination plan limited to academic publications with no community or policy-facing outputs 		
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Strengthening Research Ecosystems

SEA DREAM will fund research consortia that promote inclusive research culture and foster a supportive research environment conducive to innovation and excellence, thereby accelerating discovery, supporting inclusive growth and long-term sustainability of the research ecosystem, and delivering solutions of regional and global relevance

Question	Why this is relevant to Strengthening Research Ecosystems
Does the consortium demonstrate that its understanding of research ecosystem gaps and priorities has been shaped with and by researchers, institutions, and communities in the region?	A research ecosystem can only be genuinely strengthened if the people within it have helped define what needs to change. Priorities identified without input from regional researchers, institutions, and communities risk addressing the wrong gaps or duplicating existing efforts, undermining the long-term sustainability the programme seeks to build
Does the consortium demonstrate that people are treated with respect throughout the research process, including in how data is collected, consent is obtained, and ethical practices are upheld?	Research that does not uphold the rights, safety, and wellbeing of participants and communities' risks causing harm and eroding trust - both in the specific research and in the broader regional research ecosystem. Ethical practice is not a compliance requirement but a foundation for sustainable, credible research
Does the consortium demonstrate that data ownership, access, and use are clearly defined and equitable - particularly across the multiple country settings involved?	In multi-country consortia, data collected in one country may be stored, analysed, or published by partners in another. Without clear and equitable agreements on ownership and access, partners and affected communities' risk being excluded from the outputs of research conducted in their own settings - directly undermining the programme's commitment to research sovereignty and equitable ecosystems

Supportable?	Definition	Examples	Score	Adjective
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that ecosystem gaps and priorities have been identified with and by regional researchers, institutions, and communities, with named examples of how this has shaped the proposed research. • Clear evidence that people are treated with respect throughout, with robust and contextually appropriate approaches to consent, data collection, and ethical practice across all country settings. • Clear evidence that data ownership, access, and use are clearly defined, equitable, and agreed across all consortium partners. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community or institutional consultations named and described as informing the research agenda; • multi-country ethics approvals in place or planned; • data sharing agreements that explicitly protect LMIC partner and community access to outputs; • GEDI considerations embedded across the research design and team composition 	4	Outstanding
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence that some consultation with regional researchers, institutions, or communities has informed the research priorities, with some description of how this shaped the proposal. • Ethical practices are described and appropriate, with some consideration of contextual differences across country settings. • Data ownership and access are addressed with some consideration of equity across partners. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some evidence of prior engagement with regional stakeholders in agenda setting; • ethics approval processes described for most country settings; • data sharing plan that references LMIC partner access alongside academic outputs 	3	Excellent

Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of consultation with regional stakeholders but this appears limited or retrospective rather than genuinely shaping priorities. • Ethical practices are described but inconsistently applied across country settings. • Data ownership and access are mentioned but equity considerations across partners are limited. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional context described but based primarily on literature rather than direct consultation; • ethics approval mentioned for lead organisation only; • data sharing plan focused on academic outputs with limited consideration of partner or community access 	2	Good
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence that ecosystem gaps and priorities have been shaped with or by regional researchers, institutions, or communities. • Ethical practices are inadequate, inconsistent, or not described across country settings. • Data ownership and access are unclear, undefined, or inequitable. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research agenda appears to have been developed without regional consultation; • no multi-country ethics plan described; • data sharing plan absent or limited to lead organisation with no consideration of partner or community access; • GEDI not addressed or treated as a tick-box exercise 	1	Not Fundable