

## 2024 AUSTRALIA ALUMNI GRANTS SCHEME

### 1. Background

The Australia Awards and Alumni Engagement Program-Philippines (AAAEP-P) implements the 2024 Australia Alumni Grants Scheme (AGS), which will provide funding of up to Php 500,000 for **projects that help contribute to Philippine development while strengthening Philippines-Australia ties.**

Proposals should be aligned with [Australia's International Development Policy](#), [the Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership between the Philippines and Australia](#), [the Philippines' AmBisyon Natin 2040 Vision](#), or the [2030 Sustainable Development Goals](#). Proposals that adopt a multisectoral approach that considers socio-economic needs, with due regard for gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) and climate change action is highly encouraged. Project eligibility requirements are set out in the annex.

AAAEP-P is an initiative of the Australian Government to support the Philippines in its development goals and create positive relationships that advance mutual interests. The program offers a mix of long-term scholarships, short courses, and other forms of training for current and emerging leaders and influencers. In addition, it supports ongoing alumni engagement through the Australia Global Alumni network.

### 2. Objectives

The AGS aims to:

- Develop, maintain, and strengthen professional linkages and partnerships between Filipinos and Australians;
- Connect alumni across disciplines, professions, organisations, and geographic areas to share good practices and create opportunities for collaboration;
- Showcase Australia's excellence as a provider of high-quality education and research;
- Support initiatives that promote GEDSI and climate change action.

### 3. Key dates

Proposals for the 2024 Australia Alumni Grants Scheme are accepted until 30 June 2024.

Implementation of proposed projects and initiatives should be completed by 31 May 2025.

### 4. Eligible Proponents

Proposals may be submitted by Filipino nationals who graduated from a recognised Australian tertiary education, including those who self-funded their study in Australia. It is also available to alumni who graduated from short-term study or fellowship programs from recognised Australian institutions and alumni of Australian government-funded programs, including short courses, non-formal learning opportunities and the In-Country Scholarship Program.

Proposals must be submitted by an individual alumnus, group of alumni or alumni community of practice/organization. These must demonstrate their ability to efficiently and effectively implement projects as well as manage funds according to AAAEP-P's policies. Implementation cannot be subcontracted to a third-party organisation. Projects must be directly managed and implemented by alumni proponents.

Australia Awards alumni who have yet to complete their respective Re-Entry Action Plans (REAPs) must have completed their REAPs at least 50%.

## **5. Funding and duration**

Financial support up to Php 500,000 will be provided per project. Project costs and proposed sources of funding must be included in the proposal.

This grant may **NOT** be used to:

- Conduct masters or doctoral projects,
- Pay non-Filipino nationals for services rendered;
- Purchase furniture, fixtures, equipment or machinery;
- Pay salaries and/or compensation of the alumni proponent (individual, team leader and alumni members;
- Fund projects and research studies undertaken by non-alumni organisations;
- Fund academic or short-course training to be taken by the alumni proponents;
- Implement Australia Awards REAPs; or
- Pay for travel to other countries.

The grant amount will depend on the scope of the proposed project. AGS funds may be used as a counterpart to grants provided by other parties. Grant funds must be fully acquitted with official receipts and other acceptable documentation. Grantees are expected to maintain a sound administrative and financial system capable of providing evidence of the delivery of activities, services and goods purchased.

Implementation should commence within one month of funding approval and signing of the Grant Agreement. In case of a delay in execution, the grantee should notify the AAAEP-P in writing proposing new implementation timelines. Proposals that exceed the funding limit and duration may be considered subject to merit and assessment.

## **6. Appraisal and Approval Procedures**

All proposals should be submitted online at <https://www.australiaawardsphilippines.org/alumni/ags> using the prescribed templates . All applications will be acknowledged upon receipt. Proposals will be assessed as they come in, and if selected, the proponent may begin project implementation immediately.

Proposals will be assessed and approved on a competitive basis by the Grants Screening Committee, composed of representatives from the Australian Embassy in the Philippines and members from the private or development sectors.

Successful applicants will sign a Grant Agreement with AAAEP-P. Work must commence in the first one (1) month of signing. A delay of more than one (1) month without approval will cancel the grant. Funds will have to be returned to AAAEP-P within 30 days. Extensions of time will only be given in unforeseen circumstances beyond the grantee's control.

## **7. Terms and Conditions**

The schedule of fund releases is as follows:

- 50% on commencement, upon approval and acceptance of the project;
- 40% upon submission of the mid-term project review, satisfactory project evaluation based on projects visit and approved final implementation and costing plan (for major projects or activities); and
- 10% upon submission of final acquittal and approved terminal report.

Reports will be reviewed and approved by AAAEP-P.

Generally, these schedules should apply. However, proposals can present a different schedule when critical to the nature of the project or research they intend to implement. The final tranche will entail closer monitoring from the AAAEP-P and strict reporting from the proponents/implementers to ensure the full completion of the project.

The depositary bank account of the grant must be in the name of the organisation for registered groups or organisations or the group leader individuals or unregistered groups. The account must be kept active within the duration of the project. Group members will be asked to sign an acknowledgment of financial arrangements during contract signing and submission of the final report.

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting**

The following activity and financial reports are required for all successful grant applications:

- a. **Milestone Reports** – These must be submitted upon completion of activities for each tranche based on the approved work plan and submitted throughout the project duration. There will be instances where AAAEP-P will require proponents to submit a progress report before the due date. The report should include updates on key activities, events and progress towards completion, risks, budget and expenditure, qualitative and quantitative data, photos and other relevant information.
- b. **Project Completion Report** – This must be submitted within one month after completion of the project or activity. This should include a full recap of key activities and outcomes, events and indicators of completion, ongoing work, risks, a full breakdown of budget and expenditure, qualitative and quantitative data and reports, photos/videos and other relevant information as well as a detailed acquittal and financial reporting on project expenses and disbursements. In addition, a knowledge management (KM) product such as policy paper/recommendation, infographics, manuals, guidebooks, photo or video documentary should also be submitted.

Reports must be submitted online.

It is the responsibility of the alumni or group leader to provide timely updates and feedback to AAAEP-P regarding the implementation of the project, including:

- a. Information on major changes to the scope and details of the proposed activity or project or significant changes to the allocation of fund items within the project throughout the project's duration as they arise; and
- b. All social media promotions such as blogs, tweets, Facebook, and Instagram videos and photos of milestone activities.

## **9. Other Provisions**

### **a. Fraud Control**

Fraud is described as “dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means”. The grants scheme strictly adheres to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s (DFAT) [Fraud Control Policies](#) and the [Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework](#). AAAEP-P has a zero-tolerance “to any fraudulent activity.” This means that the grant scheme will not condone any form of fraudulent behaviour in its operations such as payment of bribes, facilitation payments or “hidden” commissions for any reason.

**b. Child Protection**

Organisations or institutions whose applications propose working directly with children must adhere to DFAT’s [child protection policy](#). The child protection policy shall include procedures for protecting children in the proposed activity, amongst other things, from any potential sexual, mental and physical abuse by staff members or other adults involved in the activity.

**c. Terrorism Financing Risks**

All organisations or institutions must make reasonable efforts to identify and understand the level of terrorism-financing risk to which a proposed activity may be exposed across its entire life cycle. Where a specific risk is identified, necessary actions must be taken to manage and reduce this risk. Grants will not be provided where there is a non-mitigated risk of financing terrorism. Proponents should review DFAT’s [Terrorism Resourcing Risk Management Statement](#).

**d. Record Keeping**

Proponents must properly maintain and keep records including all official forms and templates, minutes of evaluation proceedings and related meetings, and reports (progress, mid-term, terminal, and acquittal) and must provide access to these documents upon request by AAAEP-P or DFAT.

## **Annex: SPECIFIC GUIDELINES ON AGS PROJECTS**

### **1. Eligible Activities**

The scheme will support projects that meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Highlight and promote the proponents' Australian education or training
- Build and strengthen people-to-people links of the alumni with Australian institutions or individuals and organisation/community beneficiaries (agreement from institutional or community partners is required prior to confirmation of the grant)
- Share the proponents' training, knowledge and skills gained from his Australian education/training with local communities or organisations
- Have joint public and private sector development activities and advocacies
- Projects should be innovative and sustainable.
- Respond to immediate or long-term problems or challenges that will provide substantial benefits and significantly impact the organisation and/or community.
- Conform to current health protocols and consider innovative and/or technology-related means of implementation.
- Promote gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion (GEDSI) and protect the most vulnerable sectors of society, including women and girls, persons with disabilities, children, displaced populations, the elderly, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups
- Address climate change issues and/or promote initiatives to mitigate climate change.
- Alumni proponent/Team Leader must be a Philippine resident from the time of application until project completion, and the project must be implemented in the Philippines.

### **2. Assessment Criteria**

The assessment of each proposal will be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the objectives of the grant scheme
  - Responsive to critical problems and/or challenges of the community or beneficiary organisation.
  - Highlight and promote Australian education in the Philippines
  - Build and strengthen people-to-people links of the alumni with Australian institutions or individuals and organisation/community beneficiaries
  - Share their Australian training, knowledge and skills with local communities or organisations
  - Create opportunities for joint public and private sector development activities and advocacies
  - Promote gender equality and social inclusion
  - Address climate change issues and promote initiatives to mitigate climate change
- Innovation and Impact
  - Proposed solution or response to identified problem/s and or/challenges demonstrates innovation and/or value-adding features to conventional systems and processes
  - Project outcomes create significant change and impact and potential future benefits to the host community/organisation
- Soundness of project plan and methodology
  - The project plan is well developed and integrated to address the objectives and activities of the grant scheme
  - The methodology is highly likely to lead to concrete and meaningful results.

- The project plan includes measures to ensure accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of women and children, the elderly, the disabled and other vulnerable sectors of the community
- Clear outputs and feasible timelines are presented to ensure timely completion
- Sustainability and replicability
  - The project shows potential for replication and/or upscaling.
  - A sustainability plan is presented demonstrating continuing benefits to the community/organisation.
  - It can be localised and adapted by other proponents under varying circumstances and settings.
- Budget and Value-for-Money
  - The proposed budget is appropriate and offers value for money.
  - For projects with partnership funding, the partner organisation's contribution or counterpart funding is presented; Relevant outputs to achieving results from these funds should be clearly attributed and demonstrate good value to the project.