

Strengthening ICT4D Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA)

Call for Grant Proposals

Guide for Applicants

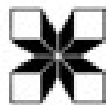
 **THE SINGAPORE INTERNET RESEARCH CENTRE**



WEE KIM WEE SCHOOL
OF COMMUNICATION
& INFORMATION

IDRC

International Development
Research Centre



CRDI

Centre de recherches pour le
développement international



Outline

Call for Grant Proposals

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Strengthening ICT4D Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA) 2008 Grant Cycle Announcement and Guidelines

The SIRCA Programme is pleased to announce a call for grant proposals.

The SIRCA Programme seeks to identify future research leaders and to facilitate their development through the support of research grants. The awards are intended to ensure capacities to conduct research in the area of Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D or ICTD) are built in Asia. This applies particularly to emerging researchers based in Asia who are relatively new to ICTD research and interested in undertaking theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous research. Additionally, these applicants would benefit from concerted capacity building exercises including a mentorship arrangement. In particular, the program promotes broad-based high-quality multidisciplinary research in ICT development, e-services, new media use and social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of individuals, organizations, nation and society.

This grant focuses on social science research, in particular, the relationships between ICTs and society. Projects focusing on developing ICT applications or other similar types of action research without the social science element would fall outside the scope of this grant.



Amount of Each Award

There are three (3) categories of funding – 20,000 SGD, 26,500 SGD and 33,000 SGD.

Project proposals exceeding 33,000 SGD must specify the source of additional funds. If the proposal seeks to supplement an existing research program, please specify the alternate source and categories of funding.

SGD: Singapore Dollars

Important Dates

Grant Application Opens: 25th August 2008

Applicants to register online interest with name and title of project: 29th September 2008

Deadline for Receipt of Proposal: 13th October 2008 11:59 EST

Duration of awards: minimum of 12 months to maximum of 24 months

Award Notification: 1st November 2008



Eligibility

To be eligible, an applicant must:

- be affiliated with an institution or with a consortium or institutions based in Asia. These institutions can be from academia, public sector, private sector or civil society;
- remain at the same institution for the entire funding period;
- have evidence of current involvement in research activities, a long term commitment to a research career, be currently involved in research training or have completed research training.

All proposals must identify the Principal Investigator of the program. Only one Principal Investigator (PI) is allowed per application. There is no limit to the number of Co-Investigators or collaborators. If the project includes multiple investigators, the Principal Investigator must be based in Asia. The Principal Investigator is accountable for the project and is expected to be actively involved in it. Applicants with multiple appointments at different institutions are to select only one hosting institution for the application.

If your project is selected, you are required to provide evidence of Institutional Support – the Research Director signature (must be original) along with a letter of support.



Preparing the Grant Application

Please organize your proposal as follows:

1. A **cover page** that gives the names of all investigators (please do not identify yourself or your institution in the rest of the proposal), mailing addresses, email addresses and phone numbers. Also describe your expertise in this area
2. A **narrative** of no more than eight (8) pages single-spaced in which you
 - explain the problem your research will attempt to solve and how the project will solve the problem you identify.
 - connect the project to previous published research and scholarship (drawing from multidisciplinary literature is encouraged)
 - give a timetable detailing how the project will proceed

Use the guidelines to help prepare your proposal. A research grant proposal guideline is attached to help in preparation.

3. A realistic, detailed **budget** in a separate MS Excel file. Please refer to the budget submission guidelines for budget preparation.
4. A list of PI and co-PIs bios on a separate page.
5. Relevant privileged or confidential information should be disclosed to help convey a better understanding of the project. However, such information must be clearly marked in the proposal. Also indicate if you have any conflicts of interest regarding the research proposal itself, or with the grant administration.
6. For the application the original signatures of the PI is required. The co-investigator(s) and collaborators signatures can be photostatted/faxed copies. These should be submitted in PDF or JPG format.



Submission Process

All applicants must register online interest with name, email address, title of project and country of research by 29th September 2008. Applicants may change their topics anytime before the registration deadline. Click [here](#) to register

All applications must be submitted online to sirca@ntu.edu.sg 13th October, 2008 11:59 EST. Send email submissions with "SIRCA Proposal" in the subject line of your message. Attachments must be in MS Word or PDF and should be labeled with your name (for example: Jane_Doe_Info_Sheet.doc or .docx or .pdf). Budget should be in MS Excel

If you do not receive an acknowledgment of receipt of the application, please contact:

Joanna Tan
SIRCA Grants Programme
Tel: (65) 6790- 6394
Fax: (65) 6792-7526
Email: sirca@ntu.edu.sg

All applicants will be notified of the success or otherwise of their proposal. For queries, more information or assistance with preparing proposals, please contact SIRCA grant secretariat at sirca@ntu.edu.sg

Submission Checklist

- € **Cover Page**
- € **Personnel**
- € **Main Proposal (8 pages maximum)**
- € **Budget (MS Excel spreadsheet)**
- € **References**

Evaluation of Application

The evaluation of applications will be the responsibility of the SIRCA Grant Review Committee. The committee members will employ the criteria for selection to evaluate the proposals. Owing to the large number of proposals anticipated, applicants for proposals that are not selected for award will receive a notification of decline without specific feedback.

Criteria For Selection

You may find the following criteria useful in preparing your proposal; the SIRCA Selection Committee will use these to conduct blind reviews of all proposals.

- i. *Relevance*: The project creates an impact on the people, culture, the economy, and society where it occurs, so as to strengthen ICT uses that promote sustainable development on the Asian continent.
- ii. *Problem Formulation*: Clear and strategic objectives and research design must be articulated and justified (through literature review of scientific sources from all relevant social science disciplines). Are the research design, articulated problem, conceptual framework, methods, and analyses adequate and appropriate for meeting the project objectives?
- iii. *Potential impact/application including Project beneficiaries*: The project must clearly indicate the individuals and groups that would benefit from this research. What impact will the proposed project have on global development inequities? Does project answer critical questions in ICTD research; does it significantly improve upon current strategies? How do the research findings influence policy and practice?
- iv. *Research Methodology*: The methodology is clear, detailed, workable, and appropriate to this project. Does the project develop new interesting methodologies, or use existing methodologies appropriately to answer the research question(s)?
- v. *Expected Outcomes and Outputs*: Outcomes and outputs from the project should be clearly stated and measurable.
- vi. *Risks and limitations*: The risks and limitations of the project should be clearly outlined along with strategies to mitigate these risks and minimize the limitations.
- vii. *Feasibility*: The implementation schedule and budget expenditure should indicate that the project can be reasonably completed in the proposed time frame and within financial resources.
- viii. *Cost Effectiveness*: The expenditures must be reasonable and the project's outcomes justify its expenses. The project budget must be used for research within social context. It can be used for research related items including salaries of administrative staff to support research.
- ix. *How results will be shared professionally*: Include plans for dissemination of research findings through the various strategies and avenues beyond those offered by the program, such as the SiRC website, the program's annual conference and peer-reviewed journals.
- x. *Qualifications and affiliations of the Investigators*: The proposal should indicate the qualifications and institutional affiliations of the investigators.



Funding

- The recipient will receive two equal instalments: The first upon signing of the letter of agreement within 14 days of receiving it. The second upon the halfway mark of the project, based on progress. The SIRCA Programme reserves the right to withhold the second payment if adequate progress has not occurred.
- Research must commence within two months of the date of the Letter of Award; otherwise the offer of the grant may be withdrawn.
- Requests for extensions must be made to the SiRC from the employing organization for review and approval. Under normal circumstances, requests for extensions will not exceed more than six months of the project completion date. Only under extenuating circumstances can projects be granted additional extensions.
- Requests for a change in the Principal Investigator must be made to the SiRC through the employing organization. Under normal circumstances the new Principal Investigator should be one of the Co-Principle-Investigators.



Expectations of Grant Recipients

- Every project will be assigned a mentor. All Principal Investigators (PIs) should expect to work closely with their mentors and be prepared for 1 (one) field trip visit by their mentors.
- One (1) PI from each project will be invited to attend workshops and conferences organized and funded by the SIRCA program.
- PIs are expected to work closely with their respective mentors, and the SIRCA secretariat. Progress of specific sections of the research publications, including theoretical literature review, research design and methodologies, analysis of findings, and discussion, should be made available for feedback to the mentors and SIRCA secretariat. Collaboration in various stages of the research process is expected, and should lead to co-authorship of subsequent publication(s).
- The PI is required to submit six-monthly progress reports to SiRC using predefined templates (to be made available subsequently). The reports need to include both research-oriented items, as well as project administrative progress, including a financial summary of spending. These reports may be reviewed by the Management Board-appointed review panel for satisfactory progress. The panel may require additional information about the progress of an award if it deems the information inadequate.
- All PIs are required to submit a final report using predefined templates to SiRC within three months of completion of the project. The report must be submitted through the respective employing organization. The research panel may examine the report for satisfactory completion of the stated objectives and goals.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of this program?

The SIRCA Programme is designed to ensure that capacities to conduct research in the area of Information and Communications Technology and/or Development (ICT4D or ICTD) are built in Asia. More specifically, it will support research projects that will strengthen the body of methodologically sound and theoretically-based social science research in ICTD.

2. Eligibility for funding

a) What types of ICTD projects are eligible for funding?

Eligible projects need to be grounded in the social sciences, but can draw on other disciplines to complement the conceptual design, data collection and analysis. Each round of calls for proposals will indicate a **thematic area** of ICTD research. All proposals must have: clearly articulated *research questions*; a *review of relevant literature*; a *conceptual design grounded in theory*; and a detailed *summary of research methodologies and methods* to be utilized. Although not conditional on funding, added preference will be given to projects that demonstrate a *multi-disciplinary approach*. For more information about the application requirements click [here](#).

b) What types of ICTD projects are not eligible for funding?

The focus of this granting mechanism is placed on social science research with respect to the relationships between ICTs and society. As such, projects focusing on developing ICT applications or other types of action research fall outside the scope of this program.

c) Will there be a compulsory list of topics from which I have to select?

The SIRCA secretariat is not limiting proposals to specific topics. Hence, applicants are free to choose relevant topics within the overall ICTD discipline.

3. What countries and regions will this granting mechanism fund research in?

Funding provided through this granting scheme will be reserved for research conducted in or on emerging Asia.

4. Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible candidates must be affiliated with an institution or with a consortium of institutions based in Asia. These institutions can be from academia, public sector, private sector or civil society. Organizations applying must be legally registered entities. If the project includes multiple investigators, the principle investigator must be based in Asia.

5. Are graduate or post-graduate students eligible to apply?

Yes, graduate or post-graduate students eligible to apply.

6. Are joint projects eligible?

Yes, projects that are co-implemented or co-funded with other agencies and organizations are eligible.

7. What is the amount of funding?



There are three (3) categories of funding – 20,000 SGD, 26,500 SGD and 33,000 SGD.

The number of grants approved in each category is contingent on available funds and specific budgetary needs. Project proposals exceeding 33,000 SGD must specify the source of additional funds. If the proposal seeks to supplement an existing research program, please specify the alternate source and categories of funding.

8. What is the duration for each grant?

The duration of the grant can range from 12 months to 24 months, depending on the type of research being proposed. If, for example, the proposal requires longitudinal data collection and analysis, a longer duration will be entertained.

9. What format should I use to submit my application?

All proposals should be completed using the guidelines provided [here](#)

10. Who will review my application?

Applications will be considered by a board of individuals with varied expertise and experience in development research, social science methodologies, and a deep understanding of the ICT landscape and issues in the Asian region. The review process will be double-blinded.

11. When should I apply?

Completed applications must be uploaded on sirca@ntu.edu.sg by 13th October , 2008 11:59 EST

12. When do I find out if my application is successful?

Notification is planned to be given by 1st November 2008. Please visit the web site for updates.

13. Will I own the copyright for the output?

Research outputs and raw data from the grants will be made available under a Creative Commons license (likely the Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License) to facilitate subsequent research and comparative analysis. Authors are free to publish the results of the research in a variety of academic journals.

14. What processes and resources are available to grant awardees while implementing research grants?

In an effort to encourage and facilitate capacity building and knowledge sharing, all grant awardees will be invited to at least one workshop to discuss their research design and another to share their research findings with others and to interact with established ICT4D researchers. Moreover, there are opportunities to be paired with a mentor over the course of the grant. More information about such opportunities will be made available as they arise.