

Information Sheet

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC)

The SSRC was set up in January 2016 to provide concerted direction and support for social science and humanities research. It serves as a focal point for efforts to develop talent and strengthen social science and humanities research that benefits social and economic development in Singapore and the region.

The composition of the SSRC can be found in the [Annex](#).

Social Science Research Thematic Grant (SSRTG)

The SSRTG aims to encourage high-quality and impactful social science and humanities research in areas of strategic relevance to Singapore. The call for applications for the 2017 SSRTG will open on 8 May 2017, Monday.

Four themes have been identified for the grant call in 2017:

Theme 1: Identities, Social Integration and Resilience

Our identities, the social fabric, people's aspirations, and socio-economic outcomes are evolving, and influenced by urban development, demographic changes, globalisation, and community development. It is important to enhance our understanding of the impact of these factors and processes, bearing in mind the historical, cultural and socio-political contexts that they occur within. This can inform policy and public actions in Singapore and other cosmopolitan urban cities to build stronger societies that are socially cohesive, resilient and that offer opportunities for all.

Key Questions

1. How do urban development and the social composition of communities influence social processes and outcomes such as social integration, identity formation, societal norms and values, and one's socio-economic status? What are the implications for urban planning, design and implementation?
2. How does demographic change associated with increasing global mobility and talent migration influence identity formation, inter-group relations and social cohesion?
3. How will social identities, integration, cohesion and resilience be shaped by the changing diversity in people's needs, concerns and aspirations, as well as external factors?

Theme 2: Human Development and Skills

As technology, work and the global economy undergo rapid changes, there is a need for a deeper study of the changing nature of work and of labour markets. To sustain social mobility and better equip people for the future workplace, it will also be useful to understand the processes of knowledge and skill acquisition for different segments of the population and at different stages of life.

Key Questions

1. What changes are occurring in the labour market, and what are the drivers of these changes? What is the impact of such changes on different sectors, types of enterprises, occupations and workers from different backgrounds (e.g., demographics, education level, types and levels of skills and expertise)? What are the critical competencies and skills that are more resilient to these changes, and more likely to stay relevant?
2. What is the 'return on investment' for the different stages of education and lifelong learning? What methodologies can be adopted to evaluate the longer term efficacy and outcomes (both positive and negative) of various education and lifelong learning policies?

3. How do workers of different profiles (e.g., age, educational background) best learn and develop new skills, and what factors motivate them to pursue continuous and lifelong learning? What role does job re-design play? How do workers retain or lose skills at various stages of their lives? What forms of education, training, or other interventions are most effective for people of different profiles to gain and retain skills?
4. What forms of care and education in the early childhood years have more positive impacts on social mobility and attitudes to learning and skills in adulthood? How should these early interventions interrelate with education during the school and post-secondary years?

Theme 3: Growth, Productivity and Innovation

There is a need to understand how technological developments and changes in the global trading and investment environment, including Asia's economic expansion, impact the competitiveness of firms in Singapore and the region. In turn, it is important to study how firms can best adapt to these changes, and what strategies for growth, productivity and innovation are most effective in Singapore's historical and socio-cultural context.

Key Questions

1. How are advances in technology, changes in the global trading and investment environment and the shift to Asia affecting firms in Singapore and the region? How do these impacts differ across firms with different characteristics such as size and industry sector?
2. What economic development, business or management strategies are effective in helping firms to adapt to the changing marketplace and technological landscape? What characteristics enable some firms to adapt better than others? What path dependencies and historical or cultural factors affect the Singapore economy's and local firms' ability to adapt to these changes?

Theme 4: Understanding Society in the Digital Age

In this digital era, new forms of media, services, and knowledge sharing have transformed people's everyday lives, social interactions, and how they live, work, play and learn. This digital revolution could substantively alter the inter-relationships linking people, businesses and governments in both positive and negative ways. Advances in big data and data science bring along challenges but also offer new insights. The integration of digital/data advances with established social science knowledge and methods will provide more robust evidence-based approaches to better understand Singapore society.

Key Questions

1. What are the impacts of the digital revolution on individuals, consumers, businesses and society? What are the new challenges and opportunities do these pose for society, industry and policy-makers?
2. What substantive translational research questions can be better addressed by integrating the findings and insights from the social-behavioural sciences and the new data sets, social technologies and modes of analysis from the advances in data science and digitisation, in order to understand complex societal issues and inform policy making?

In all of the above themes, applicants are encouraged to use quantitative methods and explore behavioural insights that strengthen the evidence base for practice, and that can be applied to improve the outcomes of policy, business and individual decisions. At the same time, research should be sensitive to the historical and socio-cultural context of the subjects, phenomena and issues that are being examined. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate closely with potential user agencies or institutions to foster the effective translation of research into practical impact. Comparative work and research that provides insights on the broader region and key global developments with bearing on Singapore are also welcome.

Grant Tiers

There are two tiers of funding:

- **Type A:** \$100,000 to \$1 million for up to 3 years (Supports smaller-scale investigator-led research projects, and encourages broad-based participation in research in areas of strategic relevance).
- **Type B:** >\$1 million to \$10 million over 3 – 5 years (Supports research programmes that pursue more ambitious, inter-disciplinary research on issues of cross-cutting interest).

Eligibility

The Host Institutions listed below (including constituent faculties, schools, colleges, research institutes and centres with relevant SSHR capabilities) are currently eligible to apply for and receive research funding under the SSRTG:

- National University of Singapore (NUS)
- Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
- Singapore Management University (SMU)
- Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
- Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT)
- Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)
- ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS-YII)

Joint submissions from these Host Institutions are allowed, subject to the eligibility of the applicants. Principal Investigators (PIs) must hold a primary full-time appointment in these institutions, defined as a minimum commitment of 9 months per year. Faculty and research fellows are eligible to apply as PIs, subject to the Host Institution's endorsement of the application. Visiting faculty, as well as Masters and PhD students are ineligible to apply as the PIs. However, they can join the project as team members or collaborators.

Other interested research organisations may contact the SSRC Secretariat to be considered for eligibility (email: MOE_SSR_Grant@moe.gov.sg). The research organisation submitting an application for eligibility must be a not-for-profit organisation, and able to demonstrate the presence of in-house independent research and training capabilities in social science and humanities research. The organisation should also have the necessary capabilities and structures in place to handle public research funding.

The SSRTG funds researchers and research capabilities based in Singapore. However, it can support regional studies and comparative international studies, and overseas fieldwork that is relevant to the research question, subject to approval by the SSRC.

Evaluation and Funding Decisions

Proposals undergo a two-stage evaluation process.

Stage One involves an evaluation by a social science and humanities research expert panel comprising prominent academics in relevant areas, focusing on the relevance, potential impact and capability building, synergies with the existing research landscape, technical merit, quality of research team, and execution of the project. The evaluation is informed and supplemented by peer reviews done by experts in specific fields, to ensure the quality and robustness of the evaluation, as well as input from potential users and/or beneficiaries of the research, such as public sector agencies.

Successful proposals from Stage One will then move on to Stage Two and undergo evaluation by the SSRC, focusing on the overall merits of each proposal, as well as its relevance and impact to policy-makers, Singapore, and the region.

PIs will be notified of the results of their applications through the OREs. Any clarifications on the project proposals will be done within the grant call, prior to the final award decision. Appeals for unsuccessful applications will not be entertained. Rejected proposals may only be submitted again after an interval of at least 1 more grant call, provided that they are still relevant to the themes of the new grant call.

Application Process

Proposals must be submitted to MOE through the Office of Research (ORE), or its equivalent, of the Host Institution. Submitted proposals have to be verified by the Host Institution's ORE and endorsed by the Director of Research (DOR) before it can be considered for evaluation. PIs should not submit proposals directly to MOE, and should direct questions on the SSRTG to MOE through the ORE. The points of contact from NUS, NTU, SMU, SUTD, SIT, SUSS and ISEAS-YII are listed below:

NUS	Ms Soh Li Yan Ms Foo Chuan Min Office of Deputy President Research & Technology	SMU	Mr William Soh Mr Low Wai Chong Ms Loraine Seng Office of Research	SIT	Kelly Wong Young Lee Technology, Innovation & Enterprise
NTU	Dr Keg Peisi Research Support Office	SUTD	Ms Ketut Nita Santoso Office of Research & Industry Collaborations	SUSS	Ms Tan Siew Peng Mr Leslie Chiang Centre for Applied Research (CFAR)
ISEAS	Ang Swee Loh Administration Officer				

Host Institutions should send all endorsed proposals to MOE_SSR_Grant@moe.gov.sg by **5pm, 28 July 2017**.

Researchers are not allowed to submit the same proposal to different grants concurrently, i.e. parallel submissions are not allowed. Applicants should decide which grant to apply for based on the nature of their proposal and the objectives of the grant. Researchers are encouraged to apply for the SSRTG if their proposal has strong relevance to the themes supported by the SSRTG.

Timeline

A timeline of the grant call process is provided below.

Time	Actions
8 May 2017	Launch of 2017 SSRTG Call
28 July 2017	Close of 2017 SSRTG Call
August-October 2017	External peer reviews
November 2017	Stage One: Evaluation by Social Science and Humanities Research Expert Panel
January 2018	Stage Two: Evaluation by SSRC
March 2018	Announce grant call results

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