



Australia Awards

Australia Awards Timor-Leste

ALUMNI SMALL GRANTS Round 12 – 2026



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1. Background

Australia Awards are prestigious international awards offered by the Australian Government to the next generation of global leaders to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia. The Australia Awards Scholarship program has been offered for Timorese to undertake tertiary study in Australia since 2000. The goal of AATL is to support Timor-Leste to achieve its development goals through education and knowledge transfer, and to build enduring relationships with Australia that advance mutual interests.

To realise this program goal, AATL pursues two key outcomes to support development and build partnerships and networks of influence in implementing AATL.

- Outcome 1: Diverse Timorese alumni use their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable and inclusive development.
- Outcome 2: Diverse Timorese alumni contribute to cooperation between Australia and Timor-Leste.

AATL coordinates a range of activities including Australia Awards Scholarships, AATL short courses, and alumni engagement activities through the Timor-Leste Australia Alumni Association (TL3A). Alumni engagement activities include a Graduate Internship Program, reintegration workshops for newly returned alumni, small grants, sectoral group activities, and networking events.

The Alumni Support Small Grants Fund was introduced in 2015. The Alumni Small Grants Fund is provided to support alumni to undertake research, community development, or leadership/professional development. The aim is to support alumni to be able to better contribute to Timor-Leste's development and/or develop stronger links between Australia and Timor-Leste.

This document sets out guidelines for the Australia Awards Timor-Leste Alumni Small Grants Fund. The guidelines are intended to inform potential grant applicants of the selection process, grant benefits and the framework within which it operates.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Alumni Small Grants Fund is to support alumni undertaking research, community development, or leadership/professional development activities, so that alumni can:

- (a) Better contribute to Timor-Leste's development; and/or
- (b) Develop stronger links between Australia and Timor-Leste.

3. Grant Funding

Grants will be awarded to a maximum of **USD 5,000** (five thousand American dollars) per grant (individual/group or organisation). Provision of an amount is not automatic, and the application should justify the amount that is sought through an itemized budget to be included in the application form (see grant application form). AATL reserves the right to approve funding above this amount for applications that have exceptional merit.

This year, at least 1 small grant will be awarded to a proposal submitted by alumni as an individual or a group and at least 1 small grant will be awarded to a proposal that are implemented through Timorese institutions or organisation in collaboration with alumni.

4. Grant Requirements and Eligibility

Eligible alumni are those who:

- a) Have successfully completed an Australia Awards Scholarships
- b) Currently residing in Timor-Leste
- c) Are *not* currently undertaking studies under another scholarship.
- d) Although previous successful grantees may apply again, such applications will be regarded as reserved applications. The grantee will need to strongly demonstrate the progression of their research with a second round Small Grant. The Assessment Committee will use its prerogative to consider these applications against program focus areas, priorities, the broader cohort of

applications, specific needs and the quality of applications.

- e) Alumni may apply for a grant through an organisation. Grants that are implemented through an organisation are strongly encouraged to ensure quality deliverables, established guideline management, professional management and a well-resourced activity.
- f) Alumni may apply individually or as a group. All members of a group submission must be eligible alumni. In rare circumstances, a proposal from a successful grantee for a second grant may be accepted if the proposed activity has exceptional merit.
- g) Applications from female alumni and those working outside of Dili are encouraged.

Eligible activities must:

- a) Utilize the skills/knowledge gained by alumni from their studies in Australia
- b) Be related to the alumni's area of employment/expertise
- c) Contribute to Timor-Leste's development (as aligned with the GoTL priorities in the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030) and/or to links between Australia and Timor-Leste respond to Timor Leste 2020 Economic Recovery Plan and COVID-19 response http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PT-Plano_Recuperacao_Economica_Timor-Leste-202011.pdf;
- d) The grant activity to consider participations, direct beneficiaries, or indirect influence to marginalized group that may include and not limited to women, people with disability, people from rural areas. Where grants activity will involve person with disability, it is important for the grantee to consider accessible venue and other support required before activity implementation.
- e) Be able to complete the proposed activities within the budget and timeframe specified under the grant proposal. Where delays are foreseen, the grantee must inform the Alumni Secretariat Coordinator ahead of time with a new timeline for further approval.

The funding duration should reflect the nature and length of the proposed activity. Research and community development activities should be no more than three months in duration. With sufficient justification, approval may be considered for research/community development activities of up to a total of three months funding, with additional of one month extension (to a total of four months) if required in exceptional circumstances.

Examples of activities which may be funded through the Alumni Small Grants Fund include, but are not limited to:

- a) Undertaking research in Timor-Leste
- b) Running a community development activity
- c) Attending or organizing an educational/information-sharing event such as a conference, workshop or symposia

Preference will be given to awarding grants for activities that have direct development outcomes, for example in areas of research and community development in Timor-Leste. This includes activities improving social inclusion, for example of women, people with disability, people from rural areas and the financially disadvantaged.

Activities that will **not** be funded under the Small Grants include, but are not limited to:

- a) Alumni attending graduation ceremonies.
- b) Any form of partisan political activity

Eligible expenses:

Unless specified below, eligible expenses may, subject to AATL approval, include for example, research costs and community development project costs,

When planning the budget, it is important to take note of the following list of cost categories that **cannot** be covered by the Grant:

- a) Salary or service fee for alumni to carry out the activity. A small grant is a partnership between the grantee and AATL. The grantee's time and labor are their contribution to the partnership,

and the grantee should gain professional development experience as a primary outcome of the grant activity;

- b) Management fee or service fee for grants managed through or in collaboration with organisation.
- c) Costs associated with preparing the grant application and preparing activity reports, such as phone credit for internet,
- d) Purchase of vehicles and other capital equipment (i.e. construction of buildings and items which might be term assets);
- e) Costs already covered by the Australian Government or other funding agencies (for example that duplicate or substitute for costs already covered);
- f) Allowance/incentives for participants are ineligible with the exception of transport fee for when activities required travelling across municipalities.
- g) Allowance/incentives for alumni are ineligible with the exception of per diem for when activities required travelling across municipalities.
- h) If additional professional support is required where service fees is applicable, fees must be limited and constitute in total no more than 10% of the total grant funds requested.

Per diem and transport fee:

Per diem or transport fees are only applicable where activities require travelling across municipalities. The following is a table for per diem and transport fee for travel within Timor-Leste. AATL will not cover accommodation expenses during activities in Dili.

Per diem	Rate (USD)	When
Breakfast	\$ 5.00	Departure before 8am OR when breakfast is not provided by hotel.
Lunch	\$10.00	Trip outside of Dili during lunch hours (11-2pm). Lunch NOT provided during the activity.
Dinner	\$15.00	Trip overnight or outside of Dili during the evening/ dinner time (after 7pm). Dinner NOT provided during the activity.
Incidentals	(a) \$5.00 OR (b) \$10.00	(a) Trip outside of Dili (more than 4 hours) OR (b) Trip with an overnight stay

The full rate is only paid where an overnight stay is required away from the team member's assigned location. If meals are included in the event, a partial per diem will be paid depending on the meals provided (\$5 breakfast, \$10 lunch, \$15 dinner, and \$5 incidental for travel more than 4 hours, or \$10 incidental for trip with an overnight stay).

For international travel, per diem is not applicable.

Grantees will need to plan and create the travel budget in the grant proposal which will be subject to review in the selection process. All travel expenses and accommodation are to be covered at-cost with proof of receipts/invoices and other supporting documents.

5. Grants Process and Selection

a. Submission of Applications

The call for applications will be promoted on the Australia Awards Timor-Leste website, in the AATL's office and through the Alumni Network.

Applications for a Grant must be submitted to the AATL office through the Alumni Secretariat Coordinator or by email at alumni@australiawardstl.org by the stated deadline for each application round. This round of applications is for small grant projects and **must be implemented between 1 November 2026 to 15 April 2027**.

Applications will follow an established format (based on application form). It is encouraged that applications include a Letter of Support from the Alumni's employer.

b. Assessment of Applications

Upon reception of the applications, AATL will conduct the first assessment against the criteria outlined and only those that meet the criteria will be recommended for the selection panel considerations within two weeks of the closing date for the round.

Only eligible applications will be considered by the Selection Panel. AATL will provide a list of ineligible applications for the information of the Selection Panel.

The selection panel for the Australia Awards Alumni Small Grants fund will consist of:

1. AATL representative
2. DFAT representative
3. TL3A Board member representative

The Selection Panel will score eligible applications on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being 'poor' and 5 being 'excellent') according to the following criteria:

1. **Relevance:** The extent to which the proposed activity is relevant to utilization of the skills/knowledge gained by the alumni from their studies in Australia and area of employment/expertise. The relevance of the activities with the Alumni plan and towards the strategic development plan of Timor-Leste.
2. **Outcomes:** The extent to which there is a clear, tangible benefit from the proposed activity that enhances Timor-Leste's development and/or develops linkages between Australia and Timor-Leste
3. **Utilization:** The extent to which the outcome from the proposed activity is likely to be utilized/sustained by the alumni's organization. A letter of support from a GoTL agency, where relevant, will be highly regarded.
4. **Relevancy the Activity Plan with Budget:** The proposed activity plan and budget is detailed and realistic and within the maximum budget available. If in any case, the activity is not implemented according to the plan budget in considerable difference, justification must be submitted to address these changes.
5. **Budget Plan:** Ensuring your budget plan is aligned with your narrative proposal, a realistic budget is a fundamental component for the grant proposal. When creating a budget, begin by listing all anticipated expenses associated with the project. **For the grant through an organization, it may include overhead cost up to 10% from total grant value applied, with total maximum grant funding up to USD 5,000.**

To be considered for funding approval, applications must score a minimum of 3 or more for all the above selection criteria.

Not all applications scoring 3 or above for all criteria will be successful, as the award of Small Grants will depend on funding availability and priorities agreed by the Selection Panel.

Applications may be provisionally approved by the Selection Panel subject to a revised (decreased or increased budget). The panel may decide to nominate reserve applications in case an approved application does not proceed.

The Selection Panel will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants if requested.

c. Notification of Funding Approval

All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application within four weeks from the close submission date. Applications approved by the selection panel for funding will receive further communication regarding contracting and funding details, beginning with a basic due diligence check on the individual or group of alumni. Following this, AATL will issue the successful applicant (grantee) with a successful notification letter and a small grant agreement, outlining the agreed expense or activity that will be funded, the maximum amount payable, the reporting requirements, and any other relevant details.

d. Agreement signature

Before the agreement signed, AATL will conduct due diligence assessment for grants' recipients (grantee) as individual and organisation.

You will require to submit:

- Copy of your ID/passport for the grantee (applied for organisation Director if the grantee is an organisation),
- Copy of legal registration document for organisation,
- Complete due diligence questionnaire,

When all the supporting documents submitted, as part of due diligence process, AATL will do Refinitiv world check.

The small grants agreement will be signed when due diligence process is completed with "no findings" result.

e. Payment of the Grant funds

AATL is responsible for effectively disbursing the Alumni Small Grants fund. The Alumni Secretariat Coordinator is responsible for receiving and approving completion reports, including acquittal of funds spent on review and approval from AATL's Finance and Operations Manager.

AATL will pay the funds into the Grantee's nominated account by transfer within 30 days of the signed Small Grant Agreement (subject to activity implementation timeline) lodged with the AATL Alumni Secretariat. Once the fund transfer is received, the grantee is fully responsible for ensuring that the fund in the nominated account provided is accounted for and managed properly.

The grantees are mandatory to complete Palladium online compliance training before implementing the budget. Details of online compliance training as mentioned in point 7, risk management.

The grantee will need to keep accurate and complete records and provide evidence (receipts/invoices and other supporting documents) of the funds expended. Unspent funds and unacquitted funds will need to be returned to the AATL office at the time the Completion Report is submitted.

Palladium reserves the right to recall part as ineligible expenses, or the full amount of the grant awarded if acquittals submitted are not in order.

f. Administration and Financial Management

Copies of identification documents (organisation certificates or personal ID's) will need to be provided to Palladium as proof of the legal status of the grantee.

The grantee must immediately tell Palladium about any changes to the bank account or details.

In carrying out your business and the funded activity, you must abide by relevant laws or government requirements. For example, you are responsible for getting any licenses and permissions that are necessary by the country of Timor-Leste.

Our funding comes from public money (Australian Government), so if you are planning to buy goods or services with our funding, you should always buy them in a way that will give value for money. This means getting the best price and quality of the goods or services you need. Wherever possible, you should go through a 'competitive process' to choose the goods or services you are buying. This involves getting three quotes from independent businesses when spending amounts above USD399. There may be some limited reasons where a competitive process may not be appropriate. These reasons might include when there is only one business that can sell you the goods or services, technical or artistic reasons, or times when the cost and time to go to tender is too much compared to the value of what you are buying. **It's mandatory to use AATL procurement procedures to buy goods and services for individual grantees.**

When the grantees are collaboratively working with an identified organisation, they will be able to use the organisation's internal policy/procedures. AATL will review and provide feedback to be aligned with Palladium and DFAT compliance procedures. In case if the collaborative

working organisation do not have an established policy/procedure, they are mandatory to use AATL policy/procedures.

Palladium has a zero tolerance towards fraud and is committed to minimizing the incidence of fraud through the development, implementation, and regular review of fraud prevention, detection, and response strategies. If you break any of the conditions of your grant, one or more of the following may apply.

- You may have to pay back all or part of the grant
- Palladium may stop any future payments
- Palladium may end the agreement immediately
- Where fraud is detected, a criminal charge may be applied by DFAT requirements and local laws
- Palladium will decide what to do and the amount you will have to pay back (if any).

6. Reporting

Grantees will be required to submit a Completion Report within **30 calendar days** of completing the activity using the template (template available). The grant budget should be disbursed maximum by the date of the activity ended. The completion report will need to be **submitted by 15th of May 2027 at the latest**. Reports will be submitted to AATL's Alumni Secretariat Coordinator. At a minimum, the report will include:

1. A **description of the Grant Activity** that has been funded (outputs)
2. A **description of the outcomes** the grant has had on the alumni's professional development, their linkages with Australia, development in Timor-Leste, and how they intend to use the outcomes in the future.
3. A **Financial Acquittal** with the breakdown of how the funds have been spent. A logbook and receipts are kept especially for travel to the districts which briefly summaries each day's events and activities. For per-diem arrangements, please refer to AATL travel guidelines that will be provided by the Secretariat Coordinator.
4. **Evidence of activity implementation and outcomes.** This might be in the form of a logbook of activities; statements from beneficiaries; or participant feedback form where the grantee has delivered a seminar, workshop or training as part of the grant.

The completion report needs to include high-quality images for use in AATL's promotional materials. (Photo subjects should be aware that the photo is being taken for possible promotional purposes with necessary consent forms completed). If advance notice is given, AATL can assist with photography if available. Photos of children must not be undertaken without prior notification to and consent of AATL (child protection consent form will be provided accordingly) in line with DFAT's Child Protection Policy.

The grantee may also be required to present their results upon completion of the activity at a seminar, (including the representatives of the ministry or other organizations involved in the activity). The time and place of the seminar is to be decided in consultation with the AATL's Office.

The Completion Report may be used by the AATL in promoting the Alumni Small Grants, or other AATL reporting and M&E.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Grantees will be required in their completion report to provide quantitative and qualitative data providing evidence of the conduct and outcomes of the activity. This will include, for example, evidence of the beneficiaries of the activity (including their gender, location and disability status), feedback from participants and photographs.

As an M&E measure, data on the disbursement of the funds and nature of support provided through the funds will be gathered on a regular basis and disaggregated by theme (or professional field) and gender and, if relevant, income/social status and disability impairment type.

Further, the design of the Alumni Small Grants will be reviewed at the end of each grant round and the

lessons learnt implemented in the following round.

7. Risk Management

Palladium will conduct a thorough due diligence procedure on grantees (individual, group, organization) before a small grant agreement is signed. The due diligence procedure will comprise of a Refinitiv World Check and agreement with relevant corporate policies. These steps aim to ensure that funds are dispersed only to reputable individuals and groups, thereby decreasing the risk of fraud or mismanagement.

Upon receiving a clear of Refinitiv World Check, the Australia Awards Timor-Leste will issue a small grant Agreement to the successful Australia Award Scholarship alumni in English and the associated grantees will have to complete Palladium's compliance trainings (Code of Conduct, Child Protection, Whistle blower, Diversity and Inclusion, and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual harassment). The grantee will be asked to complete and sign these policies together with the small grant agreement. These policies oblige the grantee to abide by stringent child protection requirements and operational best-practices.