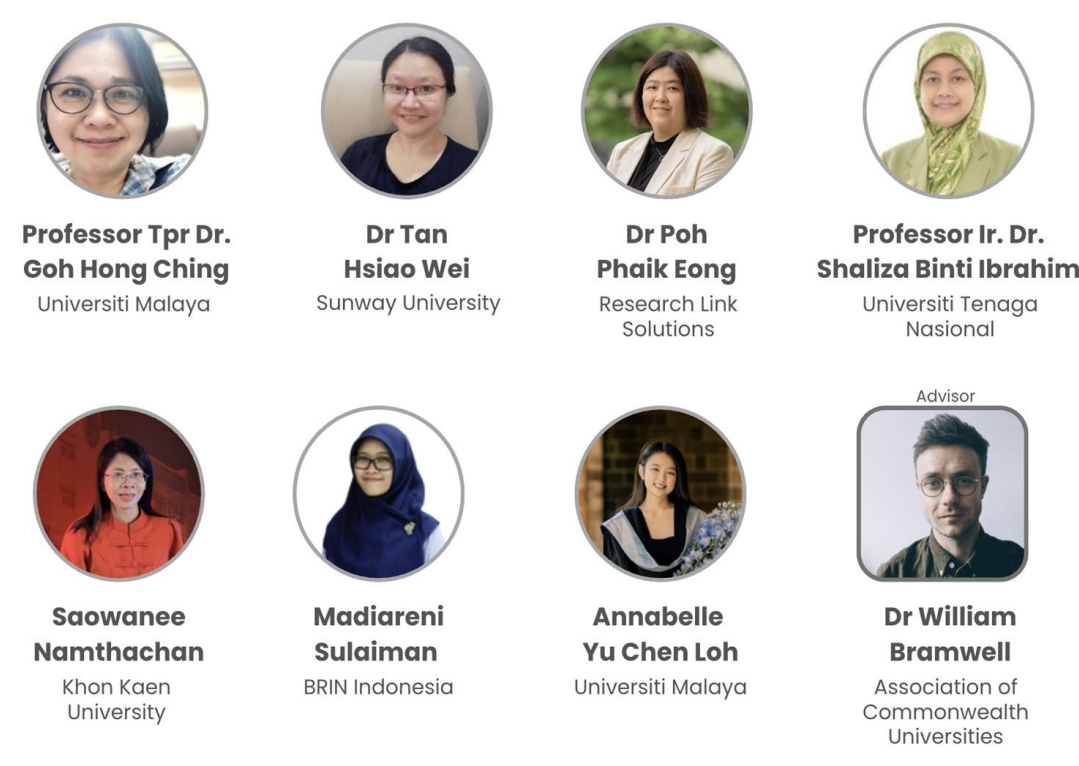




RECAP SEA- Research Excellence Capacity & Accreditation Pathway for Southeast Asia

2nd Conference on Equitable Partnerships
Pretoria, South Africa 4-5 February 2026



Vision of RECAP SEA

A standardized accreditation roadmap for research managers in Southeast Asia, adaptable for future regional and international collaboration

Key Challenges

- ▷ Inefficiencies in grant administration, resource allocation, and research impact assessment, ultimately affecting the region's competitiveness in the international research landscape
- ▷ Research management is often undervalued, resulting in high staff turnover, limited retention of expertise, and a weak pipeline of future leaders

Limited standardization in governance frameworks

Inconsistent professional development pathways

Varying institutional capacities across countries

Research management practices remain fragmented

Lack of a formal accreditation framework for research managers and administrators

Constraining institutions' ability to secure external funding, manage large-scale projects, and maximize research outputs for societal benefit

The project seeks to develop a regional framework for research excellence and accreditation, and to strengthen capacities and leadership in grant craft, ethics, project management, and impact.

Accreditation is a confident badge for quality and reliability. The initiative of setting up an accreditation roadmap will provide a pathway for the universities in the SEA to achieve accreditation aligned with global standards.

Study Outcomes



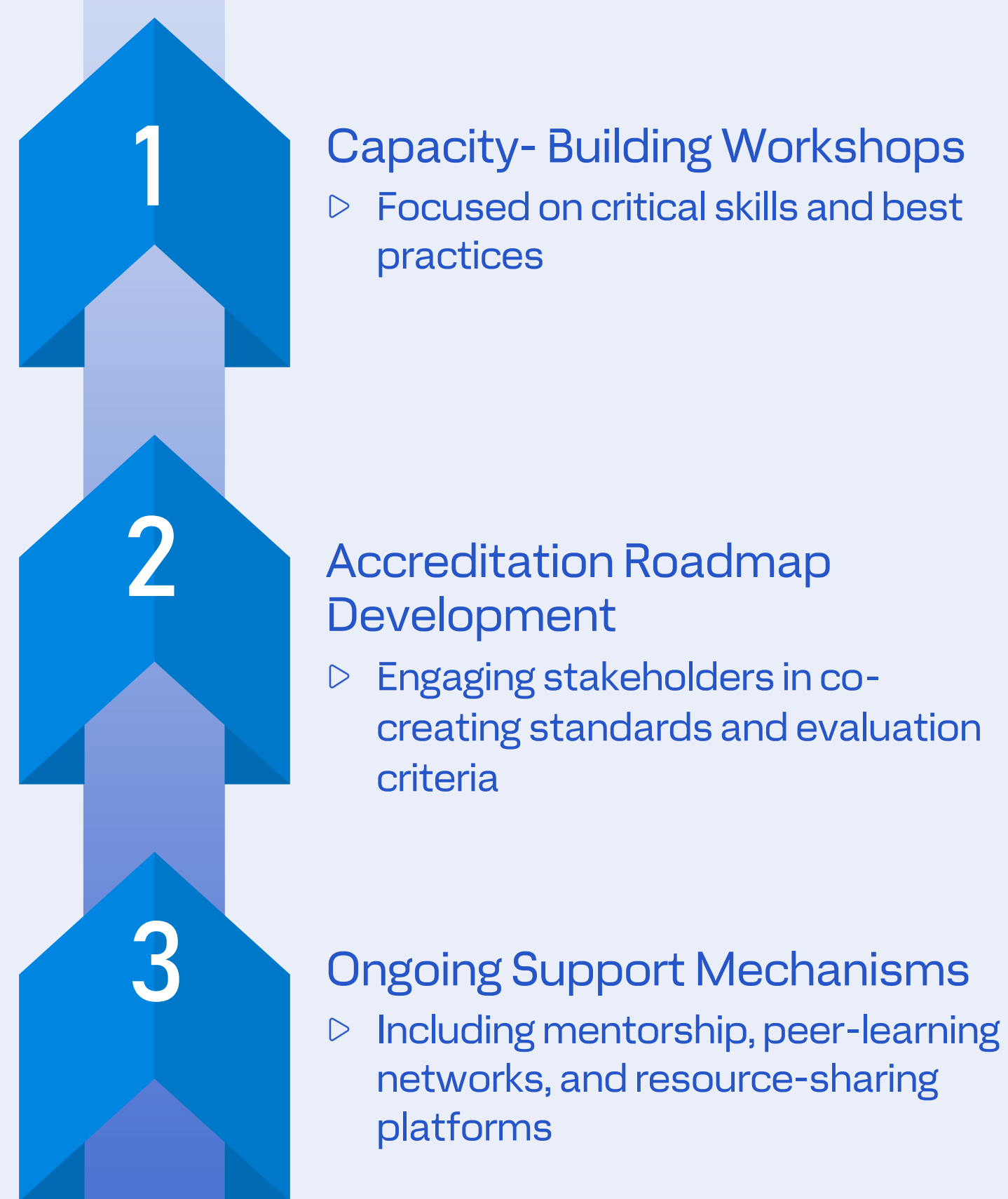
Stage 1
Identification (Month 1 – 4)
Stakeholder engagement, workshop, and consultation, questionnaire survey

Stage 2
Project Implementation (Month 5 – 8)
Compilation of good practices, research management professional skills framework, training workshops (project reporting, policy compliance, and data management)

Stage 3
Validation (Month 9 – 12)
Validation workshop on training module and roadmap drafts, feedback survey on training module and roadmap drafts

All Stages Monitoring and Assessment
Stakeholder engagement, project progress update, assessment of key drivers and barriers to training modules and roadmap implementation

Study Approach



Findings

Keyword Mapping based on the Research Management & Administration Focus Group Discussions and Survey

Core Topic	Analytical Focus	Keywords
Accessibility to Capability Development	Structural and institutional barriers to accessing RMA-specific training and capability development	Access; training availability; budget constraints; workload; approval processes; uneven access; informal learning; experiential learning; modular training; networking; cross-institutional exchange; return on investment
Improving Access to Training	Enabling conditions and system-level solutions to improve access and uptake	Leadership buy-in; institutional commitment; dedicated resources; shared platforms; case-based learning; short courses; staff exchange; communities of practice
Barriers to Attending RMA Training	Operational and governance-related constraints affecting participation in professional development	Time constraints; staffing shortages; competing priorities; bureaucracy; limited funding; lack of management support; decentralised systems
Research Experience Requirement	Contextual relevance of research experience for RMA effectiveness	Research literacy; grant lifecycle understanding; policy insight; dual academic-managerial perspectives
Criteria / Skill Sets for Recognition	Core competencies required for professional recognition and certification	Grant management; compliance; ethics; budgeting; risk management; project management; communication; coordination; analytical skills; governance
Importance of Professional Recognition	Recognition of RMA as a professional function beyond administrative support	Professional identity; legitimacy; role clarity; visibility; credibility; risk mitigation; research quality; institutional value
Role of Professional Associations	Ecosystem-level support for professionalisation of RMA	Standards setting; certification; networking; peer learning; continuing professional development; advocacy
Role of Certification in Career Advancement	Value of certification as part of a broader career framework	Credentialing; benchmarking; mobility; competence validation; professional development
Career Progression Pathways	Structural factors shaping RMA career development and progression	Career stagnation; unclear pathways; limited promotion tracks; role ambiguity; leadership support; organisational structure
Hurdles to Certification	Barriers preventing uptake of certification and formal recognition	Cost; time; workload; unclear benefits; lack of institutional alignment; limited career incentives