REPORT OF THE 2025 GLOBAL RESEARCH COUNCIL ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING

Co—hosted by
National Research and Innovation Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (BRIN)
National Research Foundation Singapore (NRF)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Global Research Council (GRC) Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, brought together public research funding organisations from across the region to provide collective regional inputs to the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand. Hosted by the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and co-hosted by the National Research Foundation Singapore (NRF), the meeting provided a platform for dialogue, experience-sharing, and policy-oriented reflection on the evolving role of research and innovation in advancing equity, justice, and sustainability.

Discussions took place against a backdrop of interconnected global challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation, widening social and economic inequalities, and rapid digital transformation driven by data and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Participants emphasized that while science, technology, and innovation play a critical role in addressing these challenges, their societal benefits are not automatically inclusive or equitably distributed. Public research funding organisations therefore have a pivotal responsibility in shaping research systems through funding priorities, governance frameworks, and evaluation practices that promote ethical, inclusive, and sustainability-oriented outcomes.

The meeting focused on two preparatory themes for the 2026 Annual Meeting: **Inclusive Open Science and AI for Equity, Justice, and Sustainability**, and **Research for Sustainable Communities**. Across both themes, a shared understanding emerged that inclusive governance, ethical safeguards, and meaningful participation by communities are essential to ensuring that research and innovation contribute to positive and lasting societal impact.

Under the first theme, discussions highlighted that advancing open science in the Asia-Pacific region requires governance approaches that are sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and institutional diversity. Participants stressed the importance of data sovereignty, informed consent, transparency, and accountability, as well as the adoption of trust-based frameworks adapted to regional contexts. Responsible and inclusive AI governance was identified as an increasingly urgent priority, with emphasis on human oversight, bias mitigation, and the integration of ethical considerations into research funding and monitoring processes. Capacity building and shared regional infrastructures were seen as essential enablers for equitable participation in open science and AI-driven research.

The second theme underscored the need to shift from research *on* communities to research *with and for* communities. Participants emphasized that sustainable development and climate transitions must be grounded in locally defined priorities and co-created knowledge, integrating Indigenous and local knowledge systems alongside scientific expertise. Science, technology, and innovation were recognized as critical drivers of sustainability transitions, provided that funding mechanisms, institutional incentives, and

partnerships are aligned with long-term, inclusive, and community-centered objectives, and closely linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Across thematic and group discussions, participants identified cross-cutting challenges that constrain progress, including fragmented policies and funding landscapes, uneven research and digital capacities, data silos, language barriers, and difficulties in building trust among researchers, communities, and policymakers. Addressing these challenges will require long-term and flexible funding, strengthened capacity building, accessible and interoperable research infrastructures, and enhanced regional and multilateral cooperation.

This report presents the key regional perspectives, discussion outcomes, and policy implications arising from the 2025 GRC Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting. It aims to inform deliberations at the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting and to support public research funding organisations in strengthening inclusive open science practices, responsible AI governance, and research for sustainable and resilient communities. The Asia-Pacific region's contributions underscore the importance of coordinated action, inclusive governance, and sustained collaboration to ensure that research and innovation serve the public good and support equitable and sustainable futures.

Introduction and Meeting Overview

1. Global Context and Urgency

Research and innovation systems are operating in an environment shaped by climate change, environmental pressures, social and economic inequalities, and rapid digital transformation driven by data and artificial intelligence (AI). These developments have increased expectations for science, technology, and innovation to contribute to sustainable development and societal well-being.

Participants noted that approaches such as Open Science and the growing use of AI present both opportunities and challenges. While these approaches can support knowledge sharing and more informed decision-making, their implementation requires appropriate governance and inclusive practices to ensure that benefits are broadly shared.

2. Role of Public Research Funding Organisations and the Global Research Council (GRC)

Public research funding organisations influence research systems through funding priorities, evaluation frameworks, and policies related to data, digital technologies, and collaboration. Through these instruments, funders shape how research is conducted, shared, and applied across different contexts.

The Global Research Council (GRC) provides a forum for public research funding organisations to exchange experiences and discuss shared principles

related to responsible, inclusive, and collaborative research and innovation. Regional meetings contribute to this process by providing context-specific perspectives that inform global discussion

3. Asia-Pacific Regional Positioning

The Asia-Pacific region encompasses diverse social, economic, and institutional contexts, with varying levels of research capacity and digital infrastructure. Many parts of the region are experiencing rapid urbanisation and are particularly exposed to climate and environmental risks, shaping regional priorities for research and innovation.

At the same time, participants highlighted the region's experience with community-based approaches and locally driven initiatives. These perspectives offer insights into how research policies and practices can be adapted to different contexts while remaining aligned with broader global objectives

4. Purpose of the 2025 GRC Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

The 2025 Global Research Council Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, and co-hosted by the National Research and Innovation Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (BRIN) and the National Research Foundation Singapore (NRF). The meeting brought together representatives of public research funding organisations, technical delegates, and observers from across the region.

The meeting aimed to facilitate regional dialogue, share experiences, and develop collective inputs for the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting to be held in Bangkok, Thailand. As addition bilateral meetings were conducted to accelerate potential bilateral collaboration among national funding agencies.

5. Meeting Format and Participation

The Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting was conducted through a combination of plenary sessions, working group discussions, and additional consultations. Sessions were designed to encourage both structured dialogue and open exchange among participants.

Participation included representatives of public research funding organisations from across the Asia-Pacific region, alongside technical experts, Working Group leads, and observers. This format enabled the sharing of diverse regional perspectives while supporting focused discussion on the preparatory themes for the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting

6. Framing of the Two Preparatory Themes

The meeting focused on two preparatory themes for the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting: **Inclusive Open Science and AI for Equity, Justice, and Sustainability**, and **Research for Sustainable Communities**.

Discussions under the first theme examined experiences and challenges related to Open Science and the use of AI in diverse regional contexts, with attention to governance, data practices, capacity, and access.

The second theme focused on research approaches that place communities at the center of sustainability efforts. Participants discussed community-based and participatory research practices, the role of local and Indigenous knowledge, and the contribution of science, technology, and innovation to sustainable development aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Scope and Purpose of this Report

This report summarises key regional perspectives and discussion themes from the 2025 GRC Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting. It is intended to inform discussions at the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting and to support public research funding organisations in reflecting on inclusive Open Science practices, responsible AI governance, and research for sustainable communities.

Plenary Themes

Overview of Plenary Discussions

The plenary sessions provided a shared space for participants to reflect on cross-cutting issues affecting research and innovation systems. Discussions focused on broad trends and common challenges, including sustainability pressures, digital transformation, and expectations for science, technology, and innovation to contribute to societal well-being.

Participants also reflected on the role of public research funding organisations in shaping research practices through funding instruments, policies, and collaboration frameworks. Across plenary discussions, the importance of equity, regional relevance, and context-sensitive approaches was highlighted as central to translating global principles into practice across diverse institutional and societal settings.

I. Inclusive Open Science and AI for Equity, Justice, and Sustainability

Discussions under the theme *Inclusive Open Science and AI for Equity, Justice, and Sustainability* emphasized that openness in science must be understood as more than unrestricted access to research outputs. Participants consistently underscored that Open Science should be framed as a public good that promotes equitable participation, respects diverse knowledge systems, and is governed through inclusive and context-sensitive approaches. In this regard, openness was viewed not as a purely technical or procedural objective, but as a normative commitment to equity, justice, and sustainability.

Across the Asia-Pacific region, participants highlighted persistent structural inequalities that continue to shape research ecosystems. These include uneven access to research funding, disparities in digital and data infrastructure, language barriers, and limited access to computational resources. Such challenges disproportionately affect researchers and institutions in low- and middle-income countries, as well as women, Indigenous peoples, and local communities, who remain underrepresented in authorship, data governance, and decision-making processes. Inclusive Open Science was therefore positioned as a strategic response to these systemic imbalances, aimed at enabling more representative, legitimate, and socially responsive research systems.

Participants emphasized that meaningful inclusion requires moving beyond symbolic recognition of Indigenous and local knowledge toward genuine co-creation and shared governance. Respect for cultural protocols, data sovereignty, and community-defined rights over data use and reuse were identified as foundational principles. Multilingual and locally adapted research infrastructures were considered essential to ensuring accessibility and participation across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, particularly in regions where global research platforms may not adequately reflect local needs or realities.

The role of artificial intelligence featured prominently in the discussions, with participants recognizing AI as both an enabling force and a source of new risks. AI was widely acknowledged as a powerful tool that can amplify human capabilities, improve research productivity, and support innovation across sectors. At the same time, participants raised concerns regarding algorithmic bias, exclusion of underrepresented groups, data protection, environmental impacts, and increasing reliance on commercial platforms dominated by a small number of global actors. These dynamics were seen to raise critical questions about digital sovereignty, accountability, and equitable access to AI capabilities within and across countries.

Several contributions noted that prevailing global AI governance frameworks are often shaped by Western-centric assumptions and may not sufficiently reflect the social, cultural, and developmental contexts of the Asia-Pacific

region. Participants stressed the importance of grounding responsible AI governance in regional realities, ensuring that ethical frameworks are adaptable, inclusive, and aligned with local values and policy priorities. Reference was made to international instruments such as UNESCO's Readiness Assessment Methodology as useful guiding frameworks, while recognizing the need for contextual application rather than uniform adoption.

From a policy perspective, participants agreed that public research funding organisations play a critical role in advancing Inclusive Open Science and Responsible AI. Funding policies, assessment frameworks, and institutional incentives were seen as key levers for embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion into research systems. Participants highlighted the need to recognize and reward community engagement, multilingual outputs, and knowledge co-creation alongside conventional indicators of academic performance.

Concrete actions discussed included the establishment of ethical research protocols incorporating free, prior, and informed consent, particularly for research involving Indigenous knowledge and local communities. Clear data governance arrangements were considered essential to balance openness with the protection of intellectual property, privacy, and community rights. The preparation of Data Management Plans and the promotion of open and FAIR research data were widely supported, with appropriate safeguards to address ethical, legal, and cultural considerations.

To address concerns related to platform dependence and sustainability, participants encouraged the development of non-commercial, open-source, and interoperable research infrastructures that are locally governed yet globally connected. Such infrastructures should be supported by long-term public investment and designed to function effectively in low-connectivity and resource-constrained environments. Capacity-building efforts in digital skills, open science practices, and ethical AI use were identified as critical to enabling equitable participation across the region.

In relation to AI deployment in research and higher education, participants emphasized the importance of embedding principles of transparency, fairness, accountability, and explainability into funding requirements and institutional strategies. Frameworks such as SAFE AI were highlighted as practical approaches to operationalizing responsible AI adoption, ensuring that AI systems remain human-centered and subject to meaningful oversight. Across discussions, there was a shared understanding that AI should serve as a support to human judgment rather than a substitute for it, with responsibility and accountability clearly residing with researchers and institutions.

Finally, participants underscored the importance of regional and global collaboration through the Global Research Council. By facilitating dialogue, sharing best practices, and supporting the alignment of principles and standards, the GRC was seen as well positioned to advance Inclusive Open

Science and Responsible AI in ways that reflect regional diversity while contributing to global efforts. Strengthened cooperation among public research funding organisations was viewed as essential to building open, trustworthy, and equitable research ecosystems that support equity, justice, and sustainability across the Asia-Pacific region.

II. Research for Sustainable Communities

Discussions under the theme *Research for Sustainable Communities* highlighted the central role of equity-based science, technology, and innovation (STI) in advancing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Across presentations and discussions, participants emphasized that sustainable community development requires a fundamental shift in how research is designed, funded, and implemented moving away from linear and extractive models toward approaches that are mission-oriented, transdisciplinary, and community-engaged.

A recurring message was that communities should no longer be viewed as passive recipients of research outcomes, but as active partners and co-creators throughout the research lifecycle. Presentations from national funding agencies and multilateral initiatives underscored the importance of embedding community perspectives, local knowledge, and lived experience into research agendas, particularly in addressing complex challenges such as climate change, energy transition, ecosystem protection, public health, and socio-economic resilience.

Several institutions highlighted the need for strong alignment between research priorities and national and regional development strategies. Contributions from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and China demonstrated how research funding schemes are increasingly oriented toward societal impact, with a focus on sustainable community development, equitable partnerships, and practical solutions that respond to local needs. Capacity-building initiatives, including support for early-career researchers, grassroots innovators, and local institutions, were identified as essential for strengthening community-based research ecosystems and ensuring long-term sustainability.

International and multilateral cooperation emerged as a key enabling factor for advancing research for sustainable communities. Programs such as the e-ASIA Joint Research Program and the Sustainable Development International Cooperation (SDIC) Program of the National Natural Science Foundation of China were highlighted as examples of collaborative frameworks that promote equal partnerships, shared governance, and mutual benefit among participating countries. These initiatives were seen as particularly valuable in addressing transboundary and global challenges that exceed the capacity of individual nations and require coordinated regional responses.

Participants also emphasized the role of science popularization, open science practices, and knowledge sharing in translating research outcomes into tangible societal benefits. Improving communication between researchers, policymakers, industry, and communities was viewed as critical to ensuring that research findings inform decision-making and support inclusive development pathways. In this context, open and accessible dissemination of research outputs was linked to greater public trust, policy relevance, and community uptake.

The integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, smart city concepts, and circular economy principles was discussed as a strategic opportunity to enhance governance, service delivery, and sustainability at the community level. However, participants cautioned that technological solutions must be implemented in ways that are context-sensitive, inclusive, and responsive to local capacities. Digital innovation was therefore framed not as an end in itself, but as a tool to support community empowerment, improve efficiency, and enable evidence-based decision-making.

From a policy and funding perspective, participants underscored the importance of long-term, flexible financing mechanisms that can accommodate the iterative and relational nature of community-engaged research. Traditional short-term project cycles and narrowly defined outputs were seen as insufficient to support trust-building, co-design, and sustained impact at the community level. Clear frameworks for assessing research impact beyond academic publications were identified as necessary to capture social, environmental, and economic benefits for communities.

Overall, discussions converged on the view that achieving sustainable communities requires integrated approaches that align research, policy, and societal needs. Equity, inclusiveness, and collaboration across sectors, disciplines, and borders were consistently identified as foundational principles. By supporting mission-oriented research, strengthening multilateral cooperation, and investing in community-centered capacity building, public research funding organisations can play a pivotal role in ensuring that research contributes meaningfully to resilient, just, and sustainable community futures.

III. Follow-up Actions and Policy Implications

The breakout group discussions provided important cross-cutting insights into the practical, policy, and institutional conditions required to advance inclusive, equitable, and sustainable research and innovation in the Asia-Pacific region. While discussions were organized around community-based perspectives, sectoral sustainability priorities, and inclusive digital and AI innovation, several common themes emerged that cut across all groups.

A central message from the discussions was that sustainable development efforts must begin with community-defined needs and priorities. Participants

emphasized that research relevance and impact depend on early and continuous engagement with communities, built on trust, transparency, and mutual understanding. Weak communication between researchers and communities, limited opportunities for meaningful participation, and insufficient recognition of local knowledge were identified as persistent challenges. To address these gaps, participants highlighted the importance of intermediaries such as facilitators, science communicators, and community mediators to bridge cultural, technical, and institutional divides and support inclusive co-design processes.

Across all groups, the need for funding mechanisms that support early-stage engagement and inclusive participation was strongly emphasized. Traditional funding models were seen as insufficient to cover the time and resources required for trust-building, consultation, and co-creation with communities. Participants called for dedicated support for pre-research engagement, flexible funding arrangements, and longer project timelines to enable sustained collaboration and locally grounded research outcomes.

Discussions on sectoral priorities underscored the importance of cross-sector coordination in addressing sustainability challenges that span energy, environment, health, urban development, and digital transformation. Fragmented policies, siloed data systems, and misaligned funding instruments were identified as major barriers to integrated action. Participants highlighted the need to align research priorities, regulatory frameworks, and financing mechanisms across sectors, supported by shared data infrastructures and interoperable systems. Joint innovation hubs, co-funding arrangements, and multi-stakeholder platforms were seen as effective mechanisms to foster collaboration and accelerate sustainable transitions.

In the context of digital innovation and artificial intelligence, participants raised concerns regarding algorithmic bias, data gaps, and persistent digital inequalities across and within countries. Strengthening AI governance frameworks, investing in robust and inclusive data infrastructure, and promoting ethical and transparent AI practices were identified as critical priorities. Participants emphasized that open science principles should underpin digital innovation efforts, enabling cross-border collaboration while respecting data sovereignty, privacy, and community rights.

Multilingual and culturally inclusive digital platforms were highlighted as essential to ensuring broader participation and accessibility, particularly in the linguistically diverse Asia-Pacific region. Participants also stressed the importance of ensuring fair access to computational resources and digital tools, supported by sustainable public investment and, where appropriate, carefully governed public–private partnerships.

Across all breakout groups, inclusivity, openness, and collaboration were consistently identified as foundational principles for sustainable development. Aligned policies, shared resources, and trust-based

partnerships were seen as essential enablers of lasting impact. Capacity building covering leadership, project management, data stewardship, and digital skills was highlighted as a key requirement for strengthening regional research ecosystems and enabling more equitable participation in international collaboration.

Taken together, the breakout discussions reinforced the view that achieving sustainable and inclusive development in the Asia-Pacific region requires integrated policy and funding approaches that connect community needs, sectoral priorities, and digital innovation. Participants emphasized that the Global Research Council can play an important role in facilitating regional dialogue, encouraging joint funding mechanisms, and supporting shared infrastructure and learning platforms that translate collective insights into coordinated action.

Update on GRC Working Groups

The Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting also featured updates from three Global Research Council Working Groups: Responsible Research Assessment (RRA-WG), Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI-WG), and Multilateral Engagement (MLE-WG). These updates provided participants with an overview of ongoing work at the global level and highlighted areas of relevance to regional priorities and challenges.

I. Responsible Research Assessment (RRA-Working Groups)

Discussions on Responsible Research Assessment reflected a shared interest in ongoing global efforts to promote more responsible and inclusive approaches to research assessment. Participants noted the relevance of global RRA frameworks as reference points, while emphasizing that their application should remain sensitive to diverse national and regional research contexts across the Asia-Pacific region.

It was noted that research assessment practices influence how open science and knowledge ecosystems evolve. Participants highlighted the importance of ensuring that assessment approaches do not unintentionally disadvantage locally governed or emerging open science infrastructures. In this context, recognizing a broader range of research contributions—including open research practices, collaborative activities, and engagement beyond traditional publications—was discussed as one possible way to support more inclusive research ecosystems.

Discussions also touched on the relationship between research assessment and sustainability-oriented research. Participants noted that research addressing complex societal and environmental challenges often involves interdisciplinary collaboration, longer timeframes, and engagement with non-academic stakeholders. In this regard, assessment practices that

acknowledge such characteristics were seen as relevant to ongoing conversations about aligning research systems with sustainability goals.

Across discussions, participants reiterated the importance of equity, inclusion, and local relevance as cross-cutting considerations. It was noted that assessment approaches should be attentive to diverse research agendas, institutional capacities, and knowledge systems, including locally grounded and community-engaged research, particularly in the Asia-Pacific context.

Practical Guide for Implementing RRA

Participants welcomed information on the development of a Practical Guide for Implementing Responsible Research Assessment at Research Funding Organisations. The proposed outline was noted to provide a useful structure for translating high-level principles into practical considerations across different stages of the funding lifecycle.

From a regional perspective, discussions highlighted the value of flexibility and contextual adaptation in the use of such guidance. Given the diversity of research systems and institutional capacities in the Asia-Pacific region, participants noted that practical guidance would be most relevant if it supports incremental implementation and allows funders to adapt approaches in line with national priorities and existing policy frameworks.

RRA Working Group Maturity Model

Discussions on the proposed RRA maturity model noted its potential as a reflective tool to support self-assessment and internal dialogue within research funding organisations. The staged structure was seen as a way to acknowledge that engagement with RRA principles may vary across organisations and evolve over time.

Participants emphasized that the maturity model would be most useful if applied flexibly and positioned as a voluntary, formative instrument rather than as a benchmarking or evaluative mechanism. It was also noted that clarity regarding purpose and use would be important to address potential concerns related to capacity constraints or additional administrative effort.

II. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group session provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the Working Group's mandate and work programme, and to consider the role of equity and inclusion in the context of Open Science. Discussions highlighted the relevance of the EDIWG's work for research funding organisations across the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in supporting more inclusive research cultures and addressing structural inequalities within research and innovation systems.

Participants noted that the work of the EDIWG can be useful to organisations by offering a shared space for learning, reflection, and exchange on EDI-

related challenges and practices. The Working Group was seen as a platform for bringing together regional perspectives, supporting peer learning, and helping funders consider how equity, diversity, and inclusion can be more systematically integrated into funding policies, assessment practices, and engagement with research communities.

Discussions also highlighted the importance of complementarity with existing regional initiatives and mechanisms. Participants emphasized that the EDIWG can add value by connecting regional experiences to global conversations on EDI and Open Science, and by facilitating linkages with complementary organisations and initiatives internationally. Such connections were seen as particularly valuable in avoiding duplication of effort and in amplifying regional voices within global research governance discussions.

Looking ahead, participants identified opportunities for the EDIWG to further support dialogue on equity and inclusion in Open Science, including through the sharing of case examples, reflective resources, and thematic discussions aligned with GRC priorities. The importance of maintaining flexibility and responsiveness to regional needs was emphasized, given the diversity of institutional capacities, policy environments, and socio-cultural contexts across the Asia-Pacific region.

Discussions on Open Science underscored that genuine inclusion and equity require more than openness of access to research outputs. Participants noted the need for values-aligned actions and monitoring approaches that recognize diverse forms of contribution, support capacity building, and address barriers to participation faced by underrepresented groups. In this context, research funders were seen as having an important role in shaping incentives and expectations in ways that support inclusive research practices.

Participants also reflected on governance and partnership practices that enable communities to have a voice in shaping research agendas and knowledge infrastructures. Emphasis was placed on approaches that promote meaningful engagement, shared decision-making, and respect for local and Indigenous knowledge systems. Such practices were discussed as relevant to ongoing conversations about how definitions of research excellence can be refreshed to better reflect societal relevance and community impact.

These reflections were consistent with broader regional discussions on Open Science and Responsible Research Assessment, where equity, inclusion, and local relevance were also highlighted as cross-cutting considerations.

Finally, discussions highlighted the importance of monitoring progress on equity, justice, and sustainability in Open Science in ways that do not reinforce existing hierarchies. Participants noted that metrics and indicators should be developed carefully, ideally through engagement with affected communities, and used as learning tools rather than as narrow performance

measures. This was seen as an area where continued reflection and shared learning across regions could be particularly valuable.

III. Multilateral Engagement (MLE-WG)

The Multilateral Engagement (MLE) Working Group session provided an opportunity to present preliminary findings from the MLE-WG desktop study and to gather regional perspectives from Asia-Pacific participants. Discussions highlighted the importance of regional input in complementing the desktop study, which provides a general overview of multilateral engagements but does not fully capture regional contexts, priorities, and challenges.

Participants reflected on the role of multilateral engagements in enabling collaborative research across borders and sectors, while also noting disparities in participation and leadership roles. Discussions highlighted that many multilateral initiatives continue to be led by agencies in the Global North, with organisations from the Global South more frequently participating as partners rather than as lead actors. These patterns were discussed as relevant to ongoing conversations about balance, equity, and shared decision-making in multilateral research collaborations.

The desktop study findings and regional discussions also pointed to differences in priorities across regions. Participants noted that capacity building, regional relevance, and practical outcomes were often emphasized in Asia-Pacific contexts, alongside broader global objectives such as science diplomacy and responses to transboundary challenges. These differences were discussed as reflecting variations in institutional capacity, resource availability, and strategic mandates.

Administrative and procedural challenges featured prominently in discussions. Participants noted that the absence of standardized processes across multilateral engagements can create additional administrative burden for both funding agencies and researchers. Issues such as repeated onboarding processes, unclear roles and responsibilities, and differing expectations regarding timelines and levels of commitment were highlighted as factors that can limit participation and slow the establishment of new multilateral initiatives.

In considering the potential role of the GRC, discussions focused on how information-sharing, transparency, and shared learning could support more effective and inclusive multilateral engagements. Participants reflected on the potential value of identifying elements of multilateral engagements that could be more widely shared or harmonized, while maintaining flexibility to accommodate regional and national contexts.

The session also engaged with themes relevant to the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting. Participants reflected on the role of Open Science and artificial intelligence in multilateral engagements, noting their potential to support collaboration and knowledge sharing, alongside the need to address issues related to data governance, equity, and access. Discussions also highlighted the importance of fostering connections between researchers, local communities, and societal needs to ensure that multilateral research contributes to sustainability and locally relevant outcomes.

These reflections were consistent with broader regional discussions on Open Science, Responsible Research Assessment, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, where equity, local relevance, and inclusive participation were highlighted as cross-cutting considerations.

Multilateral Engagement: Reflections towards the GRC 2026 Annual Meeting

Building on the Working Group session, discussions turned to themes relevant to the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting. Participants reflected on how multilateral engagements intersect with emerging priorities related to Open Science, artificial intelligence, and sustainability.

Discussions highlighted that Open Science can play an enabling role in multilateral engagements by supporting transparency, knowledge sharing, and collaboration across borders. Participants noted that open and interoperable practices may help lower barriers to participation and foster trust among partners, while also raising considerations related to data governance, equity, and access. The role of artificial intelligence was discussed in a similar vein, with participants noting both its potential to support collaborative research and the importance of responsible and context-sensitive use in multilateral settings.

Participants also reflected on how research funders can foster stronger connections between researchers, local communities, and societal needs through multilateral engagements. Emphasis was placed on the importance of locally grounded partnerships, meaningful engagement, and alignment with regional sustainability priorities to ensure that multilateral research contributes to socially relevant and sustainable outcomes.

Across discussions, participants noted that considerations of equity, balance in participation, and regional relevance would be important in shaping future multilateral engagements. These reflections were seen as contributing to broader GRC conversations on how multilateral collaboration can evolve in ways that are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to diverse regional perspectives.

Framing towards the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting

Reflections from the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting highlighted several themes of relevance to the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting. These included considerations of equity and balance in participation across regions, the importance of regional and local relevance in global research initiatives, and differences in institutional capacity and readiness to engage with emerging practices. Discussions also underscored the role of Open Science and artificial intelligence as potential enablers of collaboration, alongside the need for context-sensitive and responsible approaches. Together, these reflections contribute regional perspectives to ongoing GRC discussions in preparation for the 2026 Annual Meeting**.**

Asia-Pacific Input to the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting

Discussions at the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting highlighted a number of considerations of relevance to the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting. Participants reflected on the importance of ensuring equity and balance in participation within global research collaborations, particularly in relation to leadership roles, agenda-setting, and access to decision-making processes.

Regional and local relevance emerged as a recurring theme across discussions. Participants emphasized the need for global frameworks and principles to remain sensitive to diverse regional contexts, priorities, and societal needs, noting that approaches perceived as effective in one context may not be directly transferable to others.

Differences in institutional capacity and readiness were also discussed, including variations in administrative capability, digital and research infrastructure, and experience with emerging practices such as Open Science and the use of artificial intelligence. These differences were noted as shaping the ability of organisations to engage meaningfully in multilateral initiatives and global research agendas.

Participants reflected on the role of Open Science and artificial intelligence as potential enablers of collaboration and knowledge sharing, while also highlighting the importance of responsible, context-sensitive approaches. Considerations related to data governance, access, equity, and the ethical use of emerging technologies were discussed as relevant to sustaining trust and inclusivity in global research collaborations.

Across discussions, participants noted the value of shared learning and information exchange across regions, rather than prescriptive or one-size-fits-all approaches. These reflections were seen as contributing Asia-Pacific perspectives to ongoing GRC discussions and preparations for the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting.

Additional Consultations CNT, Bilateral Meeting, Side Events

Collaboration and Neutrality Task Group (CNT)

A closed consultation session facilitated by the GRC Collaboration and Neutrality Task Group (CNT) was held for Heads of Delegation during the Regional Meeting. The session provided a space for exploratory and informal exchange on issues related to collaboration and neutrality within the GRC, particularly in the context of evolving global research and innovation landscapes. Regional perspectives from the Asia-Pacific were shared as part of ongoing global reflections towards the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting.

Bilateral Meetings and Side Activities

In addition to the formal programme, a number of bilateral meetings and side activities were held alongside the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting. These engagements provided opportunities for participating organisations to exchange information, explore areas of mutual interest, and strengthen professional relationships within the Global Research Council community.

A small number of side events were also organised by partner institutions, focusing on broad themes such as research communication, leadership in science, and inclusive research ecosystems. These activities were conducted in parallel with the main programme and did not form part of the formal discussions, conclusions, or outcomes of the Regional Meeting.

Concluding Reflections

Across plenary sessions, Working Group discussions, and additional consultations, the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting provided a platform for the exchange of regional perspectives on key issues relevant to the Global Research Council. Discussions highlighted the importance of equity, inclusivity, and local relevance in shaping approaches to Open Science, Responsible Research Assessment, and multilateral engagement.

Participants underscored the value of continued dialogue and shared learning across regions to ensure that global research collaboration remains responsive to diverse contexts and priorities. The reflections captured during the meeting were noted as contributing to ongoing GRC conversations and informing preparations for the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting.

Closing / Way Forward

Across plenary discussions, Working Group sessions, and additional consultations, the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting surfaced a set of recurring themes that resonated across different parts of the program. Discussions consistently highlighted considerations of equity in participation, sensitivity to regional and local contexts, and the importance of balancing global frameworks with differing institutional capacities.

As reflected in the Working Group discussions, participants noted challenges related to administrative processes, variations in capacity, and differing levels of readiness to engage with emerging practices, including those related to Open Science, Responsible Research Assessment, and multilateral collaboration. These considerations were discussed in relation to how they may shape participation, engagement, and implementation across diverse regional contexts.

Overall, the Regional Meeting was seen as contributing to an ongoing process of reflection within the GRC. Insights from the Asia-Pacific region are intended to inform broader discussions and preparations for the 2026 GRC Annual Meeting, particularly in relation to equity, regional relevance, and practical pathways for engagement across differing capacities.

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