

Youth Climate Ambassadors (YCA) project in universities Call for Applications

Guidelines for project implementing partners – Cluster 1

June 2025

Version history

Version	Date	Author/Editor
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Table of Contents

Important dates	3
Background.....	4
Purpose of this call for applications.....	4
Project Objectives	4
Expected outcomes	5
Scope of the project and expected deliverables for the implementing partner	6
Eligibility criteria for partners	10
Budget	10
Application process	12
Application assessment	12
Applicant screening	12
Data protection	13
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	13
Safeguarding	14
Contact details	14
<i>Appendix 1 Eligibility criteria checklist</i>	
<i>Appendix 2 Quality review scoring system</i>	

GUIDELINES FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

Important Dates

SR No.	Activities	Date/Month
1	Date of advertisement for call for applications	30 May 2025
2	Last date for receipt of written queries related to submission of application	06 June 2025
3	Last date for submission of applications	15 June 2025
4	Date of result declaration	18 June 2025
5	Contract signing	25 June 2025
6	Start of project	01 July 2025
7	End of project	31 March 2026

Please complete the application form and submit it to: Chameera.Wickramasinghe@britishcouncil.org no later than 15 June 2025, 23:59 (SL Time).

Background

In response to the pressing climate challenges facing Sri Lanka, the British Council is launching an exciting programme aimed at empowering youth in higher education to drive climate resilience, inclusivity, and sustainable development. This initiative seeks to equip undergraduates with the knowledge, practical skills, and networks needed to become **'Youth Climate Ambassadors' (YCA)** in climate action, while also embedding principles of Equity and Inclusion into climate-related efforts.

Building on the success of British Council's previous youth and climate initiatives in Sri Lanka, including [Youth Leadership for Climate Action \(YLCA\)](#), [Youth Led Green and Inclusive Businesses \(YLGIB\)](#), Youth Leadership for Climate Pathways (YLCP) and the [International Youth Climate Conference in 2023](#) this project presents an opportunity for higher education institutes to empower the next generation of climate leaders through collaboration and innovation.

Purpose of this call for applications

This Call for Applications is to select a suitable **implementing partner** to support this project in 3 universities (**Cluster 1- University of Jaffna, Ocean University and Kelaniya University**).

The British Council intends to make one grant award to the applicant who best meets the objective of this project based on the evaluation criteria mentioned in this document.

Project Objectives

Overall aim

Empower youth in higher education to shape a climate resilient future through knowledge, skill building, networks and mindset development.

Specific objectives

- Develop leadership and climate action skills among youth in higher education.
- Advance the understanding and integration of Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, and Social Cohesion in climate action.
- Create opportunities for meaningful youth participation in climate change related decision-making.

Target group

Young people (18 – 28 years) in state and non-state sector higher education institutes in Sri Lanka.

Expected outcomes

This project is expected to empower youth in higher education to become active contributors to a climate-resilient and socially inclusive future. The outcomes reflect both individual transformation and systemic impact within the higher education and climate action ecosystems in Sri Lanka.

Outcome 1: Young people have developed leadership skills and networks to lead climate action.

- Youth participants demonstrate increased confidence and capacity to initiate and lead climate-related initiatives within their universities and communities.
- Participants apply practical skills in leadership, systems thinking, communication, project planning, and innovation to real-world climate challenges.
- Intra and inter university peer networks and collaborations emerge, strengthening youth engagement across the climate action landscape.

Outcome 2: Young people have a better understanding of incorporating Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, and Social Cohesion (GESI/SC) into their climate action.

- Participants can articulate the relevance of GESI and SC to climate change and reflect these values in the design of their climate actions.
- Increased awareness among university communities of the importance of equitable and inclusive leadership.
- Climate initiatives developed by youth adopt inclusive approaches, responding to the needs and voices of marginalised or underrepresented groups.

Outcome 3: Youth-led climate action ideas are implemented and shared across the higher education ecosystem.

- A diverse range of youth-led climate action projects are initiated at the institutional, community, or digital levels.
- Youth stories and action results are documented and showcased at universities, national, and online platforms, creating inspiration and engagement.
- Universities begin to integrate youth-led sustainability practices and ideas into their extracurricular or academic offerings.

Scope of the project and expected deliverables for the implementing partner

- **Briefing for the project team of the implementing Partner – 2 days (Late June)**

This will be organised by the British Council and will be held in Colombo. Partner organisations will have to arrange own transport. Each partner can nominate up to 4 persons* for this briefing.

** Apart from the mentors (More details below), the partner organisation is expected to assign a project manager/coordinator and a finance/grants assistant to the project, as the minimum requirement.*

The project manager/coordinator will be the operational lead and the main link between British Council team, facilitators and participant universities and

- *must have experience in managing projects, stakeholder management and working with youth.*
- *lead in identification of challenges and flagging of risks or anomalies.*
- *must have report writing skills and experience.*

- **Recruitment of youth participants from universities (June-July)**

The primary responsibility for student recruitment lies with the respective universities, with the British Council and the implementing partner expected to provide support, if needed. Each university cohort will consist of 25 to 30 students.

- **Online Familiarisation sessions (July)**

The capacity building cycle of the project will begin with online familiarisation sessions focused on foundation level climate change concepts and key thematic areas. This virtual component will allow participants to develop a shared understanding of:

- Climate change science and global trends
- Mitigation and adaptation strategies
- Climate resilience and climate justice
- Global climate networks and the role of youth

The delivery of this module is the responsibility of the British Council. This is included to ensure that all participants, including those without prior exposure to climate education, have a baseline familiarity with key ideas. It sets the stage for deeper exploration and skill-building in the face-to-face workshops that follow.

- **Face-to-Face youth capacity building workshops at universities (July-August)**

Following the online familiarisation module, participants will engage in two face-to-face workshops (2 days each) hosted at each partner university. The two workshops at each university will be held with a gap of 10-14 days.

These training workshops are to be organised by the partner in consultation with the assigned universities and the British Council. The British Council will facilitate introductions to the universities and will provide qualified facilitators to deliver the workshops, covering their fees.

'Organising' includes liaising with university focal points to confirm dates and venues, making logistical arrangements (transport to British Council appointed facilitators and implementing

partner nominated mentors, arranging refreshments, and stationery), coordinating with facilitators on session requirements, and ensuring smooth execution of the workshop schedule. As workshop venues will be provided by the universities, the partner must coordinate closely with them to ensure availability and suitability.

To ensure effective post-training support, it is strongly recommended that the 2 mentors of the partner ** are present during the workshops to gain a clear understanding of the content, approach, get to know the students and to provide inputs to them as necessary, specifically during the project idea generation by students.

The sessions of these workshops will focus on practical skills development aligned with inclusive climate leadership, including:

- Leadership
- Self-awareness and empathy
- Communication and storytelling
- Networking and collaboration
- Systems thinking
- Creativity and innovation
- Project planning and management

Sessions will be highly participatory and will include peer-led discussions.

Students will begin generating ideas for climate action during the workshops, with an expected outcome of 3 to 4 project ideas emerging from each university.

*** Each implementing partner will need to identify and nominate minimum of two individuals as mentors to support students. The mentors may be sourced from outside your organisation.*

Mentors will:

- *support the youth participants in reviewing their projects and give feedback on their project proposals at the design stage*
- *provide follow-up support and guidance to students to implement their projects*
- *assist the identification of challenges and flagging of risks or anomalies*
- *assist in providing feedback, gathering and identifying success stories for project Communications, monitoring, evaluation, learning activities.*
- *possess relevant knowledge and experience in areas such as climate action, sustainability, community engagement, green entrepreneurship, and environmental communication to effectively support the participants' initiatives.*
- *be proficient in both English and local languages to ensure effective communication and guidance.*

Youth climate action plan development (July – Sept)

Following the workshops, students will be guided to finetune their climate action ideas. These actions will reflect the learning from the programme and be grounded in the participants' local realities, interests, and institutional contexts.

Actions may take the form of:

- community projects (mitigation, adaptation)

- green enterprises
- awareness campaigns (Incl. social media)
- research etc.

The mentors of the partner are expected to help and guide students during this phase. They must strike a fine balance between a guide, assessor, supporter, and role-model at this point. They should strive to maintain the originality of the interventions designed by the youth to ensure participant and community ownership of the project.

- **Implementation of Climate Action Plans Supported by Mentoring** (*Aug – Jan 2026*)

Once the climate action plans are collectively approved (*by the British Council, partner organisation, university focal points and any other relevant stakeholders*) students will start the implementation phase.

The implementing partner should provide mentoring support to students to carry out their projects. The partner is expected to provide a minimum of 2 hours of onsite support and at least 20 hours of virtual support per student project over the implementation period through their mentors.

The mentors will have to support students on refining action ideas, if needed, resource mobilisation, troubleshooting, stakeholder engagement, and sustaining momentum.

Each student project which demonstrates strong potential for impact will be awarded a grant of up to Rs. 50,000 from the British Council to support the implementation of their climate action plans. The partner is expected to do the disbursement and follow up of these grants for their respective cohorts.

During this action period, participant students are encouraged to reflect on their climate journeys and share impact stories through various campus events, digital platforms, exhibitions etc. to encourage peer-to-peer learning and collaboration across disciplines. The implementing partner organisation is expected to support students in these activities as well. The expectation is at least one event per university.

- **Follow-up Webinars and Knowledge Series** (*Sept – Nov*)

To deepen students learning post-workshops and maintain participant engagement, a series of practitioner-led virtual sessions will be offered. These sessions will explore practical, relatable topics that help participants connect climate action to everyday life, local contexts, and future careers. All these sessions will be organised by the British Council and partner is expected to support coordination with the students.

- **Project communications and M&E**

British Council will lead, and the Partner is expected to cooperate.

The British Council collects data about the project in relation to the following areas:

- Programme management and
- Programme relevance
- Learning resulting from the project for participants and partners
- Actions that result from the project
- Project legacy, or potential legacy

This data will then be used to understand the impact the project is having at an individual, group, organisational and network level.

Monitoring and Evaluation may be conducted through a mixture of online and offline tools alongside traditional narrative reporting.

- **End of project conference** (*End of Feb 2026*)

As the concluding event of the project, the British Council will organise a final conference to showcase student-led climate action projects. The partner organisation is expected to actively support this event, particularly by coordinating the participation and contributions of their respective student cohorts.

- **Reporting**

partner is expected to submit two reports.

- Interim report – On 15 November 2025
- Final report – By 22 March 2026

Timeline

	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
Activity	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Partner briefings												
Recruitment of youth participants												
Online familiarisation sessions												
Face-to-Face workshops in universities												
Youth Climate Action plan development												
Implementation of Climate Action plans supported by mentoring												
Follow-up Webinars and Knowledge Series												
Interim report												
End of project Youth conference												
Final report												

Eligibility criteria for partners

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria to be eligible for selection under this programme:

- Be a legally registered entity (non-profit, social enterprise, or for-profit organisation) eligible to receive and manage grant funding in Sri Lanka.
- Comply with all relevant national laws and regulations, including those related to financial management, safeguarding, and anti-corruption.
- Have at least 3 years of experience in youth empowerment, education, and/or climate/environment action.
- Have a Sri Lanka-based bank account that requires 2 signatures.
- Also, to be eligible for this grant, applicants must fulfil all the following criteria, if selected:
 - Operates from a good financial position (Should be able to demonstrate through their latest audited accounts, or appropriate alternative (for example, Year End Report and Financial Statement)).
 - Accepts the requirements in relation to intellectual property rights.
 - Demonstrates a willingness to work cooperatively with both the British Council as the contracting authority, universities and any UK based organisations that may be engaged with the project by the British Council.

Eligibility checks will be applied to all applications after the call for applications closes. Those which are not by an eligible institution will be rejected during these checks.

Budget

The maximum grant available for this cluster is **Rs. 7,900,000**.

The expenses incurred by the organisation prior to the effective start date, including any costs incurred in the production of the application, cannot be charged.

To ensure value for money, the budget requested in your application should cover only costs that are essential, appropriate, and relevant to the implementation of activities.

The overhead cost that can be charged **cannot exceed five per cent (5%)** of total direct project cost.

The partner is expected to **include Rs.600,000** (Rs. 50,000 per student's climate action project X 12 projects in the 3 universities) in the budget as an allocation for the small grants to programme participants.

Also, **Rs. 150,000** (Rs. 50,000 per university event X 3 universities) needs to be allocated in the budget for student led events in universities.

Maximum allowable rate per person for refreshments (Morning tea and snack, lunch and evening tea and snack) to workshop participants and resource persons is **Rs. 1,500 per day** for a maximum of 35 persons.

The disbursement of the grant will be done in **four tranches** as below.

Tranche	Condition	Size
1 st tranche	Up on signing of the grant agreement	30%
2 nd tranche	Up on completion of first round of workshops in the 3 universities	30%
3 rd tranche	Up on the submission of an interim narrative and financial report on 15 th November 2025. The release of this tranche will be conditional on applicant spending at least 75% of the funds received from previous tranches.	30%
4 th and final tranche	Up on submission of final narrative and financial report after the satisfactory completion of all deliverables.	Max. 10%

Funds will be disbursed directly to the applicant's bank account according to the approved final budget. Applicants may be asked to adjust their budget if their request does not fit within funding guidelines or if this is considered not appropriate by the application reviewers.

- The grant must be used **exclusively for delivering the agreed project activities**.
- **Grants are not intended to support general business operations, institutional overheads, or profit-generating activities** unrelated to the project.

Partners are required to account for how funding has been spent by completing financial reports (interim and final) providing receipts for any items of direct expenditure above LKR 10,000 and evidence of staff time. Partners must retain all receipts and documentation for seven years after project closure, as 20% of all grants awarded are subject to full post-activity audits by the British Council.

British Council grants cannot cover:

- Direct staff costs for partners based in commercial organisations.
- Tuition Fees
- Bench Fees
- Costs related to writing up, promoting or disseminating previous research.
- Attendance at conferences or other events unless this is to present outputs and outcomes of the project.
- Patent costs
- Costs relating to the construction, procurement or rental of physical infrastructure (e.g. office buildings, laboratory facilities). It is expected that any rooms and facilities essential for the routine operation of collaboration are provided as an in-kind contribution by the participating institutions. These can be detailed as an in-kind contribution in the budget breakdown.
- Purchase or rental of standard office equipment (except specialist equipment essential to the activity). This includes:

- IT hardware – laptops, personal computers, iPads, tablets, etc.
 - Office software
 - Desks, chairs, filing cabinets, photocopiers, printers, fax machines.
- Mobile phone rental or purchase, and Roaming charges
- Entertainment costs such as:
 - Gifts
 - Alcohol
 - Restaurant bills or hospitality costs for personnel not directly participating in the project.
 - Excessive restaurant costs.

Application process

Applicants must submit the completed application form along with other documents mentioned in the application form via E-mail. Word version of the application is available to be downloaded. Please convert the application form to **PDF file** type prior to submission. The Email address to submit applications is: Chameera.Wickramasinghe@britishcouncil.org

The deadline for submission of applications is 15 June 2025 23:59 (Sri Lanka time).

Application assessment

Applications will be assessed against the **eligibility** and **quality criteria** (Appendix 1 and 2).

The Assessment Panel will consist of nominated, qualified individuals from the British Council.

Successful applicants will be notified around 18 June 2025.

Applicant screening

In order to comply with UK government legislation, the British Council may at any point during the application process, carry out searches of relevant third-party screening databases to ensure that neither the applicant nor any of the applicant's employees, partners, directors, shareholders is listed:

- as being wanted by Interpol or any national law enforcement body in connection with crime.
- as being subject to regulatory action by a national or international enforcement body.
- as being subject to export, trade, or procurement controls or (in the case of an individual) as being disqualified from being a company director.
- and/or as being a heightened risk individual or organisation, or (in the case of an individual) a politically exposed person.
- If the applicant or any other party is listed in a Screening Database for any of the reasons set out above, the British Council will assess the applicant as ineligible to apply for this grant call.

The applicant must provide the British Council with all information reasonably requested by the British Council to complete the screening searches. Please read the text to this effect on the application form and tick the box to show that you understand this.

Data protection

How we use your information:

The British Council will use the information that you provide to process your application, make any awards, monitoring and review of any grants. The legal basis for processing your information is in agreement with our terms and conditions of the contract.

We may share data with the agencies responsible for monitoring and evaluation as and when an agency is procured or contracted.

The British Council complies with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 (GDPR). We process and handle personal information according to these regulations. The personal information that you provide on this form will only be used to process your application. The information will be viewed by the British Council staff and those who are a part of the decision-making process.

Your information will not be used/shared beyond any partners listed above for any other purpose without your specific consent. The British Council reserves the right to publish and share anonymised aggregated information with the stakeholders' organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Gender information and country of origin, where collected, are used solely for statistical purposes. If we need to contact you, we will do so using the contact details you have provided under the UK Data Protection law, you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you want more information about this, please contact your local British Council office or the Data Protection Team at: inforgovernance@britishcouncil.org Or see our website: www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection.

We will keep your information for a period of seven years after the project.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The British Council is committed to equal opportunities and diversity in all our activities. This includes avoiding bias due to gender, disability, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or religious belief.

The applicant is encouraged to work towards as equal a gender balance as possible and promote diversity. They must ensure that no one is excluded from participation based on ethnicity, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, or disability.

The British Council reserves the right to reject the application if no consideration has been given to equality, diversity and inclusion or if the proposal is assessed to negatively impact equality.

Please contact us for further information on the British Council's approach, and you could also see our Equality Policy at: www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/equality-diversity-inclusion.

In addition, the applicants need to comply with the British Council policies on prevention of fraud, bribery, money laundering and address any other financial and reputational risk that may affect a transparent and fair award process. See: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/anti-fraud-and-corruption>

Also, the successful applicant is expected to adhere to British Council guidelines on Safeguarding and venue selection for project related activities.

Safeguarding

The British Council expects partners to follow all relevant laws and good practices related to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This includes following the [British Council's Safeguarding Policy](#), which may be updated from time to time.

If the work under this project involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, the partner must provide the British Council with appropriate background checks such as UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks or similar local checks before starting those activities.

The British Council also expects the partner to ensure that any other person or organisation they engage for this work follows the same safeguarding requirements.

Contact Details

Queries related to this call may be directed to:

Chameera Wickramasinghe

Programme Manager- Non formal education programme

Chameera.Wickramasinghe@britishcouncil.org

Mobile: +94 76 912 9807

APPENDIX 1: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA CHECKLIST

Eligibility criteria checklist	Yes/No
Applicant is a registered entity (non-profit, social enterprise, or for-profit organisation) eligible to receive and manage grant funding in Sri Lanka.	
Have at least 3 years of experience in youth empowerment, education, and/or climate/environment action.	
Has a Sri Lanka-based bank account that requires two signatures.	

All the above criteria must have a 'Yes' as answers, to be eligible.

APPENDIX 2: QUALITY REVIEW SCORING SYSTEM

Quality Review Criteria	Weightage
Relevant Organisational Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated expertise in one or more of the following areas: climate change, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, or green economy. • Proven experience in working with youth, particularly in leadership development, project implementation, or mentoring. • Ability to connect and collaborate with diverse stakeholder groups, including government agencies, civil society organisations, academic institutions, and private sector actors. • Demonstrated capacity in grant and development project management. 	40%
Expertise of Proposed Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications and relevant experience of the mentors and project staff nominated for this initiative. • Strong track record in mentoring, coaching, or technical guidance, especially in youth-led or climate-related projects. 	30%
Budget Clarity and Value for Money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-structured, realistic budget that reflects current market rates, ensuring transparency and prudent use of funds. • Evidence of cost-effectiveness and alignment between budgeted resources and activities. 	20%
Commitment to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) and Environmental Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of EDI principles in the organisation's operations and in the design and delivery of the proposed project. • Efforts to minimise environmental impact and promote sustainable practices in project delivery. 	10%