

UTTHAN Pathways: Building Regional Research Partnerships

A multi-component project to strengthen research capacity-building partnerships between regionally headquartered Australian universities and Indian higher education institutions in Tier 2 and 3 cities. Led by the Australia India Institute in partnership with the Regional Universities Network and Section Infin8 Foundation.

Researchers at regional universities in Australia and India's Tier 2 and 3 institutions share challenges and opportunities for strengthening research capacity, advancing internationalisation, and driving regional development through place-based innovation. This project provides a formal pathway for collaboration between them for the first time, through three connected streams aligned with Mission UTTHAN – India's national agenda for building research and innovation capacity outside Tier 1 cities.

STREAM ONE

UTTHAN Pathways Accelerator

A virtual program of six sessions connecting researchers and institutional leaders from Australian regional universities and Indian Tier 2 and 3 higher education institutions.

- Partnership sprints to develop collaboration concepts that build on synergies in research capability-building
- Barrier-busting labs to identify solutions to common system-level challenges in international collaboration
- Workshop sessions to identify researcher strategies for building and sustaining international research collaborations

August-September 2026, Virtual

STREAM TWO

UTTHAN Pathways Mentorship Pilot

A three-month virtual mentorship program connecting early-career researchers and postgraduate students from Indian L3 institutions with Australian regional university mentors.

- Mentors and mentees are matched within two priority research domains
- Mentees develop a research concept note for an Australia-India grant opportunity or collaborative innovation proposal
- A sequence of sessions progressing from grant principles through to a finalised concept note ready for submission

January-April 2027, Virtual

STREAM THREE

UTTHAN Pathways Learning Module on Bilateral Research Collaboration for Regional Impact

A self-paced online module co-designed with Australian and Indian expertise, providing practical guidance on building and sustaining international research partnerships that address regional development challenges. Areas of guidance may include:

- Identifying shared regional challenges as a basis for collaboration
- Building equitable and mutually beneficial research partnerships
- Institutional support structures for international collaboration
- Monitoring and demonstrating regional impact from collaborative activities

Demo in India, November 2026

ABOUT US

Australia India Institute

The Australia India Institute is Australia's leading centre dedicated to promoting support for and understanding of the Australia-India relationship and its cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Since its establishment in 2008, the Institute has established a reputation for high-quality research and analysis. We have built an influential network across business, government, think tanks and academia that has helped shape engagement with decision-makers in both countries.

With the support of our funding partners and donors, the Institute's mission is to inform and mobilise Australian and Indian leaders and institutions to forge a stronger and more enduring relationship between our two countries.

In this mission, the Institute is guided by the principles of *bharosa* (trust), *maryada* (respect), *gyan* (knowledge) and *kalyan* (welfare).

Education Pillar

The Institute's education program focuses on strengthening the cooperative relationship for talent development, research, and innovation between Australia and India. Our education research reports, analyses, and knowledge-sharing activities promote understanding of each country's education sector and open opportunities for bilateral collaboration. The Institute is supported by the Australian Government Department of Education, enabling us to play a critical role in advancing learning, skilling, and research engagement between our two countries.

Partners

Regional Universities Network

Regional Universities Network (RUN) is a network of six universities based in regional Australia. Established in October 2011, its members work together to contribute to the growth of regional economies and communities. They ensure that higher education is accessible and achievable, and produce qualified professionals needed for regional development.

Section Infin-8 Foundation

Section Infin-8 Foundation (SI-8) is a not-for-profit organisation and dynamic incubator supporting the growth of startups and strengthening economic resilience in Tier 2 and 3 regions of India. SI-8 serves as an execution partner for the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India. The Office of PSA was established by the Government of India to offer practical and objective advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet on matters of science and technology. In this capacity, SI-8 plays a key role in delivering Mission UTTHAN (Upscale Tier 2 & Tier 3 Institutes for Holistic Advancement of Their Network) – an initiative poised to transform institutes in Tier 2 and 3 cities into hubs of advanced research, innovation and entrepreneurship to ensure equitable access to advanced learning and opportunities.

Advisory Committee

UTTHAN Pathways is guided by an Advisory Committee bringing together representatives from Australian and Indian government, academia, and industry. The Institute gratefully acknowledges the time and expertise of all members in supporting this initiative.

Funded by: