

Call for Participation

APRU Tech Policy Hackathon 2025

Leveraging AI and Data for Inclusive Growth

Hosts & Partners: APRU x NUS FinTech Lab x Google x data.org
Location: Google Office, The Okura Prestige Bangkok, Thailand
Dates: September 30 - October 2, 2025
Website: <https://www.apru.org/event/apru-tech-policy-hackathon-2025/>

Overview

Digital transformation presents an unprecedented opportunity to solve complex social issues. However, gaps remain in ensuring that solutions are sustainable, scalable, and aligned with policy objectives.

The APRU Tech Policy Hackathon 2025 will empower students to design technology-driven process improvements and regulatory innovations leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and data science. These solutions aim to bridge existing gaps in underserved communities across **Southeast Asian (SEA)* countries**. The focus will be on initiatives that are self-sustaining, deliver a good return on investment (ROI), and are ready for implementation.

Objectives

Guided by mentors from the academia, tech industry, public agencies, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders, participants will develop actionable solutions to one of the following policy challenges:

- 1. Pathways for Supporting Financial Inclusion in the Digital Economy**
Exploring scalable business models, fintech innovations, and regulatory mechanisms that enhance financial access for underbanked communities.
- 2. Ensuring Interoperability, Access, and Digital Trust**
Developing business processes, governance models, and policy-aligned solutions that enable seamless integration across digital platforms, strengthen security, and build trust in digital transactions.

* For the definition of SEA, please refer to the [member states of Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#).

3. **Adapting to AI-Driven Economies**

Designing market-based and regulatory solutions that help underserved communities navigate the transition to an AI-driven economy, focusing on workforce adaptation, AI-and data driven economic integration, governance and safety, upskilling, accessibility, and localization.

4. **Developing Digital Trust as a Pathway to Solve the Digital Equity Gap**

Establishing policies and technological frameworks that build trust in digital financial systems and services, promoting broader digital equity.

Deliverables

Teams will produce a **policy brief** (approximately 1,200 words) in July, followed by a **working prototype** presented at the Hackathon as the final deliverable. The deliverable must meet the following requirements:

- The prototype must be a functional minimum viable product (MVP), such as a web or mobile app, data dashboard, or technical demo.
- It should showcase the use of AI, data analytics, or digital technology—either visibly through its functionality or embedded within its policy design logic.
- A clear technical articulation is required, even if full implementation is not feasible.
- A purely policy-focused paper or draft legislation without a digital or technical component does not meet the criteria.

Judging criteria will emphasize real-world feasibility, innovation quality, policy relevance, and the potential for high-impact scalability.

Timeline

<i>May 15-Jun 30, 2025</i>	Open call for application .
<i>Jun 27, 2025</i>	Announcement of the initial shortlist of teams for the hackathon.
<i>Jul 21, 2025</i>	Deadline for submission of an in-depth policy brief (1200 words) on one of the policy challenges outlined in the Objectives above.
<i>Aug 1, 2025</i>	Announcement of the final list of selected teams for the Tech Policy Hackathon in Bangkok.

Aug-Sep, 2025	The selected teams have two training sessions provided by speakers and mentors.
Sep 30-Oct 2, 2025	Tech Policy Hackathon in Bangkok, Thailand

Awards

- A prize of US\$1,000 will be awarded to the winning team.
- US\$500 will be awarded to the first and second runners-up teams respectively.
- Leading teams will gain continued mentorship access after the hackathon to help transform their solutions into scalable, real-world initiatives.

Benefits

All students selected for the APRU Tech Policy Hackathon 2025 will gain:

- **Expert Training:** Practical workshops with mentors from Google, NUS, and other experts on AI, data, and policy innovation.
- **Real-World Project Experience:** Build a tech prototype and policy brief under real-world conditions.
- **Career-Boosting Credentials:** Showcase a high-level project for resumes, interviews, and graduate applications.
- **Strategic Networking:** Connect with industry experts, policymakers, and top students across Asia-Pacific.
- **Pathways to Further Opportunities:** Access post-hackathon mentorship, internships, and project funding possibilities.
- **Leadership Skill Development:** Hone cross-disciplinary collaboration and problem-solving under pressure.

Funding Support

Each member of the teams selected to participate in the final round of Hackathon on September 30-October 2 in Bangkok will be fully funded for their accommodations and return flights **from a SEA* city** to Bangkok.

For those selected participants who will travel from **outside of SEA***, the **funding amounts remain the same**. They are obliged to pay the difference on their own.

Requirements

- Participants should be organized by teams, with each consisting of **3 - 5 postgraduate** and/or **undergraduate students**.
- The students must be **enrolled** at [APRU member universities](#) or any **university in [Southeast Asia \(SEA\)](#)*** for the whole duration of the competition.
- Teams are highly encouraged to be composed of members of diverse disciplines and gender backgrounds.
- Preferred disciplines: AI/Impact Data Science, Law, Business Administration, Political Science, and Humanities.
- Each team should be endorsed by a **faculty member** from their university.
- Each member of the applying teams should have the availability to join the online training sessions and in-person hackathon in Bangkok.

Selection Process

In the application, each team must submit the following:

- Team information: name, university affiliation, and faculty endorser.
- Participant profiles: majors/fields of study, genders, academic standing.
- Short essay (around 300 words) addressing:
 - How the team intends to leverage policy, AI, and data science for social good in the context of a Southeast Asian underserved community/city/country, addressing one of the policy challenge areas (Objectives) listed above.
 - A clear definition of the policy problem they aim to address, demonstrating an understanding of the political, institutional, and socioeconomic context of their selected country.
 - An outline of the identified challenge, the proposed intervention, its expected impact, and how the solution would enhance feasibility, scalability, or policy effectiveness.

Evaluation criteria:

- Alignment with the hackathon goals (Impact x Data/AI x Policy focus).
- Diversity of disciplines and genders within the team.
- Originality, clarity and depth of the essay.
- Priority will be given to:
 - Teams from SEA countries.
 - Solutions with strong potential for real-world impact, practical implementation, and scalability.

How to Apply

Please submit your application via filling out the form at <https://forms.gle/tpgtRfuL8ep4zEEr5> by ~~June 20~~ **June 30, 2025**.

For the most up-to-date information, please visit the hackathon website: <https://www.apru.org/event/apru-tech-policy-hackathon-2025/>

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Benjamin Zhou at programs@apru.org.

Notes:

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