

Nusantara Open Circle 2027 – Open Call

Nusantara Open Circle is a playwright developmental programme co-produced by Esplanade – Theatre on the Bay and Main Tulis Group. The programme encourages and supports the development of new scripts in Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia, or Malay and Indonesia-related dialects spoken in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

Four works will be selected, and the applicant for each selected play will be paired with an experienced mentor.

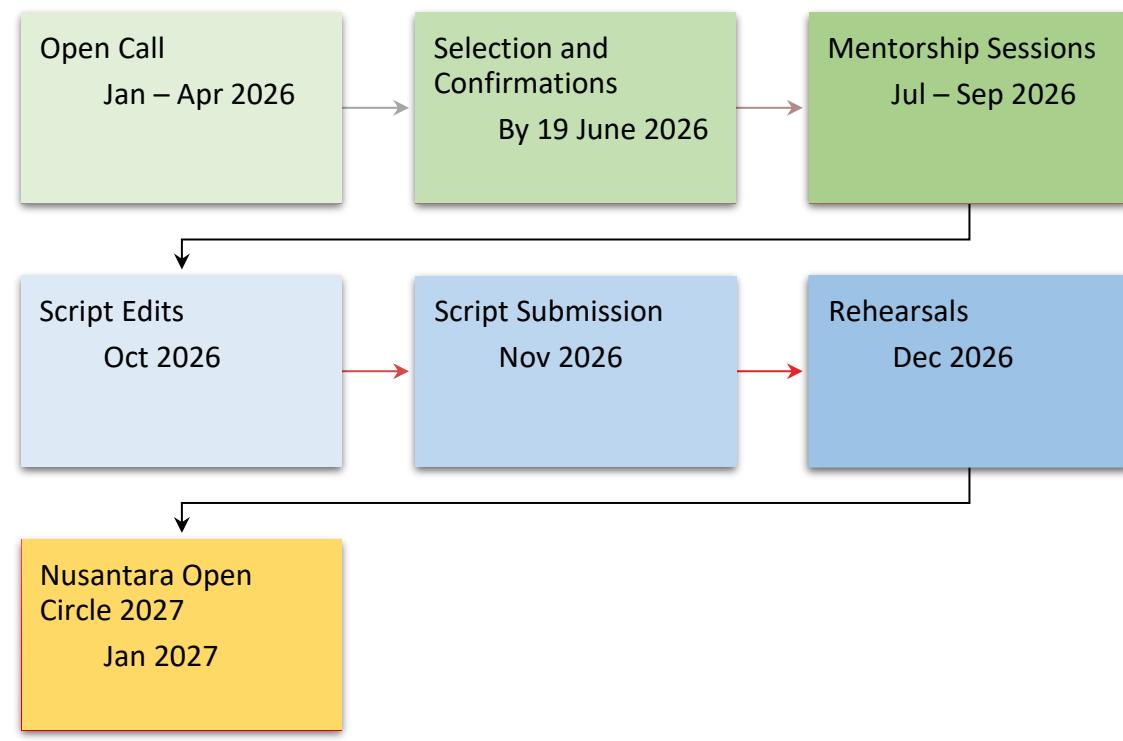
As part of the application, the applicant must submit a brand-new short script on the theme of “*Tanam*”.

The applicant is encouraged to interpret the theme in any manner. The applicant is also required to explain the relevance of the submitted script to the theme in the application.

Through group workshops and one-on-one mentorship sessions, the selected scripts will be developed for a dramatised reading in Singapore in January 2027 at the Esplanade as part of *Nusantara Open Circle 2027*.

While this residency is particularly suitable for emerging playwrights, all writers who believe they can benefit from mentoring and guidance are also welcomed to apply.

Timeline for Nusantara Open Circle



There will be four mentor-led group workshops that selected applicants must attend between July to September 2026.

In addition, the applicant must meet with their specific mentor at least three times between July to September 2026 to further develop their work and receive guidance for their scripts.

A stipend of SGD\$300 will be provided to each applicant for the mentorship phase between July to November.

A separate fee of SGD\$700 will be provided for the applicant's participation in the *Nusantara Open Circle 2027* in Singapore in January 2027. For playwrights in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, accommodation in Singapore will be provided during the event period.

Applications open from 31 January 2026, 6pm (GMT+ 8) and submission deadline will be 13 April 2026, 11.59pm (GMT+8).

Shortlisted applicants for *Nusantara Open Circle 2027* will be notified by 19 June 2026, 11.59pm (GMT+8).

Applications will be assessed by a panel of representatives from Esplanade and Main Tulis Group.

For enquiries, please write to maintulisgroup@gmail.com.

As part of your application, you will be required to submit:

1. An original script that must be a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 pages. It can be a full play or an excerpt that must not have been staged before.

Who can apply?

1. Playwrights with original work who are based in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. There is no age restriction.
2. Playwrights with original works and are able to write in Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia, or Malay and Indonesia-related dialects spoken in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.
3. The selected applicant must be able to travel to Singapore and be part of *Nusantara Open Circle* in person between 29 – 31 January 2027.

Responsibilities of applicant during Nusantara Open Circle

1. The selected applicant must attend four mentorship sessions between July to September 2026 held online on Zoom.
2. The selected applicant must arrange at least three one-on-one sessions with their assigned mentor between July to September 2026 to further develop their submitted scripts.
3. The selected applicant must submit a revised script by 2 November 2026, 12pm (GMT+8). The submitted script must be at least 20 pages.
4. The selected applicant is expected to participate in the events of *Nusantara Open Circle*, to be held at Esplanade – Theatre on the Bay in Singapore from 29 – 31 January 2027.

5. The selected applicant is to ensure that he/she has all the necessary travel documents to travel to Singapore (valid passport/visa) in January 2027.

Selection Criteria

1. There can only be one entry per applicant. Once submitted, the entry is considered final.
2. Applications will be considered based on the following:
 - Relevance of script to the theme, and how the script interprets and responds to the theme
 - How the applicant will benefit from the mentorship programme
 - Potential of the submitted script to be further developed into a 20-page script for a dramatised reading presentation in January 2027

Note: As this is a development programme, we will not penalise the applicant for submitting an unfinished script or excerpt as part of their application for the open call.

3. The decision of the selection panel in all matters is final. No correspondence from then on will be entertained.

Terms & Conditions of Nusantara Open Circle 2027 – Open Call

1. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
2. Applications are to be submitted using the provided platform.
3. The selected applicant will be notified through the email address provided in the application.
4. The submitted script must be a new script which has never been staged. It should be written mostly in Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia, or Malay or Indonesia-related dialects spoken in the applicant's country. If regional dialects or slang terms are used, you must include English translations and/or footnotes. Scripts without translations for regional dialects or slang terms will be disqualified.
5. The submitted script must be a minimum of 6 pages and maximum of 10 pages with the formatting: Times New Roman, font size 12, 1.5 line spacing. It can be a full play or an excerpt.
6. If the submitted script is longer than the stipulated length, we will only read the first 10 pages.
7. The selected applicant will enter into a contractual agreement with Main Tulis Group, the producer of this development programme and *Nusantara Open Circle*. The contract will outline the terms of the engagement, including all deliverables and deadlines, and terms of payment.
8. The selected applicant must provide at least 72 hours' notice before the start of the first workshop session should they choose to withdraw from the programme. This might entail being paid partial fees if agreed upon deliverables have not been met.
9. The selected applicant agrees to have their names, voices, likenesses, sound materials and photographs used by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay and its sponsors for the purpose of publicity, broadcasting, advertising and or trade without further compensation or notice.
10. The selected applicant agrees to participate in promotional activities, including but not limited to media interviews, promotional appearances and events arranged by Esplanade for publicity and promotional purposes, for which no additional fees shall be paid to the applicant.
11. Esplanade and Main Tulis Group reserves the right to amend the open call's rules and guidelines without prior notice.
12. By participating in this open call, the selected applicant agrees to abide by the rules and regulations, terms and conditions, and all decisions made by Esplanade and Main Tulis Group.

About Nusantara Open Circle

Nusantara Open Circle (NOC) is a transnational exchange of new ideas and writings from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. NOC presents a series of dramatised readings from works in progress of an exciting playwright from each country, written primarily in Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia, and is performed by Singapore actors. Each read will be accompanied by a feedback session where attendees can learn more about the playwrights and their craft while sharing their responses to the work.

NOC is a three-year programme starting from 2025. Besides the flagship programme that takes place in January, the development phase comprises open calls for new plays in development, and mentorships with the region's most notable playwrights.

NOC is a co-production of Esplanade and Main Tulis Group in partnership with Panas Panas Theatre from Malaysia and Indonesia Dramatic Reading Festival.

Main Tulis Group

Founded in 2016, Main Tulis Group (MTG) is Singapore's only collective that works on developing English and Malay plays. The emphasis is on *main* (play) and *tulis* (write)—writing organically, without restrictions—while also being about playwriting as a craft. The group organises regular readings of works-in-progress known as Open Circle sessions, and is known for its dramatised readings showcase ETA : 9 MIN. MTG has worked with institutions such as Centre 42, Esplanade, Singapore Writers Festival and the National University of Singapore, organising readings, workshops and outreach events on writing.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on Esplanade Offstage, an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016 and 2022, and the Charity Transparency Award from 2016 – 2023. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a guide/assistance dog friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club. Visit esplanade.com for more information.