

IMAGING SOUTHEAST ASIA (ISEA): A NEW REGIONAL NETWORK EMPOWERING BIOIMAGING SCIENTISTS

On January 24, 2025, a team of scientists and bioimaging leaders launched [imaging Southeast Asia \(iSEA\)](#), the first regional network dedicated to supporting researchers and healthcare professionals using imaging technologies across the ASEAN region.



Like other bioimaging networks and infrastructures around the world, iSEA aims to enhance access to advanced imaging technologies and expertise, bridge research infrastructure gaps, and drive higher-quality imaging, more reproducible data, and faster scientific discoveries.

“Unlike in Europe or North America, where bioimaging is well-established as a critical research field, in Southeast Asia, it is often seen as a supporting tool rather than a discipline in itself,” shared members of the inaugural committee.

This has made it challenging to secure funding and government support for imaging technologies, facilities, and professional development - elements crucial for driving research and innovation.

Southeast Asia's unique geographical challenges, including its many islands, multitude of languages, remote locations, and varying levels of imaging expertise across the scattered imaging infrastructures, highlight the need for a strong community.

With this in mind, Teng Leong Chew, Director for the Advanced Imaging Center at HHMI Janelia, Satoshi Ogawa, Associate Professor at Monash University Malaysia, and Graham Wright, Director of the Research Support Centre at Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), joined forces. Along with the support of their colleagues and regional partners, they laid the foundation for iSEA, culminating in its recent launch.

“Much of the initial energy, enthusiasm, and effort [to form iSEA] was inspired by the work of communities connected to Global Bioimaging, such as [LABI](#), [SABI](#), and [ABIC](#),” said the team. These networks, established in comparable settings, have successfully built collaborative imaging landscapes where local challenges are addressed through shared solutions and strong community ties.

Several key events have played a vital role in iSEA's formation and growth, including:

- The [Microscopy Technology Dissemination conference](#) at Janelia
- The [Okinawa Microscopy Workshop](#), hosted by OIST and ABIS in Japan, which attracted imaging scientists from Southeast Asia.
- The first [Malaysia Advanced Imaging community meeting](#) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- The [Global Bioimaging Facilities Management Course](#) in Singapore, hosted by [SingaScope](#).
- The [Global Bioimaging Exchange of Experience 2024](#) in Okazaki, Japan.

Each of these events helped expand the network, strengthen connections, and build momentum.

Additionally, industry partnerships with microscopy and imaging technology companies have been instrumental for iSEA's development and outreach, and their continued support will be pivotal in sustaining the network.

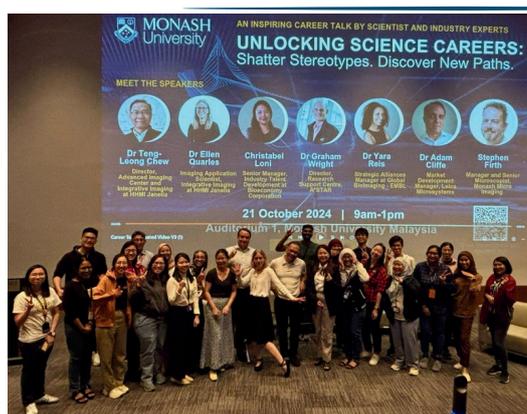
Looking ahead, iSEA is calling on imaging scientists and institutions across Southeast Asia to join its mission. Researchers can connect with iSEA through its website and social media platforms, engage with local community members, contribute to network activities, and learn about relevant initiatives timely such as [Imaging4All](#). Plans are also underway for iSEA's first dedicated event in Malaysia in late 2025, which will further strengthen regional collaboration and provide a platform for sharing expertise.

With a growing community and a shared vision, iSEA is set to transform the bioimaging landscape in Southeast Asia - fostering innovation, strengthening collaboration, and shaping the future of scientific discovery in the region.



Learn more about iSEA on their [website](http://www.imagingsea.org) (www.imagingsea.org), and connect on social media via [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

This article was written by Sophie Winter from Global BioImaging.



Key moments leading up to the launch of iSEA, including the final online meeting of the inaugural committee, the Malaysia Advanced Imaging community meeting, and the Global BioImaging Facility Management Course in Singapore and Exchange of Experience conference in Japan.