

# **CALL FOR RESEARCH APPLICATIONS 2026**



## **PHASE 2 INVITATION AND GUIDELINES**



**DANIDA  
FELLOWSHIP  
CENTRE**

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## **DANIDA FELLOWSHIP CENTRE**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Research plays a critical role in generating knowledge and informing societal understanding of how to drive transformational sustainable development. Supporting contextually relevant and impactful research is essential for guiding decision-makers and communities in effectively addressing both existing and emerging sustainable development challenges.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs//Danida (MFA) provides grants for development research activities as part of Denmark's international development cooperation. The mandate to provide support to development research is explicitly stated in §7 of the [International Development Cooperation Act](#) the purpose to strengthen research capacity and generate new knowledge in Global South.

“A Changing World – Partnerships in Development”, Denmark's current development cooperation strategy, highlights the importance of research partnerships and collaboration. Furthermore, promoting and strengthening close and equal contact between researchers in African countries is also an important element of the strategy “[Africa's Century](#)”, for strengthened Danish engagement with African countries.

## Invitation for research applications 2026 (Phase 2)

Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) invites the prequalified Phase 1 applicants to submit **Phase 2 applications** (and a full research proposal)<sup>1</sup> for research grants. Only Phase 1 prequalified applications are eligible for this call.

Research project proposals can focus on either of the two themes ‘climate change, environment, vulnerability and resilience’ and ‘health, well-being and vulnerability’. More detailed descriptions of the thematic focus areas are described in section 2. Support to development research is geographically aligned with Denmark's partnership countries, with a particular focus on Africa and low-income countries. The eligible countries for research applications are described in section 3.

The 2026 research application round has a total allocation of approximately DKK 250 million for development research funding. The grants for the Phase 2 applications selected in the 2026 application round will be funded under the 2027 appropriation, and final granting is thus conditional on the approval by the Danish Parliament of the 2027 Finance Bill.

The deadline for submitting the Phase 2 applications is 10 December 2026 13:00 PM CET. Applications must be submitted in English and electronically via the e-application system [SurveyMonkey Apply \(SMA\)](#). This is further explained in section 13.

For an application to be successful, applicants must comply with guidelines and conditions set out both in this document, ‘Invitation and guidelines Phase 2’, and in the [General Conditions](#) for Grants Supported by the Danida Fellowship Centre. Please note that the General Conditions include several sections addressing specific requirements for FFU that applicants must consult carefully.

Research proposals are assessed by the Consultative Research Committee of Developmental Research (also called the FFU). The FFU is responsible for assessing research funding proposals and advises the MFA in matters regarding the awards of the competitive funds for development research projects. Granted research projects are also referred to as research projects or FFU projects.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Application’ refers to the application for funding (all requirements filled out in the Survey Monkey Apply system), and ‘proposal’ refers to the research idea and project description.

<sup>2</sup> Read more about the [Consultative Research Committee of Developmental Research](#) on our website.

DFC manages the MFA's support to development research. For questions concerning the application procedures and, in general, relating to these present guidelines and the General Conditions, please contact the Research Management Team at DFC at [ffu@dfcentre.dk](mailto:ffu@dfcentre.dk).

## **2. RESEARCH THEMES**

The research themes in the 2026 Phase 2 call are identical to the research themes in the 2026 Phase 1 call. Research project proposals can focus on either of the two themes 'climate change, environment, vulnerability and resilience' and 'health, well-being and vulnerability'. Applicants must justify how the chosen research theme addresses the specific needs and priorities of the country/ies where the research takes place.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT, VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE**

Under the theme 'climate change, environment, vulnerability and resilience', research is invited that explores the interdependence of climate change, environmental transformation, and multi-dimensional social vulnerability.

Proposals are encouraged to focus on the interactions between the impacts of climate change, both immediate and cumulative, and existing social and environmental development challenges, inequalities, vulnerabilities and conflicts. Proposals may also examine the potential conflicts and trade-offs arising from climate change actions (adaptation and mitigation), including issues of governance, justice, distribution of benefits and burdens, and the differentiated opportunities for adaptation and resilience. Proposals may also address the design of systems of climate data provision and early warning to build resilience to climate change, including the introduction of new technologies and new forms of citizen-engagement.

It is essential that proposals examine how climate change and environmental actions relate to and tackle broader development challenges, such as inequality, poverty, gender inequality, environmental degradation, political exclusion, displacement, uneven participation and governance. A special emphasis is welcomed on marginalised and vulnerable regions, sectors and groups, as well as on research that explores emerging forms of vulnerability.

Key areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

Governance, policies and institutional frameworks that shape climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience efforts, as well as environmental actions, and their impacts on local communities.

Social, economic, environmental and health dimensions of climate vulnerability.

Integrated climate adaptation strategies, including the principles of locally-led adaptation, resilience and nature-based solutions.

Low carbon transitions in energy and productive sectors, with focus on inclusiveness and outreach to marginalised groups.

Technological and societally innovative approaches that serve marginalised and vulnerable regions, sectors and groups.

Linkages between climate change and environmental-related challenges and health issues, such as One Health and planetary health approaches.

## HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND VULNERABILITY

Under the theme ‘health, well-being and vulnerability’, research is invited that examines pressing global health issues to promote good health outcomes and well-being for the most vulnerable, and that explores new forms of vulnerability.

Proposals may focus on preventing, diagnosing, monitoring and treating diseases, ensuring access to essential health services and technologies, or tackling persistent disparities or structural barriers to equitable, high-quality, sustainable, resilient, and integrated health systems.

It is essential that proposals examine how pressing health issues relate to and tackle broader development challenges, such as poverty, gender inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, political exclusion, displacement, participation and governance. A special emphasis is welcomed on marginalised and vulnerable regions, sectors and groups as well as research that explores emerging forms of vulnerability.

Key areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Maternal and child health
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)
- Inequalities in the response to infectious diseases, including in investments in disease prevention and treatment
- Tackling the increased burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD’s) and their interaction with communicable diseases
- Strengthening health systems, including access to and coverage of essential health services, particularly for people in vulnerable settings and situations
- Strengthening global health security, including the promotion of the One Health approach as well as efforts to prevent and control Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
- Linkages between climate-related challenges, health issues and other forms of co-vulnerabilities

### Research principles

In addition to the thematic focuses of the present call, applicants are asked to carefully consider a number of guiding principles that underpin Denmark’s support to development research:<sup>3</sup>

- Development research aims to produce high-quality scientific knowledge that addresses sustainable development challenges. It emphasises the practical application of research findings, with a focus on informing policy and practice for transformational change.
- Development research pays attention to contextual relevance and stakeholder engagement. It recognises the importance of addressing the specific needs and priorities of the countries where the research takes place. It pays close attention to the local context and involves relevant communities to ensure that research is ‘fit for purpose’ and responsive to their concerns and insights.
- Development research acknowledges the multidimensional nature of sustainable development challenges. Interdisciplinary approaches are often required to bridge

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<sup>3</sup> See the [Strategic Guidance Note](#) for Danish Support to Development Research

understandings of and tackle complex issues, considering interconnected factors and systems that influence sustainable development outcomes.

- Development research aligns with the principle of leaving no one behind and takes a human rights-based approach. It ensures that research practices are consistent with international human rights norms and principles. It is gender-responsive, inclusive towards vulnerable populations and engages with local knowledge. Potentially negative consequences and outcomes for populations affected by the research are carefully considered.
- Development research recognises the crucial role of researchers and universities in the Global South as providers of scientific knowledge and innovation, research-based education, and advice to society. It integrates local knowledge systems and involves researchers and institutions that are instrumental in generating and applying knowledge in the Global South.
- Development research requires equitability in research partnerships. Equitable partnerships prioritise mutuality, reciprocity, respect and mutual learning between research partners. It acknowledges and addresses power differences and inequalities in North-South relations, striving for fairness in research partnerships.
- Development research critically examines development efforts to learn from mistakes. Critical research is an essential component in the iterative process of improving development cooperation, structures and partnerships. It contributes to an ethos of learning to design more effective and impactful development engagements.

### Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

In the e-application system (SMA), applicants must state if and to which extent they have used artificial intelligence (AI) in their application. DFC expects applicants to use AI in a responsible and ethical way. These statements will be available for the Consultative Research Committee. See further the European Commission's guidelines for responsible use of generative AI in research.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Support to development research is geographically aligned with Denmark's partnership countries, with a particular focus on Africa and low-income countries. In 2026, the eligible countries for research applications include the following:

**Algeria, Bangladesh\*, Ethiopia\*, Egypt\*, Ghana\*, Kenya\*, Morocco\*, Nigeria\*, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia (incl. Somaliland)<sup>5</sup>, South Africa\*‡, Tanzania\*, Tunisia, Uganda\*, Vietnam\*.**

Please note that applications to Ethiopia, Nigeria and Somalia (incl. Somaliland) will undergo an extra embassy review in phase 2 concerning their risk assessments and the adequacy of proposed safety measures. See further in section 7 "Security Considerations".

Applicants are **required** to check Denmark's Strategic Sector Collaboration (SSC) programmes in countries marked with asterisk "\*" above (see also next page and footnote<sup>6</sup>). Successful applications

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<sup>4</sup> See the [Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research developed by the European Research Area Forum](#)

<sup>5</sup> Please note that the Somali national passport is not on the list of travel documents recognised by Denmark. This implies that Somali participants can only enter Denmark on a Diplomatic passport or if they have double citizenship and can use an alternative passport. Please bear this in mind when planning visits by PhD students and senior researchers to Denmark within the scope of the project.

<sup>6</sup> More information on Denmark's strategic sector cooperation can be found here: [Strategic Sector Cooperation \(um.dk\)](#)

that fall within the topic of a country's Strategic Sector Cooperation with Denmark are expected to communicate with the relevant Sector Counsellor and establish links to SSC activities. Please find an overview of Strategic Sector Cooperation across eligible countries in the table on the next page.

‡ Please note that the following research institutions in South Africa are not eligible as project lead or primary partners: University of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand, and Stellenbosch University. The universities may, however, be included as secondary partners.

Research implemented in more than one of the eligible countries within the same theme can be considered. In such cases, the proposals must pay careful attention to the benefits (and complexity) of comparative research involving several countries under the same project frame. Furthermore, based on a single country, it is possible to integrate regional perspectives to the topic in focus. In such cases, a strong justification and anchorage to the country of focus must be described.

| <b>OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC SECTOR COOPERATION ACROSS ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Country</b>                                                            | <b>Strategic Sector Cooperation projects</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Bangladesh</b>                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food safety and agriculture</li> <li>• Working environment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Ethiopia</b>                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground water management</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Egypt</b>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Ghana</b>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meteorology</li> <li>• Statistics</li> <li>• Maritime</li> <li>• City to city cooperation within water management</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |
| <b>Kenya</b>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food loss and food safety</li> <li>• Maritime</li> <li>• Ground water management</li> <li>• Circular economy and waste management</li> </ul>                                                                                 |
| <b>Morocco</b>                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground water management and nature-based solutions</li> <li>• Statistics</li> <li>• Energy (new)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Nigeria</b>                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food safety and livestock production</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>South Africa</b>                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground water management</li> <li>• Food loss, food safety, animal health and antibiotic use and resistance</li> <li>• City to city cooperation within resource management</li> <li>• Intellectual property rights</li> </ul> |
| <b>Tanzania</b>                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health (new)</li> <li>• Taxation (new)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Uganda</b>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistics (new)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Vietnam</b>                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food loss and waste</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Statistics</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  |

## 4. PROJECT DURATION AND GRANT

The expected duration of research projects is up to 5 years within a maximum grant of DKK 10 million for each project. A maximum of two no-cost extensions can be granted with a total of two years prolongation of the project end date.

It is not possible to apply for an extension of a previous grant, but an application can build on a previous/ongoing MFA supported development research project, in which case it must be clearly stated in the application. If additional security measures are mandatory or deemed necessary, applicants may request additional funding of maximum DKK 400.000. Please refer to the General Conditions.

For projects granted in 2026 and onwards, Danish grant-holding institutions are allocated an additional amount of DKK 100.000, earmarked exclusively to cover necessary costs related to monitoring of partners over the lifetime of the project. No overhead or indirect costs may be charged on this amount.

All Danish grant-holding institutions are responsible for planning and carrying out monitoring of project partners in accordance with the General Conditions.

## 5. MAIN APPLICANT

There are two types of main applicants:

1. Danish universities or research-based institutions registered in Denmark and with a capacity to (co-) supervise PhD students.
2. Universities or research-based institutions in the eligible countries with a capacity to (co-) supervise PhD students, that have been involved in a Danida-funded research project completed after 1 January 2022 and no later than 31 December 2026 and that fulfil the below mentioned criteria.

Please note that the terminology used to refer to the main applicant has been updated to align with the General Conditions for Grants Supported by the Danida Fellowship Centre, published in March 2026. The term 'responsible institution' used for the Call for Research Applications 2026 has been replaced by 'grant-holding institution'.

The application must be submitted by the researcher who will, if the project is granted, become the principal investigator (PI) on behalf of the grant-holding institution. Applicants are welcome to share the project leadership with a scientific co-PI. Please note that in the unlikely event of change of PI, the co-PI can only take over the role of PI, if they are employed with the grant-holding institution.

To encourage the positive results of well-established partnerships, this call for research applications welcomes applications from institutions in the eligible countries of the current call with previous involvement in a FFU research project (North- or South-led). In this case, the institutions that apply as grant-holding institution must document their substantial role in a Danida-funded research project completed after 1 January 2022 and before the date of application. The applying PI must have held a key role e.g. as PI or work package leader in the previous project. For such applications, the primary partner in Denmark must be the same institution that led or was a partner in the previous Danida-funded research partnership, which the application builds on. The research team's CVs must document that at least one key researcher from the applying institution and at

least one key researcher from the Danish partner institution had substantial roles, such as PI or work package leaders, in the previous project.

At the time of submitting the application, the PI(s) must hold a PhD or equivalent qualification, documented clearly in the CV. Applications from younger researchers in general, and women in particular, are encouraged.

Experience shows that the PI(s) play a key role in ensuring that a research collaboration project is successful. **It is important to note that an effective engagement of the PI(s) will entail a substantial workload**, particularly at the beginning of the project.

It is important that the PI(s) and the research team document relevant scientific merits/qualifications and research background within the research topic applied for. A person may appear as PI (or co-PI) on several applications, but maximum one project per PI can be approved for funding.

## 6. PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The application must name all research partner institutions (nationally registered) and other collaborating partners in Denmark, as well as in the country or countries where the research will be implemented. If applicable, include partners in third countries and/or other international partners.

The gender composition of the team must be carefully considered, both concerning researchers from institutions in Denmark and from institutions in the partner country or countries.

The application must include at least one nationally registered research institution or university in Denmark and in each country where the research will be implemented (serving as grant-holding institution or primary partner). As relevant, applications may also include international partners, public authorities, and private sector partners as secondary partners.

Adding project participants/project partners in the Phase 2 application is acceptable; however, any replacement of project participants or partners from the Phase 1 application must be clearly justified.

**All project participants (including identified postdocs and PhDs) from all participating institutions, both primary and secondary partners, must be named in the e-application form under the task “Project participants”,** with their CV uploaded. CVs of private sector participants must include the profile or link to the website of the partner company/private sector institution. Any personal affiliation (i.e. spouse, domestic partner, sibling, parent, or child) between project participants and the PI must be declared. For South-led projects, the CVs must reflect the roles of key researchers in previous Danida funded projects.

Involving secondary partners as project participants, i.e. from the private sector and other relevant non-academic institutions in partner countries or in Denmark, is encouraged. See General Conditions regarding secondary partners and the provided link in the footnotes regarding de minimis support and rules (EU regulation<sup>7</sup>).

In the e-application, advisory boards and other counselling bodies can be included in its own section, not as project participants or as secondary partners. Endorsements are not necessary for this involvement in the research project.

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<sup>7</sup> See the EU Commission regulation of 13 December 2023 regarding de minimis aid [here](#)

In the e-application, applicants must name a primary contact person per institution. Furthermore, the applicant must also name a contact person from financial accounting from the grant-holding institution.

### **PhD and Master's students in the project**

Supporting PhD students is considered a key component of research capacity development. The application should clearly outline how PhD students will be involved in the project.

PhD students and postdocs based in Denmark may be included in the project for their direct input to the project (excluding tuition/bench fees or educational grants) if it is explained how they contribute to the project objectives. Their CVs must be attached.

Note that, for PhD students not yet identified, the selection procedure must be described and must follow the general requirements of enrolment at the relevant institution.

For further details on the requirements concerning PhD students, please see General Conditions.

Education of a limited number of Master's students in the partner country or countries, but not in Denmark, may be supported if convincing arguments are presented.

### **Study-stays in Denmark**

As a main rule, PhD students must participate in study stays in Denmark. In rare cases where PhD study stays in Denmark are not planned, this choice must be clearly explained in the research application.

Study stays in Denmark for PhD students from institutions in the eligible countries must be supported and administered according to the General Conditions.

In addition to the education of PhD students, capacity strengthening and mutual learning also materialise through activities such as joint fieldwork, collaborative development of methodologies, inclusive and shared authorship with balanced first authorship distribution, regular knowledge exchange, and shared access to databases and libraries. In order for research partners to mutually benefit from the research collaboration, partnerships should build on principles of equity (see Useful Links), and all partners must actively contribute to the preparation of the Phase 2 application.

### **Human Rights Based Approach in Research**

As part of the Phase 2 application, research team participants (from both Denmark and partner countries) are encouraged to complete DFC's Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) online course. The course can be accessed [here](#).

## **7. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS**

Heightened security considerations present significant challenges in a number of the listed eligible countries at both national and regional level.

All research applications are required to consider the security risks affecting the feasibility of research. Before submitting an application, all applicants should consult the latest MFA Travel Guidelines (Rejsevejledninger) at national and regional level. MFA Travel Guidelines are available for all eligible countries except Somalia, where other Travel Guidelines (see links on the Embassy's webpage) should be consulted.

Applicants are requested to include the risk assessment and contingency plan for their proposed research from Phase 1 in an updated version, if relevant. This also includes reflections on data security. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that all applicants have considered the potential 1) physical and 2) data security risks as well as mitigating measures relevant for project implementation.

Risks should be focused on, but not limited to, the physical safety of involved researchers, also in a gender-sensitive perspective, especially during fieldwork. It may also be relevant to include context-specific security considerations and relevant safety measures in other countries if e.g. the topic of the research implies heightened risks. The project description should reflect relevant security considerations, and also include considerations regarding feasibility of fieldwork. Attention should also be paid to insurances and visa applications for all partners in a project.

Risks such as global pandemics, natural disasters or high turnover of personnel should only be included, if there is a credible and relevant likelihood of such events occurring within the project period.

For risks assessed as having medium or high likelihood and impact, applications must include mitigation measures and provide a preliminary outline of a contingency plan.

Applications will be evaluated based on the thoroughness of the risk assessment and the adequacy of proposed safety measures.

It is possible to apply for up to DKK 400,000 for security measures on top of the maximum DKK 10 million for development research applications. Please refer to the General Conditions regarding expenses for security measures.

### **Applications in high-risk countries**

Currently, the high-risk countries include: Ethiopia, Nigeria and Somalia (incl. Somaliland). Before submitting an application for research in these countries, applicants must, in addition to consulting the MFA Travel Guidelines, contact the relevant Danish Embassy directly to receive more up-to-date detailed security information.

For risks assessed as having medium or high likelihood and impact, applications must include mitigation measures and provide a contingency plan.

Phase 2 applications to the high-risk countries listed above, will undergo an extra embassy review concerning their risk assessments and the adequacy of proposed safety measures. The embassy review is part of the applicants' hearing process.

For research conducted in high-risk countries, Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) and expanded First Aid training are mandatory for anyone involved in fieldwork.

### **Grant-holding institution holds the Duty-of-Care**

It is the responsibility of the grant-holding institution and partner institutions to ensure that adequate safety measures are in place for all staff involved in project implementation, both staff from Denmark and staff from partnering countries. As such, the 'Duty-of-Care' for such staff rests with the grant-holding and partner institutions, not with the MFA and/or DFC. Please refer to the General Conditions for further details.

Before planning any travel related to the project, all project participants should consult the latest MFA Travel Guidelines (Rejsevejledninger) at national and regional level. The Travel Guidelines are available for all eligible countries except Somalia, where the links to other Travel Guidelines should be consulted. Danish citizens and residents travelling to high-risk countries or regions should contact the relevant Danish Embassy directly to obtain up-to-date security information.

## 8. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Phase 2 application must contain a project description (template provided in the online application system), which must be structured according to the headings indicated below and in the stated order. **All headings must be used and none added.** However, subheadings may be used. It is important to ensure that the project description is clear and focused, and although there are no requirements regarding the length of each section in the project description, the project description as a whole must not exceed 10 pages, exclusive references, which are in addition to the 10 pages. The text format must be Verdana, 10-pt font size, with at least 2 cm left and right margins and at least 1.15 line spacing.

Additionally, a results framework (LogFrame) must be uploaded in the online system to complement the project description. The mandatory format and instructions are available in SMA. The LogFrame provides a tool for structuring the research project into outcomes, objectives and outputs and as a tool for assessing project progress and results during the project's lifespan. For research project applications granted funding, the LogFrame will be used as part of the narrative reporting to DFC.

### Heading 1: Title and PI

Project title and name of PI as stated in the electronic application.

### Heading 2: State of the art and rationale

As an introduction to the objectives of the research, this section should include a state-of-the-art literature review and an outline of how new knowledge will be generated on the topic concerned.

This will highlight how the proposed research relates to prior and ongoing investigations and the rationale for the selection of the partner country. If more than one country is chosen, the benefits must be clearly explained.

### Heading 3: Relevance and context

A brief summary of the importance of the project with respect to national development policies, Danish development cooperation and how the research addresses the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The section should also address how the research responds to the selected theme of the call and the guiding principles for development research. The section must also include a description of the institutional and socio-economic context for the research and consideration of the expected impact of this on the project results.

It should also include how the research will draw on and cooperate with related research projects, including participation in research networks, conferences, etc. Perspectives for South-South cooperation may also be highlighted. This could involve shared learning experiences, exchange programs, or collaborative projects that leverage partners' unique perspectives and strengths in the Global South.

### Heading 4: Objectives

Objectives are defined as what the project aims to achieve in the long term. Achieving the objectives is the impact of the research. Objectives and research hypotheses must, among other things, incorporate considerations about the following:

- How the project will drive state of the art within its field forward;
- How the project will contribute to new knowledge and be innovative;
- Include clearly defined research issues/research questions;

- Include substantive elements of research capacity strengthening.

The objectives must correspond to the objectives in the LogFrame uploaded with the e-application.

### **Heading 5: Expected outcomes and outputs**

The main scientific results and research capacity strengthening initiatives must be listed. Outcomes are what the project aims to achieve in the short and medium term and are the result of project outputs as well as factors beyond direct control (such as policy changes and/or practices of stakeholders/users of project outputs). Outputs are produced as a direct result of activities, e.g. seminars, publications and PhD degrees.

Considerations concerning the political, institutional, socio-economic, and security (when relevant) context for the research and the expected impact of this on the project results must be included. Reflections about how the project will engage relevant stakeholders throughout its duration, ensuring that their perspectives, expertise, and needs are considered in shaping the research agenda and its outcomes, must be included. This could also include considerations on uptake of the research, public-private sector collaboration, or how the research is positioned for practical use. Strategies for fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange among team members can also be included.

The outcomes and outputs must correspond to the outcomes and outputs in the LogFrame uploaded with the e-application.

### **Heading 6: Methodology**

In describing the methodology, design and research capacity strengthening, this section should include the following:

- Methods e.g. descriptions of multidimensional aspects of the research problem and interdisciplinarity;
- Project design to address the objectives;
- Approaches to research capacity strengthening;
- How the project promotes equity in the research partnership and gender sensitivity;
- Ethical considerations (beyond legal provisions);
- How the research adheres to Danish and partner country requirements concerning research permits and provision of information to relevant authorities.
- Possible limitations and risks in research design and/or team composition and how to accommodate these.

This section may be used to explain how the research utilises inclusive approaches involving local communities and interacts with local knowledge throughout the research process. Additionally, it can be used to outline how the research will be responsive to and demonstrate sensitivity to gender, age, ethnicity, minority groups, other social inequities, etc. It may also highlight interdisciplinary elements in the project methodology.

### **Heading 7: Overview of the research plan**

This section must include the proposed timetable, milestones and resource allocation by the participating parties, including information about the PhD students involved (incl. co-supervision arrangements and expected study stays in Denmark). Joint fieldwork should be described both in terms of time allocation for researchers and in proposed work packages. Envisioned involvement of stakeholders throughout the project cycle should also be included in the timetable.

## **Heading 8: Organisation and management of partnership**

Based on a summary of the scientific and managerial competencies of the research partners, this section should outline the following:

- Research and institutional capacities;
- Management, coordination and collaborative arrangements proposed for the research project;
- Justification of gender composition of the team and considerations about how to ensure gender sensitivity in team composition and project management;
- Coordination with other related research capacity strengthening initiatives;

In terms of collaborative partnerships, this section should outline how the research will be organised and implemented to promote equitability. This includes equitable distribution of resources, responsibilities, and recognition in joint activities and outputs, such as fieldwork and publications. Explain how these activities and outputs will foster collaboration and contribute to the research objectives. Partnerships contributing to interdisciplinary and gender-sensitive research are strongly encouraged.

## **Heading 9: Capacity strengthening**

This section will include a description of how the strengthening of research capacity will increase the quality and competitiveness of participating institutions (research environments), notably through the following:

- Research-based education (e.g. support to PhD students, PhD study stays);
- Facilitation of access to and use of scientific literature, databases and libraries;
- Training of researchers and teams to design and manage research and to produce, document and disseminate results;
- Support for equipping and running laboratories and other facilities.

The section can be used to discuss how the partnership will enhance the capabilities and skills of all involved parties, particularly through mutual learning, training sessions, and mentorship programs. This includes developing both research and soft skills, such as project management and communication, to strengthen the overall research capacity of partners.

Furthermore, it can be used to reflect on the possibilities for fostering sustainable, long-term networking, collaboration and commitment to creating enduring partnerships and shared goals beyond the project lifespan.

## **Heading 10: Publication and dissemination strategy**

A dissemination plan must be outlined, indicating the expected results and how these will influence policies and actions, as well as joint publication and knowledge sharing. The planned dissemination outputs should be clear, including how the project will engage with stakeholders and how the main outputs will be communicated.

## **List of references**

References are in addition to the 10 pages. It must include a list of principal publications, etc. used in the research project description.

## 9. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Members of the Consultative Research Committee on Development Research (FFU) come from many different disciplines. Applicants must be able to explain the research proposal to someone who is a researcher and has specialist knowledge about some, but not all, aspects of the theme of the call. The research proposal, therefore, must be clear and easy to understand in terms of “why and how it is research”.

Overall, it must be clear that the proposal constitutes a genuine research project rather than, for example, registration of data, commissioned research, a product development scheme, a demonstration project, technology transfer, consultancy, or a development project. This means that the research question and scientific contributions of the project must be clearly described. Furthermore, the proposal must be written in a clear and focused manner.

**The FFU assesses the Phase 2 applications on the basis of four equally weighted criteria as described below: i) scientific quality; ii) relevance; iii) the potential effect of the research, and iv) feasibility.**

The scientific **quality** of the proposal is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- The originality and innovative nature of the project, in terms of generating new knowledge;
- The focus of the project is well-defined with respect to existing relevant research;
- The design of the project in terms of methodological, theoretical and (if relevant) interdisciplinary approach(es);
- The research experience and qualifications of the PI(s) and research team.

The **relevance** of the proposal is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- The focus of the project is well-defined with respect to the guiding principles for the support to development research and the selected theme;
- The project responds to national development priorities and is relevant for Danish development cooperation/Danish Strategic Sector Cooperation;
- The project is well-defined with respect to ongoing research projects/programmes in the country/region;
- The project is well suited for the political, socio-economic and institutional context, including the security situation.

The **effect** of the research is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- The potential direct effects with respect to the selected sustainable development goal(s) and in relation to existing development efforts;
- The project is positioned for use, e.g. by collaboration with public and private stakeholders which could promote use and uptake of the research findings;
- The contribution of the project to strengthened research capacity at individual, partnership and institutional level;
- The project builds on the principles of equity in the research partnership and is gender sensitive.

The **feasibility** of the research is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- The management structure for the research project;
- Team composition, incl. gender and partner balance;
- The proposed design and activities;
- The project design for research in insecure contexts, where applicable;
- The ethical considerations and implications of the project.

Partnerships contributing to interdisciplinary and gender sensitive research are strongly encouraged. Incorporating considerations about gender sensitivity is strongly encouraged in all aspects of the outlined project, including in the composition of the research team, data collection strategies, engagement with research participants/communities and analytical framework. A considerable role for the research institutions in the eligible countries is equally expected.

Phase 2 applications will undergo international scientific peer review (to assess the scientific quality of the proposed project). To support the process, applicants are asked to suggest suitable peer reviewers within their scientific field in the e-application form. To ensure an open and transparent process, peer reviewers must comply with the [binding guidelines](#) on disqualification due to conflicts of interest and must not be affiliated with any research-based institution in Denmark or in countries where the research will be undertaken.

The applications will also be assessed by a gender specialist in terms of the overall gender sensitivity of the research proposal (including the gender composition of the research team). For guidance on how to ensure gender sensitivity by enhancing inclusivity and equity in research projects see this [video](#).

Applications for research in high-risk countries (currently Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia (incl. Somaliland)) will undergo an extra embassy review concerning their risk assessments and the adequacy of proposed safety measures.

Following the peer review, gender review and extra embassy review for applications to high-risk countries, an applicant hearing will take place. The purpose of this hearing is to give the applicant the opportunity to address and clarify any potential misunderstandings identified in the reviews of an application.

The FFU conducts the final scientific quality assessment and prioritisation of the Phase 2 applications, including the peer reviews, the gender assessment and the applicant hearing responses. Based on the FFU's collective assessment, based on the criteria listed in this section, the Committee recommends a selection of projects for funding, submitting its recommendations for the MFA's approval.

## 10. APPLICATION PROCESS IN PHASE 2

|                            |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PHASE 2 – 2026/2027</b> | <b>December 2026</b>       | Deadline for Phase 2 applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 December 2026 13:00hrs CET</li> <li>DFC administrative screening and administrative rejections</li> </ul> |
|                            | <b>January–March 2027</b>  | Peer reviewing, gender review, embassy review for high-risk countries and applicant hearing                                                                                            |
|                            | <b>March–May 2027</b>      | FFU assessment and prioritisation of Phase 2 applications for funding<br>Reply to applicants                                                                                           |
|                            | <b>June–September 2027</b> | Agreement on budget, etc.<br>Letters of Grant and endorsements                                                                                                                         |
|                            | <b>October 2027</b>        | Official project start date is 1 October 2027                                                                                                                                          |

## 11. PROJECT COSTS

When planning the project and setting up the budget, the [General Conditions](#) for ongoing FFU projects should be consulted closely.

The maximum grant is DKK 10 million for a five-year project period. In addition to this amount, applicants may apply for up to DKK 400.000 for security measures, and an additional DKK 100.000 is earmarked for monitoring project costs for Danish grant-holding institutions.

The budget allocation between the involved research institutions in Denmark and in country/ies where the research will be implemented must be balanced. PhD expenses for study stays in Denmark should be included in the South partner's share of the budget. For international research institutions, partners in third countries, national authorities, private sector partners, and other non-academic partners, the budget may only include salaries (salaries are not applicable to for-profit companies) and travel expenses covering their direct input to the project activities, and no overhead will be covered for these partners.

The budget must be uploaded with the e-application and include a budget for grant-holding institution and for each primary partner. The budget template must specify the amounts applied for.

Eligible budget items for secondary partners must be included in the budget administered by the grant-holding institution, or by a primary partner institution in the country where the research will be undertaken. It is not possible to charge overhead for the administration of secondary partners, and their budget(s) must be added to the budget of the institution responsible for the administration of the secondary partner(s). Details of expenses for secondary partners must be provided in the budget notes as per the provided template.

Contributions of additional resources are encouraged for all project partners, but no fixed percentage has been set. Co-funding may be provided in the form of monetary contributions or as payment 'in kind', i.e. by making equipment, staff, etc. available, in which case this should be detailed in the budget and budget notes.

## 12. ELIGIBLE BUDGET ITEMS

Eligible budget items are specified in the General Conditions under the following themes:

- Salaries and compensations
- Administration/overhead and coordination
- Tuition fees/educational grants
- Travel and fieldwork
- Equipment and material
- Publications, dissemination and outreach
- Security measures
- Stays in Denmark administered by the DFC
- Secondary partner(s)
- External audit

## 13. E-APPLICATION SYSTEM

Submission of a Phase 2 application must be done via the e-application system SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA). The e-application system is accessible [here](#).

All tasks in the e-application form must be completed, and the application including appendices must be written in English. Only the required appendices will be considered. Please ensure that you are able to preview and download the attachments prior to submission, as any missing or incorrect attachments will be regarded as not submitted.

You will be able to access and edit your application in “My applications” in the e-application system until you have submitted your application. After submission editing is no longer possible. All submissions must be done before the deadline. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Your partners can access the application by inviting them as collaborators in SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA).

In order to account for any unforeseen issues on the applicant’s side, it is advised not to wait until the last minute before deadline to submit the application. **Please pay special attention to the requirement of endorsements through the e-application system from all named project participants, as well as from heads of institution of all involved institutions.**

After submitting the application, the applicant will receive an e-mail acknowledging receipt. It is also possible to see whether an application has been submitted or not under “My applications”. If any doubt occurs as to whether an application has been submitted or not, the applicant should send an e-mail to [ffu@dfcentre.dk](mailto:ffu@dfcentre.dk) to enquire whether the application has been submitted. **This must be done before the deadline, since applications will not be accepted after deadline.**

The Phase 2 application must comprise the completed e-application form, including project description, LogFrame, risk assessment, budget, CVs and endorsements.

**Project description:** Must contain the headings as described in section 8. The text format must be Verdana, 10-pt font size, with at least 2 cm left and right margins and at least 1.15 line spacing. The

project description must be maximum 10 pages, exclusive of references, which are in addition to the 10 pages. A template can be found in the online application system under the relevant task.

**Logframe:** The provided format must be used.

**Budget:** The provided budget format must be used. The template is found in the online application system under the relevant task as well as [here](#). Please, remember to include budget notes. Please ensure to use the 2026 budget template.

**CVs:** A new CV template is available (see the section Application appendices and useful links). The CVs must be in English, and specify the scientific qualifications, managerial skills, and experience from developing countries. The CVs must demonstrate previous experience from FFU research projects and research partnerships if applicable. They must include a list of key publications and patents relevant for the application. The length of the CVs must be no more than 2 pages per person. Signature on CVs is not required. CVs of private sector partners must include a profile or link to the webpage of the company/private sector institution. The CVs must be named "CV - Name of the researcher/project participant".

**Endorsements:** The endorsements are mandatory by the head of the grant-holding institution/department, PI, project participants and head of respective partner institutions, as per the e-application form. Please note that it is important that the completed endorsements by the head of institution/department and project participants match the names listed in the tasks: Basic information, Partner institutions and Project participants, respectively. If the name of the user (SurveyMonkey Apply user profile) endorsing does not match the corresponding name in each of the above tasks, a comment must be included to verify that the endorser has the necessary mandate to act on behalf of the correct endorser. **Please note that you need all endorsements received, not only requested, before you can submit your application.** Please do this well in advance of the deadline.

## 14. OBLIGATIONS

Applicants should familiarize themselves with the following before using the e-application system and submitting an application.

### The responsibility of the applying institution

The PI from the (future) grant-holding institution is responsible for ensuring that all information in the e-application is correct, that the required appendices are uploaded successfully with the e-application, that the contents of the appendices are correct and that the e-application has been submitted before the set deadline of the call.

It is not possible to make corrections to an e-application after it has been submitted.

In the event of any subsequent substantive changes affecting the submitted application, the applying institution must immediately notify the Research Management Team at DFC at [ffu@dfcentre.dk](mailto:ffu@dfcentre.dk).

The application must reflect possible legal, regulatory or ethical issues and considerations, including required standards or authorization requirements (such as production standards, quality systems, scientific ethics, data handling and protection, use of animals), as well as research permits, provision of information to relevant authorities, etc., and a plan for obtaining these. Research permits, other relevant approvals and a research data management plan/policy will be required for research project applications selected for funding. Only institutions with an anti-corruption policy and a policy for Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) can receive funding from the MFA grant. Links to web-based information on these policies are required in the e-application.

## Rejection of applications without substantive consideration

An application will be rejected by DFC without substantive consideration by the FFU if the requirements concerning the eligibility of applicants and countries, the application format and attachments, and the deadlines as set out in these guidelines are not met.

DFC will not accept additional information from applicants after the deadline, even if the missing information results in an administrative rejection of the application.

## Requirements for the application to be considered by the FFU and the MFA:

- The application must be submitted by an eligible institution: *either*
  - a) a nationally registered university or research-based institution in Denmark, with the capacity to (co-)supervise PhD students;
  - OR
  - b) a university or research-based institution in an eligible country with a capacity to (co-)supervise PhD students, involved in a Danida-funded research project completed after 1 January 2022 and no later than 31 December 2026;
- The proposed PI(s) applying on behalf of the responsible institution must at least hold a PhD or equivalent at the time of applying;
- The PI must be affiliated to the responsible institution;
- The application must include correct CV of the PI(s) and all project participants using the templates provided in the e-application system;
- For south-led proposals the application must include correct CVs of one key researcher from the applying institution and at one key researcher from the Danish partner institution. The application must include at least one named researcher/project participant from each listed partner institution – this also applies for secondary partners included;
- The application must include at least one nationally registered research partner (primary partner) in an eligible country/in each chosen partner country where the research will be implemented; or for South-based research institutions, at least one Danish research partner as stipulated under section 5;
- The application must include links to the lead institutions' policies on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) and anti-corruption (see below);
- The application must include the correct and updated attachments: CVs, budget, LogFrame, risk assessment and project description, as set out in these guidelines and available in the application appendices [here](#);
- All attachments must be complete and successfully uploaded, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure this;
- The application must be endorsed by the PI and the head of responsible institution. Names of endorsers must match the names of PI and head of institution;
- If an endorsement is provided by another person, this must be noted in the comment for the endorsement;
- The application must be submitted via the e-application system (SMA);
- The application must be submitted within the set deadline;

## **Storage of information and data protection**

When the e-application system is used, the system will automatically register the applicant's identity, IP address, and the time at which the application was created or last edited. All personal data will be processed, stored and deleted in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and [DFC Privacy Policy](#).

## **Technical disclaimer**

DFC is obliged to inform prospective applicants of any system errors that make the e-application system unavailable, affecting the applicant's possibility of submitting e-applications within set deadlines. Information regarding such unavailability or other unforeseen events will be posted on the [DFC website](#).

DFC accepts no liability for incorrect information due to software errors, calculation errors, transmission errors and similar errors, or for any claims for damages due to incorrect use of the e-application system.

## **Other data which may be obtained by official bodies**

DFC and the FFU reserve the right to obtain information about any previous and current applications which an applicant may have submitted to the FFU, and this information may be included in processing of the application.

In the event that project funding has been or will be applied for from elsewhere, DFC and the FFU reserve the right to obtain information as to whether such amount has been granted. If a project is funded elsewhere, it cannot be funded by this funding window.

## **Use of funding for other purposes**

The MFA may, at its discretion, decide that a proportion of the funding available is to be used for other research cooperation.

## **Anti-corruption, anti-child labour and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**

It is the responsibility of the grant-holding institution to ensure that the following clauses are included in agreements with project partners and that all project partners and project activities comply with following:

### **Anti-corruption:**

*"No offer, payment, consideration or benefit of any kind, which could be regarded as an illegal or corrupt practice, shall be made - neither directly nor indirectly - as an inducement or reward in relation to tendering, award of the contract, or execution of the contract. Any such practice will be grounds for the immediate cancellation of this contract and for such additional action, civil and/or criminal, as may be appropriate. At the discretion of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a further consequence of any such practice can be the definite exclusion from any tendering for projects, funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs."*

## **Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH):**

*“The Danish MoFA has a zero tolerance for inaction approach to tackling sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH <sup>8</sup> ) as defined in UNSG Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 and the definition of sexual harassment in UNGA Resolution A/RES/73/148. The Implementing Partner, and its sub-grantees, will take appropriate measures to protect people, including beneficiaries and staff, from SEAH conducted by its employees and associated personnel including any sub-grantee staff and take timely and appropriate action when reports of SEAH arise. In the event that the Implementing Partner receives reports of allegations of SEAH, the Implementing Partner will take timely and appropriate action to investigate the allegation and, where warranted, take disciplinary measures or civil and/or criminal action. Any violation of this clause will be ground for the immediate termination of this Agreement.”*

## **Anti-child labour:**

*“The Implementing Partner shall abide by applicable national laws as well as applicable international instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Labour Organisation conventions. Any violation will be ground for immediate termination of the Agreement.”*

## **Anti-terrorism:**

*“If, during the course of implementation of this Project/Programme, the Implementing Partner discovers any link whatsoever with any organization or individual associated with terrorism, it must inform the Danish MoFA immediately and explain the reasons for such transfer, including whether it was made or provided knowingly, voluntarily, accidentally, unintentionally, incidentally or by force. The Implementing Partner agrees that it and/or its implementing partners (including contractors, sub-contractors and sub-grantees) will take all reasonable steps to secure that no transaction made in relation to the Project/Programme will – directly or indirectly – benefit a person, group or entity subject to restrictive measures (sanctions) by the UN or the EU. Any violation of this clause is ground for immediate termination of the Agreement returning to the Danish MoFA of all funds advanced to the Implementing Partner under it.”*

**In addition to the above, it is a requirement for grant-holding institutions and all project partners to have their own anti-corruption policy and a policy for PSEAH.**

The grant-holding institution must ensure that partners and others that receive part of the granted funds are not included on the UN or EU sanctions lists.

## **Announcement and public information about grants**

Information about prequalified and rejected applicants in Phase 2 may be disclosed in the event that access is applied for according to the Danish Public Records Act (Offentlighedsloven). Access to such information may be granted in the form of lists of who has applied and for what purpose (applicant names and application titles). Applicants should therefore ensure that their application title does not reveal information about the activity that they wish to keep out of the public domain.

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<sup>8</sup> **Sexual harassment** is understood as any kind of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature with the aim or impact that a person's dignity is violated, especially if it happens in a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. **Sexual exploitation** is understood as attempts or actual abuse of position of power to exploit a person's vulnerability for sexual gain. This also applies to relationships where economic, social, or political advantage is gained from another person on the basis of sexual exploitation. **Sexual abuse** can consist of either a threat of or actual physical abuse of a sexual nature.

Information about granted projects will be published at the [DFC's website](#) and in the [Danida Research Portal](#). This includes name of PI, project title, DFC file number, institutional affiliation, project period, granted amount, countries, information on participating institutions, and the popular science description for the project. Therefore, applicants should only include information in these parts of their application (and reporting) which does not reveal information that they wish to keep out of the public domain.

## 15. APPLICATION APPENDICES AND USEFUL LINKS

All relevant links can be found [here](#).

- How to write a good proposal
- Assessment criteria, rejection codes and examples
- Inclusion and equitable partnerships
- Gender sensitive research: Enhancing inclusivity and equity in your research project
- Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) online course
- Denmark's Development Cooperation (Danida)
- A Changing World – Partnerships in Development, Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation
- Africa's Century – Strategy for strengthened Danish engagement with African countries
- Strategic guidance note for Danish support to development research
- Strategic Sector Cooperation
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Country policies
- The Consultative Research Committee (FFU)

All phase 2 application appendices can be found [here](#).

- LogFrame – the results framework for the project
- Budget template
- Project description template
- Risk assessment template
- CV template

# ***KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION***



[www.dfcentre.com](http://www.dfcentre.com)

## **DANIDA FELLOWSHIP CENTRE**

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