

Guidelines **for Sector Counsellors** **and Danish Partner Authorities**



DFC Scholarship Programme
supporting the Danish Strategic Sector Cooperation

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Guidelines

DFC Scholarship Programme

The Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) Scholarship Programme builds on the understanding that individuals matter; and that with the right knowledge, competencies and motivation, individuals can become key change makers in their organizations.

The DFC Scholarship Programme offers opportunities for continued education and learning developed and implemented through a highly organic process, where dialogue, collaboration, flexibility and creativity is at the centre, and where learning programmes offered have a strong focus on work-related relevance and applicability. Our aim is to offer opportunities not only focused at increasing the learners' professional knowledge and skills, but also to inspire new ways of thinking and new ways of approaching the challenges and opportunities facing their organizations and societies. We measure our success by the degree to which we are able to facilitate a leap from more knowledgeable individuals, to actual change agents and stronger organizations.

The Guidelines for the DFC Scholarship Programme are not meant as a 'straightjacket', but intended to provide the framework with which DFC, together with our partners, is able to ensure a high level of quality in both contents and approach of all our opportunities for continued education and learning.

I. Background

The DFC Scholarship Programme is funded through development funding under the Finance Act § 06.38.02.20.

DFC is a self-governing institution under the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with the responsibility for DFC institutionally placed within the MFA Department for Evaluation Learning and Quality. DFC is responsible for translating the strategic direction defined by the MFA into initiatives under the scholarship programme. DFC is also responsible for coordinating among, advising and supporting Sector Counsellors, Danish partner authorities and Danish institutions of higher education in the identification, formulation and implementation of education and learning opportunities geared to the needs of the SSC target group.

DFC implements the scholarship programme in a manner that ensures a high level of:

- a. Quality in the learning programmes.
- b. Relevance to country context, partner needs and SSC goals, and the integration of our offers as a complementary element of the SSC projects.
- c. Flexibility and dialogue in the decisions on and design of learning programmes.
- d. Professionalism in our management of the scholarship programme and coordination with all relevant stakeholders.
- e. Co-creation between DFC, Danish institutions of higher education, Sector Counsellors and Danish partner authorities of needs based and dialogue driven solutions.

II. The DFC Scholarship Programme

a. Which opportunities do the DFC Scholarship Programme support?

While the scholarship programme allows for and encourages a high level of flexibility, the Programme can on the other hand **only** support opportunities that comply with the following:

- a. Scholarships can be granted for **existing** studies; e.g. a full master degree or a summer course or learning programmes developed for or **tailored** to the learners through the scholarship programme.
- b. Scholarships can only be granted for studies **in Denmark**.
- c. As a rule, scholarships can only be granted for learning programmes/courses/studies offered by **accredited Danish institutions of higher education**. Scholarships may be granted to other institutions, where such institutions are assessed by DFC to have a unique thematic or sectoral expertise, as well as a proven track record of providing quality opportunities for post-graduate learning.
- d. Scholarships can only be granted for **full-time** studies at post-graduate level.
- e. Scholarships for **PhD studies, study tours or conference participation cannot** be supported under the Programme.
- f. The development of tailored learning programmes will be supported, where such learning programmes are **relevant to partners of more than one SSC project**. In exceptional cases, DFC may, however, support tailored learning programmes for only one SSC project, e.g. where:
 - there is only one SSC project in a particular thematic area;
 - the level of competence or otherwise between countries within a thematic area differs significantly;
 - the focus of a project within a thematic area is very different from those of other projects within that same thematic area.

b. How are needs and opportunities identified?

The following steps and elements constitute the 'project cycle' for tailored learning opportunities:

- a. **Mapping**: During the 2nd quarter of each year, DFC undertakes a mapping of work-related capacity development needs among partner organizations involved in the SSC projects. This mapping supplements the option that Sector Counsellors and Danish partner authorities have of contacting DFC throughout the year with proposals for learning opportunities for which they would like to make use of the scholarship programme. If Sector Counsellors and/or Danish partner authorities already have a good idea of the learning opportunity they would like to see developed, they are recommended to develop a first initial outline using the DFC template for requests for new opportunities, which can be obtained from DFC.
- b. **Prioritization**: Opportunities identified through the mapping process will be prioritized based on a balancing of resources with needs across SSC projects, partner countries and thematic areas.
- c. **Matching**: Based on the mapping, DFC will solicit inputs from Danish institutions of higher education, using DFC's formal bidding process of negotiation based bidding ("udbud med forhandling") following the Danish Procurement Law (Udbudsloven).
- d. **Decision**: The final decision on which opportunities will be supported will be made by DFC based on 1) the financial resources available, 2) an assessment by DFC of the relevance and urgency of each opportunity, given also the amount of applications in the preceding year, 3) dialogue with Sector Counsellors on their prioritization, 4) agreement between DFC and the place(s) of study on course description and budget following the formal DFC course description and budget templates. DFC will also place emphasis on the relevance of the learning methodology applied considering the target

group. Learning elements, which must be applied in all tailored opportunities under the DFC scholarship programme are:

- i. **Learning by seeing** (it applied): All tailored options should include exposures in the shape of visits to and knowledge sharing by institutions with experience in applying the knowledge, tools and competencies taught during the learning programme.
- ii. **Learning by doing / applying**: All tailored options should include case or project work, where participants are asked to apply the new knowledge and tools to a case relevant to their own home context.
- iii. **Learning by example**: DFC scholarship holders all have a wealth of knowledge and experience from various country and institutional contexts – both in terms of challenges, what works and what does not work. All tailored options should facilitate opportunities for structured peer learning, where participants are drawn on as resource people and learn from each other.
- iv. **Translating learning into action**: DFC has for several years in most of its learning programmes applied a so-called action plan approach. The action plan, to be developed by each participant as part of the learning programme, has proven a useful tool in translating individual learning into organizational learning and change. All tailored options are expected to apply the action plan approach.
- v. **Passing on the learning**: The wider impact of a learning programme will to some degree bear on the participants' ability to pass on learnings to other colleagues within his/her organization. All tailored learning programmes must include approaches that enable participants to argue and make a case for the new knowledge and insight derived from the learning programme.

DFC is available for advice on how to consider the above elements in developing learning opportunities.

c. Who is eligible for a DFC Scholarship?

Candidates must fulfil the following criteria to be eligible for a DFC scholarship:

- a. Be a **national/local staff member of an SSC project partner** under the Danish SSC or a national/local staff of a national/local institution or entity relevant for the achievement of the SSC project targets.
- b. Be proficient in **written and spoken English** (at an advanced level allowing for active participation in discussions and group work and the completion of written assignments). In the case of master studies and some summer courses, the universities demand a TOEFL test or similar as part of their admission criteria.
- c. Fulfil the **requirements set by the Danish institution of higher education** for the particular learning programme/course/study.
- d. In general, candidates are to have at least a **bachelor** degree, as learning programmes and studies offered through the scholarship programme will be at or equivalent to Master's level. Candidates holding a Master's degree or PhD are also eligible for scholarships.

All candidates must be **endorsed by the Sector Counsellor** for the particular SSC project for which their participation in the learning programme is deemed relevant. Applications for scholarships under the DFC Scholarship Programme can **ONLY** be submitted by the Sector Counsellors.

d. What are the selection criteria?

The selection criteria applied by DFC include the following:

- a. **Relevance of the candidate as a change agent** within his/her organization and in terms of the SSC project targets.
- b. **Qualifications of the candidate vis-à-vis learning programme contents and requirements.** In the case of learning programmes developed and tailored exclusively for participants through the DFC scholarship programme this will be evaluated jointly by DFC and the study provider. In the case where the applicant is applying directly to a university or university college for existing courses/studies, DFC will only evaluate based on criteria a-c when pre-approving a scholarship, whereas the university exclusively will carry out evaluation of the academic qualifications as part of the regular application and admission process. See section IV below for further information on the application process.
- c. **Prioritization expressed by the Sector Counsellor** in his/her nomination of candidates.

To the degree possible and relevant, DFC likewise aim to ensure equitability in the distribution of scholarships among SSC-projects over time and based on the interest shown by individual Sector Counsellors.

e. Considerations by Sector Counsellors in nominating candidates for DFC learning programmes

Sector Counsellors are encouraged to consider the following in nominating candidates:

- a. **Change agents:** Which candidates would be able to act as a change agent within their organization if provided with the further knowledge, skills, networks and motivation obtained through a DFC learning programme? Here it is also worth considering the age of the candidate. If they have recently joined the organization following their studies or if they are closing in on retirement, they may not be best positioned to become change agents.
- b. **Diversity:** Sector Counsellors are encouraged to consider ways to ensure a better gender balance in terms of nominated candidates.
- c. **Institutionalization:** Sector Counsellors are encouraged to nominate at least two candidates from the same organization, as this is likely to substantiate the chance that learning acquired is retained and results in organizational learning and change. Sector Counsellors are also encouraged to discuss with supervisors of nominated staff how they wish to use the new skills upon the staff members return.
- d. **Linkages with the SSC project:** Sector Counsellors are encouraged to consider ways that the SSC project can better prepare participants for the learning programme or use their learnings upon return or link SSC project activities with e.g. the action plans made by participants during the learning programme.
- e. **Candidate preparedness:** Sector Counsellors are **highly** advised to undertake interviews with the candidates prior to their endorsement, to assess, whether they have the required level of English to actively follow and engage in the learning programme both orally and in writing. This could also be an opportunity to discuss expectations and have more strategic discussions on how the candidate plans to use his/her learnings.

f. Use of DFC in the formulation of new SSC projects or project phases

For the scholarship programme to be as integrated an element as possible in the individual SSC projects, Sector Counsellors and Danish partner authorities are encouraged and recommended to involve DFC's advisors already during the formulation process of new projects or project phases. Support from DFC to the project could include:

- a. Advice and support in the assessment of capacity development needs and capacity and competence development approaches and tools.
- b. Suggestions for DFC support learning initiatives for partner organizations to be included in the project and supported through the scholarship programme.
- c. Advice and support in the evaluation of capacity development results.

An early involvement of DFC in the project formulation may thus help to ensure that the project reaps the full benefits of the scholarship programme as a strategic and integrated element, and will likewise support early identification and/or development of educational opportunities for project partners.

III. Practical Information

a. Application process

Once the mapping has been completed and an agreement is reached on learning programme(s)/study(ies) for which DFC scholarships will be provided, the below steps will apply in terms of the application process.

Application process for TAILORED learning programmes

The following steps will apply in terms of tailored options:

- a. DFC will send out an invitation to relevant Sector Counsellors to nominate candidates. The invitation will include the tentative course description(s) and programme(s). Where at all possible, DFC will for each relevant thematic area send out one invitation for learning programmes in the first half of a year and one invitation for learning programmes in the second half of a year. DFC will endeavour to allow Sector Counsellors **no less than 6 weeks** to identify candidates.
- b. Sector Counsellors will identify candidates for the learning programme(s) from among partners or other stakeholders relevant to the particular SSC project. The Sector Counsellor must fill the Application Form. The template will be included with the invitation. The Sector Counsellor must likewise ask the candidates to fill in the form 'Information Sheet - Individual Candidates'. This template will also be included in the invitation. The Sector Counsellor should then submit the Application Form to DFC by e-mail, together with the filled-in Information Sheets and passport copies for each candidate. The e-mail from the Sector Counsellor with the Application Form will count as an electronic signature and therefore must be sent from the Sector Counsellors own mail account.
- c. Sector Counsellors are **highly** advised to undertake interviews with the candidates prior to their endorsement, to assess, whether they have the required level of English to actively follow and engage in the learning programme both orally and in writing.
- d. DFC and the place(s) of study will evaluate the candidates based on the criteria for eligibility outlined above. In case of discrepancies, the assessment of the place(s) of study will prevail unless additional information is provided by the Sector Counsellor/candidate to show that needed qualifications/requirements are fulfilled.
- e. DFC will send a formal communication to the Sector Counsellor, the respective Danish Embassy and the respective focal point(s) from the Danish partner authority confirming the selected candidates. Sector Counsellors are expected to inform the candidates of their selection.
- f. DFC will contact the selected candidates by mail to initiate the visa and ticketing process. DFC will send the selected candidates additional information on their stay in Denmark, an official Letter of Invitation for use in the visa application process, flight tickets and insurance papers.
- g. In cases where a selected candidate proves unable to participate in the learning programme, Sector Counsellors may identify an alternate candidate. Applications for alternate candidates must be

submitted by the Sector Counsellor **no later than 2 months prior to the start of the learning programme**. Applications for alternate candidates must be submitted using the same application procedure described above.

Application process for SUMMER COURSES AND MASTER PROGRAMMES

Specific to SUMMER COURSES

- a. At the end of each year, DFC will send out an invitation to submit nominations for pre-approval to summer courses at Danish universities. The invitation will include a list of courses for which DFC scholarships are available and the number of scholarships available for each course based on prior negotiations with the relevant universities.
- b. Sector Counsellors must submit applications to DFC for pre-approval of scholarships for summer courses using the DFC Application Form. The template will be included with the invitation. Applications must be submitted in line with the deadline stipulated in the invitation.
- c. DFC will confirm to the Sector Counsellor whether the candidate has been pre-approved for a DFC scholarship at least **1.5 months** before the application deadline

Specific to MASTER PROGRAMMES

- d. Sector Counsellors may submit applications to DFC for pre-approval of scholarships for full master programmes at Danish universities throughout the year. Only a limited number of scholarships for full master programmes will be supported each year.
- e. Applications for pre-approved scholarships must be submitted to DFC no later than **5 months** before the application deadline set by the university.
- f. The Sector Counsellor must submit applications to DFC for pre-approval of scholarships for Master programmes using the DFC Application Form.
- g. DFC will confirm to the Sector Counsellor whether the candidate has been pre-approved for a DFC scholarship at least 3 months before the application deadline.

Applicable to both SUMMER COURSES and MASTER PROGRAMMES

- h. DFC will communicate to the respective university, which candidates have been pre-approved for a DFC scholarship.
- i. Candidates pre-approved for a DFC scholarship will need to submit their application for the course/study for which they have been pre-approved following university deadlines, requirements and procedures. DFC will provide information on the deadlines, requirements and procedures based on information from the universities.
- j. Please note that the pre-approval by DFC of a scholarship constitutes **no guarantee** that the candidate will be admitted by the university. Candidates will be admitted only if they fulfil the application and academic requirements set by the university. **DFC will not play any role in terms of the admission process and will have no influence over neither university requirements nor whether a candidate is admitted or not.**
- k. Should the candidate be admitted, the candidate must immediately inform DFC and forward the admission letter and a copy of the candidate's passport to DFC. DFC will formally confirm the scholarship to the candidate and the respective Sector Counsellor only upon admission and once the university has confirmed that all requirements have been met by the candidate.
- l. DFC will cover any costs related to mandatory language test and application fees in line with university requirements.
- m. DFC will contact the selected candidates to initiate the visa/resident permit and ticketing process. DFC will send the selected candidates additional information on their stay in Denmark, an official

Letter of Invitation for use in the visa/resident permit application process, flight tickets and insurance papers.

b. Expectations to DFC scholarship holders in Denmark

Scholarships through the scholarship programme are much in demand and very costly, and the process for obtaining them is highly competitive. Each scholarship is an investment in improving individual learning, skills and competencies and in supporting organizational learning, strengthening and growth.

Therefore, DFC scholarship holders are expected to:

- a. Participate actively in all elements of the learning programme/course/study for which they have been selected. Participation is mandatory. Should the participant be prevented from participating he/she is expected to show due cause to both DFC and the place of study. Absence without due cause will result in reduction in per diems and, should the absence be of a longer duration, it may result in the termination of the scholarship.
- b. Undertake any and all private travel during their stay in Denmark outside the programme. Should the participant be late for or absent from lectures, whether due to travel delays or otherwise, such absence will likewise result in reduction in per diems. All arrangements related to private travel will be the sole responsibility of the participant.
- c. Carry himself/herself in a professional manner and treat all fellow students, facilitators and others involved in their study activity in a respectful and courteous manner, without prejudice as to race, gender, colour or creed.

c. What does a DFC scholarship cover?

A DFC scholarship will cover the following:

- a. Study fee to the place of study, paid directly by DFC.
- b. Application fees required by the place of study, where applicable. The fee will be paid by the scholarship holder and refunded by DFC.
- c. Visa fees, where applicable. The fee will be paid by the scholarship holder and refunded by DFC.
- d. Residence permit, where applicable. The fee will be paid by DFC.
- e. Mandatory language tests, where applicable. The cost will be paid by the scholarship holder and refunded by DFC.
- f. International travel (economy class) to and from Denmark for the learning programme/course/study. Tickets will be booked by DFC and sent directly to the scholarship holder.
- g. Per diems, paid to scholarship holders by DFC within the first few days of arrival.
- h. Accommodation in Denmark. Accommodation will be booked by DFC and will be either at DFC's own student hostel at Hostrupsvej 22, 1950 Frederiksberg, or at a hotel as close as possible to the place of study, depending on availability.
- i. Transportation to and from the place of study. Scholarship holders will receive a travel pass from DFC upon arrival.
- j. Other transportation related to the learning programme. Transportation from the airport to the place of accommodation will be paid by the scholarship holder and refunded by DFC (flat rate). For learning programmes outside of the capital area, scholarship holders may be provided with a prepaid train ticket. All costs of transportation related to the learning programme, e.g. for visits at authorities and companies will be covered by DFC.
- k. Transportation in connection with obtaining visas will **not** be covered. **No** transportation in the scholarship holder's own country related to the travel will be covered, including transportation to

and from the scholarship holder's residence/office and the airport. Such transportation costs are expected to be covered by the scholarship holder's organization.

IV. Further DFC support to link and/or tailor DFC learning programmes with/to the SSC projects

Whereas most learning programmes under the DFC scholarship programme will be tailored to the participants, the Sector Counsellor or Danish partner authority may deem it relevant to organize additional learning opportunities, such as meetings, field trips, etc., for individual participants or groups of participants in connection with the DFC learning programme.

Sector Counsellors or Danish partner authorities may also wish to use the fact that their partners are already in Denmark for a learning programme to arrange for additional activities as part of their SSC project.

DFC welcomes this and offers support in two ways, depending on whether the Sector Counsellor and Danish partner authority wish to further tailor a learning programme or wish to extend the stay in Denmark to cover SSC project activities.

a. Financial support to further tailor DFC learning programmes

DFC will cover the costs of additional tailoring of DFC learning programmes, where relevant to the context of particular SSC projects and partners, where the below requirements are fulfilled:

- a. The additional activities include further exposure visits, training or workshops that are directly linked with the subject covered by the learning programme and aimed at a further tailoring to the particular group of participants or intended to support participants in being able to better formulate or plan for the implementation of their action plan, as formulated during the learning programme.
- b. The additional activities are of a duration of no more than three days.
- c. The Sector Counsellor and/or Danish partner authority submits an application to DFC for financial support to the activities with a programme and budget **no later than 2 months** before the participants' departure to Denmark. The budget can include all costs related to the up to three days in Denmark, including transportation, accommodation and allowance. DFC will approve the budget only where the programme is assessed by DFC to be in line with the requirements as outlined in bullet a. above.
- d. If DFC approves the budget, DFC will extend the period of stay for the participants partaking in the additional programme, and will reflect the extension in terms of tickets, Letters of Invitations, insurance and allowance. The Danish partner authority is expected to arrange all other aspects of the programme, including transportation.

b. Logistic support for extended stays to participate in SSC related activities

The DFC scholarship programme may provide logistic support in cases where Sector Counsellors or Danish partner authorities wish to extend the stay of participants to allow them to participate in activities planned as part of the SSC project where the below requirements are fulfilled:

- a. DFC is informed about the dates of the extended stay **no later than 2 months** ahead of the participant's planned departure for Denmark.

- b. DFC will ensure that tickets, Letters of Invitation and insurance of participants correspond with the extended period of stay. The Danish partner authority is expected to handle all other aspects of the extended stay and additional costs involved **must** be covered by the SSC project.

Sector Counsellors and/or Danish authorities are **discouraged** from planning additional meetings *while* the participant is attending a learning programme under the scholarship programme as all learning programmes are fulltime studies. In cases, where Sector Counsellors and/or Danish authorities chose to arrange additional meeting during course weeks, DFC asks that the following be complied with:

- a. Meetings should not be confirmed until the final programme is available to ensure that they do not conflict with the programme, and should not be scheduled during DFC's debate evenings.
- b. Additional activities must be scheduled only before or after the course programme, leaving enough time for the participant to arrive from or get back to scheduled learning programme activities.
- c. Additional activities should not be of a scope where the participant is unable to concentrate fully on the learning programme/study.

V. Review of the Guidelines

DFC will review the Guidelines once a year to ensure they continue to support optimal quality and agility of the DFC scholarship programme. Comments and suggestions from Sector Counsellors, Danish partner authorities and places of study will be considered as part of the review, as will the results of the various surveys of its services undertaken by DFC each year, including the post course survey targeting learning programme participants and the annual survey targeting Sector Counsellors.