

Preparation of Expression(s) of Interest for the Building Stronger Universities Programme, Phase IV (2023-2027)

1. Introduction

This is an invitation to Danish universities and research institutions to submit *Expression of Interest* for subsequent match-making with three selected Southern universities that have prepared University Concept Notes for the Building Stronger Universities IV programme.

The Expression of Interest must be submitted to Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) at research@dfcentre.dk before **30 August 2022 at 12:00hrs** and named “Expression of Interest BSU IV – [Name of Southern Partner University]”.

The overall approach to the partnerships is outlined in the Programme Outline for the Building Stronger Universities Programme, Phase IV (2023-2027) which can be found at [the DFC website](#). The sections below specify further detail that should be adhered to in the preparation of Expression of Interests.

Section 2 details the *formal requirements of partners*, specifying the eligible institutions for submitting an Expression of Interest.

Section 3 outlines the *format for the Expression of Interest*. The length excluding annexes must not exceed 10 pages (excl. references).

Section 4 lists the *assessment criteria* upon which the Southern partners will assess and select the Danish partners.

Section 5 details the next steps following the matchmaking process

Annex 1 contains a note outlining the expenditure categories eligible for support. The list has been shared with the Southern partners for their preparation of concept notes.

Questions regarding this Call and the matchmaking process can be directed in writing to research@dfcentre.dk. Both questions and answers will be posted on DFC’s web site.

2. Requirements of Danish Partners

The following Danish universities and research institutions are eligible to submit Expression of Interest, individually or in university consortia:

- Aalborg University
- Aarhus University
- Copenhagen Business School
- IT University of Copenhagen
- Roskilde University

- Technical University of Denmark
- University of Copenhagen
- University of Southern Denmark
- Danish Institute for International Studies.

The Expression of Interest can include a consortium of universities and research institutions, or a single of these. In addition, up to 10% of the funds assigned to the Danish partners in each partnership can be used for support from institutions, companies or individuals outside of the eligible universities and institutions mentioned above.

For all Expressions of Interest, endorsement by department level management is required. In the case that a consortium submits an Expression of Interest, this must be submitted by the lead institution at department level and signed by participating institutions at department-level.

Institutions can participate in multiple Expressions of Interest responding to one or several concept notes, but an institution can only take lead of one EoI for each project outline.

Expressions of Interest must respond to the entire project outline from one of the Southern Universities.

3. Format for the Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest aims at enabling the Southern leads to identify and select the partnership which most relevantly, efficiently and effectively allow them to achieve the objectives of the BSU IV Programme and the specific objectives identified by the Southern Universities. The Expression of Interest must include the following:

1. Presentations of the Danish applicant(s): The participating institutions, the Lead Institute (in case of a consortium).
2. Overall assessment and possible comments to the concept note to which the response is being made, and in particular how the Danish applicant(s) sees the opportunities for the collaboration to create new knowledge capable of alleviating development challenges.
3. Outline of methodology and approach regarding how the Danish applicant(s) will help deliver the outputs requested by the Southern university, and how a multi-disciplinary approach will be applied as relevant.
4. Outline of how the Danish applicant(s) will work with the partner to apply a human rights based approach and attention to gender equality as per the [The World We Share](#) (Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation: [Strategies and priorities \(um.dk\)](#)).
5. Description of the management set-up envisaged by the Danish applicant(s), including suggested relation-building activities and communication principles.
6. Capacity statement of Danish University or Consortium, demonstrating that the Danish applicant(s) to the extent possible covers all requested thematic areas, as well as research capacity development and other areas demanded by the partners.
7. Overview of previous experience with similar activities by the Danish applicant(s), including possible participation in previous BSU phases funded by Danida. Please mention relevant networks in the country or region that might foster synergies and enable South-South cooperation, as relevant.
8. Overview of key personnel to be engaged, including proposed role and availability (include CVs in annex).
9. Other comments.

10. Signatures by the Lead institution at department level management and signatures by department-level management from other partners in the case of a consortium submitting the EoI.
11. The EoI should not exceed 10 pages (excl. of references).

4. Assessment criteria

Based on the responses submitted by the eligible Danish universities and institutions, the universities in the South will select one partner (or partner consortium) each as their match. The match will be based on the following criteria:

- Overall responsiveness to the concept note of the concerned South university, including thematic relevance and appropriateness of initial capacity development plan.
- Realism, relevance and practicality of the methodology, including reflections about good practice principles for capacity development support and the degree to which outputs can be expected to be met.
- Attention to gender equality.
- Demonstration of the North partner's capacity and experience with similar programmes in relation to the needs/outputs required by the South university.
- Experience of key personnel with research capacity issues and their experience from developing countries.
- Expected cost of the partnership in relation to the outputs expected and the budget available.

DFC (supported by a consultant) will provide guidance to the South Universities concerning the selection process if necessary; however, the final choice will be made by the universities in the South based on their assessment of the best match to their concept note. The universities will document the basis for their assessment and make it available to DFC. In cases where there are competing expressions of interest, the documentation made available to DFC will include a matrix comparing the various expressions of interest according to the selection criteria.

5. Next Steps Following the Matchmaking

Selection and Approval of Matches

The Southern partners will conclude this process not later than 15 September 2022. Following this, the partnerships will be invited to work on and submit joint project proposals for the three partnerships, respectively, as described below.

Joint project proposal

The partners will develop joint project proposals based on the initial concept note and expression of interest. The joint project proposals should be submitted to DFC (research@dfcentre.dk) no later than **30 October 2022 COB** for review by the consultant. It is expected that the final project proposals are finalized by end-November 2022.

After this, a full BSU Phase IV programme document will undergo appraisal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in March 2023, it will be presented to the Council for Development Policy and then for

approval by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation. After the final approval, Letters of Grant will be issued for the three projects, and the inception phase can be initiated in May 2023.

Please note that the programme is conditional of the approval of the finance bill for 2023.

Inception Phase

After the start of the programme a three months inception phase is envisaged (starting in second quarter of 2023), which will allow the partners to:

- Initiate substantive collaboration as relevant.
- Engage in a detailed planning process resulting in activity plans and detailed budgets.
- Develop detailed success criteria and indicators for monitoring.
- Establish the baseline values of the selected indicators.
- Prepare an Inception Report containing the activity plans, budgets, indicator frameworks and baseline values. The Inception Report must be submitted to DFC. The content outline for the Inception Report will be provided in due time by DFC.

Annex 1

BSU IV - What can be funded?

This note outlines the key eligible expenditure categories under the programme, as well as costs that are not eligible. The note will serve as reference for the project formulation as well as the audits required under the programme and form part of the formal Partnership Agreements governing the cooperation.

Overall principles

- All funding provided by Danida is for research capacity development activities enabling the participating universities to contribute to poverty alleviation and promotion of human rights and equality, including gender equality, in line with Danida strategy and priorities.
- The thematic focus of research activities around which capacity is developed is thus expected to be of direct relevance and application in society to address development challenges related to the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs).
- The budget for the leading South university should roughly account for 50% of the overall budget for each individual partnership. Up to 25% of the budget for each individual partnership can be used for national/regional twinning arrangements.
- Each partner (lead South University, Danish partner, South partner(s)) will develop a budget using the budget lines below. The budget for the respective partners will cover the costs of the activities carried out by each partner, respectively.
- The budget can only be used on activities described in the *Partnership Agreement* between the partners, in line with the objectives and output areas described in the final programme document and partnership documents.
- Up to 10% of the total budget can be used for small scale investment cost and equipment needed to achieve partnership objectives if included in the Partnership Agreement, as further specified below.

Terms and conditions for salaries for staff, and other salary costs (Budget line 1).

- Salaries for academic staff, disbursed through the grant, must follow the appropriate tariffs applying to the local institution in question. It is not accepted that staff is paid allowances on top of the salaries already received from the institution.
- Salaries are either paid to the institution for the actual time the staff allocates to the project as compensation of the time the researcher is not able to spend on teaching/other general tasks, or as payment for over-time, either time (per hour) or performance based. In the case of over-time payment, a written agreement must be entered between the institution and the researcher.
- Double salaries and payment of consultancy fees will not be accepted.
- Salaries for e.g. younger researchers from South and North are eligible when initiating research collaborations including a more substantial input to research collaboration activities throughout the project, preferably spending part of the time in Denmark and part of the time in South.
- Salaries for researchers and other staff indirectly or directly funded under this programme must follow the tariffs, rates and regulations of the university.

- South institutions are allowed to allocate a maximum of 8% of their total budget for coordination of activities across faculties. These funds can be earmarked to cover specified and documented expenditures of the Southern partner's coordination of the programme, e.g. salaries or part salaries for administrative staff that perform significant coordination and administrative functions to make the programme work, as well as associated direct expenses.
- Payment of salary to individuals must be declared in full to the tax authorities, and tax deductions must be made according to the appropriate local rules.
- Research assistants: Salaries for e.g. research assistants or other necessary functions contracted for research preparation, pilot and baseline studies can be funded under the programme.
- No additional funding can be provided in connection with illness and parental leave, but no-cost extensions are possible according to the rules in force.

Technical assistance to strengthen financial and administrative systems related to research capacities of the Southern partner (Budget line 1).

- *Assistance from national sources:* In areas where support from Danish partners would be too costly and/or not within their core competency, other sources of consultancy support from national providers can be included. This could e.g. be in the field of basic accountancy capacity development.
- *Support from Danish sources outside the universities:* Up to 10% of the funds available for Danish partner expenditures can be spent by the Danish partner, as decided by the partnership and outlined in the Partnership Agreement, on buying additional assistance in areas where they do not have the required skills and where a provision of services from a Danish source is justified.

PhD degrees for younger academic staff (Budget line 2).

- Funding of PhD students enrolled at the Southern partner university are eligible in situations where the university is facing academic and research capacity staff shortages within the identified areas of focus, and therefore needs to strengthen their capacity. The topic of the PhD must be within the prioritized thematic areas identified by the partnership and focus on issues relevant to local development challenges related to the Sustainable Development Goals, and the research must be of a character that can be replicated and expanded within the means (laboratory facilities, equipment etc.) available at the Southern partner university.
- *Regulations of the Southern partner university:* Funding of PhDs shall be granted as per the policies and regulations of the Southern university. Permanently employed academic staff under 40 years of age is eligible.
- *Enrolment in home country or region:* PhD candidates must be enrolled within the first year of the program, and the candidates must seek enrolment at the Southern partner university or a university in the partner country, alternatively at a university in the region of the partner country. Enrolment in Denmark can only be considered, if enrolment in the partner country or the partner country region is not possible and if sufficient justification for this is provided in the Partnership Agreement. In cases where study periods in Denmark are found necessary, this must be under a "sandwich" programme with studies at the Danish institution for a limited period of time (usually a maximum of three semesters).
- *Double degrees:* Double or multiple PhD degrees i.e. a PhD degree from a Danish university in addition to a degree from a Southern partner country university or a university in the region,

can be awarded provided that the requirements of the Danish Ministry of Education, Executive Order no 1039 of 27/08/2013 (<https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=152430>) are fulfilled, and that the possible payment of taximeter fee at the Danish university at maximum is set according to the period of stay at the university¹.

- Stipends for PhD students in addition to their staff salary (for books etc.) included in the project must follow the tariffs for PhD students in the Southern partner university/country. The normal salary of the PhD student cannot be charged to the programme.

Travel cost and per diem (Budget line 3).

- The participating institutions are responsible for settlement of duty travel etc., and this must follow the relevant regulations of the institution in question. All staff engaged by a Danida granted research project can only receive per diem and other reimbursable costs according to their institution's rules, regulations and cost-norms. However, should local per diem rules exceed the applicable rates according to Danish rules for 2022 (per diems² for meals, plus reimbursement of documented reasonable accommodation expenses), the Danish rules must be applied. The cheapest fare should be applied and frequent flyer points earned on these flights cannot be used for private purposes. Budgeted travel must be justified and directly related to project activities.

Training/workshop costs (Budget line 4).

- *Training/workshop costs:* Direct costs in relation to conducting training/workshops (i.e. stationary, refreshments, minor sundries)
- *Workshop and conference facilities:* Facilities for workshops are expected to be at the participating universities, thus rental of facilities is not foreseen. However, in case of international open conferences, costs for rental of facilities may be necessary and hence eligible.
- *No allowances for participation:* In no occasion shall participants residing at, studying at or being employed by a participating university be paid any kind of allowances for attending training/workshops.

Small scale investments and major equipment (Budget line 5).

- A maximum of 10% of the total partnership budget can be allocated to small scale equipment and major equipment.
- *Buildings, furniture:* Rehabilitation/remodeling, or in exceptional cases construction costs for buildings/rooms which serve research purposes (laboratories, libraries) within the chosen thematic areas. Cost related to general purpose class rooms or auditoriums are not eligible.
- *Equipment:* Other capital costs relevant to the programme activities. Capital costs are understood as items with a minimum of three years depreciation horizon. Service contract and maintenance costs are to be included as part of the capital costs.
- *Vehicles are not eligible:* Acquisition of or repair/maintenance of vehicles is not eligible, and normal transport costs are deemed covered by the general overhead allowance. Payment for transport for specific research preparation activities can be covered.

¹ It is up to the Danish partner to ensure that these Danish regulations are adhered to.

² Please observe special rates per day depending on country. Per diem rates for 2022 can be found [here](#) (in Danish).

Peer learning, Dissemination and Publication activities (Budget line 6).

- *Peer exchange*: Travel and per diem for peer learning exchanges with relevant institutions in the region regarding research capacity development are eligible.
- *Scientific conferences*: Costs related to scientific conferences regarding a specific research theme are eligible if the theme is of direct relevance to the research capacity development (e.g. with direct impact on curriculum development, or on key courses in research methodologies).
- *Dissemination and publication*: Includes dissemination related to the partnerships and to the research capacity development of the Southern partner university.

Overhead (Budget line 7).

- *Overhead, Southern Partner*: A maximum of 12% of the total direct expenditures of the Southern partner can be charged as general overhead for which no specific accounting is required.
- *Overhead, Danish Partners*: A maximum of 20% of the total direct expenditures of the Danish partners can be charged as general overhead for which no specific accounting is required.³
- The following general administration costs are considered to fall under the scope of overhead contributions:
 - Office expenses (rent, cleaning, stationery, transport, electricity and water, support staff and other operating expenses).
 - Danish Partners: Expenses relating to staff carrying out general administrative assignments, including budget and accounting tasks.
 - The universities Senior Managements involvement in the cooperation.

DFC Expenses (Budget line 8).

While visiting researchers and PhD's are staying in Denmark, the administrative issues related to the stay must be handled by DFC (for information, see <http://dfcentre.com/research/how-dfc-administers-research-projects/research-fellows/>). Overhead cannot be charged to these expenses.

Audit costs (Budget line 9).

The South partner accounts are to be externally audited annually, while the Danish partners' final accounts, only, are to be externally audited. Annual and special external audits of the Danish contribution can be funded under the programme. The regular external auditors used by the partner universities are eligible. The maximum amount to be used for annual audits is DKK 15,000 per year per primary partner for whom audit is required, and DKK 20,000 for the final audit for the responsible institution and per primary partner for whom audit is required. The funds for audit are earmarked. Additional expenses will not be accepted but must be borne by the institution's overhead. The audit expenses are not subject to overhead.

Prepared and authorized by Danida Fellowship Centre

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³ Overhead cannot be charged on expenses effectuated by DFC on behalf of the Southern partner relating to study periods in Denmark of PhD students and/or staff.