DANIDA FELLOWSHIP CENTRE

LIST OF REASONS FOR REJECTION WITH EXAMPLES

Applications may be unsuccessful for a number of reasons. In the matrix below, we have listed the criteria that the proposals are assessed upon, reasons for rejection and examples of commonly observed insufficiencies in project proposals.

Criteria Call 2025 Phase 1	Reasons for rejection	Examples
Is it a genuine research project? It must be clear that the proposal constitutes a genuine research project rather than being registration of data, commissioned research, a product development, demonstration project, technology transfer, consultancy, or development project.	1. The research components of the proposal are not clearly described. The proposed project is rather characterized as 1a. - a registration of data. 1b. - a product development scheme. 1c. - a demonstration project. 1d. - technology transfer. 1e. - consultancy. 1f. - a development project.	The purpose of the research appears unclear in the proposal. There is a lack of clear research questions and/or clear hypotheses in the proposal and it therefore appears to be a development project/consultancy. The proposal appears to be merely about transferring a technical solution from Denmark or elsewhere to the country, where the research will be undertaken. The proposal is purely technical without considering poverty reduction, the institutional and social context, or political aspects.
Quality – Originality and innovativeness The originality and innovative nature of the project, in terms of generating new knowledge	2. The proposal does not convincingly show that it will produce original and innovative new knowledge.	The proposal does not convincingly show how the research will contribute with new knowledge. It does not appear from the proposal why the research is needed (in the specific country or in general). The proposal fails to show that the research is new and innovative in the specific field. The innovativeness of the research cannot be assessed as the proposal fails to link the proposed research to gaps in existing relevant research or to knowledge gaps

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Quality – focus The focus of the project is well-defined with respect to existing relevant research.	3. The existing relevant knowledge within the field of research is not sufficiently taken into account.	The proposal does not reflect the current state of the art. The proposal does not or insufficiently refer to relevant scientific literature in the field of research or in the country/region. The proposal does not refer to similar research ongoing (or models used) in other countries/contexts.
Quality – design The design of the project in terms of methodological, theoretical and (if relevant) interdisciplinary approach(es);	4. The design is not sufficiently described in terms of 4a. - suitable methodology, including ethical considerations. 4b. - suitable theoretical approach 4c. – interdisciplinary approaches (including a description of reason for absence)	The methodology of the proposed project appears unclear. It is not clear that the proposal builds on a suitable theoretical framework. The design of the proposed project does not include all the needed disciplines to carry out the research and fails to explain why. The project does not adequately involve local communities or stakeholders in the research process, especially when the research affects these groups directly. The proposal does not sufficiently address ethical issues that may arise in cross-cultural or international research settings
Quality - Principal Investigator and team The research experience and qualifications of the PI(s) and research team.	5. The qualifications of the PI are not considered fitting with regard to 5a. - experience within the topic applied for. 5b. - managerial competence and experience from managing comparable research projects. 5c. - relevant experience from the country/region in which the research will be implemented.	The CV of the PI does not show relevant experience/qualifications for the topic applied for or for managing research projects. The PI does not have experience from working in the country or region where the research will be implemented.

Criteria Call 2025 Phase 1	Reasons for rejection	Examples
	6. The research experience and qualifications of the research team do not sufficiently align with the proposed project's scope.	The team composition is not considered well suited to achieve the research objectives. Important disciplines are not represented. It does not appear clearly how shortcomings in the team composition will be addressed. The team is considered unbalanced in terms of gender/North-South.
Relevance – theme The focus of the project is well-defined with respect to the guiding principles for the support to development research and the selected theme.	7. The proposed project does not sufficiently address the selected theme of the call. 8. It is not sufficiently justified how the proposed project adheres to the guiding principles for the support to development research.	The proposal does not respond sufficiently to the theme of the call. The proposal does not clearly explain or discuss the thematic focus for the research. It is unclear how the proposed project is a development research project as outlined in the guiding principles.
Relevance – development priorities The project responds to national development priorities and is relevant for Danish development cooperation/Danish Strategic Sector Cooperation.	9. It is not sufficiently justified that the subject of the proposed project responds to national development priorities and is relevant for Danish development cooperation. 10. It is not sufficiently justified how the proposed project is relevant to the socio-economic country context.	The proposal does not sufficiently engage with Danish development priorities. The proposal is too general in regards to the context of the proposed project. The proposal does not adequately address significant context-specific issues that are relevant to the project.
Relevance - research context The project is well-defined with respect to ongoing research projects/ programmes in the country/region.	11. The project does not sufficiently take into consideration significant research projects/programmes undertaken in the country/region.	The proposal does not show sufficient knowledge about relevant research projects ongoing in the same thematic and geographical area.

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Relevance - context The project is well suited for the political, socio-economic and institutional context, including the security situation.	12. The project does not sufficiently take into consideration 12a. – the political, socio-economic and institutional context, in which the proposed research will be undertaken. 12b. – the security situation in the country and/or region where the project will be undertaken.	The proposal lacks a contextual analysis. The proposal does not sufficiently consider the political, institutional or socio-economic context for the research. The proposal does not sufficiently consider policy implications of the research. The proposal has not included sufficient security measures to implement the project in the country context.
Effect - SDGs The potential direct effects with respect to the selected sustainable development goal(s) and in relation to existing development efforts.	13. It is not sufficiently justified that the proposed project will generate new knowledge and capacity, which may contribute to the SDGs. 14. The proposed project is not positioned sufficiently in relation to existing development efforts.	The proposal fails to explain the potential effects of the research towards and across the SDGs. The proposal does not show sufficient knowledge of the development context in the country(ies) where the research is to be undertaken.
Effect - public-private sector 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.	15. The proposed project does not sufficiently address opportunities for engaging with public and private sector stakeholders, which could promote use and uptake of the research findings.	The proposal is unclear concerning collaboration with stakeholders in terms of how they will be engaged/involved in the research.

Criteria Call 2025 Phase 1	Reasons for rejection	Examples
Effect - capacity strengthening The contribution of the project to strengthened research capacity at individual, partnership and institutional level.	16. The proposed project is not considered to include substantive elements of research capacity strengthening.	The proposal fails to explain the capacity strengthening components beyond the education of PhD's (such as joint research activities, collaboration in developing methodologies and approaches). The proposal does not convincingly show equitability in the research partnership. The planned activities in the project do not show that the large majority of activities and capacity building are happening in the South.
Effect – equitability in partnerships The project builds on the principles of equity in the research partnership and is gender sensitive.	17. The proposed project does not build on principles of equitability in research partnerships to a sufficient degree. 18. The proposed project does not build on principles of gender sensitivity to a sufficient degree.	The budget distribution between North and South partners appears unbalanced (with a disproportionate share for the North). The proposal appears to disproportionately benefit one party over others, rather than offering mutual gains. The gender balance of the research team is very skewed, and this is not sufficiently justified or addressed in the application.

/DFC, 2024