

# Rules of Procedure for the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU), 2025

## Introduction

Pursuant to Article 7 of the Act on International Development Cooperation (*lov nr. 555 om international udviklingsamarbejde*) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Denmark may grant support to development research with a view to strengthening research capacity and creating new knowledge to address development challenges. The funds for development research are provided in the form of grants to collaborative research projects between universities and research institutions in Denmark and in selected countries with a Danish embassy, primarily in Africa. The projects combine research with capacity building and may be applied for in competition based on calls for proposals, which specify research themes as well as selection criteria and agreed procedures.

The purpose of the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (*Det Forskningsfaglige Udvalg for Udviklingsforskning*), hereinafter “the Consultative Committee”, is to assist the MFA providing scientific advice in relation to the prioritisation and allocation of funds for research projects, strategic and policy issues, and - when requested - contribute to monitoring of ongoing projects. Advising on the effective communication of research results in order to influence development policies is also important.

Pursuant to Article 5 of the Act on the Innovation Fund Denmark (*bekendtgørelse nr. 156 af lov om Danmarks Innovationsfond*) and the guidelines for ministerial research committees, the Innovation Fund Denmark must approve the composition of the Consultative Committee and the content of the calls for proposals including their quality, the assessment criteria and the timeline of the assessment process.<sup>1</sup> The Minister for Development Cooperation formally endorses the approval by Innovation Fund Denmark of Members of the Committee.

The MFA has established the following Rules of Procedure for the Consultative Committee.

### Art. 1

The primary task of the Consultative Committee is to assist the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) by ensuring high scientific standards in the assessment of quality, relevance and effects of individual research grants. The Committee oversees the scientific quality of grants through the prioritisation of applications and through assessments of ongoing and/or completed projects. Furthermore, the Committee provides expert advice regarding strategic considerations pertaining to the funds allocated for competitive applications. The Committee’s advisory services encompass matters relating to national budget account no. 06.38.02.19 for research activity.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://innovationsfonden.dk/sites/default/files/2025-06/Retningslinjer%20for%20forskningsfaglig%20ministeriel%20r%C3%A5dgivning\\_2025.pdf](https://innovationsfonden.dk/sites/default/files/2025-06/Retningslinjer%20for%20forskningsfaglig%20ministeriel%20r%C3%A5dgivning_2025.pdf)

## Art. 2

The Consultative Committee comprises up to eleven members. Ten members are external, while the Head of the Evaluation, Learning and Quality Department (LÆRING) represents the MFA. The Innovation Fund Denmark must approve that the composition of the Committee meets requirements for internationally recognised researchers and research expertise in relation to the calls for applications.

The external members must be internationally established researchers with research-related experience in low-income developing countries. Combined they must possess solid knowledge and experience within the thematic and geographic areas related to the calls for proposals. As a whole, the committee must have the necessary breadth of competences to assess applications spanning disciplines within the natural and social sciences, humanities, medical sciences and engineering. The aim should be to have several (at least three and preferably more) international members (for example from Scandinavia and the Global South) and there should be a geographical distribution among the Danish universities and research institutions from where members of the Committee come from. Finally, the aim should be to have an equally distributed gender representation of the external members of the Committee.

The MFA designates the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Consultative Committee.

Members of the Consultative Committee serve in their individual capacities for a period of up to three years at a time. The same member may be appointed for a maximum of three consecutive periods. If a member resigns prior to the end of a period of service, a new member will be appointed for the remaining part of the period.

Committee members are not eligible to apply for Danida funds for development research or to be part of an application for Danida funds for development research while serving in the Consultative Committee. Members may be involved in ongoing projects that have been granted before their appointment to the Consultative Committee.

LÆRING under the MFA acts as the focal point for the Consultative Committee. The Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) acts as secretariat for the Consultative Committee, undertakes the management of research support and provides strategic input to LÆRING and the Committee.

## Art. 3

The chairperson, deputy chairperson, and a representative from the MFA comprise an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee deals with the affairs of the Consultative Committee upon the request of LÆRING. The Executive Committee forms a quorum when all members are present.

## Art. 4

The Consultative Committee meets regularly in accordance with the provisions of the MFA and in consultation with the chairperson, at least three times a year and otherwise as frequently

as estimated by the MFA to be required. Two of these meetings are two-day in-person committee meetings held in Denmark.

The agenda and materials to be considered at a meeting must normally be in the members' possession no later than one week before the meeting. Materials are circulated by DFC. Online access to applications and reports is provided.

Meetings are chaired by the chairperson and, in her or his absence, by the deputy chairperson. The Consultative Committee may take decisions concerning applications when at least five members are present. All Committee members contribute to the assessments of projects and the final prioritisation for funding, according to an agreed procedure. In the event of a tie, all applications with the same rating must be assessed again in order to make a new prioritisation. The deciding vote is cast by the chairperson, or in her or his absence, the deputy chairperson.

#### Art. 5

The minutes of Committee meetings are drawn up by DFC and LÆRING. Any member can demand to have his or her dissenting voice added to the minutes.

The draft minutes are circulated no later than two weeks after a meeting, and comments on the draft minutes must be submitted by the Committee members no later than one week upon receipt, after which the minutes are approved by the MFA (LÆRING).

#### Art. 6

Extraordinary sessions of the Committee can be convened by the MFA and the chairperson and must be held when at least two members so request. A written request must state the issue or issues which are to be addressed. Upon agreement with the chairperson, LÆRING may present a matter to the Consultative Committee in writing without a meeting.

#### Art. 7

During each term, a field trip for all committee members may be arranged to one of the countries with a substantial number of ongoing collaborative research projects.

#### Art. 8

The Consultative Committee is subject to the rules laid down by the Public Administration Act (*Forvaltningsloven*), including rules regarding conflict of interest, as interpreted by the Innovation Fund.<sup>2</sup> These have been detailed in "Binding guidelines regarding disqualification due to conflict of interest."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [https://innovationsfonden.dk/sites/default/files/2023-06/IFD\\_Habilitetsregler\\_2023.pdf](https://innovationsfonden.dk/sites/default/files/2023-06/IFD_Habilitetsregler_2023.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s-6nmQVAWxthnktD0z34buOZa\\_K1x6Ox/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s-6nmQVAWxthnktD0z34buOZa_K1x6Ox/view)

There must be publicly accessible documentation to show that the rules for disqualification due to conflicts of interest are followed. There will be continuous dialogue on this issue to ensure that the work of the Committee is of the highest quality.

The minutes of committee meetings and the DFC website must set out the decisions on matters of disqualification in connection with publication of funding commitments. When the Consultative Committee decides that a member is disqualified in relation to a particular matter, the member concerned must leave the meeting room during the Committee's discussion. That member cannot take part in assessing and deciding on the issue of his or her own disqualification. In the event of disqualification due to conflict of interest, the Consultative Committee forms a quorum when at least five of the remaining members take part in assessing the matter at hand.

Likewise, the Consultative Committee's discussion of individuals' personal and financial concerns, as well as of private firms' or organisations' financial circumstances, is subject to the professional secrecy provisions of the Public Administration Act and the penal code. The duty to observe professional secrecy encompasses confidentiality in the processing, assessment and recommendation of applications, confidentiality concerning strategic issues prior to formal approval by the Innovation Fund Denmark, and confidentiality as regards other discussions within the Consultative Committee.

#### Art. 9

In connection with the application rounds, the Consultative Committee will contribute by participating in meetings at the request of LÆRING and DFC, such as information meetings. Furthermore, members of the Committee act as first and second reviewer on each of the applications, in preparation for the prioritisation meetings, suggest the text of the replies to the applicants and on possible follow-up on any conditions attached to the approvals, and can be consulted in case of further correspondence with rejected or approved applicants.

Concerning the management of the approved and completed projects, the Committee contributes as follows: The members are consulted in the case of changes in the course of a granted project, which may influence the achievement of the outputs and outcomes approved, including changes of project coordinator. In cases where DFC is informed about deteriorations in the conditions for completing an approved project, which may lead to closure, DFC and the Executive Committee and possibly an additional Committee member must prepare an explanation for the MFA.

The Consultative Committee will be informed by the MFA with a link to the MFA's orientation of the National Audit Office, in cases of suspected theft, fraud, corruption, loss or any other misuse of funds.

The Consultative Committee furthermore can upon DFC's request contribute to the quality assurance of the ongoing and/or completed projects. Committee members can be involved in meetings with the individual projects and field visits.

Art. 10

The Consultative Committee will be kept informed of other MFA funded activities in the field of research and, if relevant, will be requested to contribute with professional advice.

Art. 11

These Rules of Procedure can be amended by the MFA with one month's notice. They enter into force from 1 January 2026.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 December 2025