BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

A BUSINESS INSTRUMENT OF THE DANISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

SEPTEMBER 2026

1. About Business Partnerships

These guidelines explain how businesses and non-commercial actors can jointly apply for support under Business Partnerships of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and what criteria should be considered.

Business Partnerships offer support for partnership projects between businesses and non-commercial actors for business ventures in specific countries (listed in section 3) to generate development effects that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The focus is on business cases where multi-actor partnerships are essential to achieving commercial viability and which contribute to job creation and increased incomes for underserved groups, alongside wider market, social, or environmental improvements.

Business Partnerships is funded under the Danish development cooperation and administered by an external Fund Manager.

Business Partnerships aim to create inclusive jobs and incomes, with a strong emphasis on a business case driving the projects and on ensuring responsible and sustainable business conduct.

Key features of Business Partnerships are as follows:

- ***Calls for applications focus on commercial projects with strong effects on creation of decent jobs and sustainable income opportunities at local level***. Projects should be commercially viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible. It is an advantage if projects also focus on generating wider market, environmental, or social improvements, including climate action.

- ***Applications can be made for maturation projects or full projects***. Partnerships in the early stage of conceptualizing the joint project are encouraged to apply under the maturation window. A maturation project can apply for maximum DKK 1.5 million (minimum DKK 0.8 million) over 18 months. Full projects can apply for DKK 4-15 million and implement their project over 3-5 years. An acceleration window may offer additional support for full projects in their last stage and showing promising potential for commercial take-off and scale-up[1].

- ***The commercial partner is allowed and encouraged to act as administrative partner of maturation projects.*** A commercial partner may receive financial support capped by the EU de minimis regulations.

[1] The acceleration window is not open for support in 2026. From 2027, commercial partners/projects from DMDP and DGBP (predecessor programmes of Business Partnerships) may apply. Reference is made to upcoming guidelines for 2027.

What is a Business Partnership?
A commercial project with development effects. Business Partnerships is open to applications for partnership projects that are driven by a solid business case and, in addition, has clear positive development effects, in particular inclusive job and income creation, but also relevant wider market, social or environmental benefits in the partner countries. The commercial partner's business case should address relevant local development challenges and complement Danish strategic priorities in the targeted country. Business Partnerships responds to the recognition that certain business cases and development goals face complex and multifaceted challenges and a need of specific contextual expertise which are best tackled by combining the focus and capacities of private businesses and non-commercial actors in multi-actor partnerships. This aligns directly with SDG 17 on partnerships for development. **Three windows – distinct purposes**. Business Partnerships has three windows through which partners can apply based on the project's stage and needs: 1) Maturation projects (DKK 0.8-1.5 million/18 months), 2) Full scale projects (DKK 4-15 million/3-5 years), and 3) Acceleration projects (DKK 1 million/2 years) (acceleration not applicable in 2026). Both commercial and non-commercial partners can receive funding under Business Partnerships. The funding to the commercial partner is, however, capped by the EU de minimis regulations, which permit EUR 300,000 over a rolling three-year period. If the commercial partner has reached the de minimis ceiling through other sources of funding, it might be possible to receive funding in accordance with the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER), though still only up to the de minimis ceiling. Projects can move from one window to the next, though this will not be guaranteed. **Partnership consortia and roles**. A partnership will apply as a consortium with at least one international commercial partner, one non-commercial partner, and one local partner, who can be commercial or non-commercial. There may be more partners. The primary commercial partner (international) should take lead on the business case that drives the project. The commercial partner(s) should be committed to a long-term commercial engagement in the partner country. The non-commercial partner(s) should have capacity in managing development processes, relevant thematic expertise, and solid experience in working with commercial actors and private sector led approaches. The partnership should assign an administrative partner who manages the funding, coordinates the project, and undertakes the financial management, progress, and results reporting. In cases where a project is successful in moving from one window to the next, the administrative partner may shift: A commercial partner can be administrative partner for projects under the maturation window as

well as the acceleration window. A non-commercial partner should be administrative lead at the full project stage.

Shared project vision. Well-working partnerships require partners to build a joint understanding and vision, and it is imperative that the partnership consortium demonstrates robustness and joint commitment. The first step for partnerships who seek support from Business Partnerships is to submit a completed Application Form. The application should be developed in a collaborative way between the lead partners and ideally with other partners (if applicable) identified. Before final approval, all partners must sign a memorandum of understanding defining the roles, responsibilities, and commitments for inputs to the partnership.

Elements supported. The commercial partner(s) may receive funding, for instance, for feasibility studies and training. The non-commercial partner(s) can receive support for implementing development-related activities under the project. The grant provided can constitute maximum 75% of the total project budget. The rules are further explained in Section 6.

2. Guidance to applicants

Eligibility and Selection criteria

The application for a Business Partnerships project will first be checked to ensure it meets certain mandatory requirements for receiving support. Section 4 lists these "eligibility criteria". Applications will be rejected if they do not meet all eligibility criteria.

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will next be assessed based on three overall selection criteria (Section 9 details the criteria):

- The business case: The potential for the business venture to become commercially viable and show prospects for upscaling.

- The development effect: The potential for the project to generate inclusive jobs, incomes, and wider market, social, and environmental benefits locally in the country.

- Implementation and feasibility: The soundness and realism of the planned project to achieve its objectives, implementation setup, and capacity and division of roles of the partners.

All partners in a partnership project must be committed to responsible and sustainable business practices. Participating commercial partners are expected to integrate human rights, labour rights, environment, and anti-corruption concerns into operations and core strategies. Section 7 explains this further.

A Business Partnership at a glance

The table below summarises the main elements of a Business Partnership project (see other sections and application formats for specific features and requirements).

The project objective	The project objective should be aligned with the Business Partnerships' objective, "***Commercially viable business engagements contributing to sustainable and inclusive development and decent job creation, enabled by partnerships between businesses and non-commercial actors***". The project must focus on contributing to inclusive job and income opportunity creation and improved livelihoods of the target group(s), in addition to wider market, social, or environmental effects.
The business case	The project should build on a business case with development effects, led by the primary commercial partner who intends to implement it in one of the eligible countries (see Section 3). The focus should be to develop the business case to be commercially viable and ready to

	scale up in the partner country and/or region to also amplify its development effects.
The partnership	The partnership must include at least one primary commercial partner and one primary non-commercial partner. There can be more partners if needed. The primary commercial partner should be international, with dedicated resources to engage in the project (see definitions on ‘international’ in Section 4). At least one partner should be a local partner registered in the partner country.
The commercial partner(s)	The primary commercial partner should: 1) lead the business case that will drive the project, 2) seek a long-term commercial engagement in the partner country, 3) have sufficient experience and capacity to implement the business case in the partner country, 4) where the commercial partner is the administrative partner (during maturation stage), have adequate administrative capacity to play this role effectively, 5) should operate in accordance with international norms for Responsible Business Conduct (including other international commercial partners). Other commercial partners are expected to be able to have a clear business case in the project. Local commercial partners should work systematically towards implementing international standards (see Section 7).
The non-commercial partner(s)	The non-commercial partner(s) should: 1) have the capacity to lead the development activities of the project, 2) have sufficient private sector experience and commitment to be able to follow the lead from the commercial actor on the business case, 3) have capacity to administer, report, and overall project management if selected as administrative partner (a requirement at full project stage), 4) have experience from and presence in the partner country, and 5) have solid capacity in working with the SDGs.
Administrative partner	Each partnership appoints one partner as “administrative partner” with responsibility for administrating the funds, results monitoring and reporting, and due diligence of other project partners, and respond to the Fund Manager’s request for documentation. The commercial partner can be administrative partner at the maturation (and acceleration) stage. The non-commercial partner will be administrative partner at the full project stage.
Eligible countries	The projects must be implemented in one of the eligible countries listed in Section 5 (countries eligible for development assistance with a Danish representation).
How much and what gets funded	Business Partnerships can fund specific limited activities of the commercial partners up to the EU de minimis limit and activities of the non-commercial partner(s) linked to ensuring the project’s development effects. Funding support ceilings are: Maturation projects – DKK 1.5 million;

	Full projects – DKK 15 million; Acceleration projects – DKK 1 million. A grant can cover up to 75% of the partnership budget, with the remaining 25% to be funded by the commercial partner(s) in cash or in kind.
Duration	Maturation projects – 18 months; full projects – 3-5 years; acceleration projects – 1-2 years. If the partnership consortium has received maturation project funding, the time span of the maturation project is deducted from the total maximum of 5 years for a full project.
Application process	Two annual application calls, indicatively in March and September. The expected duration from submission of the Application form to start-up of a full Partnership Project is approximately nine months, which includes a project preparation phase. Maturation projects will have a lighter preparation phase.
Mandatory requirements	Section 4 outlines the mandatory requirements the application must meet to be eligible for funding (eligibility criteria)

3. Application process

How to apply?

Partnership consortia that wish to apply, need to complete the Application form, which can be downloaded from https://danida-business-partnerships.dk/resources/. Applications should be submitted to business-partnerships@ncg.dk

The application deadline is **6 November 2026 1 PM CET (Danish time)**.

Selection process

After the submission deadline, the Fund Manager will carry out screening for eligibility and inform rejected applicants. The Fund Manager will strive to inform applicants who are rejected for lack of compliance with the eligibility criteria within one month after the submission deadline.

Eligible applications will be assessed and scored based on the detailed criteria presented in section 9. Applicants can expect up to three months from submission deadline before being notified of a rejection or approval to move to the next stage of developing the project document.

The highest rated applications will be invited for an interview to present their project idea. Following the interview, the successful applicants will be granted a preliminary approval, after which the partnership is invited to prepare a full project document.

Applicants approved to proceed to the full project document development stage should allow for a period of approximately four to six months to prepare the project document, secure its final approval, and start implementation.

Financial support will be available to support the preparation of the full project document. The full project document is the final basis for the approval and implementation of the project.

4. Mandatory requirements and exclusion list

Applications that do not meet the following requirements will be rejected.

1. The partnership should assign one administrative partner

The primary commercial partner can be the administrative lead on maturation and acceleration stages while the non-commercial partner must be the administrative partner at the full project stage **(acceleration not applicable in 2026)**.

The appointed administrative partner must document proven project management experience. In addition, for full scale projects, the appointed administrative partner should demonstrate a solid presence in the partner country (e.g. own established office or long-standing partnership with local partner organisation(s)), experience with commercially oriented development projects, and experience with key beneficiary groups in the partner country.

Multilateral organisations and intergovernmental organisations (e.g. UN agencies and CGIAR organisations), public institutions, and universities are not eligible as administrative partners.

2. The partnership includes an international commercial partner as commercial lead

One international commercial actor should be appointed as primary commercial partner, with sufficient capacity to lead the business case and engage effectively as relevant in the project implementation (it's not sufficient for the primary commercial partner to engage only through import/export, equity investments, and loans). The international commercial partner must meet at least one of the four criteria below:

a. An international company registered in a non-ODA country, with commitment to engage directly and actively in the project activities in the partner country.

b. A locally registered subsidiary of a well-established international company, where the international company is registered in a non-ODA country.

c. A large company (using the EU definition) with international ownership structure registered in the partner country (and not covered by criteria b above), with at least 51% ownership by international well-reputed companies registered and operating in non-ODA countries.

d. A locally registered company with an active investment and engagement at Board level from a European development finance institution (DFI).

3. The primary commercial partner has a minimum of DKK 1 million in equity according to the most recent audited accounts; minimum of 5 full-time

employed staff according to the most recent audited accounts (or other documentation); and a turnover of minimum DKK 2.5 million according to the most recent audited accounts.
4. All partners are registered legal bodies. Certifications must be submitted as annexes to the application.
5. Commercial partners are legally and financially independent from the non-commercial project partners.
6. The project is located in an eligible country
7. The funding requested is within the ceilings of the windows applied for Maturation window: DKK 0.8-1.5 million; Full project window: DKK 4-15 million; Acceleration window: max. DKK 1 million - **(acceleration not applicable in 2026**).
8. All sections of the Application form are duly filled out in English
9. Annual audited accounts for the two most recent financial years for both the primary commercial partner and administrative partner (if non-commercial) are attached to the application
10. 1-3 relevant project references from the administrative partner, when this is non-commercial, are attached, showing experience within market-based/commercial partnerships
11. The application is dated and signed by all partners in the consortium. Appendix B should be signed by all commercial partners applying to receive part of the grant. Appendix C should be signed by all consortium partners (commercial and non-commercial)

Harmonized EDFI Exclusion List

Business Partnerships applies the exclusion list agreed among the European Development Finance Institutions (EDFI), which means that Business Partnership projects must not include the following:

1) Forced labour[2] or child labour[3]
2) Activities or materials deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international phase-outs or bans, such as:

[2] Forced labour means all work or service, not voluntarily performed, that is extracted from an individual under threat of force or penalty as defined by ILO conventions.
[3] Persons may only be employed if they are at least 14 years old, as defined in the ILO Fundamental Human Rights Conventions (Minimum Age Convention C138, Art. 2), unless local legislation specifies compulsory school attendance or the minimum age for working. In such cases the higher age shall apply.

a. Ozone depleting substances, PCB's (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) and other specific, hazardous pharmaceuticals, pesticides/herbicides or chemicals;
b. Wildlife or products regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species or Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); or
c. Unsustainable fishing methods (e.g. blast fishing and drift net fishing in the marine environment using nets in excess of 2.5 km in length).

3) Cross-border trade in waste and waste products, unless compliant with the Basel Convention and the underlying regulations
4) Destruction[4] of High Conservation Value areas[5]
5) Radioactive materials[6] and unbounded asbestos fibres
6) Pornography and/or prostitution
7) Racist and/or anti-democratic media
8) In the event that any of the following products form a substantial part of a project's primary financed business activities[7]
   a) Alcoholic Beverages (except beer and wine);
   b) Tobacco;
   c) Weapons and munitions; or
   d) Gambling, casinos and equivalent enterprises.

Furthermore, the following investment exclusions are considered as a minimum common requirement by all EDFI members for all new Direct Financing (Debt or Equity), for Indirect Equity through new commitments to investment funds, and new dedicated lending[8] via financial institutions:

- Coal prospection, exploration, mining or processing
- Oil exploration or production
- Standalone fossil gas exploration and/or production[9]

[4] Destruction means the (1) elimination or severe diminution of the integrity of an area caused by a major, long-term change in land or water use, or (2) modification of a habitat in such a way that the area's ability to maintain its role is lost.
[5] High Conservation Value (HCV) areas are defined as natural habitats where these values are considered to be of outstanding significance or critical importance (See www.hcvnetwork.org).
[6] This does not apply to the purchase of medical equipment, quality control (measurement) equipment, or any other equipment where the radioactive source is understood to be trivial and/or adequately shielded.
[7] For companies, "substantial" means more than 10 % of their consolidated balance sheets or earnings. For financial institutions and investment funds, "substantial" means more than 10% of their underlying portfolio volumes.
[8] "Dedicated lending" is defined for these purposes as loans conditioned by a use of funds clause specifying that such financing will be used for one or more of the purposes described.
[9] Gas extraction from limnically active lakes is excepted from this exclusion.

- Transport and related infrastructure primarily[10] used for coal for power generation
- Crude Oil Pipelines
- Oil Refineries
- Construction of new or refurbishment of any existing coal-fired power plant (including dual)
- Construction of new or refurbishment of any existing HFO-only or diesel-only power plant[11] producing energy for the public grid and leading to an increase of absolute CO2 emissions[12]
- Any business with planned expansion of captive coal used for power and/or heat generation

[10] "Primarily" means more than 50% of the infrastructure's handled tonnage.
[11] For indirect equity through investment funds, investments (up to a maximum of 20% of the fund) in new or existing HFO-only or diesel-only power plants are allowed in countries that face challenges in terms of access to energy and under the condition that there is no economically and technically viable gas or renewable energy alternative.
[12] I.e. where energy efficiency measures do not compensate any capacity or load factor increase.

5. Eligible countries

The Business Partnerships can support projects in the following countries.

<table>
<tr><th>Least developed countries</th><th>Low-income countries</th></tr>
<tr><td>Bangladesh
Ethiopia
Rwanda
Senegal
Somalia
Tanzania
Uganda</td><td>Syria</td></tr>
<tr><th>Lower middle-income countries</th><th>Upper middle-income countries</th></tr>
<tr><td>Algeria
Egypt
Ghana
India
Iran
Kenya
Lebanon
Morocco
Nigeria
Pakistan
Philippines
Tunisia
Ukraine
Vietnam</td><td>Albania
Argentina
Brazil
China
Colombia
Georgia
Indonesia
Malaysia
Mexico
Moldova
South Africa
Thailand
Türkiye
West Bank</td></tr>
</table>

A maximum of 3 new projects per country/year can be approved to avoid an excess concentration of partnership projects in individual countries.

6. Eligible project expenses

Project preparation support. Partnerships whose applications have been approved can apply for funding to cover up to 75% of the costs of the preparation of the full project document, with a maximum of DKK 500,000 for applications under the full project window, and a maximum of DKK 100,000 for applications under the maturation window. The funding provided for preparation is included in the overall grant and should be included in the application form's project budget.

Eligible costs related to preparing the project document include staff time, studies, partner visits, and other well-justified activities required to develop the project idea into a full and solid project concept.

Project budget and grant ceilings. A full project should have a budget between DKK 4-15 million, and a maturation project between DKK 0.8-1.5 million. In addition, towards the end of implementing a full project, partnerships that show good prospects of commercial sustainability and scale-up, may apply for additional support under the acceleration window at a maximum of DKK 1 million.

The commercial partner(s) should provide an own contribution corresponding to at least 25% of the full project budget. The own contribution can be in form of staff time, travel expenses, equipment, and/or investment financing. In-kind contributions, such as staff time, must be directly linked to project outputs.

If partners get funding from other sources than Business Partnerships (such as the non-commercial partner, other donors or non-commercial actors, philanthropic funds, etc.), this is not included in the commercial partner's own contribution ratio.

Eligible expenses for support include the following:

- Activities by the non-commercial partner(s), including local partners, related to staff salary, travel costs, local transport, and other expenditures related to their engagement in the project, including the management and monitoring of implementation.

- External consultants, where justified for achieving project objectives, but only constituting a minor part of the total input of personnel (project partners' own staff should provide the major share of the input).

- Limited equipment and investment costs, but the grant does not support large scale investments in e.g. productive infrastructure.

- Project communication activities to disseminate learnings and results for raising awareness and inspire broader application of the project approaches and deepen the development impact.

- Activities related to the partnerships' work with Responsible Business Conduct, for instance, internal partnership workshops, studies/preparation of, or raising awareness about, responsible and sustainable business conduct in the value chain locally, or similar.

- An administration fee of maximum 7% may be included to cover the costs of functions to manage the project overall and establish the basic project management processes and mechanisms.

Project activities must primarily take place in the project country. There is an expectation that a minimum of 80% of the grant is spent in the project country.

Projects may include a provision towards local administration costs directly related to the project but not covered under any outputs (e.g. project inspections and establishing a dedicated field presence).

The costs of services by the Danish Trade Council to the Danish partner companies cannot be funded by the Business Partnerships but may be included in the budget as the commercial partner's in-kind own contribution. The 'Executive Order on Payment for Services Provided by the Danish Foreign Service' explains how Danish companies may make use of services of the Danish Trade Council.

Products with a public value (such as market or regulatory analysis, or similar) produced with direct support from Business Partnerships must be publicly available.

Producers included in value chains should not be obligated to deliver exclusively to businesses under the partnerships. Exclusive supply arrangements may, however, be accepted where justified by the business model, if producers are able to terminate such agreements on reasonable terms. The acceptability of such arrangements will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Companies that have invested in research and development from own resources while participating in a partnership project will not be required to publish the content or specifications of their developed products, for example, lists of ingredients of their product, or be prevented to apply for patents.

Financial support to commercial partners

The commercial partner can receive financial support up to the limits set by the EU de minimis regulation, i.e. maximum EUR 300,000 calculated over a rolling three-year period. If the commercial partner has reached the de minimis ceiling through other sources of funding, it might be possible to receive funding in accordance with the General Block

Exemption Regulation (GBER), though still only up to the de minimis ceiling.

The commercial partner(s) must in connection with the application declare previous support in accordance with the de minimis regulations. The declaration must include all support received by affiliated companies.

Any support granted under Business Partnerships will be reported in accordance with the EU State Aid regulations.

The Fund Manager cannot advise on the application of the EU State Aid regulations.

The commercial partner(s) should be in a financial position to manage the initial cash outlay until reimbursements are requested and received from the Fund Manager. The eligible expenses will be reimbursed once per year for Full projects and at the time of project closure for Maturation and Acceleration projects.

7. Responsible business conduct

All partners in the consortium of a partnership project must be committed to responsible and sustainable business practices.

The international commercial partner(s) is expected to have integrated into its operations and core strategies principles and processes for ensuring respect for human rights and labour rights and to address environmental sustainability and anti-corruption concerns. The purpose should be both 1) enhancing positive impact of a partnership on local sustainable economic growth, and 2) identifying, preventing and mitigating risks of potential negative impacts.

All partnerships will be required to assess and actively work to address the relevant aspects of responsible and sustainable business practices in the preparation and implementation of their partnership project. The projects should, where needed, include support for strengthening the local commercial partner's responsible and environmentally sustainable business practices.

An output related to specific RBC activities to increase focus and capacities as well as to any specific MEAL related activities including baseline, endline and communication of results, should be included as a separate output. Relevant indicators and targets can be further developed during project preparation.

Key international frameworks which serve as benchmarks include: UN Global Compact, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and the ILO decent work agenda. In addition, the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), and the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) apply if the company is above the defined scale. Commercial partners should be compliant with national legislation from the start of and throughout the partnership project.

If complaints or disagreements occur e.g. with local stakeholders, The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs encourages partners to use the services provided by The Mediation and Complaints-Handling Institution for Responsible Business Conduct in Denmark, if relevant.

Minimum RBC requirements in a project
• Comply with national legislation and regulations in the project country. • International commercial partners must operate in accordance with international norms for responsible business conduct i.e. UN Global Compact, UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGP), OECD

Guidelines for multinational enterprises and the ILO decent work agenda partner(s).

- All other commercial partners must work systematically towards implementing international standards in the operations of the commercial project.
- Risks, impacts, and mitigation measures related to the project must be assessed and defined during the preparation phase. These should consider human rights, decent work, environmental impact, and anti-corruption.
- The partnership must set up mechanisms to systematically follow up on RBC throughout the project. The commercial partner(s) are expected to lead these activities.

8. Monitoring of results

Partnerships will track and report on results achieved through the projects. This is a requirement for all grants provided through Danish official development assistance. Maturation projects will be required to submit a project completion report which will document activities, results/outcomes, and next steps. The format for the completion report will be shared with successful partnerships during the start-up phase. Full projects will submit annual reports as well as a completion report.

The results to be reported will both include some that are specific to the project, based on its special focus, and some that every project should report on to align with Business Partnerships' overall objective.

The results will be tracked based on indicators that should be defined in the project document developed during the preparation phase. The project document should define the full set of indicators for each project.

Every project should track and report on the indicators below:

- Number of decent jobs created with commercial partners, including numbers of females and youth
- Number of people who gain opportunities for increased incomes and/or improved livelihoods, including number of females and youth
- The business case turns out viable and will be sustained at the end of the project period (yes/no)
- Number of local partner companies that follow international standards for responsible and sustainable business conduct

Furthermore, it is desired but not required that each project tracks and reports on one or more of the following indicators:

- Type and number of improvements in the wider market environment which may benefit business cases of other local small-scale commercial actors
- Type and number of improvements to environmental sustainability and climate action[13]
- Number of beneficiaries benefitting from social improvements as result of the partnerships project (the type of social improvements should be specified)

[13] Such as more efficient use of water, energy, materials, and/or other natural resources, reduced amounts of polluting substances released to soil, water bodies, and/or air

9. Project application assessment criteria

All applications that meet the eligibility criteria (section 4) will be assessed and rated based on following three overall selection criteria:

1) The business case
2) The development effects
3) Implementation and feasibility

The three overall criteria are sub-divided into the below detailed criteria (and reflected in the application form).

The selection criteria are the same for maturation projects and for full projects.

The applications will be scored on each criterion in terms of poor, fair, satisfactory, or good. The table below lists the qualitative descriptions that will be used to determine the scores.

If criteria 1 and 2 (the business case) is scored poor or fair, the application will not be assessed further.

Business case - commercial focus and drive

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good
1. How well developed is the business idea, i.e., value proposition, knowledge of the value chain, market and customers, and competitors?	The value proposition is vague and shows no or little knowledge of the context, market, customers and competitors.	The value proposition is promising and shows basic knowledge of the context, market, customers and competitors.	The value proposition is clear and largely robust, and shows developed knowledge of the context, market, customers, and competitors.	The value proposition is clear and robust, and shows solid knowledge of the context, market, customers, and competitors, and documented with key figures.
2. What is the potential for the business idea to become commercially viable and scaled up beyond the project period?	No plan or model is demonstrated or evident for maturing the business idea into a viable business by the end of the project period.	A vague plan is presented, and/or the business case description may have potential for maturing the business idea into a viable business within the project period.	A clear plan is presented, and/or the business case shows immediate potential for maturing the business idea into a viable business within the project period.	A sound and robust plan or model is demonstrated, and/or the business case shows convincing potential for maturing the business idea into a viable business by within the project period.

Development effects

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good
3. What is the potential for the business case to create jobs, generate incomes and/ or improved livelihoods?	The business case shows low and/or not documented potential for job creation and/or income generation and/or improved livelihoods. I.e. the project is not eligible.	The business case shows basic potential for job creation and/or income generation and/or improved livelihoods but is not a specific focus of the project.	Job creation and/or income generation and/or improved livelihoods is a significant objective of the project, and the business idea demonstrates clear potential in this regard.	N.a.
4. To what degree is the project expected to include women, youth, poor and/or other underserved parts of the population in the target country?	The project shows no clear or significant focus on including or benefitting any of these groups.	The project shows some focus on including and benefitting these groups.	The project shows a clear and significant focus on including and benefitting these groups, including setting disaggregated targets for one or more these groups.	N.a.
5. To what extent is the project expected to result in wider social, environmental, or market-strengthening effects?	The project shows no clear or significant focus on improving wider social, environmental, or market effects.	The project shows some focus on improving wider social, environmental, or market effects.	The project shows a clear and significant focus on improving wider social, environmental, or market effects.	N.a.
6. Are the challenges and envisaged activities in relation to responsible and sustainable business conduct described?	Challenges and activities linked to responsible and sustainable business conduct are not described.	Challenges and activities linked to responsible and sustainable business conduct are mentioned at a basic level.	Challenges and activities linked to responsible and sustainable business conduct are described in a focused and elaborated way.	Challenges and activities linked to responsible and sustainable business conduct are described focused, elaborate, and as a core element.

Implementation and feasibility

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good
7. How well described, sound and realistic is the implementation plan to achieve the project outputs and outcomes?	The implementation plan and budget do not sufficiently document how outputs and outcomes are to be effectively delivered.	The implementation plan and budget documents show at a basic level how outputs and outcomes are to be effectively delivered.	The implementation plan and budget are developed and show clearly how outputs and outcomes are to be effectively delivered.	The implementation plan and budget are highly developed and solid and show clearly how outputs and outcomes are to be effectively delivered.
8. What is the capacity and commitment of the primary commercial partner in relation to the project?	The business case is not aligned with the core mission, strategy and/or product line of this partner; and/or the commercial partner shows low experience to implement the	The business case broadly aligns with the core mission, strategy and/or product line of this partner; and/or the commercial partner shows low experience to implement the	The business case broadly aligns with the core mission, strategy and/or product line of this partner; and/or the commercial partner shows adequate experience to	The business case broadly aligns with the core mission, strategy and/or product line of this partner; and/or the commercial partner shows strong experience to

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good
	business case; and/or shows low management and financial capacity.	business case; and/or shows low management and financial capacity.	implement the business case; and/or shows good management and financial capacity.	implement the business case; and/or shows strong management and financial capacity.
9. What is the capacity of the non-commercial actor in terms of country experience, sector/thematic focus, management and administrative competences, and private sector/business development experience?	The partner shows: no/very limited experience from the project country; and/or no or shallow knowledge of the target group; and/or no/very limited experience/competence with the thematic focus; and/or no/very limited business development/private sector experience; and/or no/very limited project/grant management and administrative, capacity.	The partner shows: basic experience and presence in the project country; and/or basic knowledge of the target group; and/or some focus and experience/competence with the thematic focus; and/or basic limited business development/private sector experience; and/or basic project/grant management and administrative, capacity.	The partner shows: long-standing experience and solid presence in the project country; and/or good knowledge of the target group; and/or direct focus and solid experience/competence with the thematic focus; and/or basic business development/private sector experience; and/or solid project/grant management and administrative, capacity.	The partner shows: long-standing experience and solid presence in the project country; and/or solid knowledge of the target group; and/or direct focus and solid experience/competence with the thematic focus; and/or strong business development/private sector experience; and/or solid project/grant management and administrative, capacity.
10. To what extent is it a good fit between partners and a clear and sound project organisation with clear division of roles?	The partners do not complement each other in a clear way in delivering the project objective; the roles of the partners are not clearly described; the project organisation is not clearly described.	The partners can be seen to complement each other in delivering the project objective; the roles of the partners are not clearly described; the project organisation is not clearly described.	The partners clearly complement each other in delivering the project objective; the roles of the partners are clearly described; the project organisation is clearly described.	The partners clearly complement each other in delivering the project objective; the roles of the partners are clearly described and relevant in terms of exploiting their joint competences; the project organisation is clearly described and solid.
11. To what extent is the budget well specified and representing a cost-effective use of funds?	The budget is not specified at the relevant output/activity level; does not enable cost-effectiveness to be assessed.	The budget is specified at the relevant output/activity level; does not represent a cost-effective budget.	The budget is specified at the relevant output/activity level; represents a cost-effective budget.	N.a.