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These FAQs address frequently asked questions regarding the DDF's 5th call for proposals and are updated regularly. They complement the DDF's Terms and Conditions, which remain the governing document; in case of any inconsistencies, the Terms and Conditions prevail.

1. What is the DDF? A Quick Overview

- ✓ The DDF is a funding competition. It supports innovative projects for the implementation of corporate HREDD processes. It selects the best projects from all submitted proposals based on transparent criteria.
 - ✓ Funding approval is based on an individual case assessment. An application does not constitute a legal entitlement to DDF funding.
 - ✓ Project proposals shall be submitted by a **consortium** between
 - one or more **"Commercial Partner(s) (EU+)"** with legal personality and registered office based in the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland or the United Kingdom (UK)
- and at least one of the following:**
- one or more **"Commercial Partner(s) (Local)"** with legal personality and registered office based in a country listed by the OECD DAC
 - one or more **"Public-Interest Partner(s)"** that has previous experience in the project country or other relevant experience with regards to the project proposal. No geographic restrictions apply.
- ✓ Selected projects are funded through two funding options:
 - Funding Window A: EUR 50,000–124,999
 - Funding Window B: EUR 125,000–250,000Projects in Window B must meet higher requirements (e.g. governance, scalability, impact) and require a financial audit. Funding recipients must remain available for up to 12 months after the project ends.
- ✓ Funded activities must take place during the funding period. The total project may last longer, but important results should be achieved within the funding period.
- ✓ The Commercial Partner (EU+) matches the public funds provided through the DDF with an **own contribution**.
- ✓ Funding is provided through a grant agreement between GIZ and a funding recipient designated by the consortium. GIZ guidelines for financing apply.
- ✓ The consortium formally accepts DDF's Terms and Conditions of the DDF through signing a **funding agreement** ("Cooperation Agreement on development partnerships").

2. Eligibility and Project Consortia

Can an organisation participate in more than one consortium application to the fund?

A: Yes, partners may participate in multiple consortium applications, including with different Commercial Partners/ public-interest partners and project concepts. However, the same consortium (i.e. the same set of partners) may not submit more than one application.

How can an organisation prove its status as a public-interest organisation?

A: In some countries, a specific legal status or formal certification exists to confirm public-interest status, while in others no such designation is available. Where no formal status exists, an organisation may also demonstrate its public-interest status by submitting its statutes and the proof of registration. These documents should show that the organisation works for the public good or promotes development purposes, in line with customary standards in its country. Formal public-interest recognition is in this case not required.

Eligibility as a public-interest partner can only be confirmed after reviewing the supporting documents with your short proposal. Organisations that do not qualify as public-interest partners may still participate in a consortium as supporting entities.

Can a partner involved in other GIZ projects participate?

A: Yes, partners can participate in multiple GIZ projects. Please clearly list in your short proposal the other GIZ projects the respective partner is involved in, including relevant contact persons.

What are eligible Commercial Partners?

A: Eligible Commercial Partners are companies whose operations, products or services are connected to an agricultural supply chain (upstream or downstream), including through production, processing, distribution or enabling services, and that can cause, contribute to, or be directly linked to actual or potential adverse human rights or environmental impacts. They either have leverage or can reasonably seek to build leverage (including through collaboration), to prevent or mitigate those impacts. Organisations providing only advisory or standalone technical services without such influence are excluded as Commercial Partners. Instead, they may participate as "Supporting Entities" Please also check the formal eligibility criteria in section I. 1 of the [Terms and Conditions](#).

Can a company based outside the EU, EEA, Switzerland, or the UK apply as Commercial Partner (EU+)?

A: A company registered outside the EU, EEA, Switzerland, or the UK can be eligible if it has a registered office within these regions and the relevant commodity is exported into the EU. Please also keep in mind the special provisions regarding the partnership contributions in section I. 4 of the [Terms and Conditions](#).

Can a partnership consisting only of a Commercial Partner (EU+) and Commercial Partner (Local) apply, without a public-interest partner?

A: Yes, it is sufficient to apply with a consortium consisting of just Commercial Partner (EU+) and Commercial Partner (Local). The minimum size of a consortium is one Commercial Partner (EU+) and at least either one Commercial Partner (Local) or, alternatively, one Public-Interest Partner.

3. Funding and Consortium Contribution

When determining a company's co-funding contribution, how are the indicated numbers on net turnover in EUR per year and numbers of employees determined?

A: The calculation is based on the total number of employees and the annual net turnover of the company. If the company is part of a group, the figures should include all employees and the total turnover across the entire group. Please also see the special provisions in section I. 4) of the [Terms and Conditions](#).

How is the company contribution calculated?

A: The company contribution is calculated as a percentage of the requested DDF funding. For example, for SMEs, this means contributing at least 25% of the DDF amount.

Example:

If €100,000 in DDF funding is requested, the SME must add at least €25,000 on top.

The €50,000–€250,000 range refers only to the DDF funding, not the total project budget. The company contribution is additional, meaning the total project size is higher (e.g. €75,000 DDF + €18,750 contribution = €93,750 total). The €250,000 therefore represents the maximum DDF share, not the overall project cap.

Is it possible for multiple brands to participate in a project and split their co-funding contributions? For example, could two brands with over 1,000 employees each jointly cover the full co-funding requirement, while their individual contributions are reduced (e.g., 50/50)?

A: Yes, the co-funding contribution can be shared among multiple companies. For consortia with companies of different sizes, the required contribution is generally based on the largest company. It is therefore possible and often beneficial to submit a project with several European commercial partners. For SMEs and smaller companies, contributions are reduced proportionally. For example, if the DDF funding is €100,000, a total co-funding of €25,000 would be required, which three SMEs could divide among themselves as they wish.

Is the Commercial Partner (EU+) ultimately responsible for providing the counterpart funding, even if other partners contribute?

A: Yes. The minimum amount of the financial contribution must be provided solely by the Commercial Partner (EU+). Any additional contribution by other partners is appreciated and may be positively evaluated during shortlisting. The financial contribution of a supporting entity can only replace the Commercial Partner's (EU+) contribution if the partner is a foundation or organisation of which the Commercial Partner (EU+) is a member (see the special provisions in section I. 4 of the [Terms and Conditions](#)).

What types of contributions are accepted (e.g. cash, in-kind)?

A: We generally accept both cash and in-kind contributions. The most important point is that funding will only be provided for activities that are primarily designed to prevent or mitigate the risks identified in the risk assessment. All contributions must also be clearly documented and verifiable.

Are contributions from existing projects or ongoing initiatives eligible as co-funding?

A: No, contributions from existing projects or ongoing initiatives are not eligible. The co-funding must be specifically provided by the Commercial Partners for the current DDF proposal.

Who will receive the funding?

A: The funding recipient is designated by the partnership, meaning the consortium collectively decides which entity will officially receive the funds. This funding recipient needs to be part of the partnership; Commercial Partners (EU+) may only receive funds in exceptional cases (see section I. 3b) of the [Terms and Conditions](#)). There can also be sub-recipients that get a share of the funds forwarded from the funding recipient. For sub-recipients, the same provisions apply.

What is the "KEP"?

A: A crucial prerequisite for the project's selection is a successful commercial and legal eligibility check (*KEP – kaufmännisch rechtliche Eignungsprüfung*) of the designated funding recipient. This check, performed after the project is shortlisted, verifies the entity's internal capacities, expertise in administering public grants, and internal rules and procedures (e.g., procurement processes and control mechanisms). The consortium should agree internally on the distribution of funds and responsibilities before submitting the short proposal.

4. Changes and Updates in Round 5

There will be two funding windows in DDF Round 5 - what qualifies as a larger or more comprehensive project under funding window B?

A: A project is considered larger or more comprehensive under Funding Window B if it demonstrates a higher level of complexity, for example through the involvement of a greater number of partners, project regions, or commodities. It must include a clear scaling concept outlining how its impact will be expanded or replicated. Additionally, affected rights holders or their legitimate representatives must be formally integrated in the project's governance structure, ensuring their perspectives are actively reflected in decision-making processes. Furthermore, at least one activity under funding window B must be gender-responsive, directly addressing an identified risk.

Are there priority regions or commodities for DDF Round 5?

A: No, there are no priority regions or commodities for Round 5.

Are there audits for funded projects?

A: Projects funded under Window B are required to undergo a financial audit commissioned by GIZ. Funding recipients must remain available for this purpose for up to 12 months after the project end.

5. Support from DDF Team/ GIZ

Is there an opportunity to receive feedback on project ideas, early-stage concept notes or short proposal drafts before submitting a short proposal?

A: Yes, there are opportunities to seek clarification and feedback before submission, although individual support is more limited than in previous rounds due to the high number of applications. Applicants are encouraged to first review the information available on the DDF website, including the FAQ section. In addition, the DDF will offer [four online Q&A sessions](#), where general questions can be addressed. Following these sessions, applicants may request one bilateral consultation meeting with the DDF team to discuss their project ideas ahead of submitting a short proposal. Written questions are also welcome, provided they are not already covered by publicly available information.

I have an idea for a project but cannot yet form a complete consortium that meets the DDF eligibility requirements. Can the DDF help find a partner to form a consortium?

A: No, identifying and establishing partnerships is not part of the DDF's mandate. Typically, consortia and partnerships approach the DDF directly once they are already formed. The DDF is unfortunately not able to assist in finding partners at this stage.

How does support from the DDF team and GIZ look during project implementation?

A: The DDF team and GIZ provide technical backstopping throughout the project. Partnerships report on project progress during bimonthly calls and submit technical reports every six months. Additional support may be available through the local GIZ office, as agreed at the start of the project. However, the implementation itself remains the sole responsibility of the consortium.

6. Other

What are the requirements for the risk assessment?

A: The risk assessment does not need to be a formal or externally commissioned study. It should clearly describe the identified environmental and/or human rights risks and specify the sources of this information. Typically, the assessment is carried out by the Commercial Partner (EU+) or by the Commercial Partner (Local) as part of their due diligence obligations. First-hand insights from field staff are welcome, provided you explain how the information was obtained and, where possible, supported or verified with external sources (e.g. NGO reports, studies, or other publicly available information). This information can be included directly in the proposal template. You can optionally attach your risk assessment but this is not required.

Is there a specific format to prepare and submit the project proposal?

A: Yes, the template for the short proposal is available on our website. Only proposals using this template are accepted.

Would a project addressing risks in agricultural raw materials for fashion or beauty supply chains be eligible for the DDF, given that many projects seem to focus on food commodities?

A: Yes. While eligible products must be agricultural raw materials, the DDF is not limited to food commodities. In previous rounds, projects have included raw materials for the textile and beauty sectors, such as cotton and various botanicals.

Which agricultural raw materials and value chains are eligible under the DDF?

A: We do not exclude any particular agricultural raw materials. However, the product in question must be traded in the EU Single Market. Products only for the local market or without ties to the EU market are not eligible.