



**Ministry of Food, Agriculture
and Fisheries of Denmark**
The Danish Agricultural and
Fisheries Agency

Green Programme: Green transition of fisheries and aquaculture Call

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Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries,
The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency
Nyropsgade 30
1780 Copenhagen V
Tel: + 45 72 18 56 00
E-mail: mail@lfst.dk
[The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency](#)

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Gíslason

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1. Call

In the agreement on the distribution of the national research grant, the *Research Reserve*, for 2025, a pool named Green Programme has been set aside. The purpose is to support research and development that enhance knowledge and ensure documentation of the effects of initiatives promoting the green and sustainable transition in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

A pool of DKK 35M will be offered in 2025.

1.1 Types of projects

Applications are invited for research projects that contribute to research into and documentation of the effects of fisheries and aquaculture production on nature, the environment, and fish welfare.

Specifically, we are looking for projects in the following focus areas:

1. Research or monitoring to support the management of fisheries in marine areas with fishing restrictions (one or more projects will be funded).
2. Effects of fisheries on nationally regulated fish stocks with the aim of producing or improving biological advice for these stocks (one project will be funded).
3. Fish welfare in aquaculture (one project will be funded).

1.2 Application deadline and decision

The deadline for submitting applications is **Friday, 10 October 2025**.

The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency expects to notify its consent or refusal in medio December 2025.

1.3 Learn more

You can read more about the programme in [The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency's grant guide](#).

2. Background, objectives, and focus areas

2.1 Background to the call

This call invites high-impact research and monitoring projects that aim to deliver new, science-based solutions to pressing environmental and sustainability challenges within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The ambition is to support the green transition and ensure that research outcomes contribute to long-term ecological and societal value. Funding for this call is provided through the *Research Reserve* established by the political agreement from 1 November 2024 and confirmed by the adoption of the Finance Act for 2025. The call follows recommendations from the Danish Fisheries Commission and the Political Agreement on the Future of Danish Fisheries from 2 July 2025¹.

Researchers are encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary collaborations and to work closely with relevant stakeholders from industry or public institutions. Projects should aim to produce knowledge that is both academically robust and practically relevant, informing policy, and guiding actions toward a more sustainable future for fisheries and aquaculture.

¹ [En ny kurs for dansk fiskeri.pdf](#)

2.2 Objectives of the research programme

In 2025, the research programme for the green transition of fisheries and aquaculture will be launched, with a total of DKK 35M allocated to projects that generate new insights into the impacts of fisheries and aquaculture on nature, the environment, and fish welfare. The programme focuses on addressing critical knowledge gaps identified through an assessment of existing research and development efforts, aiming to advance scientific understanding by supporting new, targeted research in these areas.

We encourage projects that span the entire value chain—from basic research to industrial research and experimental development—and that deliver both scientific excellence and tangible societal benefits. Cross-disciplinary collaboration is promoted, and research outcomes are expected to contribute to evidence-based management and support sustainable practices in fisheries, aquaculture, and nature conservation.

Focus Area 1: Research or monitoring to support the management of fisheries in marine areas with fishing restrictions (one or more projects will be funded).

Under Focus Area 1, three objectives can be found.

- Objective 1 is to investigate the impact of towed mobile bottom-contacting fishing in the Natura 2000-area “Vadehavet” (H 89).
- Objective 2 is to investigate the effects of introducing requirements for the use of semi-pelagic trawl doors in mobile bottom-contacting fisheries in a test area in the central Kattegat.
- Objective 3 is to examine the effects of changed gear use in areas where towed mobile bottom-contacting gear will be banned in accordance with the political Agreement on the future of Danish Fisheries from the 2 July 2025 and as part of an overall effort to promote the development of fishing with low-impact passive gears. A key element of the project under this objective should be to provide research-based recommendations for the management of fisheries in the designated areas.

The duration of the objectives under Focus Area 1 is up to four years. The project under Objective 1 may last a maximum of two years.

For more information on Focus Area 1, see section 2.3.1.

Focus Area 2: Effects of fisheries on nationally regulated fish stocks with the aim of producing or improving biological advice for these stocks (one project will be funded).

The objective of Focus Area 2 is to improve knowledge on nationally regulated fish stock in order to produce or improve biological advice on the state of these stocks. The duration of the project is up to three years.

For more information on Focus Area 2, see section 2.3.2.

Focus Area 3: Fish welfare in aquaculture (one project will be funded).

The objective of Focus Area 3 is to provide knowledge on animal welfare of farmed fish under Danish conditions. The knowledge should provide a basis for development of farmed fish welfare regulations for Danish aquaculture. The research project will complement and build on a knowledge synthesis conducted by DTU Aqua. The duration of the project is up to three years.

For more information on Focus Area 3, see section 2.3.3.

2.3 Which projects can get funding?

Within the framework of the programme, grants may be awarded to projects that contribute to research and documentation of the impact of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors on nature, the environment, and fish welfare. The projects should support a transition towards green and sustainable fishery and aquaculture sectors.

To maximise synergies and impact, projects should build on existing knowledge and relevant research from previous or ongoing initiatives. This requires interdisciplinary collaboration across research environments, institutions, organisations, and close cooperation with industry.

Broad partnerships – nationally and internationally – are strongly encouraged. Applicants are urged to form consortia uniting research institutions, professional organisations, and industry stakeholders to develop proactive, targeted solutions aligned with political agreements, strategic priorities, and national action plans.

For projects that are found to have significant societal or technological implications, it is recommended to ensure openness and knowledge dissemination. This could involve activities that foster public discussion and reflection, such as citizen-oriented events or other inclusive communication efforts.

By involving relevant actors throughout the research and innovation process, projects can help ensure that outcomes are not only scientifically robust, but also socially anchored and broadly relevant.

The focus areas of the programme are described below.

2.3.1 Focus Area 1: Research or monitoring to support the management of fisheries in marine areas with fishing restrictions (one or more projects will be funded).

Under Focus Area 1, there are three objectives. Applicants can submit projects for any one of these objectives. These objectives collectively aim to assess ecological and operational impacts of restricting or modifying bottom-contacting fishing, in order to inform sustainable fisheries management across Danish waters.

Objective 1:

“Vadehavet” (The Wadden Sea) is a unique and ecologically significant natural area with international recognition. It provides vital habitats for fish during key life stages and functions as an essential stopover and breeding ground for large numbers of migratory bird species. “Vadehavet” has been designated a Natura 2000 site, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and established as a National Park.

In connection with the implementation of the Natura 2000 action plan², it is necessary to evaluate whether further regulation of fisheries is needed to ensure sufficient protection of the area's ecological integrity.

For Objective 1, grants may be awarded for projects aimed at examining the impact of towed mobile bottom-contacting fishing on the ecosystem in the Natura 2000-area “Vadehavet” (N89).

² [Natura 2000-plan 2022-2027, Vadehavet \(N89\)](#)

The investigation must apply an ecosystem-based approach and should include one or more test areas. The project should involve relevant interdisciplinary expertise in marine ecology, fisheries science, and – where relevant – socioeconomic impacts. Finally, the outcomes of the project should be explicitly considered in relation to the criteria for the protection of the Natura 2000 area “Vadehavet”.

The research project will start in early 2026 and is expected to take up to two years. The reference area(s) with no impact on fisheries shall be established by mid-2026. The Authorities will enter into dialogue with the project owner on the designation of the reference area/areas at the start of the project. A project reporting will take place no later than Q3 in 2028. Data will be made available to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.

Objective 2:

A test-area in Kattegat will be established with a requirement for the use of semi-pelagic trawl doors. The aim is to gather experience and data on the use of this type of trawl doors to assess fishing efficiency, fuel consumption, and seabed impact.

For Objective 2, grants may be awarded to projects investigating the effects of introducing requirements for semi-pelagic trawl doors in mobile bottom-contacting fisheries within this designated test area in the central Kattegat.

The investigation must be based on a systematic and scientifically sound approach, combining operational monitoring and environmental assessment. Use of historical data or comparisons with conventional gear types is highly encouraged.

The current expectation is that the test area and its gear requirements will enter into force no earlier than 2027. Following the implementation of the test area and its gear requirements, a test period of at least three years must take place, with the possibility of extension depending on future funding decisions. Projects must include ongoing evaluation and reporting throughout the test period and be carried out with relevant expertise in fisheries technology, fleet dynamics, marine ecology, and environmental assessment.

The outcome of this project should be explicitly considered in relation to policy-relevant effects such as fishing efficiency, fuel consumption, and seabed impact in the area where it is to be introduced.

Objective 3:

In the coming years, towed mobile bottom-contacting fishing gear will be prohibited in certain designated marine areas. This will significantly alter the conditions for commercial fisheries in these areas and require a shift toward alternative fishing methods. The shift in fishing practices may lead to new ecosystem dynamics, including altered pressure on benthic fauna, fish stocks and potential changes in by-catch rates of non-target species such as fish, seabirds, and marine mammals.

For Objective 3, grants may be awarded to projects examining the effects of changing gear use in areas where towed mobile bottom-contacting gear is banned. The objective is to support the sustainable use and management of passive fishing methods such as gillnets, pots, fyke nets, and pound nets.

Ensuring sustainable management requires that projects proposing gear changes conduct a risk assessment to evaluate environmental and operational impacts, considering potential trade-offs and other sustainability challenges. In addition, projects should also evaluate the economic feasibility for the industry and determine whether such changes are adaptable and economically viable in specific fisheries. Projects should involve relevant stakeholders to ensure the applicability of results.

A key outcome of the project must be the delivery of research-based recommendations for the future management of fisheries in trawl-free zones. These recommendations should support the establishment of regulatory and operational frameworks that balance sustainable resource use with environmental protection.

2.3.2 Focus Area 2: Effects of fisheries on nationally regulated fish stocks with the aim of producing or improving biological advice for these stocks (one project will be funded).

In order to ensure sustainable management and predictability for the fishing industry, there is a political ambition to strengthen the biological knowledge base for fish stocks that are subject to national regulation. Sufficient biological advice is currently lacking, despite their commercial importance in Danish fisheries for these species.

For Focus Area 2, a research project aimed at producing or improving biological knowledge and data availability for nationally regulated fish stocks and fish stocks with the potential of regional regulation may be granted. The aim is to support the future development of scientific advice and stock assessments, thereby enabling more sustainable management and providing greater certainty for the fishing industry.

Projects are expected to use appropriate scientific methods adapted to the specific biology and ecology of the selected species. Cooperation with the fishing industry for data collection is encouraged.

The project must contribute to establishing a stronger basis for scientific advice, including indicators for stock status and, where possible, the development of catch recommendations. Projects must clearly show how the knowledge they aim to develop contributes to better stock management and catch advice.

2.3.3 Focus Area 3: Fish welfare in aquaculture (one project will be funded).

As part of *the Agreement on Animal Welfare 2024–2027*, a knowledge synthesis was initiated in January 2024 by DTU Aqua on the welfare conditions of farmed fish in Danish aquaculture facilities³. The final report that was available in July 2024, concluded that there are significant knowledge gaps preventing the development of science-based recommendations on fish welfare under Danish conditions. Additional research is therefore required.

For Focus Area 3, grants may be awarded for research projects aimed at strengthening the scientific knowledge base on fish welfare in aquaculture operations in Denmark. Projects must build on and supplement the findings of the DTU Aqua synthesis and address different welfare needs in different production systems, and during critical phases (e.g. handling, live fish transportation and slaughter).

³ [Animal welfare in Denmark's fish farming sector: Regulatory and practical aspects. DTU Aqua Report no. 474-2024](#)

The project should combine the use of existing data and new data collection under Danish production conditions possibly including real farm scenarios, reflecting the diversity of production systems, species etc. Comparative studies drawing on relevant international experience, particularly from Norway, which has established science-based welfare regulations, are encouraged where they may help filling the gap of knowledge on real farming conditions to optimize the use of operational welfare indicators and to develop guidelines, which may be adapted to the Danish context.

Given the limited national expertise in this specific area, international collaboration is encouraged. Projects should involve research institutions with demonstrated experience in fish welfare in aquaculture, conducted in close partnership with a Danish university.

A key outcome of the project should be research-based recommendations to pave the way for the development of future fish welfare regulations in aquaculture under Danish conditions.

2.4 Expected impacts

Applications must include a description of how the research efforts can contribute to one or more of the following impacts:

- Improved scientific knowledge about the ecological effects of fisheries and aquaculture activities, including their impact on ecosystem integrity.
- Improved scientific knowledge about the effects of aquaculture practices on fish welfare.
- Enhanced understanding of the environmental and socioeconomic consequences of fishing gear restrictions and the establishment of fishing-free zones, supporting ecosystem-based fisheries management.
- Development of more sustainable fishing practices.
- Collection and generation of robust data on nationally or regionally regulated fish stocks to improve biological advice, stock assessments, and sustainable fisheries management.
- Development and evaluation of improved aquaculture practices that enhance fish welfare considering potential impact on environmental footprint.
- Strengthened collaboration between research institutions, the fishing industry, and policy-makers at national and international levels, facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity building.
- Provision of science-based recommendations that inform policy and regulatory frameworks for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and marine conservation efforts.
- Demonstration of how the findings can be implemented into practice.

3. Application and application procedure

3.1 Application material

You can find the application form and other material in The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency's grant guide under the [Green programme for the transition of fisheries and aquaculture](#).

Your application must consist of:

- Table A: Application form
- Table B: Budget form
- Table C: Participant form
- CVs of the project manager and relevant key personnel
- Any annexes to the application – e.g. reference slides, illustrations and technical drawings

In the grant guide you can also find instructions on how to fill in the different forms.

3.1.1 Language

Please note that the application must be submitted in English, as it will be reviewed by an international scientific committee.

3.1.2 Submission of application

You submit your application by uploading it in The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency's grant administrative system TAS. [You can access TAS here](#).

You can find a guide to the application in The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency's grant guide under the [Green Programme for Fisheries and Aquaculture](#).

3.1.3 The application must be complete

It is important that the application contains all relevant information to enable The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency to make a decision regarding your project. If your application is incomplete, you will receive a consultation request.

The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency may reject your application if it is incomplete or does not meet the requirements set out in this call and the accompanying guidelines, including if the application deadline has not been met.

3.2 Who can apply?

Universities and other recognised knowledge and research institutions carrying out research as a non-economic activity may apply for grants. Priority will be given to projects that involve collaboration across universities and institutions.

Companies and other institutions with research as an economic activity may, where appropri-

ate, be included in the applications without receiving a grant. However, they cannot obtain exclusive rights to the results of the project, as equal access to them, including exploitation, will be required.

3.3 Eligible expenditure

Grants are awarded for expenses necessary to carry out the project. The costs must be necessary and directly related to the project activities and to the implementation of the project.

You can apply for a grant to cover expenses for:

- Staff salaries (VIP and TAP)
- External assistance
- Ph.D. costs
- Other expenditure

You can also get grants for common expenses (overheads), calculated as up to 44 per cent of the direct costs of the project.

Generally, the applicant is expected to finance and provide the necessary equipment. However, grants can be provided for apparatus and other equipment that is solely used for the project and is an essential prerequisite for its implementation.

Full funding is given for Ph.D. programmes (including periods abroad and enrolment, but not for the fulfillment of teaching obligations).

3.4 For which expenses are you not eligible?

Grants cannot be awarded for:

- VAT, unless it is definitively borne by the grant receiver
- Capital investment;
- Apparatus and equipment other than investments, which are solely applicable to the project and are a necessary condition for carrying out the project.
- Depreciation, general operating, and service expenses, etc., in addition to what is included in the contribution to common expenses.
- Coverage of lost production for the applicant or experimental host on land or in premises where the research work is carried out.
- Financing costs of any kind.

3.5 Appropriations allocated

A total of DKK 35M has been allocated to the research programme.

Approximately 70 percent of the total funding pool is divided between the objectives under Focus Area 1. Projects under Focus Area 2 will be allocated approximately 15 percent of the total pool, and projects under Focus Area 3 will likewise receive approximately 15 percent. The remaining and any unutilised funds will be allocated to the highest-scoring projects across all Focus Areas.

Projects are prioritised according to the criteria scheme (see section 3.8.1).

3.6 Financing

You can receive a maximum grant of 100 per cent of the total cost of the project.

The grant is awarded on the condition of compliance with relevant national regulations as well as in accordance with the Ministry of Finance's budget guidelines and guidance on effective grant management.

You are responsible for ensuring that the grant is not directly or indirectly transferred to a third party as the final grant receiver in violation of the [EU State aid rules](#).

3.7 Project period

For Focus Area 1, the project period may last for up to four years. The project under Objective 1 may last a maximum of two years.

For Focus Area 2, the project period may last for up to three years.

For Focus Area 3, the project period may last for up to three years.

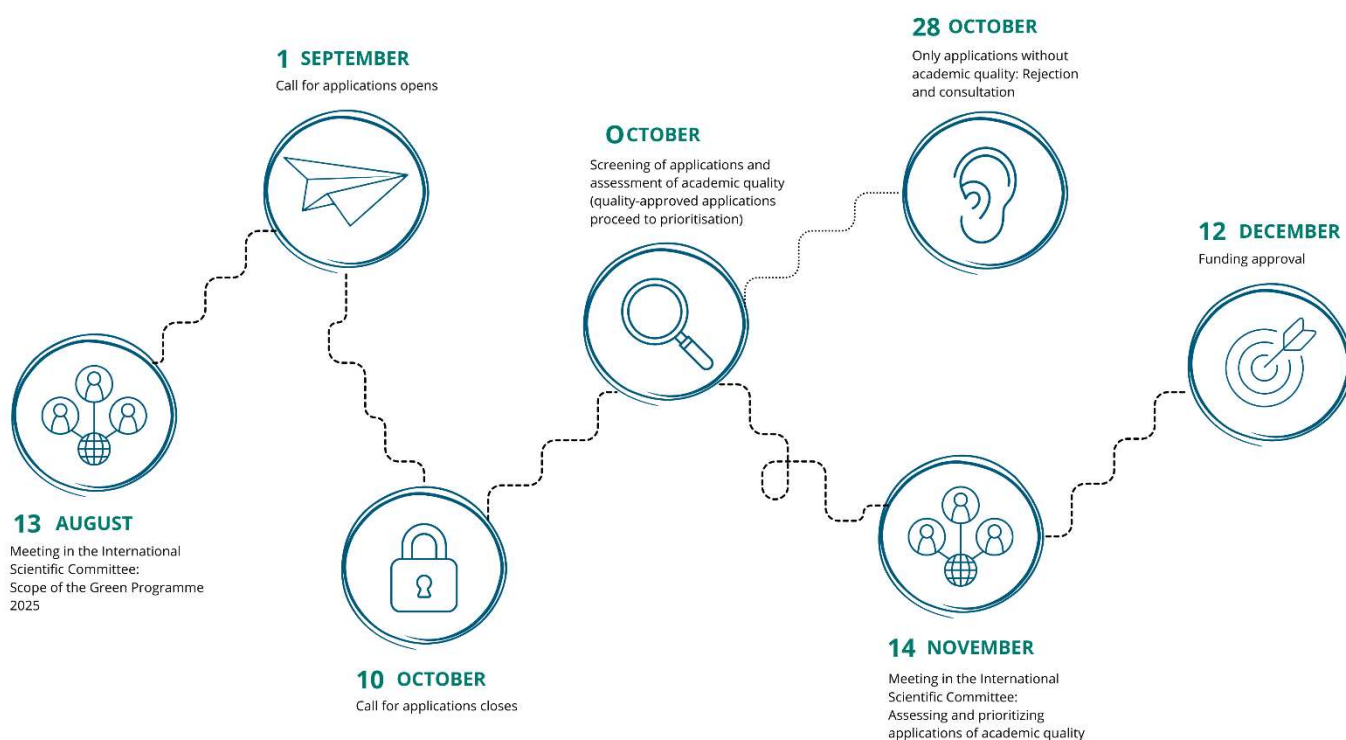
You must provide a clear timeline for your project period in the application form (Scheme A), including justification for the time allocated to each phase.

3.8 Procedure for processing applications

Submitted applications will be screened to ensure that the required material has been properly completed. Afterwards, an international Scientific Committee consisting of researchers and professionals primarily from the university sector will assess the scientific quality of the projects. This is done to determine the projects' eligibility for funding. Finally, the Scientific Committee will make the final assessment and prioritise which projects are awarded funding.

Based on the Scientific Committee's assessment, The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency will make the final decision regarding the approval or rejection of applications. If your application is approved, you will receive a letter of approval. If your application is rejected, you will receive a rejection letter.

Timeline and important dates:



3.8.1 Assessment and prioritisation of applications

Scientific Committee:

An international Scientific Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) consisting of 8-10 members, has been established to assess the applications and the academic quality of the research in the applications. The Committee is composed to reflect the necessary scientific and professional expertise within the domains associated with the politically defined focus areas under which the *Research Reserve* allocates its funding. Members are selected based on relevant qualifications and research, ensuring that the Committee is equipped to carry out its tasks. Furthermore, each member must meet the qualifications for either an Established Researcher or a Recognised Researcher, as defined in the Danish Act on Research Policy Governance⁴. The Committee is approved by Innovation Fund Denmark. You can read more about the Committee and its members in the [grant guide](#).

The assessment of the academic quality of the research will be conducted by members of the Scientific Committee that are Established Researchers. The assessment is based on whether the application sufficiently meets the following criteria:

- The project's scientific question and hypothesis, theoretical framework, methodology, and overall project plan, including objectives, milestones, deliverables, success criteria, and key risks.
- The research content of the project in relation to 'state-of-the-art'.
- The research qualifications of project participants, in particular the project manager and work package managers, as well as relevant information regarding the division of labour.

If the assessment is unfavourable to the project, the applicant has the right to comment on the external assessment in a consultation with the parties. The applicant will have one week to do so. This is done in order to clarify whether the external assessment is based on misunderstanding. A consultation response may be submitted to the Established Researchers of the Scientific Committee with a view to clarifying any misunderstandings.

Applications deemed of sufficient scientific quality will be assessed and prioritised for funding according to four criteria (relevance of the project, expected results, feasibility of the project, and cooperation) on a **scale of 1-5**. Funding commitment will be given to the project that achieves the most points. In the event of a tie, priority shall be given to the project with the lowest cost.

Description of scale

Score	Description
5 points	Fulfilment of the criterion without deficiencies
4 points	Fulfilment of the criterion with some non-essential deficiencies
3 points	Some significant deficiencies but meets the criterion overall
2 points	Substantial deficiencies and meets the criterion only partially
1 point	The criterion is not met in its entirety

Regardless of the scoring, approximately 70 percent of the total funding pool is divided between the objectives under Focus Area 1. Projects under Focus Area 2 will be allocated approximately 15 percent of the total pool, and projects under Focus Area 3 will likewise receive approximately 15 percent. The remaining and any unutilised funds will be allocated to the highest-scoring projects across all Focus Areas.

⁴ [Bekendtgørelse af lov om Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd og Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond](#)

Applications will be evaluated based on these four criteria

Criterion	Weighting
Relevance of the project The project must be relevant for the green transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and the project must contribute to closing the knowledge gaps described for the focus area in the research programme. In the assessment of the relevance of the project, the following factors will be prioritized: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project fulfils the overall purpose of the research programme, including how the project fulfils the purpose under the respective Focus Areas 1, 2 or 3.• The project aims to build upon the existing knowledge that is relevant to the project.• The project is innovative and contributes to generating new knowledge, e.g. through the collection of new data or the development of new methods.	40 per cent
Expected results The project must be relevant according to the expected impacts defined in section 2.4. In the assessment of the project's expected results, emphasis is placed on the applicant's explanation of how the project contributes to one or more of the expected results. It should also be demonstrated how the findings may be implemented into practice.	20 per cent
Feasibility of the project The application must explain how the project can be implemented within the framework of the grant. In assessing the feasibility of the project, emphasis shall be placed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the project can be carried out within the time and financial framework.• Professional competences of project participants.• Explanation of the technical risks associated with the project and mitigation measures requested. It is expected that there will be certain risks associated with the implementation of the research projects, but the applicant must show that they are aware of the risks inherent in the project.	20 per cent
Cooperation The application must describe any establishment of relevant interdisciplinary and inter-agency collaborations, national as well as international, and must explain the value of these collaborations for the project.	20 per cent

3.8.2 Confidentiality

Applications are treated confidentially within the framework of the applicable legislation on open government.

3.8.3 Publication of applications

Once a decision has been made on which projects that receives an approval, the project title, the amount of the grant, and the company name of the main applicant will be published on The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency's website (lfst.dk) and on relevant social media. Therefore, applicants that receive funding must write a short project description for publication.

Once a project is completed or significant interim results are available, the project results and story may be shared on our website and on relevant social media. In such cases, we will need media files from the project, the opportunity for an interview, and a short description of the project results.

3.9 During and after the project

During the project period for all focus areas, you must submit a short progress report yearly to The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency. The progress report should include, among other things, a status of the progress of your project, whether the project is progressing as planned or not, and the preliminary results.

Once the project has been completed, you must report and publish the results of the project, which you must send to The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency. Final payment will only be made once we have received and approved your report. Scientific articles shall be made publicly available no later than one year after the completion of the project.

3.9.1 Obligation to provide information

Throughout the project period, we can ask for information on whether the conditions for grant commitments continues to be met. You are also obliged to give us written notice of circumstances that may result in the cancellation of commitments, repayment or reduction of the grant. We can decide on cancellation of approval and reimbursement of grants if the conditions for grant commitments are not met.

3.9.2 Open data directive

Please note that universities are required to provide documents and data under Regulation (EU) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019⁵ (Open Data Directive).

3.10 Processing of personal data

The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency processes the personal data you provide to us or we collect about you in accordance with applicable data protection rules.

In order to protect your personal data in the best possible way, we continuously assess how high the risk of our data processing adversely affects your rights. We treat your information with respect for the confidentiality of the information and for your privacy - and are particularly aware of the risk of identity theft or other adverse effects.

In our [data protection policy](#), you can read more about how we at The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency process your personal data, including how we collect, handle, and protect your personal data.

In accordance with applicable freedom of information laws, a request for access to documents may result in the disclosure of project information, participants, etc. The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency will contact applicants to ensure that no business sensitive information or other information which, by law, cannot be disclosed.

Such processing is carried out for the purpose of complying with obligations under the Danish Public Administration Act⁶, the Access to Public Administration Files Act⁷, and the Environmental Information Act⁸.

⁵ [Directive - 2019/1024 - EN - psi directive - EUR-Lex](#)

⁶ [Lovbekendtgørelse nr. 433 af 22. april 2014 af forvaltningsloven](#)

⁷ [Lovbekendtgørelse nr. 145 af 24. februar 2020 om offentlighed i forvaltningen](#)

⁸ [Lovbekendtgørelse nr. 980 af 16 august 2017 om aktindsigt i miljøoplysninger](#)

Green programme for the transition of fisheries and aquaculture

Call



The Danish Agricultural and Fisheries Agency
Nyropsgade 30
1780 Copenhagen V
Denmark
E-mail: mail@lfst.dk