

6th KoEF Call for proposals

Information and guidelines for applicants

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1. About Cooperation Development Research (Kooperation Entwicklungsforschung – KoEF)

With the programme Cooperation Development Research (*Kooperation Entwicklungsforschung – KoEF*) the Austrian Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) has created an instrument to foster research on the two main principles of excellency and cooperation in development research. KoEF intends to contribute to creating an environment which fosters international cooperation between researchers and institutions extending beyond individual project durations. It aims to support impactful cooperative research projects between Austrian higher education institutions/research institutions and institutions in countries of the Global South and therewith to contribute to analysing and solving local challenges and to achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) adopted by the United Nations in 2015.

The primary objectives of the Cooperation Development Research programme are to:

- + Foster international partnerships in research that address significant development challenges.
- + Enhance the capacity of research institutions in both Austria and in countries of the Global South to contribute to sustainable development.
- + Support research projects that have a direct impact on improving the quality of living in countries of the Global South.
- + Promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Austrian researchers and their international partners.

The OeAD-GmbH – Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalisation – in short OeAD – implements Cooperation Research Development (CDR/KoEF) in accordance with the Special Guideline on the “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung/Measures for Internationalisation” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) of the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF).

2. Scope of KoEF Cooperative Research Projects

KoEF funds collaborative research projects between researchers from public universities or research-performing institutions in Austria and from state-accredited universities or research-performing institutions in countries of the Global South. Eligible partner countries are those classified as “least developed countries”, “other low income countries”, or “lower middle income countries and territories” (excluding India) according to the [DAC-list of the OECD 2022/2023](#). Each project must involve researchers from **at least one Austrian public university or research-performing institution** and **at least one partner institution in the Global South**.

Central to the KoEF cooperative research projects is their alignment with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Projects must demonstrate a clear pathway to contributing to one or more of these goals, ensuring that the research efforts are grounded in addressing specific local challenges while also contributing to broader international development objectives.

The collaboration should be equitable, with meaningful contributions from both sides in terms of knowledge, resources, and effort. While the programme is open to **all scientific disciplines**, interdisciplinary approaches to solving complex development-related problems are especially encouraged. Combining diverse perspectives and methodologies increases both the impact and sustainability of project outcomes. **Research projects must be new**. The project may build on previous KoEF projects if fundamentally new research questions or methodologies are applied. Revised applications of previously rejected KoEF projects are allowed.

KoEF aims to foster long-term international collaboration between researchers and institutions beyond the duration of individual projects. Expected outcomes include **joint publications, continued cooperation, and follow-up initiatives**. The project consortia therefore undertake to report publications and projects resulting from the KoEF grant even after the KoEF project has been completed.

Research stays in both partner countries are mandatory. These stays are considered integral to achieving mutual learning, knowledge exchange, and genuine cooperation.

Overall, KoEF projects are intended to strengthen **international research partnerships**, enhance **scientific collaboration**, and contribute to **sustainable development** in the partner countries.

The Special Guideline on the “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung/Measures for Internationalisation” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) of the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF), which was published in 2024, defines the following formal requirements for a cooperative research project.

3. Submission, Project Coordination and Project Consortium

Each project must involve researchers from **at least one public university or research-performing institution located in Austria** and **one state-accredited university or research-performing institution in a country of the Global South**, as defined in the [OECD DAC-list of the OECD 2022/2023](#) (“least developed countries,” “other low income countries,” or “lower middle income countries and territories,” excluding India).

Only **researchers (PhD holders) affiliated with an Austrian public university or research-performing institution** are eligible to apply for, submit, and coordinate a project. The project coordinator that submits the project proposal will also assume overall responsibility for coordinating the project and for reporting. The funds are to be handled via a bank account of the institution. The project coordinator must hold at least a **PhD**. All participating researchers must either be **PhD students** or **PhD holders**. Master’s students are not eligible to participate.

Please note: Only researchers (PhD holders) affiliated with an Austrian public university or research performing institution are eligible for application, submission and coordination of a project.

4. Project Duration and Maximum Funding Amount

- Project duration: 24 months
- Maximum funding amount: 40,000 euros per project

Please note: All projects have a project duration of 24 months. The maximum funding amount is 40,000 euros per project.

5. Eligible Costs

Project funding is provided as a grant and is not intended to cover the entire project costs. The grant recipient must ensure project implementation and achievement of objectives by using **appropriate own funds, excluding staff costs**. Therefore, applicants must clearly demonstrate in the financing plan how the remaining costs (except staff costs) will be covered through their own or other secured funds (e.g., institutional funds, other grants, or in-kind contributions). The total budget presented in the financing plan – including both KoEF funding requested and own funds – must exceed the amount requested from KoEF to confirm adequate co-financing. This ensures the project’s viability and successful execution.

Please note: If no own funds or other sources of co-financing (Eigenmittel) are indicated in the financing plan, the application will be considered incomplete and will not meet the formal eligibility criteria.

Only the following expenses can be claimed:

Please note: Research stays in both partner countries are mandatory. Non-compliance constitutes grounds for project termination and recovery of disbursed funds.

Incoming mobility | travel to Austria from a partner country in the Global South:

- 1) Travel costs to Austria. The cheapest reasonable means of transport must be chosen. The financing only covers the journey to the partner institution in Austria and back home. No further travel financing is provided. A **maximum of 2,000 euros** per person per trip can be reimbursed. This includes only the following:
 - + Flight costs including airport taxes: cheapest option, economy class only. Fees for the reservation of certain seats cannot be reimbursed. CO₂ compensation cannot be reimbursed. Costs for visa, travel insurance and vaccination cannot be reimbursed.
 - + Travel costs to and from the airport: In Austria only public transport.
- 2) Allowance for the stay: Daily allowance of **no more than EUR 180 per day spent actively working** on the project during the stay in Austria. However, the **maximum monthly allowance is capped at EUR 2,160 per month** (1 month = 30 days). Thus, the maximum amount is EUR 2,160 per month. The maximum duration per person per stay is three months (i.e. three times EUR 2,160 = EUR 6,480 total allowance). No further costs related to the stay can be reimbursed.

Outgoing mobility | travel from Austria to the partner country in the Global South:

- 1) Travel costs to the partner country in the Global South. The cheapest reasonable means of transport must be chosen. The financing only covers the journey to the partner institution in the Global South and back home. No further travel financing is provided. A **maximum of 2,000 euros** per person per trip can be reimbursed. This includes only the following:
 - + Flight costs including airport taxes: cheapest option, economy class only. Fees for the reservation of certain seats cannot be reimbursed. CO₂ compensation cannot be reimbursed. Costs for visa, travel insurance and vaccination cannot be reimbursed.
 - + Travel costs to and from the airport: In Austria only public transport.
- 2) Allowance for the stay: Daily allowance of **no more than EUR 180 per day spent actively working** on the project during the stay in the partner country. However, the **maximum monthly allowance is capped at EUR 2,160 per month** (1 month = 30 days). Thus, the maximum amount is EUR 2,160 per month. The maximum duration per person per stay is **three months** (i.e. three times EUR 2,160 = EUR 6,480 total allowance). No further costs related to the stay can be reimbursed.

Please note: Travel within or between partner countries in the Global South (field work) cannot be reimbursed.

Material costs

Material (consumables), only if they are essential and specifically relevant for the project, can be covered up to a maximum amount of **5,000 euros** for the entire project duration. Only consumables can be reimbursed, e.g.: test kits, chemicals, research permit, data acquisition, vehicle rent for field research, publication costs. No infrastructure or basic equipment can be reimbursed, e.g.: no laptops, no telephone or internet costs, no staff costs, no honoraria for participants. Overheads are not acceptable and must not be included.

6. Application

6.1. Submission of the Application

The project is applied for via the StipOnline portal. The basic data for the project and all project participants (including their birth dates) must be entered in this portal and the application documents uploaded. The documents to be uploaded are:

- 1) **Project Proposal (pdf)**
- 2) **Abstract (pdf)**
- 3) **Financing Plan (excel file)**
- 4) **CV of the Project Coordinator (pdf)**
- 5) **Letters of Endorsement of ALL participating institutions (as one pdf)**

Please note: Please be advised that applications can only be submitted via the StipOnline portal.

Application documents can be downloaded from the [KoEF website](#).

The templates for the project proposal and the financing plan, which can be found on the KoEF website, must be used. Please copy the abstract from the project proposal and upload it as a separate pdf document. You may use or adapt the templates for the CV of the project coordinator and the letters of endorsement to suit the needs of the respective project coordinator/institution. However, ensure that all relevant content is included as stated in the respective template. Please note that the application must be submitted in English.

6.2. Application Documents

6.2.1. Project Proposal

The template for the project proposal provided on the KoEF website must be used. The project proposal consists of the following sections:

- 1) Project Overview
- 2) Abstract
- 3) Cooperation and Partnership

- 4) Project Design and Scientific Quality
- 5) Contribution to the SDGs and Added Values
- 6) Results and Sustainability
- 7) Risk Management and Cost-Effectiveness
- 8) List of References

The project proposal **must not exceed 12,000 words** for the whole document.

6.2.2. Abstract

Please copy the abstract from the project proposal and upload it in pdf format.

6.2.3. Financing Plan

The template for the financing plan provided on the KoEF website must be used.

The financing plan provides an overview of the costs requested for funding by KoEF along three categories:

- OUTGOING costs requested for funding by KoEF, i.e. from Austria to the partner country
- INCOMING costs requested for funding by KoEF, i.e. from the partner country to Austria
- Material costs requested for funding by KoEF, only if they are essential and specifically relevant for the project

Project funding is only intended as a grant and is not designed to cover the entire costs of the project. Thus, the financing plan also has to include the total expected costs (excluding staff costs) and funding sources.

Please note: As stipulated in the Special Guideline on the “Maßnahmen zur Internationalisierung/Measures for Internationalisation” (GZ: BMBWF-2024-0.205.097) the grant recipient must ensure the implementation of the project through the use of appropriate **own funds**. This must be clearly presented in the financing plan. If no own funds (Eigenmittel) are indicated in the financing plan, the application will be considered incomplete and will not meet the formal eligibility criteria.

6.2.4. CV of the Project Coordinator

The template for the CV of the project coordinator (CV template) from the KoEF website can be used or adjusted to fit the requirement of the respective project coordinator. In this case, however, ensure that all relevant content is included as stated in the template.

6.2.5. Letters of Endorsement of All Participating Institutions

The template for letters of endorsement (LOE template) from the KoEF website can be used or adjusted to fit the requirements of the respective institutions. In these cases, however, ensure that all relevant content is included as stated in the template. The letters of endorsement have to be signed by an authorized signatory of the respective institution. The letters of endorsement of all participating institutions, i.e. the coordinating institution and all partner institutions, must be compiled and uploaded as one pdf file.

7. Checklist on Formal Requirements

Eligibility Criteria

- + Only researchers (PhD holders) affiliated with an Austrian public university or research performing institution are eligible for application, submission and coordination of a project.
- + The project coordinator must hold at least a PhD.
- + All participating researchers must either be PhD students or postdoctoral researchers. Master's students are not eligible to participate.
- + Researchers from at least one public university or research performing institution located in Austria and one state-accredited university or research performing institution in any country of the Global South classified as "least developed countries", "other low income countries" and "lower middle income countries and territories" (excl. India) as defined in the DAC-list of the OECD 2022/2023 must be involved in each project.

Project Requirements

- + The project duration is 24 months.
- + The maximum funding amount of 40,000 euros per project must not be exceeded.
- + Compliance with financial regulations:
 - KoEF can only provide allowances for PhD students and PhD holders travelling to and from Austria.
 - For incoming and outgoing mobility, the daily allowance must not exceed EUR 180 per day or EUR 2,160 per month (1 month = 30 days). The maximum duration per person per stay of three months (i.e. three times EUR 2,160 = EUR 6,480 total allowance) must not be exceeded. Travel costs are limited to EUR 2,000 per person per trip (economy class, transport to/from airport only) and must not be exceeded.
 - Material costs for a project must not exceed 5,000 euros in total.
 - The use of own funds (Eigenmittel) has to be indicated in the financing plan

Application Requirements

- + The application has to be in English.
- + Submission only via the StipOnline portal. The basic data for the project must be entered in this portal and the application documents uploaded. The documents to be uploaded are Project Proposal (pdf), Abstract (pdf), CV of the Project Coordinator (pdf file), Letters of Endorsement of all participating institutions (compiled and uploaded as one pdf file), Financing Plan (excel file).
- + The templates for the project proposal and the financing plan provided on the KoEF website must be used.
- + The document Project Proposal must not exceed 12,000 words.
- + The document CV of the Project Coordinator must include all information as listed in the CV template.

- + The Letters of Endorsement of all participating institutions have to be compiled and uploaded as one pdf file. They must be signed by the authorized signatory of the respective institutions. They must include all information as provided in the LoE template. LoEs from all participating institutions are necessary, i.e. the coordinating institution and all partner institutions.
- + The document Financing Plan must comply with the guidelines and be completed in full.
- + The application must be submitted within the deadline.

8. Review and Selection Process

The KoEF Office at OeAD checks whether the project applications fulfil the formal criteria. Formally correct proposals are evaluated by two independent reviewers for each proposal. They evaluate the project proposals individually and submit their reviews to the KoEF Office. The reviews include a scoring matrix (max. 100 points) and narrative assessments.

The evaluation criteria are:

- Project Design and Scientific Quality, Cooperation and Partnership (max. 50 points)
See Project Proposal Sections 2-4, CV, Letters of Endorsement, Financing Plan
- Contribution to the SDGs and Added Values (max. 20 points)
See Project Proposal Section 5
- Results and Sustainability (max. 20 points)
See Project Proposal Section 6
- Risk Management and Cost-Effectiveness (max. 10 points)
See Project Proposal Section 7, Financing Plan

The ranking is based on the average score of the evaluations (maximum score 100). The list of selected projects has to be approved by the BMFWF.

9. Disbursements of Funds and Reporting

Disbursement of funding to the institutional account (no disbursement to private accounts).

A disbursement of 50 per cent of the funding per project is made to an account of the institution of the project coordinator after the contract has been signed. Further 25 per cent are disbursed after approval of the mid-term report. The remaining max. 25 per cent of the project budget will be transferred after approval of the final report.

The mid-term as well as the final report must include a scientific and a financial report. The reports have to be in English and have to be submitted by the project coordinator within 2 months after the end of the reporting period. Failure to report will automatically result in the termination of the KoEF project and the requirement to return undocumented funds to OeAD.

Presence at the research location is mandatory for all projects; failure to comply may result in the termination of the project and reclaiming of funds.