Guidelines for dedicated funding for environment and climate interventions 2022-2026

Adopted by the SMC board on August 24th, 2021.

These Guidelines:

- describe the purpose of SMC's dedicated funding for environment and climate interventions.
- define the basic requirements for applications to SMC under this initiative.
- explain the application procedure and how SMC assesses the applications.
- describe key perspectives to consider in your application, including the resilience approach.
- describe some relevant areas to explore regarding environment and climate change.
- provide a list for further reading.

In the Guidelines we use the word "interventions" to describe the various programs and projects implemented by our member organisations and their partners around the world.

Important concepts relevant to environment and climate interventions are briefly described in the Guidelines. Please find more information in our list for Further reading on page 10.

1. Purpose of the dedicated funding

As part of SMC's new strategy for 2022-2026, SMC wants to promote sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The purpose of the dedicated funding is to contribute to a green transition[1] and sustainable livelihood systems, based on a resilience approach, so

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[1] Green transition means that resource constraints must be respected, and resilient systems rewarded. This includes rapidly reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the society's dependence on fossil fuels. The use and management of natural resources needs to be done based on the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity.

that our global community will remain within the limits of the planetary boundaries.[2]

The dedicated funding for environment and climate interventions is part of our Sida-funded development cooperation. It is a way to boost our member organisations' engagement in sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

We strive for as many member organisations as possible to apply for this dedicated funding. We hope that this will lead to broad impact and learning within our network. We want to promote interventions with an emphasis on innovation, advocacy, networking, monitoring, learning and knowledge dissemination.

2. How to apply

2.1 Application requirements

Application for funding is only open for member organisations that have ongoing development interventions in cooperation with SMC. All applications should be in line with SMC's Guidelines for Development Cooperation Grants and relevant policies.

Time frame and total budget

Each member organisation can make only one application for dedicated funding for the first three years (2022-2024) of SMC's new strategic period. In early 2024, we will make a review of the outcomes of the dedicated funding and these guidelines.

Interventions should preferably be planned over at least two years, but no longer than five years. The maximum total budget for an intervention is 1.5 million SEK.

Possible areas to focus on

Interventions should focus on any of the following areas:

- Rights to a healthy environment, and environmental and climate justice
- Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) linked to climate and/or environment action
- Natural resource management, land rights and livelihood
- Biodiversity
- Disaster risk reduction and/or climate change adaptation

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[2] For more information, see section "Further reading".

- Ecosystem restoration and/or nature-based solutions
- Carbon neutrality.

Required components

Interventions should include at least one but preferably two or more of the following components:

- action research[3] and evaluation
- development of cooperation with informal actors or networks
- actions for advocacy on local and national level
- improved adaptive and participatory approaches with local communities in focus
- method development
- pilot project
- pre-study or baseline.

Linking up to relevant frameworks and initiatives

All interventions must be clearly linked to relevant global frameworks, such as Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement and/or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and their specific goals and indicators.

All interventions must also be linked to relevant global, national, or local initiatives related to sustainable environment and climate action and to local strategies and plans for development.

2.2 Application procedure

Contact us at SMC before you start to plan your application for the dedicated funding. This way we can discuss the optimal way for designing and submitting the application.

Deadline for applications

Submit the application no later than May 31st for approved interventions to start in January the following year.

Submit the application no later than February 1st for approved interventions to start in July of the same year.

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[3] Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out (infed.org).

Three ways to apply

The member organisation can apply for dedicated funding in three ways. We prefer applications that are connected to ongoing development interventions (see 1-2 below):

1) Include a specific environment and/or climate action component within a new development program or project application presented by May 31ˢᵗ. This promotes aid-effectiveness as parts of the program or project can be supported by dedicated funding.

2) Add an environment and/or climate action component to an ongoing program or project granted prior to 2022. This is possible in one of two ways:

- a revised proposal for the intervention (see instructions below).
- a presentation of a separate proposal but with the costs included in the budget of the ongoing intervention. This will be managed as one intervention with a common reporting.

3) A proposal independent from other interventions. You can use our application template but we encourage organisations to use their own templates.

Instructions for revising the proposal for an ongoing intervention

- Use track changes when revising your proposal and budget.
- Clearly specify adjustments of goals and expected results/behavioral changes, approaches and methods, and additional activities.
- Describe how the partner organisation will monitor the additional actions.
- Describe and justify additional costs.
- Clearly specify the results of additional actions for environment or climate in annual reports and final narrative reports.

2.3 Assessment of applications

We assess applications in accordance with our Guidelines for development cooperation grants and relevant policies.

We also assess if the intervention:

- has a systematic resilience approach includes at least one of the required components mentioned above
- has a focus on innovation and/or advocacy and a strong emphasis on networking, monitoring, learning and knowledge disseminationis based on the local context.

We strive for as many member organisations as possible to apply for dedicated funding. We hope this will promote broader impact and learning within our network.

2.4 How to report interventions with dedicated funding

If dedicated funding has been added to an ordinary intervention, the member organisation must clearly report the additional actions in the ordinary report of the intervention.

The same terms of agreement and reporting deadlines apply for interventions with dedicated funding as for ordinary interventions. We encourage you to use your own reporting formats. If you prefer, we at SMC can provide templates for reporting.

3. Key perspectives to consider in planning

3.1 Use a systematic resilience approach

All interventions should have a systematic resilience approach. Resilience is the capacity of an individual, a community, or a country, to cope with and be able to handle negative changes, shocks, and uncertainty while continuing to develop.[4] Strengthening resilience capacities is fundamental to promote sustainable development. With resilience capacities we mean:

1) absorptive capacity – for immediate management of shocks and stresses.

2) adaptive capacity – to adapt to shocks and stresses in a longer term.

3) transformative capacity – to transform the way that households, communities and organisations act and operate.[5]

To be able to face threats, resilience is the lens through which we should look upon all development programming.

We at SMC have facilitated the development of a basic resilience tool together with member and implementing partner organisations. We recommend that you use SMC's tool for resilience to design your intervention.

3.2 Consider the gender perspective and social inclusion

Exploring gender norms and inequalities[6] is key when addressing challenges and solutions concerning the environment and climate change. Uneven power

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[4] Definition is included in SMC's "Climate and environmental policy".
[5] For more information, see section "Further reading.
[6] For more information, see section "Further reading.

dynamics in all spheres of public and private life make women and girls uniquely and disproportionately affected by climate change. Other power relations concerning for example age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and disability make certain groups of women or girls and men or boys even more vulnerable to climate change and environment degradation.

All interventions should explore gender norms when addressing environment and climate challenges and recognise the special value of including vulnerable groups of women and men in decision-making and action planning.

3.3 Connect the dots between climate change and conflict

There is no direct and linear relationship between climate change and violent conflict[7], but under certain circumstances climate-related change can influence factors that lead to or exacerbate conflict. Scarcity of natural resource may then lead to local competition which, in the absence of institutions for conflict resolution, become unmanageable. Countries with protracted conflict are less able to cope with climate change, precisely because their ability to adapt is weakened by conflict.[8]

Regardless of the cause of conflict, we at SMC believe that conflict sensitivity and peace building, are crucial in the work for a green transition and for development of sustainable livelihood systems. Therefore, all interventions need to include a proper conflict sensitivity analysis and should preferably also promote peacebuilding in the local context to support the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.[9]

We want to encourage organisations to deepen the knowledge of how security risks posed by climate change interact with one another. For example, how water scarcity affects food security, and how food security could increase social unrest and violence?

3.4 Develop and use religious literacy

We at SMC describe religious literacy as an understanding that beliefs and religious actors play a significant role in shaping society, but it is also a sign of our own ability to relate to and work with these ideas and actors. We need to see religion and belief as explanatory factors, without diminishing or exaggerating their significance, and understand how they interact with other factors in the contexts of people's lives.

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[7] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[8] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[9] For more information, see section "Further reading".

There is a variety of faith-based actors in our network. Their legitimacy and spiritual narrative can strengthen global environmental, climate and resilience work. At SMC, we believe that bilingualism, meaning the ability to speak both the language of development and the language of faith, can help address rights bearers in a holistic way.

All interventions should include conscious strategies to work with religious and non-religious actors and to relate to the various power structures and religious values that the project encounters. SMC has developed a [tool box for religious literacy](#) that can guide partners in how to navigate in a religious landscape and improve their religious literacy to obtain better outcomes of their work.

4. Relevant environment and climate change interventions

Here we specify examples of relevant and interconnected areas to explore and address when designing your intervention.

4.1 Environmental and climate justice

The universal human rights include the right to a healthy environment. This means that environment and climate challenges should be addressed from a human rights perspective. Environmental justice normally refers to a social movement that focuses on the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Climate justice is a term used to frame global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature.

We encourage interventions with a justice approach to environment and climate, which have a strong focus on advocacy on a local as well as a national level.

4.2 The future generation and the environment and climate change

Environment and climate change have disproportionate effects on children and young people, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable societies. Climate and environmental change are increasing the inequalities that children and young people are already experiencing in, for example, unequal access to health, education, participation, protection, work and sexual reproductive health and rights.

We encourage initiatives that ensure that children and young people have the right to a healthy and safe environment and climate. It is the future generations that will bear the effects of our polluted planet. Maintaining the rights of children and young people and strengthening their meaningful participation in climate

and environmental decisions and actions is therefore a priority. It is also important to address social norms, attitudes and methods that increase the vulnerability of children and young people to climate change, environmental degradation and disasters.

4.3 Natural resource management, livelihood and land rights

Unsustainable development systems, including agriculture and forestry, have led to a deterioration in the conditions for people's livelihoods. This needs to be addressed through improved natural resource management (NRM). Management of land, water, soil, plants and animals is the starting point for people's livelihood and for food security. Regulations of land rights and management systems of common land[10] are crucial for achieving sustainable rural development.

We encourage interventions where civil society organisations (CSOs) play a significant role in local actions to influence policymakers. This way they can ensure both proper natural resource management and that local populations and indigenous people's right to land is respected. This is a precondition for sustainable livelihoods.

4.4 Biodiversity

Climate change, industrial agriculture and unsustainable management of natural resources are some of the factors that have contributed to the decline of biodiversity[11] at such a rate that researchers are talking about a mass extinction of species.

We encourage interventions where civil society organisations are involved in defending biodiversity and influencing policymakers to act and ensure the protection of a biodiversity of species.

4.5 Disaster risk reduction and Climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks and managing residual risks. This contributes to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development. Climate change adaption (CCA) means taking action to prepare for and adjusting to both the current effects of climate change and its predicted impacts in the future.[12] DRR and CCA overlap to some extent, though DRR is a broader concept as it includes disaster management.

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[10] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[11] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[12] For more information, see section "Further reading".

SMC encourages the promotion of local initiatives for DRR and CCA to strengthen resilience. It is important to include people and their communities at the frontline so that they can participate, influence policymakers and take decisions on risk informed development policies and practices.[13]

4.6 Freedom of religion or belief and religious literacy

Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) gives every person the right to have, to change, or to leave his or her religion or belief. It is a human right to practice one's religion or belief alone or together with others, privately or in public, for example through worship, preaching, or teaching. FoRB is one of the core freedoms of opinion that also enables people to criticise values and norms among both moral and legal duty bearers.

We encourage interventions that recognise and use FoRB and religious literacy by cooperating with faith-based actors in environment and climate actions. We and other actors have developed tools that can guide partners in our network to increase their understanding of working with FoRB and religious literacy.

4.7 Ecosystem restoration and Nature based solutions

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration[14] aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change, and prevent the mass extinction of species. The role of nature-based solutions [15] in tackling the environment and climate crises that has gained the world's attention.

We encourage interventions that contribute to global and national efforts for ecosystem restoration, including biodiversity, as well as nature-based solution approaches.

4.8 Carbon neutrality

Carbon neutrality, or net zero CO_2 emissions, refers to carbon dioxide emissions. It is the state of balance between the CO_2 emitted into the atmosphere and the CO_2 removed from the atmosphere (according to the definition of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC).[16]

We encourage interventions for development towards carbon neutral operations, organisations, and societies.

[13] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[14] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[15] For more information, see section "Further reading".
[16] For more information, see section "Further reading".

5. Further reading

This reading list provides more in-depth information on the topics mentioned in these guidelines. The figures refer to notes in the document.

2) The nine planetary boundaries
https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html

5) The Future is a Choice - Absorb, adapt, transform Resilience Capacities
https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620178/gd-resilience-capacities-absorb-adapt-transform-250117-en.pdf?%20sequence=4&hx0026;isAllowed=y

6) Feminist Policies for Climate Justice
https://concord.se/rapporter/feminist-policies-for-climate-justice

7) The relationship between climate change and violent conflict
https://publikationer.sida.se/contentassets/c571800e01e448ac9dce2d097ba125a1/working-paper---climate-change-and-conflict.pdf

8) Seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict
https://www.icrc.org/en/document/climate-change-and-conflict

9) Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (Guidance Note for Sida)
https://publikationer.sida.se/English/publications/166821/humanitarian-development--peace-nexus

10) Elinor Ostroms studies about "Governing the Commons"
https://beyonsintractability.org/bksum/ostrom-governing

11) UN environment programme and biodiversity
https://www.unep.org/unep-and-biodiversity

12) EU Adaptation Strategy
https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation_en

13) Cookbook on Institutionalising Sustainable CBDRM
https://cbdrm.org/wp/wpcontent/uploads/2019/06/CBDRM_cookbook_A4_40pp_ENG.pdf

14) Preventing, Halting and Reversing the degradation of Ecosystems worldwide
https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/

15) University of Oxford, 2021: Nature based Solution initiative:
https://www.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/

16) Glossary — Global Warming of 1.5 °C (ipcc.ch)