

Call for Expression of Interest for partnership to strengthen research capacity in Zambia

Sida announces the intention to initiate bilateral research cooperation between Sweden and Zambia and the opening of a call for Expressions of Interest for Sida-funded **collaboration between University of Zambia and Swedish universities possibly in cooperation with other Swedish research organisations**. The Expression of Interest call concerns three-year collaborative partnerships between University of Zambia and Swedish partners for strengthening institutional research capacity at University of Zambia in the **thematic areas climate change, renewable energy and sustainable mining**. Partnerships are also sought for the establishment of a grants office, supervisor training and mentorship courses, training courses for doctoral students, and development and implementation of an integrated research information management system.

The collaboration is part of Sweden's efforts to support strengthening of institutional research and innovation capacity in selected partner countries, contributing to increased capacity to carry out research relevant for poverty reduction and socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development. In addition, it aims at promoting professional skills development at postgraduate level supporting applied research and innovation with direct relevance to the public and private sectors in Zambia.

Anticipated collaboration period: 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2028

Call deadline: 31 May 2025

Context

The objective of Sweden's international development cooperation is to create conditions to improve the lives of people living in poverty and oppression and its implementation is guided by the Government's policy *Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth* focusing on a long-term perspective, transparency and effectiveness to be able to better tackle multiple global challenges.

Sida's research cooperation within Swedish development cooperation is guided by the *Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation in research for poverty reduction and sustainable development 2022-2028*. The overall objective of the strategy is to support activities that will contribute to enhanced research that is of high scientific standard and relevance to poverty reduction and sustainable development in least-developed countries and regions. Activities aim to develop research capacity in the long-term and enhance sustainable research environments and are characterised by equal partnerships, local ownership and promotion of research systems and promoting values such as research ethics, democratic working methods and gender equality.



In an effort to identify candidate countries for potential new bilateral research cooperation, a Sida-commissioned consultancy found favourable conditions for initiating bilateral research cooperation in Zambia and identified University of Zambia as a suitable partner for such collaboration. University of Zambia showed high interest in initiating research collaboration with Sweden and explained that such a programme would be well-aligned with the ambition to become a research-intense university with focus on impactful research and innovation responsive of the needs of the country and contributing to socio-economic development.

With the intention of initiating bilateral research cooperation between Sweden and Zambia, Sida invited University of Zambia to submit a Concept Note for a three-year pilot phase during 2026-2028. In the Concept Note (see section Documents), University of Zambia proposes to focus the pilot phase on up to three thematic subprogrammes covering research and capacity strengthening in the areas climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable mining. Each thematic subprogramme may include resources for postdocs (sandwich-mode for up to two years with a maximum of six months per year at Swedish university), equipment, and research, and involves the schools of Agricultural Sciences, Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences, Mines, and Natural Sciences at University of Zambia. In addition, University of Zambia proposes research management and support components focusing on the establishment of a grants office, supervisor training and mentorship courses, training courses for doctoral students, and development and implementation of an integrated research information management system. For all subprogrammes and research management and support components, University of Zambia seeks cooperation with Swedish universities possibly in cooperation with other Swedish research organisations.

The tentative maximum budget for the three-year pilot phase 2026-2028 is 50 million Swedish kronor. The budget will cover programme costs at University of Zambia and potential Swedish partner organisations. Please note that Sida has not made any formal decision on support and that any potential budget allocation is subject to Swedish Parliamentary appropriations.

Eligibility – who can apply

Researchers employed at accredited Swedish universities and/or consortia of accredited Swedish universities and other Swedish research organisations interested in entering into partnership with University of Zambia to contribute to the strengthening of institutional research capacity in one or more of the above mentioned subprogrammes and/or other components are invited to express their interest.

For inquiries concerning the application process, content of the cooperation and the further process, please contact Markus Moll, Markus.Moll@sida.se, and Eren Zink, Eren.Zink@sida.se. The deadline for the Expression of Interest is 31 May 2025.

Evaluation and selection

Please note that all Expressions of Interest submitted to Sida become official documents and that Sida, in accordance with the principle of public access to official information, may have to disclose



documents if requested by someone. [More information about this and how Sida processes personal data can be found here.](#)

The selection of Swedish partners will be made in two steps:

1) All Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by Sida using the following criteria:

1. Eligibility criteria and adherence to Sida's instructions;
2. Relevant academic, scientific and research management competence;
3. Relevance to University of Zambia's requests in the Concept Note with special focus on scientific relevance, capacity building relevance and quality of research and research training.

Information about the first selection is expected to be communicated on 13 June 2025.

2) All eligible Expressions of Interest will be forwarded to University of Zambia for selection of up to three Swedish partners or consortia of Swedish partners for each subprogramme for face-to-face or digital meetings in view of potential partnership. These meetings are anticipated to take place in September 2025. Following partner visits, University of Zambia will decide which Swedish partners to collaborate with in each subprogramme.

Information about the results of the second selection is expected to be communicated 31 July 2025.

Next steps

University of Zambia and the selected Swedish partners will be invited by Sida to develop a joint full programme proposal under the lead of University of Zambia during the autumn of 2025. Details will be communicated and an invitation for an information meeting will follow.