

Fundraising GUIDE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FUNDRAISING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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Hello!

Aarhus is an international city, and it is Hello Aarhus' mission to make our city easier to navigate for internationals and businesses. Besides being a single point of entry to existing initiatives in Aarhus, we bring together more than 80 local partners working with international newcomers, students and companies.

One of our main priorities is to strengthen the international ecosystem in Aarhus by increasing the visibility of existing initiatives and supporting organisations in developing new projects and navigating the Danish funding landscape. And we hope to encourage many more organisations to explore fundraising with this guide.

Fundraising is a skill – and like any skill, it takes practice. That's why we've made this guide for you – whether you have never applied for funding before or already have a bit of experience. This guide is designed to introduce you to the basics of fundraising and help you turn an idea into a stronger and more fundable project.

Fundraising is not just about writing applications. It is about developing good projects using your creativity, analytical thinking and communication skills along the way. It's a process of exploration, decision-making and storytelling.

We hope this guide inspires more organisations to explore the possibilities of fundraising and that it will make the Danish funding landscape a little easier to navigate – especially for the internationals living in Denmark.

Enjoy!

What is fundraising?

Put simply, fundraising is about finding the resources you need to turn an idea into reality. Most often, this means money, but it can also be in-kind donations for example.

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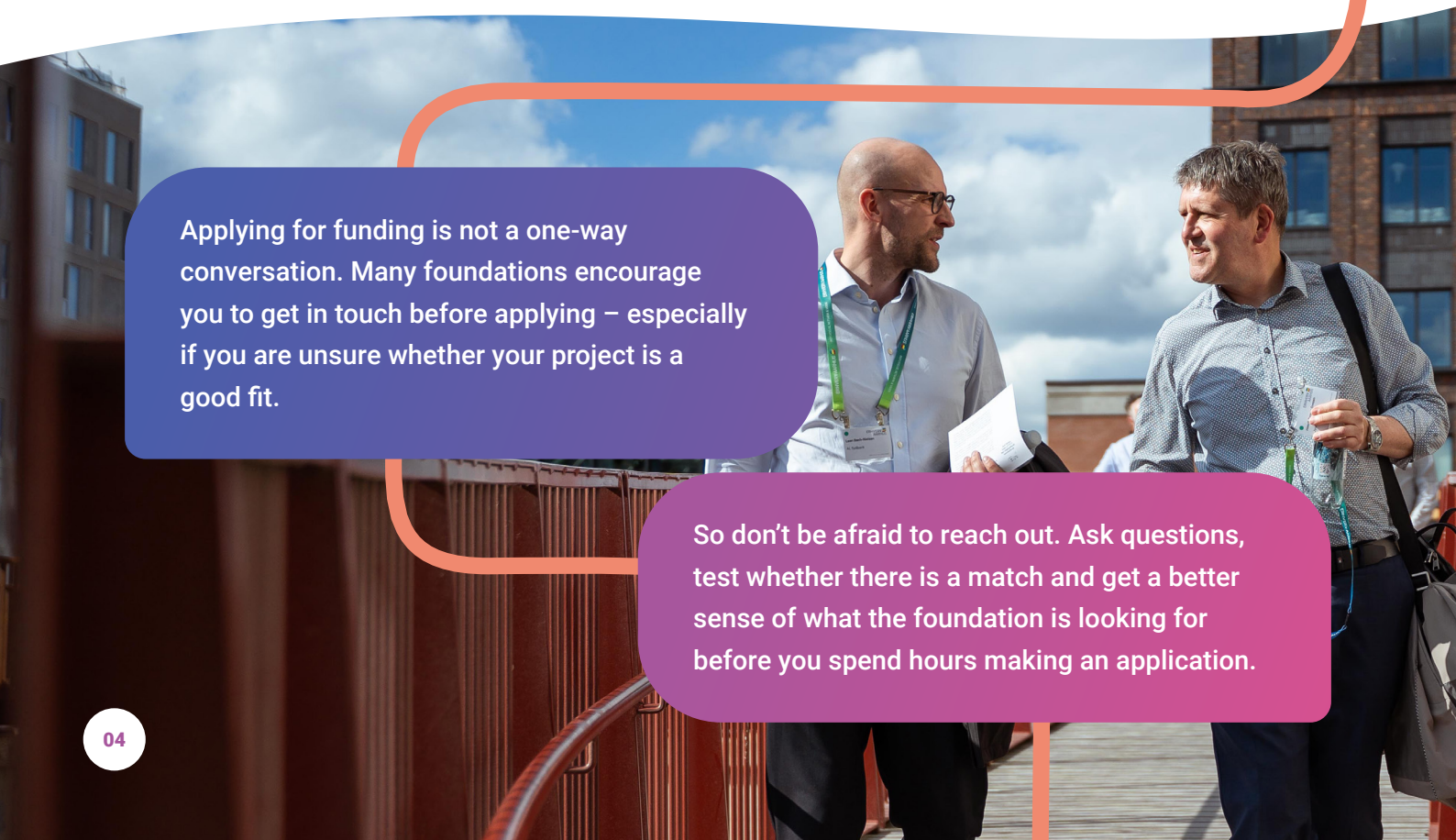
grant-awarding foundations

DKK 27.5 billion

granted to philanthropic purposes in 2024

Denmark has over 3,800 grant-awarding foundations as well as a wide range of public funding programmes. In 2024, DKK 27.5 billion was granted to philanthropic purposes. In other words, there are plenty of funding opportunities out there – the challenge is finding the right one for your project.

There are many ways to fund a project, including crowdfunding, sponsorships and membership fees. Here, we focus on grants: From developing your project and finding the right funder to writing the application.



Applying for funding is not a one-way conversation. Many foundations encourage you to get in touch before applying – especially if you are unsure whether your project is a good fit.

So don't be afraid to reach out. Ask questions, test whether there is a match and get a better sense of what the foundation is looking for before you spend hours making an application.

Where can you apply for funding?



1 Private foundations

Private foundations play an important role in the Danish funding landscape. They vary in size, purpose and the types of projects they support. Examples include Nordea-fonden, Velliv Foreningen, The Tietgen Foundation and The VELUX Foundation.

2 Regional and municipal funding programmes

Municipalities and regions offer funding programmes that typically support initiatives within specific geographical and thematic areas. Examples include §18 funding for local voluntary social initiatives and funding programmes offered by Region Midtjylland.

3 National funding programmes

The Danish state offers a wide range of funding programmes within different policy areas. Perhaps the most well-known example is Statens Kunstfond, but funding opportunities are available across several ministries and government agencies.

You can find an overview of national funding programmes and application deadlines at Statens Tilskudspuljer.

4 EU funding programmes

EU funding programmes are often relevant for larger projects and may involve partnerships with organisations in several countries. Requirements vary between programmes and may include co-financing, international partnerships, extensive documentation and reporting.

Applying for EU funding can be complex. If you are considering EU funding, you can seek guidance from Central Denmark EU Office. Relevant programmes include Interreg ØKS and Erasmus+.

With so many foundations and funding programmes out there, finding the right one can be challenging. Searchable online databases and AI can make the process easier and help you find funding opportunities that match your project, although some require a paid subscription.

Not sure where to start? As a Hello Aarhus partner, you can reach out to us for help developing your project idea and finding relevant funding opportunities.

How do I choose the right foundation?



Competition for funding is high. Among almost 50,000 applications submitted to 31 major Danish foundations in 2023 around 60% were rejected. Even a strong project can receive a rejection if it's not a good fit with the foundation's purpose and priorities.

That's why it's worth doing your homework before you start writing. Spending a little time on research can save you hours later.
You're well on your way, if you:

1. **Explore the foundation's focus areas.** Start with the foundation's website and get a sense of what it wants to achieve through its funding. A foundation might have several funding programmes with different requirements for purpose, activities and application deadlines.

2. **Read the foundation's charter.** The charter sets out the foundation's formal purposes and what it is allowed to support.

3. **Look at previously supported projects.** Take some time to look at what the foundation has previously supported. This can tell you a lot about how the foundation interprets its priorities in practice, the types of projects it tends to support and the typical size of its grants.

4. **Talk to the foundation.** Some foundations allow you to submit a pitch or preliminary application before developing a full proposal. This can help you find out whether there is a good match. The same goes when you receive a rejection. If possible, be curious on possibilities and let-downs.

Your project does not have to match every aspect of a foundation's strategy or resemble projects it has previously supported. But there should be a clear connection between what you want to achieve and what the foundation wants to support.



What does an application contain?

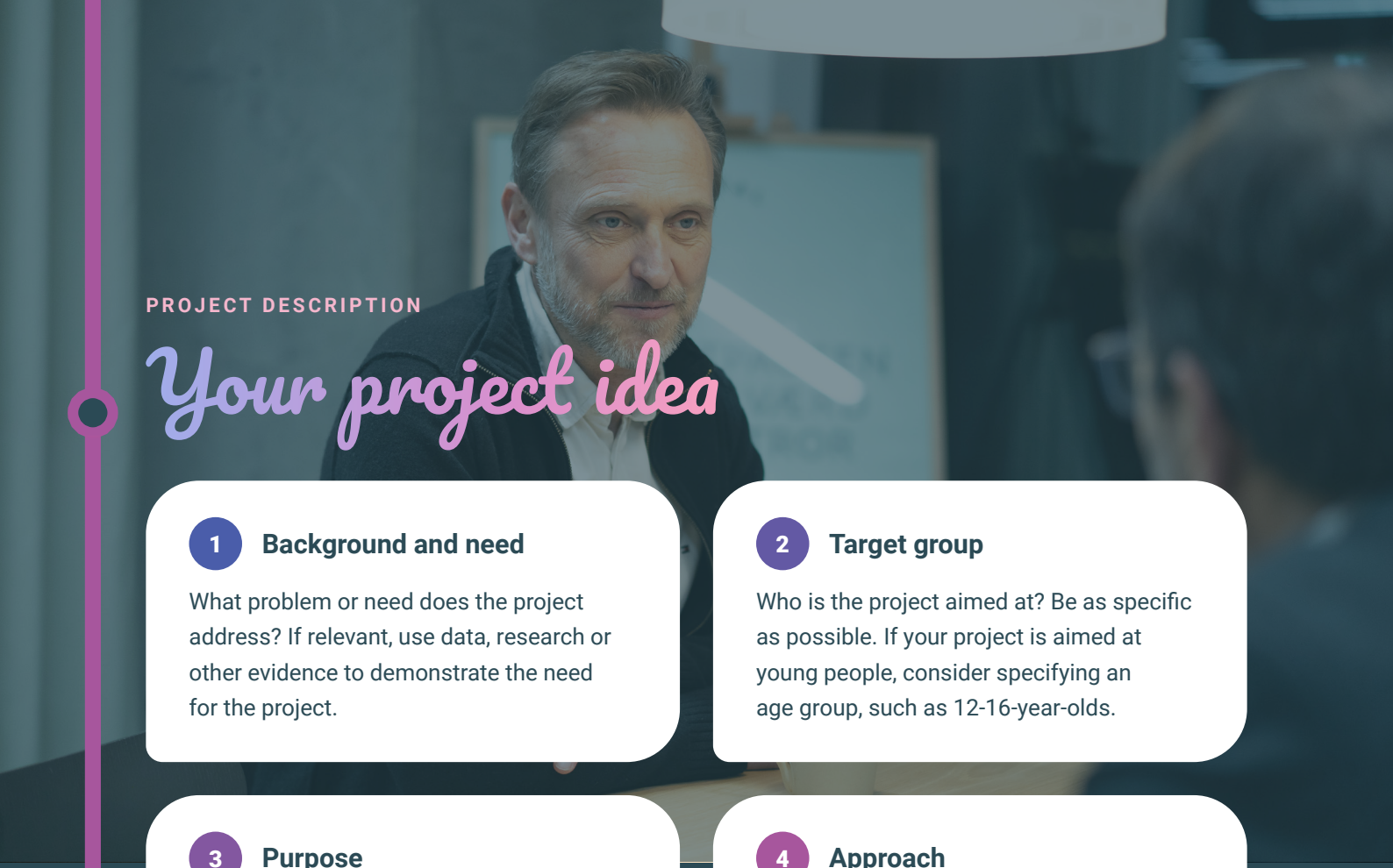
Every foundation has its own application process, so no two applications look exactly alike. The good news is that you will come across many of the same elements again and again.

The project description and budget are usually the two main components, although the length and level of detail will depend on the foundation and the size of your project. So, think of the elements below as a guide rather than a checklist – you won't necessarily need to include everything in every application.

Project description

A good project description should make it easy for someone outside your organisation to understand the project. Why is it important? What do you want to achieve and how? And why is your organisation well-positioned to deliver it?

Remember to make the connection between your project and the foundation's priorities clear. Why is this project relevant to this particular foundation?



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Your project idea

1 Background and need

What problem or need does the project address? If relevant, use data, research or other evidence to demonstrate the need for the project.

2 Target group

Who is the project aimed at? Be as specific as possible. If your project is aimed at young people, consider specifying an age group, such as 12-16-year-olds.

3 Purpose

What change does the project aim to create? Differentiate between the overall purpose and more specific objectives.

4 Approach

How will the project create change, and why do you believe this approach will work? Think of the approach as the reasoning behind your activities: Why do you expect these specific activities to create the desired change?

5 Activities

Describe the specific activities you plan to carry out as part of the project. This could be five workshops, mapping existing services, or creating a digital platform. Describe the scope, frequency and expected number of participants where relevant.

6 Outcomes

What changes do you expect your activities to create for the target group? Consider both short- and long-term outcomes where relevant.

Need help turning your idea into a strong project? Use our simple project development tools to visualise your project logic, challenge your assumptions and strengthen your project before you start writing.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Planning and delivery

Organisation and partnerships	Why is your organisation well-positioned to deliver this project? Who are your partners? What are their roles? And what do they contribute?
Timeline	Outline the milestones of the project and, if relevant, different phases of the project. Show that it is realistic to carry out the planned activities within the timeframe.
Evaluation	How will you know whether the project has achieved its objectives? Consider how you will document results and capture key learnings along the way. Larger or more complex projects may require an external evaluation.
Continuation and sustainability	What happens when the external funding ends? Should the project or parts of it continue – and if so, how?
Communication	How will you share relevant results, methods and learnings with the people and organisations that can benefit from them?





Budget

The project budget is more than a list of expenses. Think of your budget as the financial version of your project description. The two should tell the same story.

A clear and realistic budget shows the foundation that you have thought through what it will actually take to deliver the project. If you say you are going to run five workshops, your budget should show what those five workshops actually cost – for example staff hours, materials and venue rental.

Before you start, check whether the foundation has a budget template you need to use.

Typical expenses in a project budget

- Staff and project management
- External consultants
- Venue rental
- Materials and equipment
- Communication and marketing
- Travel and transport
- Catering
- Evaluation
- Administration

Once you know what the project will cost, the next question is: Where will the funding come from?

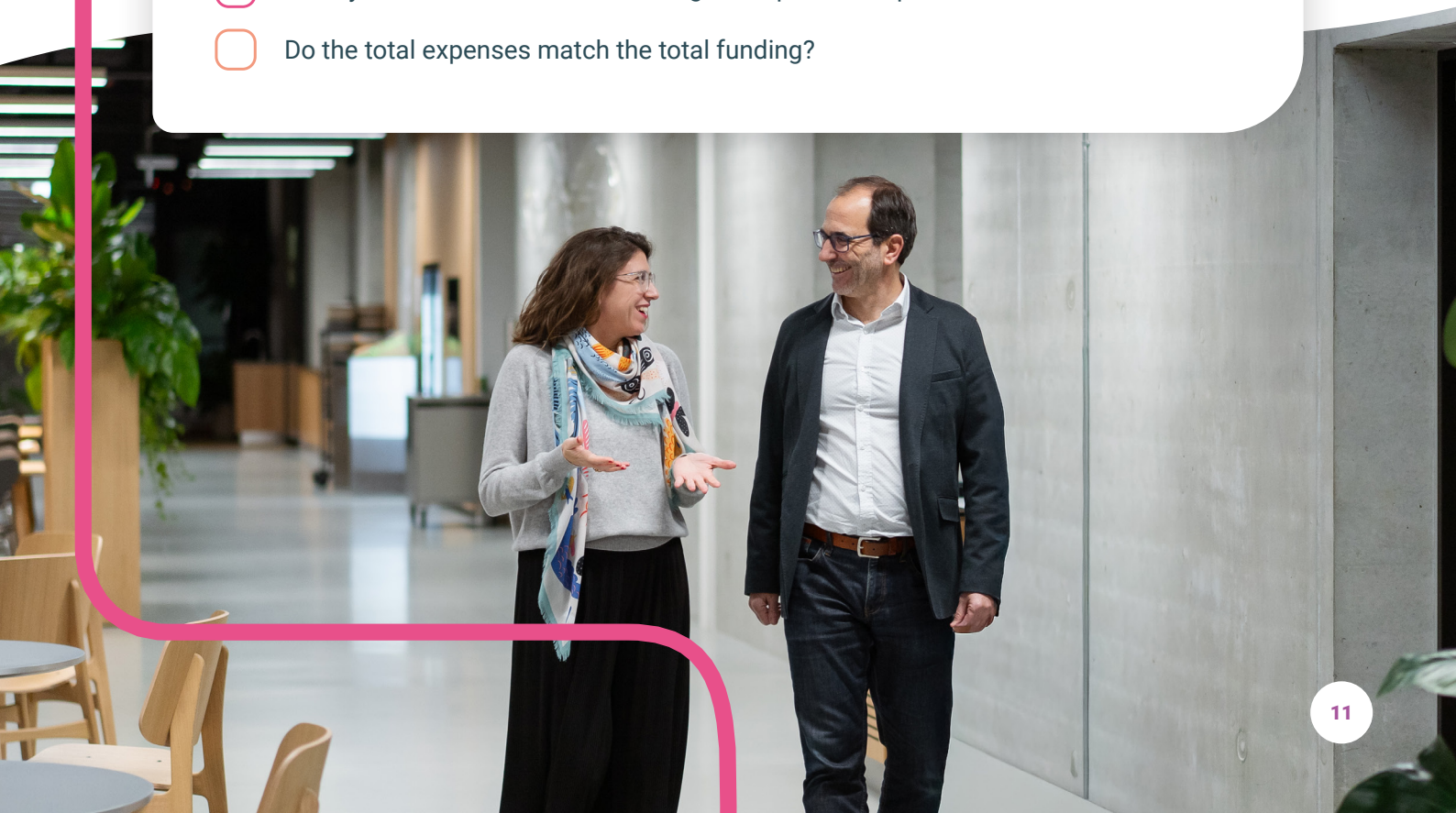
- The foundation you are applying to
- Your organisation's own contribution
- Other foundations or funding programmes
- Partner contributions
- In-kind contributions

Think beyond one funding source. Larger projects may combine grants from several foundations, public funding, partner contributions and your organisation's own contribution.

Always check what the foundation will and will not fund. Some foundations exclude specific types of expenses such as administration and salaries.

Before submitting, ask yourself:

- [ ] Does the budget reflect the activities described in the application?
- [ ] Have you included all the resources needed to carry out the project?
- [ ] Are the costs realistic and easy to understand?
- [ ] Is it clear how salaries, hours and other major costs have been calculated?
- [ ] Have you checked what the foundation will and will not fund?
- [ ] Have you used the foundation's budget template, if required?
- [ ] Do the total expenses match the total funding?



Now it's your turn

Start with your idea, be curious and do your research. Use the simple tools from this guide to develop a strong project, find the right funding and turn your idea into something that makes a difference.

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AARHUS KOMMUNE

ERHVERV AARHUS
INDFLYDELSE, NETVÆRK & VIDEN

From idea to project

A simple tool to help you develop and visualise your project logic.

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PROJECT TITLE:

1 UNDERSTAND THE NEED

Get a clear picture of the need you want to address – and where your project can make a difference.

TARGET GROUP

Who is the project for? Be specific. Think age, life situation, location, experience or role.

CHALLENGE / NEED

What problem or need are you addressing?
What happens if it is not addressed?

CAUSES

Why does this challenge exist?

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Who else is working with this issue and how?

GAP / OPPORTUNITY

What is missing? And how does your project fill the gap?
How does your project add value?

2 BUILD THE PROJECT

Turn your insights into a project that creates change. This section focuses on the logic of your process.

PURPOSE

What is the overall aim of your project?
What change do you want to create?

ACTIVITIES

Describe the key activities in your project.
Have in mind how your activities support the purpose of your project.

OUTPUTS

What will the project deliver?
Examples: 5 workshops, 100 participants, 1 new tool.

OUTCOMES / EXPECTED RESULTS

What changes do you expect to make – both short- and long-term? Consider both individual results for the participants and societal change.