



ARLA FOOD FOR HEALTH

Research Programme 2025/26

– Application Guidelines

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1. THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

These guidelines are intended to assist you in the application process when applying for a grant from Arla Food for Health (AFH). Please read these guidelines carefully before initiating the application process. The guidelines contain the complete call text as well as information regarding the application process and content requirements.

About the partnership

AFH is a public-private research partnership between University of Copenhagen, Aarhus University, Arla Foods a.m.b.a, and Arla Foods Ingredients. The vision is to *Discover health effects of dairy and dairy ingredients*.

In AFH, we are convinced that collaboration through independent research activities, both nationally and internationally, is crucial to address global health challenges. Our ambition is to foster world-class research that can be translated into new nutritional solutions with positive impact on human health. To achieve this, AFH supports high-quality research projects within the [research strategy](#). Read more about AFH at the [website](#).

Funding

In 2025/26, **DDK 10 million** is available for funding of research projects. The ambition is to fund 2-3 projects. However, it should be emphasized that there is no preferred budget size, and projects requiring a smaller or larger budget are welcome. The projects can be co-financed by other public or private foundations or fully financed through AFH. Finally, we urge applicants to create synergy with already ongoing AFH projects if possible and when relevant. Previously funded projects can be seen at <https://arlafoodforhealth.com/funded-research/>.

Eligibility

The main applicant must be affiliated to University of Copenhagen or Aarhus University, and we urge researchers from all career levels to apply. AFH strongly encourages co-applicants from other AFH partner institutions to promote collaboration in the partnership. Co-applicants or partners from international research institutions, as well as from non-AFH research institutions in Denmark, can also be involved in the projects.

2. AREAS OF SUPPORT

AFH's Research strategy

AFH emphasizes multidisciplinary research projects that ***bring Food Science and Health Science together***. This is due to the fact that dairy products and ingredients function both as individual components and as part of food matrices or dietary patterns affecting digestion, nutrient uptake, and metabolic response. AFH seeks to promote hypothesis driven research that uncovers health effects of dairy products and dairy ingredients, as well as the mechanisms behind. This interdisciplinary approach is rarely seen within traditional scientific disciplines and requires collaboration across scientific fields.

Regarding methodologies, the full range of food science approaches combined with *in vitro* or *in vivo* models, as well as human research studies, are welcomed depending on the purpose. For human studies both interventional and observational studies are welcomed, but clinical studies should be based on a strong mechanistic hypothesis or combined with experiments aimed at providing mechanistic insights. When dairy products and ingredients are investigated as part of dietary patterns, the specific role of dairy is of particular

interest. Finally, we welcome applications for pilot studies aimed at providing preliminary evidence to guide future studies within high risk, high gain areas.

In 2025/26, AFH seeks research proposals within the following areas:

- **Milk Processing and the Dairy Matrix.** Processing and formulation change the physical and chemical composition and properties of food products, and eventually impact how the human body responds to and handles the nutrients. In some cases, this might improve the health value of the final product, whereas other processes might have negative impact. We invite applications aimed at addressing this in the context of dairy products and ingredients. We are particularly interested in studies designed to explore underlying mechanisms related to digestion and absorption of the nutrients or studies assessing clinical outcomes.
- **Gut, Inflammation and Metabolic Health.** Diet can modulate gut microbiota composition and function, which is further linked to immune regulation and metabolic health. Chronic low-grade inflammation is thought to be a key driver of cardiometabolic and lifestyle-related diseases. Dairy products and ingredients have emerged as vehicles for microbiome-targeted interventions and modulators of inflammation. We invite applications aimed at addressing how dairy products and ingredients influence gut physiology or may attenuate or exacerbate inflammation alone or through interaction with the gut microbiota. We are particularly interested in studies that explore underlying mechanisms or assess clinical outcomes in at-risk populations.
- **Dairy and Preservation of Healthy Body Composition.** A healthy body composition is critical to prevent disease and stay healthy throughout life. We seek applications aimed at exploring the role of dairy-based interventions, either alone or in combination with other interventions, in promoting or preserving a healthy body composition. We are particularly interested in the role of dairy in weight loss in individuals with overweight and obesity, or their role in preserving lean body mass in at-risk populations prone to musculoskeletal decline.

AFH does not support:

- Testing of commercially available products or ingredients, unless they are used to address a research question of generic interest.
- Industrial product and process development.
- Major equipment investments.
- Individual research chairs and professorships.
- Non-dairy ingredient testing.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Submission of applications

The applications must be submitted via email to Andreas Buch Møller at abmoe@arlafoods.com.

Online info meetings

Online info meetings are hosted as scheduled below. This is an optional opportunity to meet and ask questions to the Head of AFH. The meetings will be informal and include an introduction to AFH, as well as a Q&A session.



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Review process

The applications will be reviewed by the independent external [Scientific Advisory Board](#) and ranked according to i) scientific quality and originality, ii) the applicant's qualifications and the research environment of the project, and iii) the ambition, methodology and feasibility of the project. After this, the [Steering Committee](#) review the proposals scored above average by the Scientific Advisory Board to assess if the application: (i) has a strategic fit to AFH, (ii) has business relevance for Arla Foods Amba or Arla Foods Ingredients, and (iii) demonstrates a collaborative partnership. The Steering Committee takes the final decision on projects to be funded.

The Head of AFH communicates the funding decision to the main applicants, including any requirement for amendments to the successful applicants. In case the selected, fully funded projects do not require all available funding, the Steering Committee may ask other selected applicants to revise their applications to fit the remaining funding.

Important dates

2025

- September 15 Call opens
- November 7 Online info meeting (optional)
 - 09:00-10:30 – Join [here](#)
 - 15:00-16:30 – Join [here](#)
- December 12 Online info meeting (optional)
 - 09:00-10:30 – Join [here](#)
 - 15:00-16:30 – Join [here](#)

2026

- January 5 Application deadline
- Primo March Funding decision communicated

4. APPLICATION CONTENT

Language

The application must be written in English.

Text and illustration

The application should not exceed five A4 pages (Calibri font, size 12, line spacing 1.15), excluding figures, budget and references.

Content

The application must include the following elements (in this order):

- 1) Project title and acronym.
- 2) The project's main objective.
- 3) Short project summary (max 15 lines).
- 4) Expected start and end dates.
- 5) An estimate of the project's total budget costs and the amount applied for in AFH. A full budget should be attached (budget template available on website). If co-funding from other public or private funding bodies is obtained or applied for this should be noted in the budget. It is not a prerequisite that funds are equally split between Aarhus University and University of Copenhagen, but collaboration between the AFH partners is desired.
- 6) Information on principal investigator (PI) and co-applicant(s):

- i) Name, title, affiliation, email, phone number.
- 7) Bank details and accounting contact:
 - i) Name of the bank and registration and account number.
 - ii) Accounting contact (name, address, phone, e-mail).
- 8) Project description:
 - i) Scientific rationale and hypotheses.
 - ii) Experimental design, work packages, methodology, research facilities, milestones, deliverables etc.
 - iii) Illustrations and preliminary data can be enclosed.
- 9) Foreseen project outcomes:
 - i) Relevance for the dairy industry.
 - ii) Short description of the innovation aspects, innovation potential, scientific and commercial perspectives.
 - iii) Potential impact on people's health.
- 10) Assessment of the risk of project failure and mitigating strategies.
- 11) Contribution to education - short description of the project's educational elements.
- 12) Publication plan.
- 13) Communication plan. Short description of potential messages, target audiences, relevant platforms and channels to be used. Furthermore, where appropriate, describe communication and interaction with wider policy and health authorities to facilitate that new research findings are included in decision-making processes and practices. Up to DDK 40,000 can be allocated for communication in the budget.
- 14) CV of main applicant and co-applicants should be enclosed (not included in the 5 pages). Please specify role in project and full-time equivalent months committed during the lifetime of the project:
 - i. A 2-page CV of the main applicant
 - ii. A 1-page CV from co-applicant(s)

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Interested applicants are welcome to consult the Head of AFH Andreas Buch Møller regarding questions on application topics, test products, business relevance, or sparring partners on mail abmoe@arlafoods.com or mobile +45 91316686. Already established contacts to Arla can also be used for this purpose.



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