

Dubai Resilience Challenge Fund

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This FAQ summarises the key points of the Dubai Resilience Challenge Fund call. It is intended as a quick reference for prospective applicants and partners. The formal Call for Proposals remains the authoritative source.

What is the Dubai Resilience Challenge Fund?

A grant programme funding applied research and pilot projects that strengthen the resilience of Dubai's systems in real-world operating conditions, not just on paper.

What are the three challenge areas?

Cognitive Cities (critical infrastructure and smart-city systems), Health & Life Sciences (population health and healthcare resilience), and Environmental Science (resources, ecosystems, and circular economy).

Who can lead a proposal?

A Principal Investigator with a PhD and a full, non-adjunct affiliation with a Dubai-based university or research institution.

Is a partnership mandatory?

Yes.

Is a tripartite partnership (university + government + industry) mandatory?

Not always. A tripartite consortium is often the strongest model, but a two-way partnership (university + government, or university + industry/non-governmental partner) is acceptable where adding a third party would not bring clear value. The chosen structure must be briefly justified.

Do partners need to fund?

Not necessarily, but a funding partner is an indication of interest in the proposed resilience challenge. In general partners can contribute data, expertise, access to infrastructure, test environments and are willing to commit to commercialisation and/or permanent solution deployment.

How much funding is available, and over what period?

Up to AED 2,000,000 per project over up to three years, split into Phase One (proof of concept, up to AED 500,000 in Year 1) and Phase Two (pilot, up to AED 1,500,000 across Years 2–3, capped at AED 750,000 per year).

Is progression to Phase Two automatic?

No. It depends on Phase One performance, partner commitment, a credible pilot plan, and portfolio considerations. Projects that do not meet agreed Phase One milestones will not receive Phase Two funding.

Can a project span more than one challenge area?

Yes, cross-domain work is welcome, but each proposal must select one primary challenge area and at least one primary focus area within it, and demonstrate sufficient depth there. Proposals that spread effort thinly across multiple areas without strong rationale are unlikely to be competitive.

What does the Fund explicitly NOT support?

Theory-only or laboratory-only research, generic smart-city or health-tracking concepts without operational partners, incremental improvements without transformative potential, and projects without a credible deployment pathway in Dubai.

What is the application process?

A two-stage process: (1) Letter of Intent, screened against the published evaluation criteria; (2) Full Proposal, by invitation only, with letters of commitment from all key partners (university, government, industry/non-governmental).

What is expected on ethics, data, and IP?

At Lol stage, only an indication of whether sensitive data, human participants, or environmental interventions are involved, plus willingness to obtain any necessary approvals. Detailed arrangements for data management, IP, and ethics are formalised in the Grant Agreement for shortlisted teams.

What types of partners might a consortium include?

Government entities such as DEWA, RTA, Dubai Municipality, DHA, DP World, and MOCCA, alongside industry and ecosystem partners ranging from real-estate developers and utilities to healthcare providers, AgriTech firms, and environmental monitoring companies. The lists provided in the document are illustrative; comparable Dubai-based organisations are equally welcome.

Does the Fund support household and community-level projects?

Yes. Projects may address household and community needs (such as food, water, energy, shelter and medicine, digital resilience, or psychological wellbeing) where they clearly contribute to one

of the three challenge areas and meet the same standards of evidence, methodology, and pathway to adoption.

What is deployment or adoption?

Integration into operations, practice, policy, or commercial use.

Can we build on existing projects?

Yes, if there is clear added value and no duplication of funding.

Will feedback be provided?

Yes, at the full proposal stage.

Can international partners be involved?

Yes, with conditions:

- Lead PI must be based in **Dubai**
- Industry partners must be **UAE-based**
- Government partners must be **Dubai-based**
- Projects must be **anchored in Dubai's context**
- At least 50% of the fund should remain in Dubai
- International partners should add **distinct value**.

What is the expected PI time commitment?

The Principal Investigator (PI) is expected to commit up to 30% of their time to the project. This should be reflected as a course buyout within the institution, rather than as additional financial compensation.

Are subcontracts required between collaborating partners?

Yes, subcontracts are required between the lead institution and collaborating partners to formalize roles, responsibilities, and, where applicable, the allocation of project funds.