ODI Global

ODI Fellowship Scheme 2026



About the ODI Fellowship Scheme

Launched in 1963, the ODI Fellowship Scheme has embedded more than 1,300 young professionals in government agencies, partnering with dozens of institutions, from Colombiato the Solomon Islands, Uganda to Uzbekistan. ODI Fellows support their host organisations in progressing government priorities, forging bonds of mutual trust and understanding along the way.

The Fellowship Scheme is a 'win-win' form of cooperation.

- ODI Fellows can help to fill critical resource gaps. They can be a source of particular skills or technical knowledge that might be hard to come by. Fellows can also facilitate the strengthening of networks with other governments, investors or research institutions.
- ODI Fellows benefit from the experience of living and working in a different country context to their own. Many Fellows draw upon their experience as they go on to pursue careers in development finance institutions, the public sector, or investment and advisory firms.

The continued demand from governments for ODI Fellows, as well as the level of responsibility entrusted to them, is testament to the esteem the fellowship has earned in the 60+ years since it was established.

Successful candidates are expected to serve for the full two-year contract and be ready to work in any of the scheme's partner countries. For more details on entry requirements, please see the section 'Application information' below.

The aims of the scheme

The Fellowship Scheme provides host governments with highly qualified, early-career economists and statisticians and offers unique work experience to Fellows.

How host institutions benefit from the scheme

Responding to country needs

Fellows are part of a government or international organisation and, together with their colleagues, effectively identify the most pressing needs of the host organisation.

Tailored solutions

Because Fellows are embedded, they learn the relative strengths of their department and work together with their colleagues to tailor policies, models and ways of working that are practical and in line with the capabilities of the host institution.

Transferring skills

Fellows are only placed in host institutions where certain technical skills and thematic knowledge are currently missing. Through close collaboration over a two-year period, colleagues learn important skills and acquire knowledge from Fellows.

> **"The Fellow significantly enhanced our team's analytical capabilities by implementing training sessions and mentoring staff, which has led to more informed decision-making within the organization. Their contributions to policy briefings have also helped to shape our strategic initiatives."**
>
> Denis Mukama, Assistant Commissioner for Research, Statistics, and Planning – Rwanda Revenue Authority

How ODI Fellows benefit from the scheme

Personal development

Fellows gain valuable experience as civil servants. They learn about their host country, its policy landscape, and public sector service delivery in low- and middle-income countries, as well as the challenges of receiving development assistance from bi- and multilateral donors. They gain new technical skills as they work with colleagues to fill skills gaps. Since it is practical in nature, the fellowship is highly valued by participants and their future employers.

International exchange

ODI Fellowships are also an opportunity for international exchange and lesson sharing between civil servants: some ODI Fellows bring experience of another civil service and many more go on to work in large bureaucracies, either at home or in third countries.

Future career opportunities

The scheme enjoys an excellent reputation and Fellows benefit from the prestige associated with the scheme. ODI Fellows have gone on to build successful careers in multilateral institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations), academia, the private sector, non-governmental organisations as well as their own country governments. Many choose to stay on in the country of their fellowship.

"I was posted to Freetown City Council (FCC), Sierra Leone, where I worked within the Mayor's Delivery Unit as a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Advisor. My main tasks included supporting several climate action projects and developing and writing high-level policies for FCC.

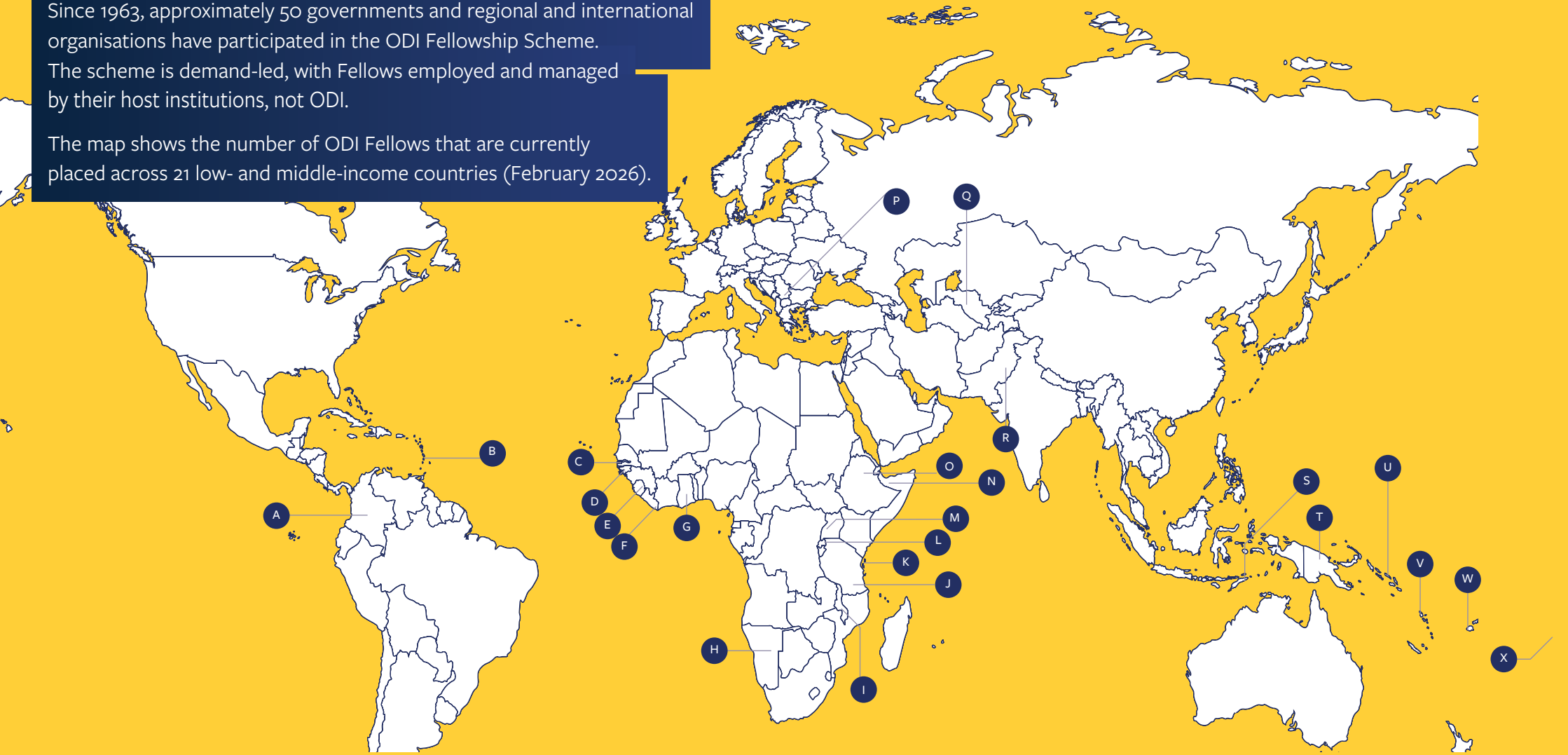
During my Fellowship, I supported colleagues in strengthening project management coordination practices and helped build institutional understanding of carbon credits, carbon markets, and climate finance. My main professional achievements include co-developing and co-authoring the city's four-year strategy Transform Freetown – Transforming Lives 2024–2028, co-authoring Africa's first Heat Action Plan, and co-leading the carbon work stream for #FreetownTheTreetown, which advanced significantly toward issuing carbon credits."

Hedda Most – ODI Fellow, Freetown City Council, Sierra Leone, 2023-2025.

Where ODI Fellows work

Since 1963, approximately 50 governments and regional and international organisations have participated in the ODI Fellowship Scheme. The scheme is demand-led, with Fellows employed and managed by their host institutions, not ODI.

The map shows the number of ODI Fellows that are currently placed across 21 low- and middle-income countries (February 2026).



- A Colombia 1
- B St Lucia 1
- C The Gambia 2
- D Guinea-Bissau 2
- E Sierra Leone 5
- F Liberia 1
- G Ghana 3
- H Namibia 1
- I Malawi 5
- J Tanzania 1
- K Zanzibar 1
- L Rwanda 6
- M Uganda 3
- N Somaliland 3
- O Ethiopia 1
- P Kosovo 1
- Q Uzbekistan 2
- R Pakistan 1
- S Timor Leste 3
- T Papua New Guinea 2
- U Solomon Islands 3
- V Vanuatu 4
- W Fiji 3
- X Tonga 2

What ODI Fellows work on

Most Fellows are employed in government ministries or agencies where they work as economists, planning officers or statisticians. Many Fellows work in the centre of government in ministries of finance or planning, revenue authorities, central banks and statistical offices. Others work in line agencies including ministries of trade and industry, agriculture, environment, health and education. Sometimes Fellows are placed in research organisations affiliated to government or regional organisations.

Work depends on needs, and as such, varies greatly between countries and even ministries. As a result, posts call for a diversity of economic, statistical and administrative skills.

Strengthening internal systems

ODI Fellows contribute to the ability of their department, ministry or country to deliver their mandates, through high-quality data management, the construction of macroeconomic models and indices, and setting up systems for organisational management. Examples include:

- Designing National Health Accounts and Client Satisfaction Surveys in Tanzania
- Improving inflation and GDP forecasting models in the Central Bank of Papua New Guinea
- Strengthening the Domestic Resource Mobilisation strategy of Liberia
- Developing metrics to rank all senior high schools in Ghana based on performance

Improved national and sub-national policies

ODI Fellows often make significant contributions to important analytical pieces of work which cover areas including: the provision of vital public services; analysing and designing regulatory policies; promoting economic development in key sectors; enacting climate adaptation reforms; and negotiating the terms of trade deals. Recent examples include:

- Redesigning Fiji's merger control regime and drafting the National Competition and Consumer Protection policy
- Drafting the Petroleum Natural Resource Governance Regulations in Ghana
- Initiating and moderating follow-up discussions from the President of Uzbekistan's visit to Singapore
- Conceptualised and formulated the Feed Salone Strategy - Sierra Leone's flagship program for agrifood transformation with a focus on sustainable value chains and climate-smart agriculture
- Preparing a presentation for the Minister of Finance of Timor Leste to deliver in Parliament

Strengthening networks and building coalitions

There are many examples of Fellows building new networks, establishing new partnerships and co-producing research with international and local partners. Fellows have helped to build the environment for future international investment and supported the membership process of international organisations including Vanuatu's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Rwanda's membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Improving the work culture of their office

By bringing a diverse set of values, new ideas and fresh perspectives, Fellows can have a positive effect on those around them.

Application information

Fellowships vary from job to job and country to country, but all require a combination of the following experience and personal qualities.

Qualifications

The ODI Fellowship Scheme is open to candidates of all nationalities who have a master's degree or PhD in economics, statistics or a related field.

Suitable specialised qualifications at postgraduate level include but are not limited to agricultural economics, environmental economics, international economics, health economics, development economics, and econometrics and statistics.

For those studying for a postgraduate degree at the time of application, the award of a fellowship is conditional upon the successful completion of the postgraduate degree.

Intellectual ability

- A sound grasp of economic and statistical theory and the ability to apply that knowledge to real world problems
- Data and information analysis to solve problems
- Clear and concise written and verbal communication, especially translating complex technical ideas to non-specialists

> **"I was involved in donor-funded project cycles, including proposal submissions, multisectoral coordination, policy reviews...this experience enhanced my leadership skills and deepened my understanding of donor-funded projects.**
>
> Ofer Dotan – ODI Fellow, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Solomon Islands, 2022-2024

Personal qualities

- Resilience and problem-solving to drive change and to work independently
- Interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity and political acumen to succeed within a diverse team, sometimes on politically sensitive topics
- Patience and humility to learn about new contexts and accept advice
- Adaptability and flexibility to navigate resource-constrained environments

Management and work-related skills

- Strong organisational skills including prioritisation and delegation of tasks
- Willingness to consult and advocate
- Good time management
- Ability to take initiative and work without supervision
- Project management
- Report writing

Applications are strengthened by a demonstrable interest in public policy, relevant work or voluntary experience and language proficiency (with English essential and French particularly advantageous) and strong IT skills.

We support and encourage applications from LGBTQ+ and disabled candidates. To ensure candidates are not placed in difficult, dangerous or impractical situations, we will ensure that all successful candidates are only offered suitable placements during the matching process. We will discuss this with the candidate directly during the allocation process.

How to apply

Our next application round will open in March 2026. Full details of how to apply online will be made available at **odi.org/odi-fellowship-scheme/**.

Applications will only be accepted if they are completed according to the instructions available on our website and submitted by the closing date.

Applicants must be willing to commit to a two-year period in any of the countries that participate in the scheme. However, to ensure the safety of all involved, we take personal characteristics into account when placing Fellows.

Timeline

- **Early March 2026:** Applications open for the ODI Fellowship Scheme
- **31 March 2026:** Closing date for receipt of applications
- **Early May 2026:** Long-listed candidates are invited to submit a video in support of their application
- **Late May 2026:** Short-listed candidates invited to interview
- **8–12 June 2026:** Interviews take place, after which offers are made to successful candidates
- **March–July 2026:** The ODI team discuss potential roles with all participating governments. Host institutions submit requests for new Fellows with job descriptions and a short-list of preferred candidates
- **July–August 2026:** ODI and host institutions agree on which candidates are allocated to which openings
- **5–9 October 2026:** A briefing session is held at ODI in London to prepare new Fellows for their roles
- **Oct/Nov 2026:** Successful candidates begin their fellowships

Frequently asked questions

How are Fellows paid?

Fellows are employed and paid by the institutions that host them and their work programmes are determined and managed by local civil servants. Fellows receive a monthly supplement and housing allowance from ODI.

How are the posts and the scheme funded?

Current and recent funders of the ODI Fellowship Scheme include: the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, the UK Office of National Statistics, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Gates Foundation, UNECA, Namibia Nature Foundation, Comic Relief, the Fleming Fund and the EdTech Hub. Some governments fund the cost of Fellows themselves.

How are administrative and financial responsibilities shared between governments and ODI?

Fellows are selected by ODI, but become employees of the governments or public bodies for which they work.

The local employer is normally responsible for:

- Furnishing office accommodation and a computer for the ODI Fellow
- Providing conditions of service such as leave entitlement, expense allowances and medical insurance similar to those offered to local staff in similar grades
- Ensuring Fellows receive assistance in obtaining work visas/permits, residence permits and security clearances where required

ODI is normally responsible for:

- Selecting candidates
- Identifying fellowship posts along with host institutions
- Preparing a pre-departure briefing

- Overseeing administration – monthly payments, flights, medical insurance, reports to funders
- Providing duty of care (safeguarding, security)

Contracts of employment between host governments and individual Fellows determine Fellows' conditions of service. These vary from country to country according to the post held, the cost of living and other factors. As local employees, Fellows are expected to pay tax..

Total compensation net of tax will amount to approximately £32,600 per annum in the first year and £34,600 in the second year. The compensation is inclusive of a housing allowance that varies according to cost of living in-country.

How can a government become part of the scheme?

If a new country wants to participate, the ODI Fellowship Scheme team will conduct a detailed scoping visit at the invitation of the government to ensure that conditions are suitable for ODI Fellows. Governments wanting Fellows must make a formal request to ODI, accompanied by a clear job description and a commitment to provide a local salary and other benefits that would be due to an equivalent local employee.

How are Fellows matched to placements?

Representatives from ODI conduct annual placement visits to countries participating in the scheme. These visits provide an opportunity to hold detailed discussions with host institutions about their future requirements for ODI Fellows, as well as monitor the progress of existing roles. Following the placement visits, governments submit their requests for ODI Fellows along with clear job descriptions. Candidates are then allocated to roles to the satisfaction of both host institutions and candidates. The scheme is demand-led and aims to the extent possible to give governments their preferred candidates. Start dates are negotiated according to individual availability and the requirements of the employing institution.

We expect all successfully recruited Fellows to be available to start from October/November 2026, subject to any necessary visa or permit requirements.

"I feel I have supported the development of knowledge and skills in economics/health economics among health financing team colleagues that lacked backgrounds as economists. I've delivered trainings on topics such as cost-effectiveness analysis and feel the understanding of key concepts in the team is stronger than when I'd arrived. I am also proud of my colleague Abebe getting a Chevening Scholarship to study health economics at the University of York and was pleased to play a role in assisting this."

Joe MacConnell – ODI Fellow, Ministry of Health, Ethiopia, 2022-2024.

ODI Global

ODI Global is a leading global affairs think tank.

ODI Global advises global leaders on driving positive change. We turn bold ideas, evidence, and broad expertise into actionable strategies for a more resilient, just and equitable future.

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