



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*

# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH DANISH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

**INFORMATION NOTE**  
**FULL APPLICATION 2022 – 2025**



## BOX 1

# A WORLD UNBALANCED

We live in a time of global upheaval. The COVID-19 crisis, climate change and conflicts reverse progress and development. Poverty and inequality are on the rise. Far too many people are left behind, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected areas. People are forced to flee from their homes to an unprecedented extent. Thousands risk their lives as they try to reach Europe. Climate change and the exploitation of the world's natural resources amplify the challenges and threaten our common future. Democracy and human rights are increasingly under attack in step with the resurgence of authoritarian regimes. Developing countries, particularly in Africa, are the new geopolitical battleground. This poses a challenge to the international level playing field and the values in which we believe.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

**CHS**

Core Humanitarian Standard

**CSO**

Civil Society Organisation

**DAC**

OECD Development Assistance Committee

**DANIDA**

Danish International Development Assistance

**DDD**

Doing Development Differently

**DKK**

Danish Kroner

**EOI**

Expression of Interest

**HCE**

Department of Humanitarian Action, Civil society and Engagement

**HDP**

Humanitarian-Development-Peace (nexus)

**HRBA**

Human Rights Based Approach

**IATI**

International Aid Transparency Initiative

**IPE**

Information and Public Engagement

**LGBTQIA+**

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual. LGBTQIA+ is an ever growing and evolving acronym. It should be seen as an inclusive term covering people of all genders and sexualities and allies.

**LNOB**

Leaving No One Behind

**MFA**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**MHPSS**

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

**OECD**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Q&A**

Questions & Answers

**SDG**

Sustainable Development Goals

**SRHR**

Sexual reproductive health and rights

**SPA 2022-2025**

Strategic Partnerships 2022-2025

**TOC**

Theory of Change

**UN**

United Nations

**WASH**

Water, sanitation and health



# 1 INTRODUCTION

The vision for Denmark's development cooperation is: A more secure and sustainable world free from poverty, based on international binding cooperation as well as just and resilient societies that fight inequality and create hope and future opportunities for the individual, with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement as beacons.

— THE WORLD WE SHARE

Ethiopian refugees cross the Tekeze river to Sudan.  
Photo: UNHCR/Olivier Jobard

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA) is entering a new round of Strategic Partnerships for the period 2022-2025 with Danish civil society organisations (CSOs).

The overall purpose of the Strategic Partnerships 2022-2025 (SPA 2022-2025) is to implement the new strategy for Danish development cooperation “The World We Share” through dynamic and mutually reinforcing partnerships with independent Danish CSOs through the strategic priorities set out in the strategy, namely democratic values and human rights, fragile contexts and displacement and climate and green solutions.

The selection of new strategic partners is based on an open application process.<sup>1</sup> This information note outlines the framework for SPA 2022-2025 along with guidance and requirements for the full application for a Strategic Partnership. Strategic Partnership applications are assessed on their strategic relevance and programmatic approaches.

The Strategic Partnerships provide a predictable framework over a four-year period where the annual commitment is subject to parliamentary approval.



SPA 2022-2025 follows the main principles of the first generation of Strategic Partnerships from 2018-2021. The new framework has been adapted to be in line with lessons learned from the previous partnerships and new strategic development priorities.

In the new generation of Strategic Partnerships the strategic partners will be awarded one single commitment. This will allow for a holistic, adaptive and integrated approach to programming over the four year period in line the Adaptive Management and Doing Development Differently approach.<sup>2</sup> The ongoing COVID-19 crisis emphasises the need for adaptive and integrated approaches to programming to find solutions not only to the health crisis, but all the derived effects and developmental set backs. Furthermore, the Strategic Partnerships will include unallocated flexible funds to enable swift response to new or changing needs or opportunities. It will also provide access to potential additional funding beyond the annual commitment.

The Strategic Partnerships will take further steps towards strategic alignment with Danish development priorities through two types of partnerships. Cross-cutting partnerships which are expected to address all strategic

priorities and thematic partnerships which can focus on one or more strategic priorities. The CSOs can apply for the one type of Strategic Partnership they see fit. This will allow for a more focused and strategic dialogue based on the different partners' core competencies and the strategic priorities of the partnership type.

Cooperation with civil society is a cornerstone in Danish development cooperation. CSOs are recognised as development and humanitarian actors in their own right and with a fundamental respect for the independent nature of civil society. The strength of the Strategic Partnerships lies in the diversity of strategic partners and their different roles and mandates. The Strategic Partnerships will therefore take point of departure in the strategic partners' own mandate, vision, goals, strategies and specific core competencies – and how they contribute to the Danish development priorities.

<sup>1</sup> The first step has been a prequalification of applicants based on the assessment of Expressions of Interest submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2021. In the prequalification round the eligibility and capacity of the organisations was assessed. The prequalified organisations are now invited to send a full application following the format presented in this information note.

<sup>2</sup> Guidance Note for Adaptive Management (um.dk)

### BOX 2

## READING GUIDE

**Chapter 1** gives an overall introduction to SPA 2022-2025 and the application process.

**Chapter 2** describes the three strategic priorities that the partnerships are expected to develop their application against and be aligned to.

**Chapter 3** outlines the prioritised programmatic approaches, including a strong focus on local leadership.

**Chapter 4** introduces the different types of partnerships in SPA 2022-2025 including thematic and geographical requirements and budgetary frames.

**Chapter 5** describes the flexible funding modalities.

**Chapter 6** outlines overall aspects and requirements connected to the strategic dialogue, reporting, CHS, ceilings for expenditure at headquarter and public engagement in Denmark.



## INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Partnerships are founded upon a human rights based approach with a special focus on vulnerable and marginalised groups.

In line with “The World We Share”, there is a wish to support more people where the needs are greatest. The Strategic Partnerships therefore introduce an increased geographic focus on fragile countries and contexts, especially in Africa, Afghanistan or Syria and neighbouring countries related to the crises in Afghanistan and Syria. Beyond this focus, strategic partners can be engaged in all OECD DAC eligible countries.

The Strategic Partnerships will take as point of departure the needs of the local partners and people. There is therefore an increased focus on strengthening local leadership including transfer of funds, ownership and decision-making power.

The Strategic Partnerships will focus on delivering cost effective sustainable results, will seek to maximise outcomes and impact and further promote learning. The strategic partners engage in close and strategic dialogue with the MFA and other strategic partners in order to increase knowledge and performance levels.



An increased focus on transparency and accountability will be a part of the Strategic Partnerships. Strategic partners are required to publish complete and useful data in open data format defined by the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and are required to report on Rio Markers as well as SDG-targets.

Finally the Strategic Partnerships play a proactive role in strengthening information and public engagement in Denmark on Danish development cooperation and are

expected to further enhance this through a collective impact project.

Applying for a Strategic Partnership encompasses a commitment to live up to the requirements outlined in this information note as well as the administrative guidelines.

Women dancing in village outside of Timbuktu in Mali.  
Photo: Danida

# 2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Denmark will prevent and fight poverty and inequality, conflict and displacement – and thereby mitigate irregular migration. First and foremost by creating hope and opportunities for the individual. And by supporting the building of just and resilient societies. We will lead the fight against climate change in the poorest countries. We must create a planet in balance with a richer and healthier natural environment. Our overall development interventions will rest on democratic values and human rights. We will protect the most vulnerable. And we will make a particular effort to advance gender equality, promote and protect the rights of girls and women, and maintain focus on marginalised groups.

## — THE WORLD WE SHARE

This chapter describes the three strategic priorities that the Strategic Partnerships are expected to develop their application against and be aligned to and thus forms the strategic framework for all SPA 2022-2025 engagements. In chapter 4 the different types of Strategic Partnerships are introduced with reference to these strategic priorities.

The three strategic priorities are mutually reinforcing (and to some degree overlapping) in line with the strategy for Denmark's development cooperation. In the strategy, democratic values and human rights form the foundation of the way of working. This is also the case in the SPA 2022-2025, but it will also be a strategic priority in its own right.



School children in Uganda.  
Photo: Bill Wegener, Unsplash

## THE THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE:

### DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

To support and strengthen democracy, human rights, independent civil societies and labour market framework conditions.

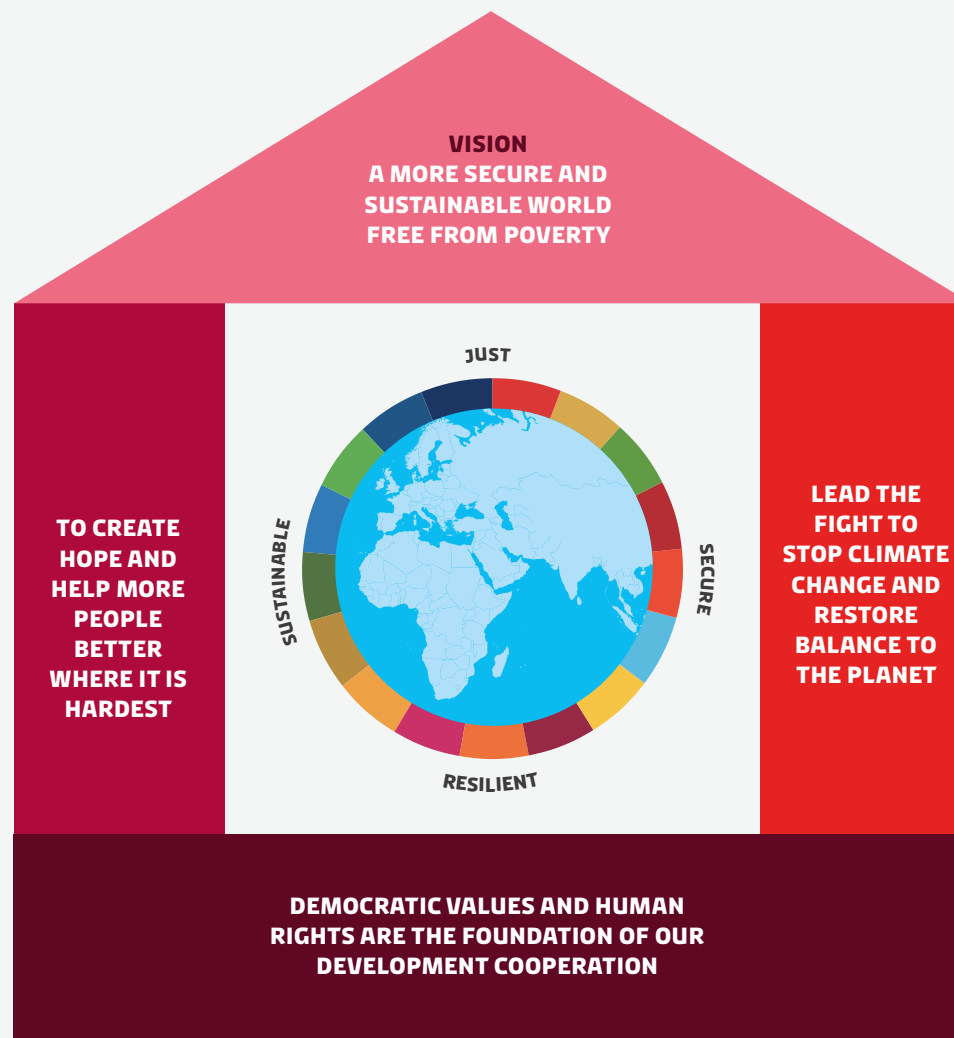
### FRAGILE CONTEXTS AND DISPLACEMENT

To fight poverty and inequality, and reduce conflict, fragility, displacement and irregular migration.

### CLIMATE AND GREEN SOLUTIONS

To fight climate change and strengthen adaptation and resilience, and to protect and restore nature, the environment and biodiversity.

The three strategic priorities are expected to permeate all Strategic Partnerships, but through different approaches and with varying emphasis. This will depend on the strategic partners own core competencies and the specific type of Strategic Partnership they apply for (see Chapter 4).



## 2.1

# DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

People have an innate dignity and right to be human. People have the right to live in safety, to have freedom to think, speak and believe, to be free of oppression and free to participate in local community life. Therefore, human rights and democracy are goals in themselves. However, they are also a means to creating a more safe, just, resilient and sustainable world. This is vital at a time when people are impacted by poverty, inequality and climate change.

— THE WORLD WE SHARE

Refugee school children in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.  
Photo: Danida

### THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **A strong, vocal, diversified and free civil society** that is representative, accountable, and locally-based, offering enhanced opportunities for poor, vulnerable and marginalised communities to participate in public life.
- Strengthening and promoting the **rights and dignity of vulnerable and marginalised groups with focus on** freedom, non-discrimination, the right of a person to participate in the political system, to organise themselves, and to hold those in power accountable. This includes minorities, e.g. indigenous people, LGBTQIA+ persons, religious minorities and people with disabilities.
- Supporting **girls and women's rights** with focus on economic and political rights including participation, representation and leadership. It also includes focus on girls and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), education, decent work, as well as on fighting sexual and gender-based violence.
- Supporting **effective, democratic and responsible states** with respect for human rights, freedom of expression, association, assembly and religion, freedom from child- and forced labour, who provide healthcare, education, and social protection for their citizens. With focus on activities that strengthen the accountability of the state, enable political participation and fight corruption.
- Supporting and protecting **democracy and human right defenders** who are subjected to harassment and attack – both online and physically. This applies, for example, to human rights advocates, journalists, trade union representatives, faith-based actors, environmental activists, etc.
- Defending and promoting an **open and enabling space for civil society**. Including a strong focus on the digital sphere with a special emphasis on participation for youth, girls and women, and groups in marginalised and vulnerable contexts.
- Supporting **freedom of expression and access to information** with specific focus on free media, digital rights and online freedom.
- Supporting representative and legitimate **civil society actors in fragile and conflict-ridden** contexts offering enhanced opportunities for poor, vulnerable and marginalised communities to participate in conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding through strengthening resilience and promoting dialogue, peace and reconciliation.
- Exploring and developing new partnerships and ways of supporting **civic activism** outside the conventional and mainstream support modalities with **informal civil society and social movements** in order to reflect the changing dynamics of civil society in the global South. Including specific focus on the role of youth, digital connectivity and countering shrinking civic space.
- Supporting **sustainable and decent livelihoods** and improvement of labour market framework conditions and regulations that support sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and promote workers' rights, and the right to collective negotiation, well-functioning labour markets, as well as decent jobs in both the formal and informal economy.
- Supporting and strengthening **bi- and tripartite mechanisms** and building of social partners' capacity for performing social dialogue at national, sectoral and workplace level.
- Promoting **innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships** between civil society, the private sector and other actors in order to strengthen sustainable and inclusive economic growth and investments, enhance corporate social responsibility, human rights and creation of decent jobs.

## 2.2 FRAGILE CONTEXTS AND DISPLACEMENT

Denmark meets its international responsibility when we fight poverty and inequality. And when we contribute to creating hope and opportunities. It requires addressing the fundamental causes of crises and hardship for millions of people. We must do more to prevent conflicts and crises, and we must react promptly when they erupt. We provide humanitarian assistance and implement initiatives that promote peace, stability and development.

— THE WORLD WE SHARE

Pastoralists with their herd near Timbuktu in Mali.  
Photo: Danida

### THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Strengthening **protection, resilience and self-reliance of vulnerable and marginalised** people in and around conflict and crisis affected countries with a special view to refugees and internally displaced people as well as supporting affected communities to help themselves.
- Helping and ensuring effective access to **protection and live-saving assistance** for vulnerable refugees and internally displaced people as well as local host communities when the conflict, crisis or disaster has struck. This includes the provision of cash, food assistance, education and healthcare services, including water, sanitation and health (WASH) and mental and psychosocial support (MHPSS), based on needs, and securing their opportunities to return to a safe and dignified life.
- Strengthening **prevention of crisis and disasters and minimizing their impact** through anticipatory action, early warning systems and forecast based financing modalities as well as through supporting national social safety nets.
- Strengthening the coherence between **humanitarian, development and peace efforts** including climate change adaptation and supporting preventative efforts with a view to reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and prevent conflict and displacement.
- Strengthening the **engagement and capacity of crisis-affected communities** to respond to both immediate and long-term consequences of crises and conflicts. This encompasses communities hosting displaced people, local CSOs as well as local and national authorities and other relevant actors. It entails prevention of conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms related to e.g. land use and natural resource management.
- Enhancing protection of civilians through advocacy for **international humanitarian law, international humanitarian principles and human rights** as a basis for humanitarian action and work in fragile contexts.
- Strengthening the ability of states to ensure **economic and social protection and development** in fragile countries, regions and regions of origin impacted by conflict and disaster.
- Promoting **sustainable and decent livelihoods** through quality education and health initiatives, vocational skills, entrepreneurship, decent jobs and sustainable economic growth in fragile contexts.
- Lead the way and prioritise activities in the **fight against sexual and gender-based violence** against girls and women during displacement crises, partly through providing support for survivors.
- Work for **greater food security and access to water** as an increasing challenge facing the world's fragile countries and regions.
- Considering the **rights, voice, potentials, and specific vulnerabilities** of women, girls and boys and other marginalised and exposed groups, including LGBTQIA+ and people living with disabilities in a sustainable manner in conflict and crisis affected countries.
- Supporting the **rights and potentials of youth as actors of change** especially in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stress the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.
- Strengthening **women's meaningful engagement in the work for peace and security** in line with the 1325 resolution. Including by recognising that women have the right to participate in the development of society and that women and men have different interests and needs, also in crisis and conflict situations.
- Promoting **innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships** between civil society, the private sector and other actors in order to strengthen sustainable and inclusive economic growth, green and decent jobs, food security and climate change adaptation.

## 2.3 CLIMATE AND GREEN SOLUTIONS

Climate change and the pressure on the world's resources are among the greatest global threats of our time. Our livelihoods are at stake. We urgently need to adapt to climate change and build resilience. We need to act to halt irreversible damage and prevent further poverty and inequality. We also need to speed up the green transition. We need to secure access to clean energy and water for the poorest people locally and ensure less CO<sub>2</sub> emission globally. Developing countries need to use natural resources in a sustainable manner and protect biodiversity.

— THE WORLD WE SHARE

Woman collecting water in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.  
Photo: Danida





### THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Considering and **integrating climate, nature and biodiversity concerns** and elements in programming either as the main focus of an action or as a co-benefit or complimentary component of an action.
  - Strengthening **adaptation to climate change and building resilience** locally before and after disaster strikes.
  - Strengthening **biodiversity and promote nature-based solutions**. Partly through support to protecting, preserving and restoring nature, such as forests, freshwater systems, coastal and wetland areas, as well as ensuring sustainable management and use of ecosystems. This may also contribute to prevention of conflict and food insecurity, and creation of green jobs and income opportunities.
  - Strengthening the **coherence between climate change adaptation, humanitarian action, development and peace building**. Including supporting preventative efforts with a view to reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and prevent conflict and displacement.
  - Ensuring the **social dimension** related to green and just transition, including focus on workers rights, social dialogue, social security, up- and reskilling, promotion of new and decent jobs.
  - Promoting a **green development pathway** that is consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This entails integration of climate and environment concerns into local and national development planning processes, as well as supporting access to clean sustainable energy for all.
  - Strengthening **water resource management and access to clean water** in rural and urban areas to improve resilience towards changes in precipitation patterns as well as health and sanitary conditions. This covers drinking water, water for production and crops, sanitation, and management and recycling of wastewater.
  - Strengthening **climate-adapted agriculture and sustainable food systems** in order to build resilience, improve food insecurity, promote agro-organic cultivation methods, strengthen green value chains and generate green jobs.
  - Strengthening **prevention of climate related disasters** through anticipatory action and early warning systems. This includes working through innovative approaches to avoiding, minimising and addressing the risk of loss and damage due to climate change.
  - Strengthening **civil society capacity to engage in advocacy efforts** that promote ambitious action plans at community level, national level and globally.
- This in order to strengthen impact, accountability and governance on climate, nature and biodiversity issues.
- Strengthening the **voice, protection and rights** of local and indigenous communities, activists, trade unions, and social movements among others in climate, nature and biodiversity related situations.
  - Support the **business community's green engagement** in introducing new green technologies within areas such as energy, water, environment, food and health. With a focus on the social and environmental responsibility of companies within sustainable global value and supplier chains, decent jobs and living conditions in developing countries.
  - Strengthening **multi-stakeholder approaches to find innovative green solutions** and introduce green technologies and practices with potential for replicability and scalability.
  - Developing **green skills at all levels** through skills upgrading, education and training relevant for the green transition, with a special emphasis on just transition.
  - Promoting **innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships** between civil society, the private sector and other actors in order to strengthen sustainable and inclusive economic growth, green and decent jobs, food security and climate change adaptation.

# 3 PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES

Building on and in support of the three strategic priorities this chapter outlines the prioritised programmatic approaches, that Strategic Partnerships are expected – but not limited – to include in their engagements. There is first of all a strong focus on the partnership and local leadership approach, followed by other crucial approaches to be reflected in the engagements.

Fisherman in Kenya.  
Photo: Danida



### 3.1 PARTNERSHIP AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH

*“Strong, locally based civil societies can make demands, promote change and think innovatively. They create tomorrow’s leaders and develop communities of practice. Their rights-based work is crucial for promoting gender equality as well as the rights of women and girls, for ensuring inclusion of marginalised groups, and for ensuring involvement of young people. They provide a voice for vulnerable, persecuted and exposed groups and contribute to preventing conflicts and strengthening resilience in regions of origin. We will therefore work to build and strengthen locally based civil society actors – particularly through the Danish partners – and ensure a robust defence of civic space in developing countries.”*

— THE WORLD WE SHARE

A strong and independent civil society is a main pillar of democratic societies and a goal in itself in the strategy for Danish development cooperation. Supporting civil society in the global South is thus a fundamental element of all programming throughout the SPA 2022-2025. Strategic Partnerships will strengthen the independence, space, diversity and capacity of civil society in the global South to influence and promote the realisation of the SDGs with a particular focus on poor, marginalised and vulnerable groups. Strategic partners are expected to engage in partnerships with locally rooted and representative civil society actors in the global South. This includes:

- Strengthening capacity and enabling partners in the global South to effectively combat poverty, vulnerability, inequality, build community resilience, crisis preparedness and ability to adapt to climate change. Build legitimacy, constituency and internal democracy, and accountability primarily in organisations and social movements. It also entails strengthening resilience towards shrinking civic space.
- Engaging in advocacy efforts, which involve and empower relevant local civil society actors and local partners, are informed by evidence, based on knowledge of the processes and stakeholders. Such efforts include holding duty bearers accountable for implementing the SDGs.
- Promoting an enabling environment for civil society in the global South primarily including i) basic legal guarantees such as the freedom of expression and the right to assembly, association and registration, ii) appropriate measures for CSOs’ financial viability and sustainability and iii) appropriate spaces for participation in local, national and international decision-making processes.
- Supporting new and emerging civil society actors. Civil society is a dynamic concept with more fluid, informal

and community-oriented activism emerging in the global South. This includes non-formalised actors, such as community-based networks, local committees, activists and social movements, women and youth groups. To ensure relevance and effectiveness strategic partners are encouraged to also support informally organised civil society actors including children and adolescent civil society actors and social movements as drivers for change when relevant and timely.

- Partnerships are dynamic and though many partnerships are strong after many years of investment, qualitative development is expected, including exit strategies from long running partnerships and strategies for entering into new partnerships.
- Strategic partners are encouraged to apply a multistakeholder approach and engage with a broad range of partners, including new emerging civil society actors, private sector actors, finance institutions, universities, governments, think tanks and multilateral agencies to strengthen collective impact. This may include innovative partnerships on sustainable growth and job creation as well as climate change adaptation and green and just transition.



Young girl in Afghanistan.  
Photo: Kabul Wakil Kohsar, Ritzau Scanpix

### 3.1.1 Strengthening local leadership

The SPA 2022-2025 places a special focus on strengthening local leadership including transfer of funds, ownership and decision-making power to local partners (see definition below in box 3). Ongoing reviews and surveys have shown that local partners continuously wish to see themselves as equal partners in a two-way relationship with their Danish partners, based around mutual added-value.

Strategic partners are expected to set ambitious objectives for strengthening local leadership of local partners within the partnership period in line with the five core elements (see box 4) and will be assessed according to these in the annual consultations throughout the partnership period. As strategic partners have very

different organisational set-ups as well as modalities for their work, the partnership approaches will be different, but nonetheless comprehensive.

It is acknowledged that different approaches and contexts will merit different programme designs. Strategic partners may apply a mixed approach with various partners and context should determine what is the most effective and sustainable approach to reaching the overall objective. In some situations, e.g. humanitarian crisis, war and conflict zones, strategic partners might to some degree or for some periods, choose a modality of self-implementation. This must be based on assessment showing that this is the best modality due to capacity or access constraints or in order to ensure respect for the humanitarian principles regarding impartiality, independence and neutrality.

### BOX 3

## DEFINING LOCAL PARTNERS

**Local partners:** State governments and their specialist services agencies, concerned local government bodies, state auxiliaries, national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs), community based organisations (CBOs), trade unions, local private sector and social movements, and other informal groupings.

Where partnerships are made up of organisations in Denmark and in the global South that are part of the same international alliance or similar, the South-based member of such an alliance must be able to demonstrate that it is rooted in local civil society to be defined as a local partner. This includes local leadership (board and management), local fundraising and an overall autonomy. Where this is not the case, the South-based member of the alliance is not recognised in this definition as a local partner, but may still contribute meaningfully to the partnership.

BOX 4

## FIVE CORE ELEMENTS IN STRENGTHENING LOCAL LEADERSHIP <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The framework for the 5 core elements for strengthening local leadership is developed on the basis of definitions from the seven dimensions for localization, START Network, Charter for Change, The Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO) and the workshop on localisation and local partnerships held 21. April 2021 for all applicants for SPA 2022-2025.

# 01

## Partnerships

Strategic partners are expected to engage in equitable partnerships with local partners based on locally identified needs and mutual added value.

# 02

## Financial resources and support

Strategic partners are expected to transfer as high a proportion of the grant as possible to local partners and encourage local ownership.

# 03

## Capacity

Strategic partners are expected to actively support local partners' organisational capacities and their ability to design, manage and deliver effective people centred projects and programmes with targeted and relevant capacity strengthening and capacity sharing.

# 04

## Participation and leadership

Strategic partners are expected to support and promote local partners' participation and leadership in projects and programmes.

# 05

## Coordination, policy and advocacy

Strategic partners are expected to promote greater presence, influence and leadership of local partners in coordination mechanisms and policy fora.

## 3.2 THE LINK BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE ACTION

The Strategic Partnerships must contribute to strengthening an integrated approach – and operate long-term from the outset. The partners should work towards finding long-term and sustainable solutions, but also be ready to respond quickly in the face of new and changing challenges and needs. Strategic partners are expected to work with a high level of nexus sensitivity and when relevant (depending on context) through a double or triple nexus approach (see definition in box 5).

The Strategic Partnership provides opportunity for linking emergency response and humanitarian action to development and civil society strengthening. Through applying a comprehensive and integrated nexus approach, strategic partners and their local partners will address and reduce humanitarian needs, support conflict prevention, and peace efforts while investing in long-term development to address the root causes of marginalisation and economic, social, political and ecosystem vulnerabilities and inequalities. The humanitarian imperative will continue to guide all humanitarian interventions, while all interventions – including humanitarian interventions – should seek to strengthen civil society and promote and protect human rights, where they are under pressure, and overall aim to build capacity of a free, independent and thriving civil society.

### BOX 5

## NOT ONE DEFINITION OF NEXUS

#### Definition of the double nexus:

Nexus refers to the complementary use of instruments of humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

#### Definition of the triple nexus:

Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions (HDP).

Context determines which nexus.

## 3.3 INNOVATION

In the SPA 2022-2025 innovation is expected to be integrated throughout programmes and contribute to strengthening locally rooted innovation. Strategic Partnership applications will be assessed on their ability and willingness to develop new approaches, methodologies, technologies, knowledge products, and partnerships to seek improved outcomes, based on

risk-willing investments. This includes the development and piloting of new strategies and operational approaches and methodologies that the applicant can take to scale across programmes and contexts. Innovation may also cover innovative approaches in existing partnerships or building new partnerships.



Internally displaced women and child in Ethiopia.  
Photo: Ritzau Scanpix

### 3.4 HRBA AND LEAVING NO-ONE BEHIND

All engagements must build on a Human-Rights Based Approach (HRBA) as well as focusing on Leaving No-One Behind (LNOB). Where the HRBA is expected to inform the entire Strategic Partnership engagement, LNOB specifically points to a strong focus on marginalised groups' rights and dignity, e.g. the rights of indigenous people, minorities, LGBTQIA+ persons, and vulnerable

groups. It includes faith based and other actors' role in the promotion of human rights and democracy, including promotion of freedom of thought, conscience and religion for all religious communities, non-believers and minorities. It includes fighting discrimination, stigma and persecution of minority groups; and ensuring equal rights and voice of people living with disabilities.

### 3.5 GENDER EQUALITY, GIRLS AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

All engagements must integrate focus on gender equality, and girls and women's rights either as cross-cutting priorities or through dedicated programming. This entails specific focus on girls and women's economic and political rights including participation, representation and leadership. It also includes focus on girls and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), education, decent work, as well as on fighting sexual and gender-based violence. Gender equality is not just about

girls and women having equal access to e.g. healthcare and education, but also about tackling harmful gender roles, norms and power relations. Women, women-led organisations and Women Rights organisations are central partners in this and must be involved in planning, decision-making and implementation of actions.

### 3.6 MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All engagements are expected to consider meaningful inclusion of children and young people. This entails a focus on the rights, empowerment, voice, and specific vulnerabilities of children and youth, as well as their potential role as partners and actors of change. The question of representation is crucial. Specifically for youth, it is vital that development cooperation is done with and by young people, and not just for young people.

This includes supporting meaningful participation of young people in democratic and political processes, and in terms of influencing and contributing to the positive development of their communities and society. This is also relevant in situations of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Furthermore, it includes a strong focus on promoting opportunities for young people through e.g. quality education, skills upgrading and decent jobs.

### 3.7 GREENING OF ENGAGEMENTS

The strategic partners are expected to increasingly consider and integrate climate, nature and biodiversity concerns and elements in their programming. This entails reflections on how their activities are addressing the environmental dimension of sustainable development and are coherent with the goals of the Paris Agreement and other global environmental agreements.

Greening should be understood in a broad way and can be approached from different angles. Some strategic partners may have climate, nature and biodiversity as the main focus of their engagements, while others may address it as a cross-cutting consideration ensuring that activities do not harm the environment and that possible synergies and co-benefits with environment and climate goals are considered. Greening of engagements will thus depend on the strategic partners' core competencies and outset for working with greening, i.e. green jobs and just transition, locally led adaptation, nature based solutions or access to sustainable energy sources in humanitarian contexts.

Refugee school children in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Photo: Danida





### 3.8 GLOBAL AND LOCAL CONNECTEDNESS AND COORDINATION

The MFA and the strategic partners can be mutually supportive and reinforcing in programme interventions and in relation to international policy agendas. Strategic partners are expected to demonstrate added value and lift Danish strategic development priorities internationally through leveraging their networks, alliances and partnerships. Such networks can take the shape of formal alliances and federations, but may also include loose networks and ad-hoc fora.

In line with MFA's strategy on Doing Development Differently (DDD), strategic partners will, as relevant, develop and strengthen collaboration and coordination with the MFA, other strategic partners and relevant stakeholders at country, regional and international level. This may include promotion of learning as well as synergies and exchanges of knowledge in the development of context analysis, Country Strategic Frameworks and specific programming exercises. It may also include mutual support in ensuring relevant collaboration and coordination with other development and humanitarian actors, e.g. – in humanitarian settings – through the cluster system.

Young boy in front of the ruins of the Al-Nuri Mosque in Mosul.  
Photo: Ritzau Scanpix

### 3.9 INFORMATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN DENMARK

Strategic partners are expected to play a proactive role in engaging the Danish public and strengthening the general level of understanding of and support to the Danish development cooperation and the SDG's in a development context. The Strategic Partnership will support partners in building public awareness of and

public engagement in development issues in Denmark. Strategic partners are encouraged to engage a larger and more diverse segment of the Danish public, including target groups and stakeholders not traditionally involved in development issues. Innovation and risk taking in new methods and/or target groups is encouraged.



# 4 TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS

In SPA 2022-2025 two types of Strategic Partnerships are introduced. These are cross-cutting partnerships expected to address all three strategic priorities (outlined in Chapter 2) and thematic partnerships focused on one of the three strategic priorities. The programmatic approaches (described in Chapter 3) are expected to be applied across throughout both types of partnerships when relevant and possible.

Women on their way to collect water.  
Photo: Jeppe-Gudmundsen-Holmgreen



## TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS

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The two types of partnership will have different thematic and geographic requirements and different budget spans.

It is up to the individual applying organisation/consortium to decide what type of partnership is relevant to apply for considering the organisation's capacity and experience – including what amount within this budget span is realistic. It is possible to apply for a Strategic Partnership either as an individual organisation or as a consortium of partners.

In case of a consortium, the Strategic Partnership is expected to contain joint initiatives, programmes and projects, but may also include activities of the individual consortium member. For consortia there must be a lead applicant in charge of the application.

The MFA will assess all applications based on transparent criteria and weights (see Annex 1B). If the total applied amount from all partners exceed the available funding,

a calculating mechanism will be applied to finally determine the strategic partners and adjust funding levels. The applied mechanism is intended to ensure a diversity of strategic partners and adequate coverage of strategic priorities and portfolio targets.



## 4.1 GEOGRAPHIC REQUIREMENTS

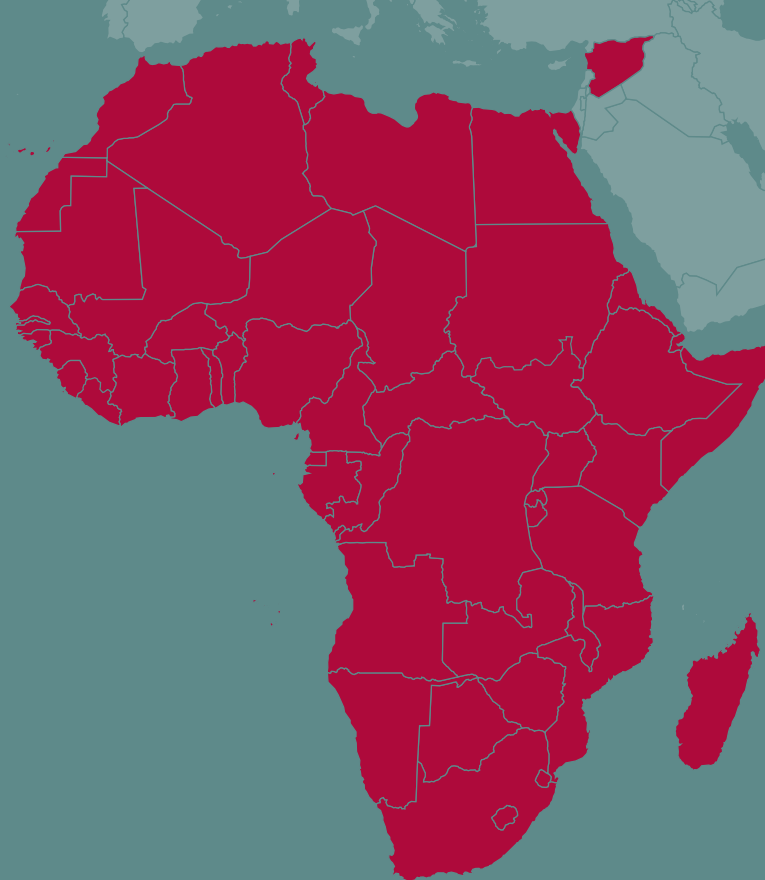
Strategic Partnerships can have programme and project activities in all OECD DAC eligible countries. For all types of partnerships a minimum of 50 pct. of the programme and project activities must be implemented in Africa and specific geographies (see Box 6).

For some types of partnerships there are specific requirements for implementation in fragile contexts (see Box 6). This is elaborated under the specific type of partnership.

Women on their way home from work in Sikasso in Mali.  
Photo: Danida

BOX 6

## WORLD MAP WITH GEOGRAPHIC REQUIREMENTS



**AFRICA AND SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIES**

For all types of partnerships a minimum of 50 pct. of the programme and project activities must be implemented in Africa, Afghanistan or Syria. This includes neighbouring countries related to the crises in Afghanistan and Syria.

**FRAGILE CONTEXTS**

For some types of partnerships there are specific requirements for implementation in fragile contexts. See list of fragile contexts (countries and host nations) on [Strategiske partnerskaber 2022-2025 \(um.dk\)](https://um.dk/da/strategiske-partnerskaber/2022-2025)

## 4.2 TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS AND BUDGET SPANS

The two boxes below outline the specific strategic priorities, requirements and budget spans connected to each type of Strategic Partnership.

All applicants are required to indicate clearly in the application which type of partnership they are applying for. The MFA however maintains the right to offer another

type of Strategic Partnership than the one applied for, if it is considered necessary to meet the overall strategic priorities and provide added value for the portfolio of partnerships. MFA also maintains the right to request partners to adjust size of budget targeted humanitarian purposes or in fragile contexts in order to meet overall portfolio targets.

### BOX 7

## CROSS-CUTTING PARTNERSHIPS

- Commitments between **40–200 mio.** DKK per year.
- For consortia commitments are between **40–200 mio.** DKK per year.
- The cross-cutting Strategic Partnerships are expected to deliver on all three strategic priorities. It is up to the

- individual, applying organisation how priorities are weighted in the application.
- Minimum 60 pct. of the programme and project related activities are expected to be in fragile contexts (See Box 6).

### BOX 8

## THEMATIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Commitments between **15–50 mio.** DKK per year.
- For consortia commitments are between **15–100 mio.** DKK per year.
- The thematic partnerships are expected to focus on one of the three strategic priorities, but may address the other strategic priorities as well. Strategic priorities can be equally weighted under the thematic partnerships.

### DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- The thematic partnership should focus on the strategic priority for democratic values and human rights, but may address other strategic priorities as well.
- There are no specific requirements for implementation in fragile contexts.

### FRAGILE CONTEXTS AND DISPLACEMENT

- The thematic partnership should focus on the strategic priority for fragile contexts and displacement, but may address other strategic priorities as well.
- Minimum 80 pct. of the programme and project activities must be in fragile contexts (See Box 6).

### CLIMATE AND GREEN SOLUTIONS

- The thematic partnership should focus on the strategic priority for climate and green solutions, but may address other strategic priorities as well.
- There are no specific requirements for implementation in fragile contexts.

# 5 FLEXIBLE FUNDING MODALITIES

In the Strategic Partnerships 2022-2025 there will be an increased focus on flexibility and adaptive programming through more flexible funding modalities. This section describes the different modalities for flexible funding under the Strategic Partnerships related to having one commitment, having flexible funds as part of that commitment, having access to additional funding and the aspect of co-financing.

Woman selling bananas from her street stand outside Nairobi in Kenya.  
Photo: Danida





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## 5.1 ONE COMMITMENT

The strategic partners will receive one commitment from the MFA that will allow for a flexible approach to programming. In the application format, the strategic partners should indicate how much of the applied fund should be targeted humanitarian purposes or development purposes (e.g. 70/30 or 0/100 etc.).

This must be indicated in the budget, but the strategic partners will have flexibility to adjust and adapt their programmes throughout the period to changes in contexts and needs. It is however, up to the strategic partners to make sure they meet their specific target for funds allocated for humanitarian purposes each year and it must be clearly reflected in the budget and reporting. This is for the sake of MFA commitment on the Finance Act as well as reporting on Danish humanitarian assistance.

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## 5.2 UNALLOCATED FLEXIBLE FUNDS

The Strategic Partnerships will include unallocated flexible funds to enable the strategic partners to react rapidly and in a flexible manner to an immediate crisis, and beyond crisis situations to respond to new or changing needs, or seize opportunities and follow new and innovative ways of working. The unallocated flexible funds may amount to one-third of the annual budget for programme and project activities and can be programmed throughout each year.

Woman carrying water back from the village well in Ghana.  
Photo: Danida

## 5.3 ACCESS TO ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The strategic partners will have access to receiving or applying for potential additional funding as part of their Strategic Partnership with the MFA. The additional funding must be reflected subsequently in budgets and in reporting. It will also be part of the elements discussed at the annual consultations. The additional funds will follow their own specific thematic and geographic requirements.

There are two modalities for additional funding<sup>5</sup>:

### 5.3.1 Swift response to new and changing needs (top-up)

The MFA can allocate additional funding (top-up of existing annual commitment) to relevant strategic partners in order to ensure swift and flexible response to new and changing needs. This modality can be used to respond to a broad range of crises (humanitarian

crises, democracy- and human rights crises as well as climate- and nature crises) or changing needs, where strategic partners are well placed to act. The allocation of funds will be based on the MFAs existing knowledge of the partners capacity and ability to deliver results. This will be based on an assessment of the partners' thematic knowledge, geographic presence, local partner capacity and access to target groups.

### 5.3.2 Thematic call for proposals

The MFA can launch thematic call for proposals in line with specific development priorities, where the strategic partners can apply. The allocation of funding will be based on an assessment and scoring of applications from the strategic partners. The strategic partners have direct access to apply under the call for proposals. The calls may be open for other actors as well depending on theme and context.

## 5.4 CO-FINANCING

Strategic partners will be given flexibility to allocate funds towards co-financing and mobilisation of funding from other institutional donors, provided that the engagement reasonably falls within the overall objectives of the partnership and that the strategic partner can demonstrate an added value beyond the transfer of funds. This includes the possibility to use MFA funds strategically towards co-financing, basket funds, joint programmes and match funding of local partners to enhance scale, influence and promote harmonisation in countries and regions as long as it does not imply a reduction in the thematic and geographic areas of priority for the specific type of partnership.

<sup>5</sup> The formats and criteria for these modalities are to be developed.



# 6 STRATEGIC DIALOGUE, REPORTING AND REQUIREMENTS

This chapter outlines the expectations on strategic dialogue, reporting requirements and specifications relating to Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), ceilings for expenditure at headquarter and for information and public engagement in SPA 2022-2025. All aspects will be further elaborated in the administrative guidelines to be developed and shared at the onset of the Strategic Partnerships. Organisations can use 2022 for phasing in requirements regarding living up to fragility focus and use of funds at headquarter level in Denmark. From 2023 all requirements must be met.

## 6.1 FOCUSED STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

The Strategic Partnerships will involve a continuous and close strategic dialogue with the MFA. This dialogue is based on the type of partnership that the partner is engaged with vis-à-vis the MFA and is centered on issues of strategic relevance for both the partner and for MFA.

MFA and strategic partners will meet in annual dialogues on programmatic issues as well as crosscutting dialogues across strategic priorities, thematic areas, geographies and partners.

## 6.2 REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING RESULTS

As part of the application for a Strategic Partnership, strategic partners are required to develop an overall Theory of Change (ToC) as well as ToCs for each country, thematic, regional and global engagement. Together with a summary results framework they will be a part of the assessment of the application. Following the application process and when entering into the Strategic Partnership all partners are required to develop and submit detailed results framework for each ToC submitted.

Annual reporting will be based on progress towards the outcomes defined in the summary results frameworks and will include an account of how Danish priorities have been addressed during the period and the results emanating from this. A joint set of cross-cutting indicators across the entire SPA-portfolio is furthermore introduced (see section 6.2.1) in supplement to the summary results frameworks of the individual partners. Reporting will also include learning and adaptation in programmes.

ToCs are during the partnership period expected to be updated when relevant. Together with the summary results frameworks (and detailed results frameworks when relevant) they will be used by the MFA to establish an overview of SPA-engagements in countries and

settings and to inform strategic dialogue, coordination and collaboration at various levels.

Partners will plan and report in their own reporting formats, while adhering to a number of reporting requirements as set out in the administrative guidelines for the SPA 2022-2025. Strategic partners will furthermore use the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) format for reporting to the MFA, promoting transparency and making aid information more timely, comparable, compatible and accessible to the most important stakeholders.

### 6.2.1 Cross-cutting indicators

MFA wishes to establish a more systematic documentation of results for both internal and public transparency and accountability. For the Strategic Partnerships, to demonstrate results at the level of the entire SPA 2022-2025 portfolio, partners will be required to report against a choice of pre-defined cross-cutting outcome level indicators within a number of domains of change. These cross-cutting indicators and domains are defined and agreed upon in close collaboration between the MFA and strategic partners in the beginning of the partnership, based on partners own priorities, as well as

### BOX 9

## CROSS-CUTTING INDICATORS

**Examples of focus for predefined cross-cutting indicators:** civil society strengthening, partnerships, nexus, advocacy and capacity development as well as a number of more thematic-oriented domains such as education, health, democratic values and human rights, fragility and displacement and climate and green solutions.

on issues of strategic relevance, as outlined in the Danish development strategy.

### 6.2.2 Reviews

Strategic partners will all undergo a MFA review during the four-year cycle of the partnership with a particular view to support relevant organisational development, validate results, and analyse and strengthen value for money. There will also be cross-cutting thematic reviews across the portfolio of all Strategic Partnerships in order to stimulate learning and adaptation.

## 6.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR GREENING OF ENGAGEMENTS

The strategic partners shall as part of the annual narrative reporting requirements, report on progress in mainstreaming and integration of climate, nature and biodiversity concerns across programmes and projects, the key results achieved in this area and the lessons learned.

In addition, strategic partners are required to report annually on climate and environment flows during the year based on OECD DAC statistical guidelines system of policy marker's for aid to environment and the four Rio markers, and publish these data in the IATI format.

## 6.4 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR STRENGTHENING LOCAL LEADERSHIP

In order to strengthen local leadership, all applicants for a Strategic Partnership must describe their approach referring to the five core elements as described in chapter 3. Applicants must as part of the application describe their objectives for strengthening local leadership within the four-year partnership period. On the basis hereof, the MFA wishes to engage in an annual dialogue and stock tacking, as part of the annual consultations, towards progress. It will be up to the strategic partners to self-assess how they best promote local leadership throughout their programmes. The reporting might also

be included in crosscutting reviews and assessments of the entire partnership portfolio.

Strategic partners will furthermore be subject for an assessment done by their local partners during the partnership period.

In the budget, partners are required to report on the level of transfers to local partners in the South.

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## 6.5 CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS

All strategic partners with humanitarian/nexus engagements in fragile contexts or areas affected by conflict are required to undertake independent verification or certification against the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). Other strategic partners operating in fragile contexts or areas affected by conflict are encouraged to undertake CHS self-assessment or to engage in a dialogue with the MFA about how to make the CHS a good practice within the organization.

The CHS requirements must be met at the time the organisations enter into the Strategic Partnership, alternatively the process of verification or certification must be initiated at this time.

## 6.6 REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF FUNDS AT HEADQUARTER LEVEL IN DENMARK

The Strategic Partnership will strengthen local leadership and flow of funds to the global South and implementation of activities by local partners. Therefore a ceiling for expenditure at headquarter level in Denmark is introduced for all strategic partners.

There will be a maximum ceiling of 20 pct. for expenditure at headquarter level in Denmark and all strategic partners are required to comply with this from 2023 and onwards.

Annex 2E provides an overview of cost categories to determine cost allocations.

Under exceptional circumstances, global entities in Denmark may be funded through the Strategic Partnership above the 20 pct. expenditure ceiling. Please refer to Annex 2F.

The MFA will during the partnership period conduct a mid-term review on how the modality for use of funds at headquarter level in Denmark is being implemented by the strategic partners.



A shepherd with his herd in northern Tanzania.  
Photo: Danida



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## 6.7 OWN-FINANCING ACTIVITIES

The strategic partners are expected to ensure own-financing activities similar to those funded by the MFA through other sources of funding, corresponding to at least 20 pct. of the Strategic Partnership budget. Of these, an amount corresponding to minimum 5 pct. of the budget should be raised in Denmark by the strategic partner. The remaining 15 pct. co-financing may comprise of funding from other donors, including the strategic partner's international alliance. A plan for own-financing activities should be included in the application but does not need to be specified in the budget. Upon entering a Strategic Partnership, partners commit to ensure the own-financing requirements throughout the partnership period.

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## 6.8 THEMATIC, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

The strategic partners may have thematic, regional and global programmes. The allocation of funds under the programmes must be geographically specified at country level. Thematic, regional and global programmes, that are not geographically specified at country level must not exceed 10 pct. in the budget for programme and project activities. Programmes that are not geographically specified at country level cannot count towards thematic and geographical requirements (as specified under section 4.1).

Woman working in an automobile repair shop in Bangladesh  
Photo: Danida

## 6.9 REQUIREMENTS FOR INFORMATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN DENMARK

The MFA will in cooperation with each strategic partner define and agree on a set of engagement targets (hard and soft) which the partner will prioritise and focus on during the partnership period. Targets are defined based on the partners' key strengths and capabilities.

Up to two per cent of the Strategic Partnership budget can be allocated towards information and public engagement (IPE) activities aimed at reaching these targets. The targets will be evaluated and reflected upon in the annual consultations.

Strategic partners are furthermore expected to play an active role in the exploration into different approaches to a collective impact project with the other strategic partners. Part of the IPE can be reserved for this purpose.

The strategic partners will be invited to share lessons learned and best practices with the other strategic partners in order to increase knowledge and performance levels.



## 6.10 ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

A revised set of joint administrative guidelines covering the Strategic Partnerships will be developed through a consultative process. Organisations will receive a draft set of administrative guidelines before entering into the Strategic Partnership.

School class in Ghana.  
Photo: Danida

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Young girls on the street in  
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Photo: Danida

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