



Att. HMC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

DanChurchAid's Comments to Information Note – DRAFT

Strategic partnership between Danish civil society organisations & Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

DanChurchAid (DCA) would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for inviting the Danish CSOs to take part in the transparent consultation process of the Information Note. We find the overall outline of the Information Note relevant and in line with strategic thematic priorities of Danish humanitarian and development organisations. However, for DCA the high expectation of strategic geographical alignment between Danida and Danish CSOs is a major concern for DCA. Further, it is important that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs describe how a responsible phase out of partners is ensured in case of decrease in funding levels. Please find DCA's specific comments to the Information Note.

Page 3, 2.1.1

- DCA suggests a separate bullet point as the following: Efforts that enable partners working with vulnerable communities affected by conflicts, crisis, recurrent natural disasters as well as protracted emergencies to build resilience and sustain livelihoods and self-reliance

Page 4, 2.1.2.

- Bullet one: It would be better if this language avoided the 'helping victims' language. Since the drafting of the Humanitarian Charter in 1995, most organisations and donors speak from a perspective of rights. The Charter itself talks about the 'Rights of conflict and disaster affected non-combatants to the right to life with dignity, the right to humanitarian assistance, and the right to protection and security.'
- Bullet three: DCA suggests adding, 'including support to community-led efforts of affected communities to help themselves, as per ECHO's own protection policy.'
- Bullet four: DCA suggests that it either decide to focus on vulnerability (which is a bit stating the obvious, as it already exists in all international instruments), or on linking to development, which is what the latter half seems to imply.
- Last paragraph, "like the current HPAs" DCA will argue for an even greater proportion of the funds going to flexible funds. This allows us to respond to emerging crises quickly, as special grant rounds have often proved a bit slow coming in the early recovery phase at best. The Nepal earthquake response is a good example of this, when Danish organisations' contributions were made

Folkekirkens Nødhjælp
Nørregade 15
1165 København K

T 3315 2800

info@dca.dk
www.nødhjælp.dk
www.danchurchaid.org

up entirely of flexible funds. In addition, it should be explicitly noted that this funding could be used to respond in existing long-term crises addressed by the HPA (which is not currently the case without prior approval).

Page 5, 2.2.

- Focus on strategic outcomes: DCA suggests that the following sentence is added to the last sentence: “including strengthening Danish engagement and funding to contribute to synergy between NGOs, International Organisations, and Multilateral partners”.

Page 7, 2.2.

- Second paragraph “Mobilisation and engagement of the Danish public”: DCA suggests that one percent of the partnership engagement budget under lot HUM also contributes to the information activities in Denmark (refer to page 16, section 5.3.9. Strategic partners are expected to play an important role in engaging the public in Denmark and strengthening the general level of understanding of the effects of and humanitarian action.)

Page 10, 5.2.1.

- Second paragraph “Migration and development”: Referring to the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action chapter 5 (Migration) it is important to specify civil society organisations’ role regarding migration and development. DCA suggests: Support strengthening the link between migration and development. All people have the freedom and right to create a future/livelihood where they live. Lack of opportunities especially for young people to educate themselves and get decent jobs forces people into unsafe migration. It is important to sustain stable and just societies, where citizens influence decision-making and where women and girls’ rights are respected.

Page 12, 5.2.4.

- DCA suggests adding Libya and Uganda to category 5.

Page 13, 5.2.4.

- Second paragraph “Application for lot HUM”: DCA suggests adding, “that near region refugee-hosting countries are also eligible for funding (e.g. refugees in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia from South Sudan). DCA also suggests that the 100% geographic match should cover countries in both category 4 and 5.

Page 13, 5.2.4.

“For lot CIV and lot LAB”: The strategic alignment between Danida priority countries and Danish CSOs countries is very strict and will have significant negative impact on DCA and our local partners. While we do recognize a need for some level of overlap, Danida should also respect and recognize the need for a civil society that does not act as a sub-contractor to Danish foreign policy, but rather as a partner in its own right. Diversity is in itself a strength and enables the Danish Government to have “indirect presence” in countries where the Ministry/Denmark does not have embassies. As such the continued presence of Danish

CSOs in countries where Denmark does not have – or has decided to no longer have – representation secures a very cost-effective “Danish presence”, which can also be to the benefit of the MFA’s other departments in terms of on the ground knowledge, “early warning” and not least as potential partner to Danish companies seeking to establish a commercial presence in these countries. It is also of great value to Danish investors to build on the good reputation of the Danish development aid and the value added through Danish CSOs.

- The 2/3 alignment criteria match (assessment) thus makes identifying cooperation opportunities between private sector and Danish CSOs more restricted/difficult. The more instable a country is, the less opportunities for cooperation.

With the suggested 2/3 match, half of DCA’s current focus countries do not match Danida’s priority countries (Cambodia, Nepal, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The consequence of this is that DCA has to withdraw all Danida funding in two to three of these countries.

If DCA were able to continue with Danida funding in the countries listed above then DCA would be able to continue the important nexus work done in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake (Build Back Better). Another example is DCA’s presence in Zimbabwe, where support to civil society in the fight for ensuring civic and political space is in line with Danish priorities and has hitherto been conducted in close coordination with the Danish Embassy, which is now closing.

Would Danish CSOs be able to use CIV funding to co-finance projects and programmes outside Danida priority countries? Restricting Danida co-financing will have huge impact on DCA/Danish CSOs’ opportunities to fundraise in Danida non-priority countries, ultimately resulting in closing entire DCA country programmes. As argued above, this would be detrimental, not only to many local partners and to the beneficiaries of our work in these countries, but it would also hamper private sector cooperation, which is a key priority in the strategy underpinning the modalities in question.

DCA strongly suggests revisiting the alignment criteria so that the assessment of geographic strategic alignment is based on 50% of the proposed country programme budget, meaning that 50% of the proposed country programme budget may be allocated to countries outside the lot specific priorities.

Page 13, 5.3:

- DCA suggests that the ability to leverage external funds through the effective and strategic use of Danish funds should be a priority paragraph all of its own. DCA also suggests that there should be more emphasis given to contributing to learning and policy change across the international humanitarian and development community.

Page 15, 5.3.7

- Please clarify that the “engagement budget” referred to is the partnership engagement budget.

Page 16, 6.1.

- Please note that the text reads “the LEADS descriptors (allocating scores from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)” and the table indicates that score 5 is little action/evidence and score 1 is sustainable.

Page 17, 6.2.

- Point 1 “Responsible growth”: DCA will argue that this refers to a 25% increase in the total Danida contribution to the partner, including not only HPA and CIV but special grants as well.
- Point 2 “Diversity of partners”: The text reads, “no partner will receive more than DKK 20 million on top of current levels of Danida funding *within* the three lots”. Does this mean DKK 20 million on top of Danida funding within each of the three lots, or is it DKK 20 million all together for the three lots?

Sincerely

Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen

General Secretary

biqs@dca.dk

Tel 29700623