

The Civil Society Fund anno 2025



Guidelines for the Civil Society Fund – DRAFT



PHOTO: ELSA GÓMEZ ROSARIO ORREGÓN, ASES

 CISU CIVIL SOCIETY IN
DEVELOPMENT

AGENDA

1. Why a reform and the process until now
2. The new guidelines in broad strokes

Short break

3. The support modalities
4. The Board's allocation of CSF budget
5. Questions

Shared rules

- Camera on, at least when speaking
- Mic off
- Raise hand
- Clarifying broader questions and comments along the way and at the end
- Narrow questions through advisory services



BACKGROUND AND PROCESS



Why reforming the CSF?

Ambition: CSF (continues) as a progressive, inspiring funding mechanism.

A changing context:

1. The wider world: Locally led development
2. In Denmark: Government strategies and priorities are changing (less poverty focus, more strategic interests), CSOs should revisit our added value, role in relation to strategic interest, and our purpose as CS.
3. The CISU bubble: \$-pressure → pressure on CSP, urgent need for adjustments of guidelines, waste of HHRR.

The reform process until now

- The board: continued involvement
- Users: open meeting in February and hearing process in June – August
- Internally in CISU: Assessment committee and consultants, Secretariat
- MFA: Approval but with some requirements

TRANSITION

- All existing grants will continue
- The Neighborhood Fund continue using the 'old' formats
 - But introduces application deadlines, part of grant ceiling
- DERF, OpEn, Engagementspuljen, Connect are not part of the CSF reform.
- Potential future Pools of Funds can become part of CSF, but this will be determined case by case.



FAQ –
www.cisu.dk/csp2025



THE GUIDELINES BROADLY

- Shortened guidelines
- Smaller grants
- Lower grant ceiling (6 → 5 million DKK)
- Limit on number of applications
- Competition in all project and programme modalities (application deadlines and scoring)



MODALITY	# OF DEADLINES
■ Project Support	3 times per year
■ Small Programme	2 times per year
■ Medium and Large Programme	1 every second year
■ Funding Diversification and Capacity Analysis	Ongoing

MODALITIES



PROJECT SUPPORT

Small Project	Large Project
Up to 150,000 DKK	Up to 700,000 DKK

PROGRAMME SUPPORT

Small Programme	Medium Programme	Large Programme
Up to 4 million DKK in total	Up to 15 million DKK in total	Up to 27 million DKK in total

CIVIL SOCIETY FUND

FUNDING DIVERSIFICATION

Co-funding	Support for Application Process
Up to 1 million DKK per grant	Up to 50,000 DKK per grant

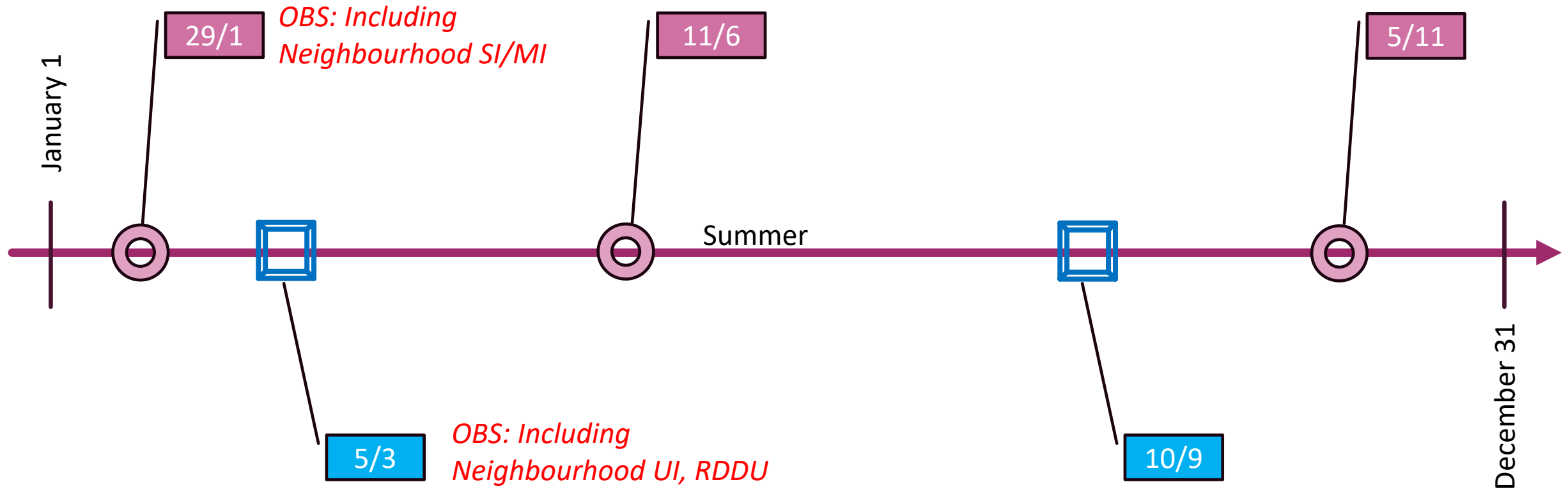
CAPACITY ANALYSIS

CISU covers all costs for the consultant and activities for an organisation awarded a Capacity Analysis grant.

Deadlines 2025 for Projects and Small Programmes

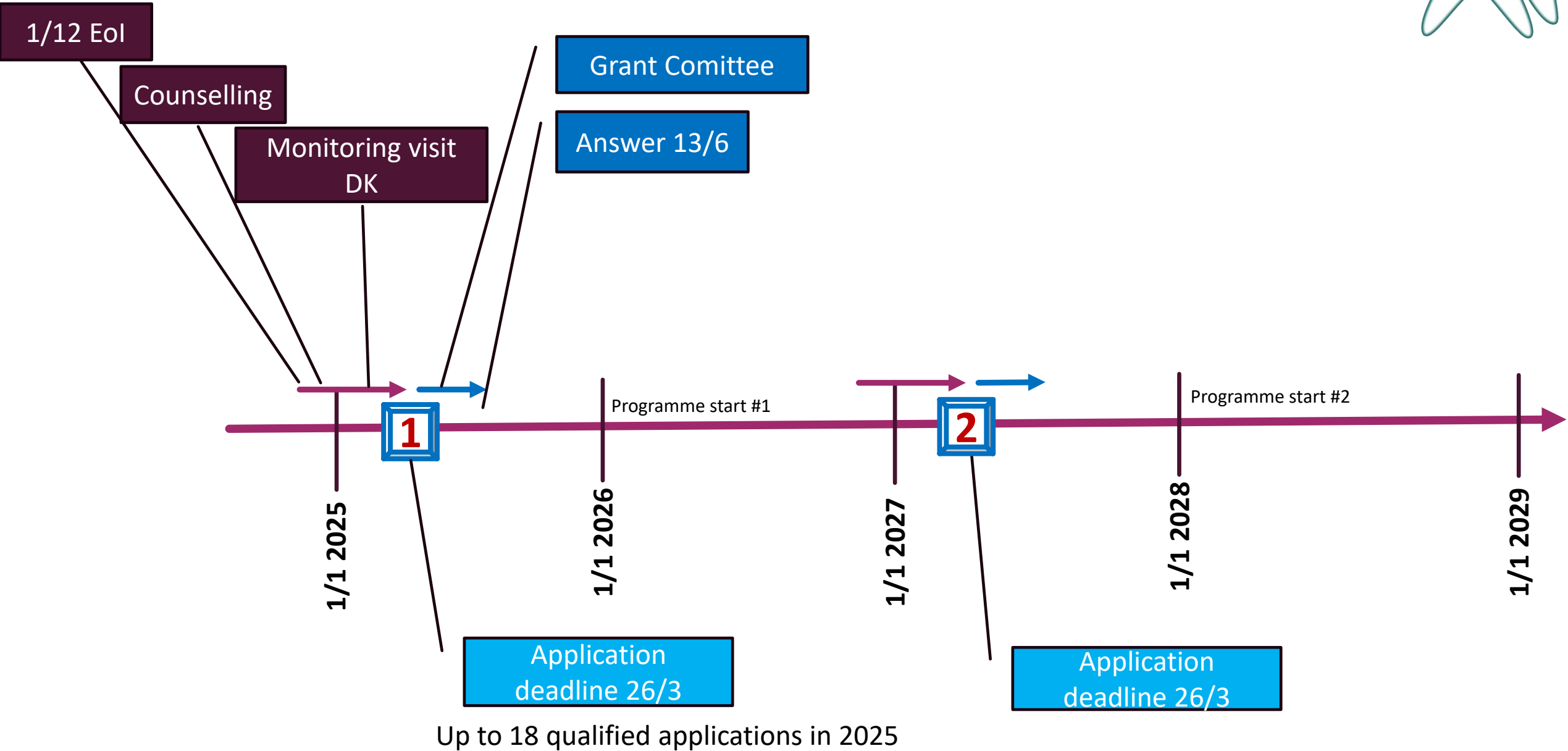


Small & Large Projects



Small Programmes

4 year cycle for Medium & Large Programme



PURPOSE



1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the Civil Society Fund (CSF) is to support capacity strengthening of civil society actors.

By supporting such actors, the CSF aims to increase citizen participation in governance and development processes. This helps give voice to marginalised groups and holds governments accountable, and address pressing social issues like poverty, inequality, discrimination, and lack of access to services. The CSF contributes to a robust and pluralistic civil society by supporting a wide range of formal and informal organisations, movements, and initiatives. This diversity is crucial for a well-functioning democracy.

- SDG compliance
- Human Rights compliance
- Poverty alleviation

PRINCIPLES

4 principles

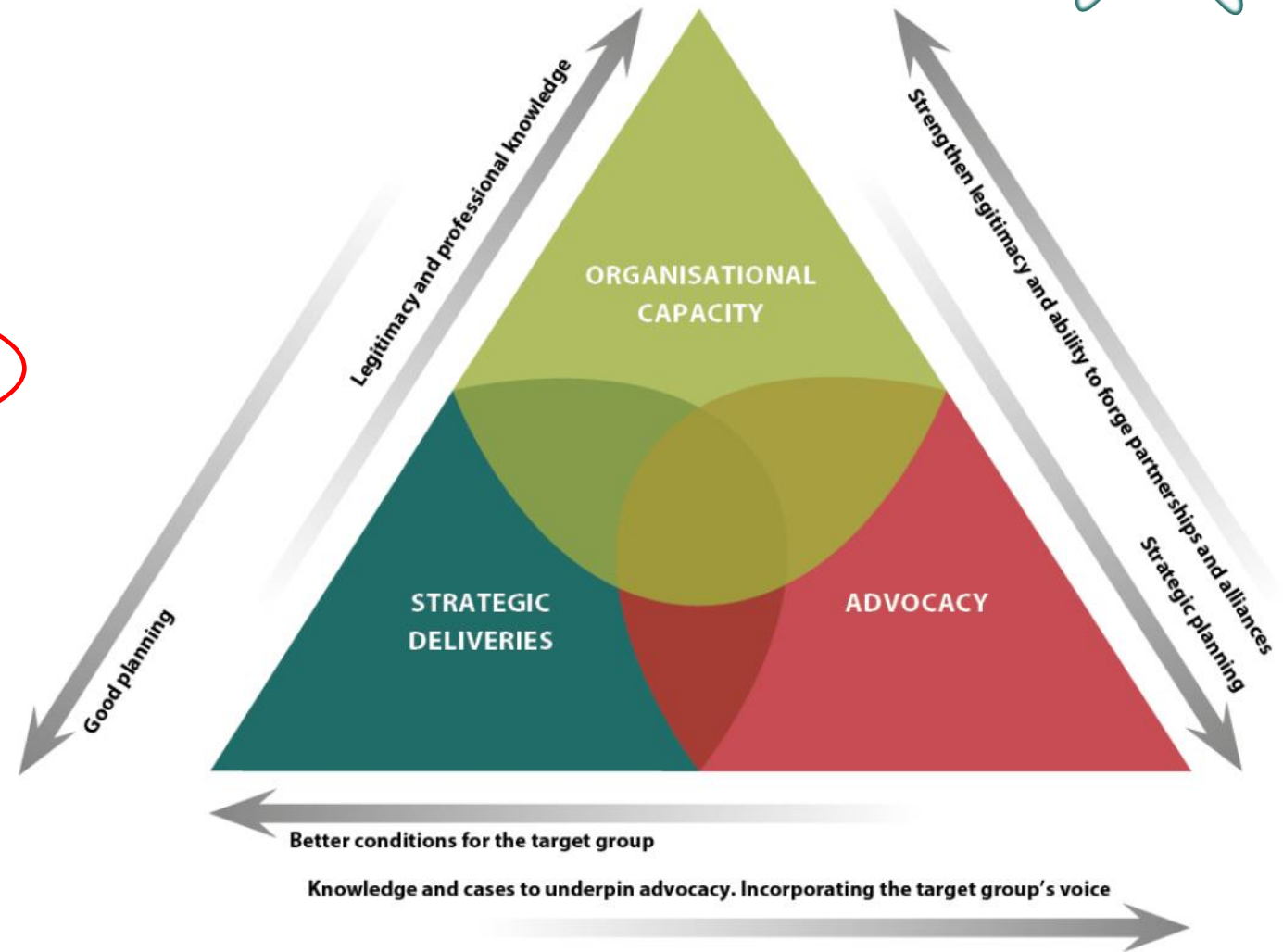
1. Human rights
2. Do no harm
3. Poverty orientation
4. Sustainability

Human Rights

Applicants must demonstrate how the intervention uses a human rights-based approach to work with rights holders and/or duty bearers to promote the situation of the rights holders.

Fundamental human rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled. A human rights-based approach focuses on enabling people to demand their rights and hold duty-bearers accountable.

The approach focuses on eliminating unequal power relations and unequal distribution of resources, for example in relation to gender. A human rights-based approach rests on four fundamental principles: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, and Transparency (PANT). It is expected that the affected rightsholders are adequately involved in the entire development cycle. In the case of tribal and indigenous peoples and according to their collective human rights, this requires a process of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).



LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT (LLD)



LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT

is an ongoing development process where local actors have agency in framing, design, delivery (including control over resources), and accountability, with or without the support of international development cooperation.

1.2 The programme is based upon locally identified needs, priorities, and concerns.

EX OF LLD IN ASSESMET CRITERIA



<p>3.4 The Global South partner(s)' strategies are reflected in the programme strategy.</p>	<p>3.4 The Global South partners' strategies are clearly reflected in the programme strategy.</p>	<p>3.4 The Global South partners' strategies are central for the programme strategy.</p>
<p>4.2 The target group(s) or their legitimate representatives are involved in the design and planned delivery of the programme.</p>	<p>4.2 The target groups or their legitimate representatives are actively participating in the design and planned delivery of the programme.</p>	<p>4.2 The target groups or their legitimate representatives have a leading role in the entire programme cycle.</p>

- 8.1 The cost level in relation to the programme strategy, context, and size of and level of engagement with the target group is reasonable.
- 8.2 The budget is clear and transparent and reflects a fair and relevant budget allocation for each partner based on their respective roles and responsibilities.
- 8.3 The partner(s) and local community(ies) provide relevant non-financial contributions.

Also in application formats, Expression of Interest (for Medium and Large Programmes), budget and reporting formats

MODALITIES



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CIVIL SOCIETY FUND

FUNDING DIVERSIFICATION

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PROJECT



4.1. Purpose

Project Support enables the strengthening of organisations and partnerships for the benefit of local communities in the Global South. The project modality can for example include support to organisations to:

- Build partnerships
- Strengthen organisational capacities
- Try out new approaches
- Expand on impactful approaches
- Foster popular engagement.

4.2. Project Support overview

PROJECT SUPPORT		
Type	Small Project	Large Project
Max grant size	DKK 150,000	DKK 700,000
Eligibility	No requirements of previous collaboration in the partnership applying for support. No requirements of previous project experience. Danish organisations with a Medium or Large Programme from CISU cannot apply.	Previous collaboration in the partnership applying for support is required. Danish organisations with a Medium or Large Programme from CISU cannot apply.
# applications	Maximum three applications* for Small Projects per Danish organisation per year.	Maximum three applications* for Large Projects per Danish organisation per year.
Application deadlines	Three deadlines per year. Dates are published on www.cisu.dk	

* This number includes applications that are rejected and re-applications.

PROJECT (cont.)

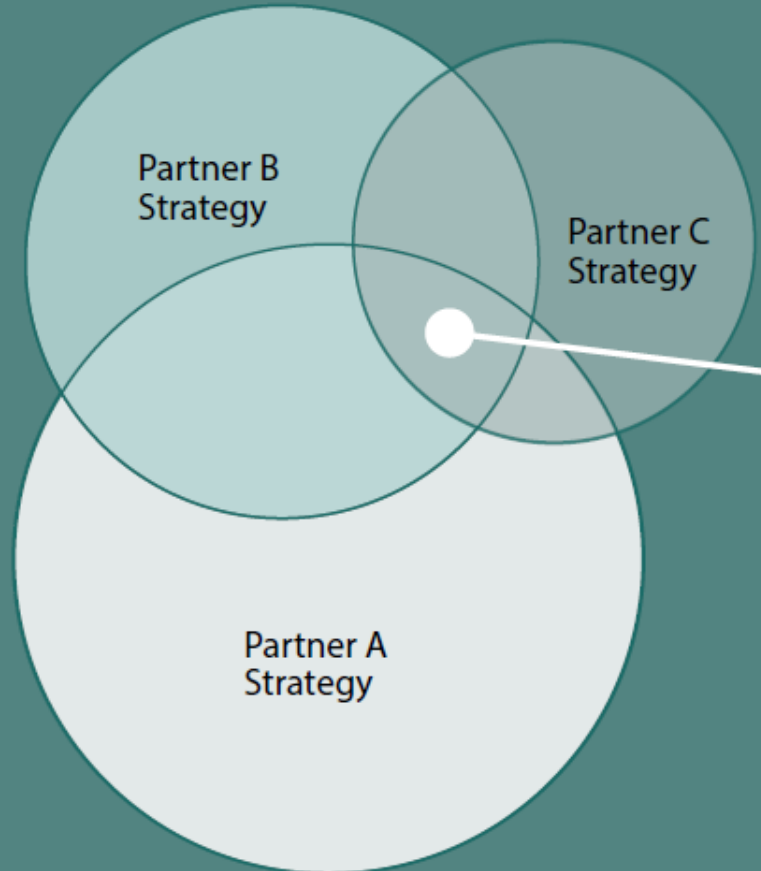


Criteria	Small Project	Large Project	Weight of criteria	
			Small	Large
1. Relevance	1.1 The project adheres to the purpose and the principles of the CSF.		15%	15%
	1.2 The project is relevant in the context in which it will take place and is based on local needs.		15%	15%
2. Partnership	2.1 The Global South partner(s) have the relevant experience, capacities, and resources to implement the project and manage their financial and reporting responsibilities.		9%	5%
	2.2 The Danish partner has the relevant experience, capacities, and resources to support project implementation and manage the financial and reporting requirements.		9%	5%
		2.3 The project strengthens the partners and/or the relationship between them.		8%

PROGRAMME



Programme strategy



Programme strategy

As illustrated, the partners (A,B,C) each have their own strategies that to a smaller or larger degree overlaps with each other.

The programme strategy is identified within the area where the strategies of all partners overlap. The overlap can be a smaller or larger part of the individual partner's area of work.

Features:

- Long-term focus -> predictability
- Strategic focus on partnership strategies -> local led development
- Proven track record -> flexibility

Assessment Criteria:

- Locally led development
- Synergy
- Learning and results from previous engagements
- Financial and organisational sustainability

Programme Support

Type	Small Programme	Medium Programme	Large Programme
Eligibility⁵	<p>Having been granted minimum DKK 750,000 in total from the CSF over the last four years.</p> <p>Previous experience from the context and cooperation with at least one of the partner(s).</p>	<p>Minimum DKK 3 million yearly on average in grants from the CSF in the last four years.</p> <p>Previous experience from the context and cooperation with at least two of the partners.</p>	<p>Having been granted two Medium Programmes from the CSF in the partnership within the past ten years.</p> <p>(Having been granted two programme grants under the CSF before 2025 would qualify for a large programme).</p> <p>Previous experience from the context and cooperation with at least two of the partners.</p>
No. of Global South partners	Minimum one	Minimum two	
Max grant size	DKK 4 million in total (max DKK 0.8 – 1.3 million per year, depending on duration)	DKK 15 million in total (max DKK 2.5 – 3.75 million per year, depending on duration) (divided in annual grants)	DKK 27 million in total (max DKK 4.5 – 6.75 million per year, depending on duration) (divided in annual grants)
Duration (chosen by the applicant)	3 – 5 years	4 – 6 years	



Possibility for the Danish organisation to apply for additional Programme Support	Maximum three applications* for Small Programmes per year within the organisational grant ceiling.	Maximum one application* for Small Programme per year within the organisational grant ceiling.	No
Possibility for the Danish organisation to apply for Project Support	Maximum a total of three project applications* per year within the organisational grant ceiling.	No	No
Application deadlines	Twice per year	Once every second year	

**This number includes applications that are rejected and re-applications.*

PROGRAMME (cont.)



Assessment criteria

- Generally, higher demands
- Increasing expectations along with increased programme size

3.5 The programme strategy promotes sustainable changes within its area of work beyond the duration of the programme.

3.5 The programme strategy includes realistic plans to ensure sustainable changes within its area of work beyond the duration of the programme.

3.5 The programme strategy has a clear plan for creating sustainable structural changes within its area of work and make the Global South partners increasingly self-sustainable.

PROGRAMME (cont.)



FINANCIAL OWN CONTRIBUTION

- Funds raised in Denmark, e.g., donations, contributions, membership fees, grants.
- Co-financing e.g., grants from foundations or institutional donors supporting one or more partners in the partnership within the purpose of the programme.

10% for Medium Programmes
20% for Large Programmes

The financial own contribution requirement must be completed by the end of a given grant period, i.e. four years. If the requirement is not achieved, the maximum grant amount for the next grant given under Programme Support shall be aligned to the financial contribution that the partners have secured to supplement CISUs funding for the programme.

FINANCIAL DIVERSIFICATION and CAPACITY ANALYSIS



Co-funding

- Co-financing can cover up to 35% of the total budget applied for to the main donor.
- Up to DKK 1 million per grant.

Co-funding (for DK org's)

- Increase from 25% to 35%
- Maximum of 1 mio DKK
- DKK org must be lead **or co-applicant**

Support for application process

Support for Application Process

- Relevant expenses of the application process of each partner, e.g., salaries, consultant fees, workshops, and studies.
- Up to DKK 50,000 per grant.

7. Capacity Analysis

Criteria	Capacity Analysis
Civil society relevance	The organisation's work generally contributes to the CSF's purpose and principles.
Focus	The proposed specific areas to be analysed are based on a thorough analysis of needs, wishes, and opportunities for the organisation, its partnerships, and/or interventions.

The Board's allocation of CSF budget



Subject to final approval by Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2025 budget, 2026 **indicative** budget. Number of grants based upon application to maximum grant size.

	2025			2026		
	% of total grants	DKK/year	Number of grants (with max amount)	% of total grants	DKK/year	Number of grants (with max amount)
Small projects	2,0%	2.960.000	20	3,4%	5.032.000	34
Large projects	14,4%	21.312.000	30	14,0%	20.720.000	30
Small programmes	32,0%	47.360.000	12	36,2%	53.576.000	13
"Medium programmes" (running)	11,4%	16.872.000	5	6,3%	9.324.000	3
Medium programmes (new)				12,2%	18.056.000	5
"Large programmes" (running)	37,7%	55.796.000	10	25,4%	37.592.000	6
Large programmes (new)		0	0	0,0%	0	0
Funding diversification and capacity analysis	2,5%	3.700.000	4	2,5%	3.700.000	4

THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS



- Final approval from MFA
- Application formats projects and programmes expected to be ready week 46/47
- Coming deadlines in 2025:
 - EoI process Medium programme: December 1
 - Projects: January 29
 - Small Programmes: March 5
 - Medium Programmes full applications: March 26
- Stocktake end of 2025

Write, call, book advisory sessions