

Guidelines for the Neighbourhood Fund

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CISU CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPMENT

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1. Introduction

Three decades after the six eastern neighbouring countries - Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan - gained independence, the countries still face challenges to democracy, and there is an overarching need to strengthen civil society, democratic institutions, and citizen participation. Moreover, there is an urgent need to strengthen people's resilience in contexts of conflict, notably in Ukraine due to Russia's brutal invasion.

In large parts of the population, there is a strong desire for democratic reforms, which has driven several popular protest movements over the past two decades. Despite the obvious popular aspirations, there are strong forces and actors that oppose this. At the same time, the sovereignty and stability of the neighbouring countries are being challenged. Five of the six countries are experiencing armed territorial conflicts with Russian interference and are increasingly challenged by hybrid attacks.

The Neighbourhood Fund (NF) supports civil society interventions that contribute towards democratic development and enhance civil society's resilience and capacity to work towards a strong and diverse society.

As a framework, the NF has established the following three purposes:

- **Promoting human rights and democratic values.** Civil society is essential empowering citizens to engage in democratic processes and protect marginalized communities through the promotion of transparency, accountability, and respect for fundamental human rights.
- **Enhancing engagement with authorities for public service delivery.** Strengthen the ability of civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage and collaborate with local, regional, and national authorities to improve the delivery of essential public services for vulnerable groups.
- **Fostering resilience for vulnerable groups** affected by conflict to withstand external shocks and pressures and adapt, recover, and thrive despite continued violence, displacement, and economic instability.

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2. Principles

The NF supports a variety of work by organisations and movements; from short-term projects with a tight focus on a specific task, to longer development processes that require long-term strategies and flexibility to react to opportunities as they present themselves.

The NF recognises different approaches and strategies can be applied to achieve changes, which varies depending on context, priorities, experiences and position. However, all applications must comply with the following principles with exceptions given for applications in contexts of conflict and high fragility.

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.

Do no harm

Applicants must demonstrate extensive knowledge of the context and understanding of how their involvement has consequences for the affected people. Applicants must also demonstrate readiness to adjust an intervention if the context changes.

It is important to be aware of the effect that any involvement has on others, and as such it is necessary to analyse relations, consequences, and risks in the context in which an intervention takes place. Actors working with people living in poverty and marginalisation must be aware of the position or role they play in each context and acknowledge their own biases. The aim is to minimise any negative impact and increase the positive impact on the situation.

Poverty orientation

Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of the target groups and describe the form of poverty and vulnerability they face and how the intervention addresses this.

The NF supports work that directly or indirectly secures the participation, interests, and rights of people living in poverty and vulnerability. Poverty has several dimensions and is not only about income but also personal security, access to resources such as education and jobs, health and access to natural resources, including land and water, and the possibility to influence decisionmakers. Many people are trapped in one or more forms of poverty and vulnerability in different ways, and often various types of poverty affect each other.

Sustainability

Applicants must demonstrate how the intervention contributes to a more sustainable situation for the community, partners, and wider environment.

Sustainability in interventions should encompass a holistic approach that ensures interventions not only achieve their immediate objectives but also foster long-term benefits for the beneficiaries, environment, and partnering organisations. This means supporting interventions and organisations that remain viable and impactful even after their completion, thereby contributing to ongoing sustainability efforts.

Continuation in partnerships requires solid sustainability strategies and results in relation to sustainability. Interventions should thus be designed with a focus on organisational sustainability, ensuring financial feasibility and alignment with the values and goals of the partnering organisations, social sustainability promoting equity, and environmental sustainability minimising ecological footprints and preserving natural resources.

For interventions implemented in contexts of conflict and high fragility, requirements for sustainable improvements can be waived if sufficiently explained in the application.

3. The Development Triangle

The Development Triangle is a framework to describe the different elements in a development intervention. The triangle illustrates how three core elements of development interventions effects one another and their potential synergies showing how they can address fundamental causes of deprivation of human rights.

The three elements together are considered fundamental to good development processes but the balance between them can vary, depending on the context and the capacities and experiences in the partnership. It is not a requirement to include all elements in an intervention, but it must be explained why some elements are chosen over others to reach the goals.

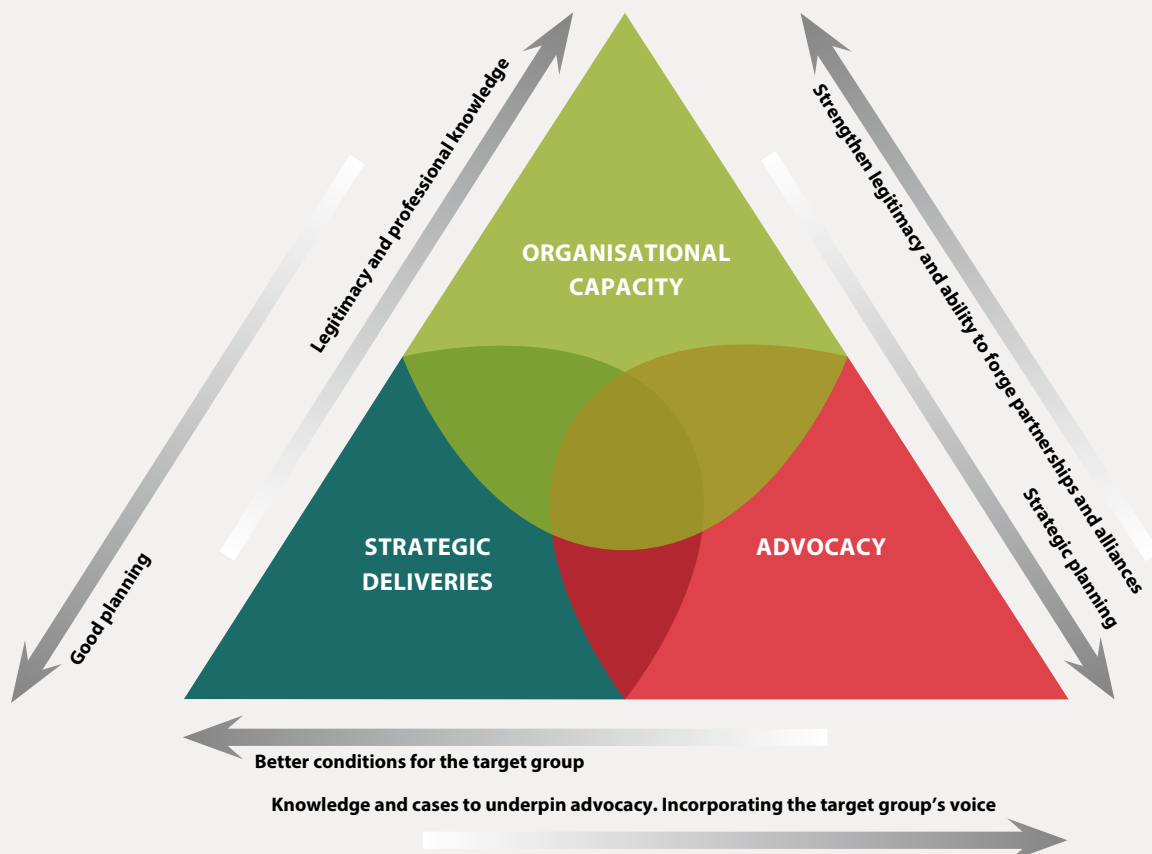
- **Capacity building** refers to strengthening the capacity of partners and other actors, networks, and/or target groups. Capacity can include strategic and organisational capacity, technical and thematical capacity to conduct projects and programmes, and capacity to work in networks and alliances with other actors. Capacity building is often a prerequisite for making sustainable change and can form the basis for engaging in advocacy.
- **Strategic deliveries** are tangible inputs such as goods and services that the partners contribute with towards the primary target group. The strategic deliveries must never

be an end in itself but be used as a strategic means that strengthens or better allow working with the two other elements of the triangle. Strategic deliveries can thus be necessary but will never in themselves create lasting and sustainable change.

Interventions implemented in contexts of conflict and high fragility may encompass a significant higher proportion of strategic deliveries.

- **Advocacy** is the planned action to influence formal or informal decision-makers and the public to bring about lasting improvements for poor or marginalised groups. Advocacy can both be directed at duty bearers such as local authorities, community stakeholders, private sector, or national and international authorities, but also to form broader coalitions of civic actors and the mobilization of target groups. Advocacy can be based upon the knowledge and experience among the civil society actors, for instance based on learnings from strategic deliveries. Advocacy actions should take point of departure in the legitimacy, access, and capacity of the civil society actors.

There is no advocacy requirement for interventions implemented in contexts of conflict and high fragility if sufficiently explained in the application.



4. Who can apply

The NF supports partnerships between civil society actors and movements in the eastern neighbourhood countries and Denmark. Different requirements apply to the partners and there must be a clear division of roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the intervention. This division must be jointly agreed upon and clear to partners.

4.1. Responsibility

The applicant organisation's governing body must be able to take on full responsibility for the application and for any subsequent grant. If several Danish organisations apply jointly, there must always be one lead organisation which holds the administrative and legal responsibility for the grant and contract with CISU. Only the lead organisation needs to live up to the above requirement. If the lead organisation is an umbrella organisation, at least one of its member organisations must fulfil the above requirement.

Grant Administration Guide

More information about the governing body's responsibility is available in the Grant Administration Guide available at www.cisu.dk.

4.2. Requirements for the Danish partner organisation

The NF accepts applications from Danish CSOs that meet the following minimum requirements for support laid down by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

REQUIREMENTS TO THE DANISH PARTNER	INELIGIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organisation needs to be private, and it must have legal domicile as well as activities in Denmark.• The chairperson or most members of its governing body must be Danish citizens or foreigners with permanent residency in Denmark unless the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark grants an exemption.• The organisation must have an approved set of statutes.• The accounts of the organisation, including the annual accounts, must be subject to auditing.• The organisation must have a minimum of 25 paying Danish contributors for applications up to DKK 500,000, and a minimum of 50 paying Danish contributors for applications more than DKK 500,000. The Danish contributors may be members, volunteers in the association or financial contributors. The contributions must have been given in the current financial year. There are no requirements to the size of the contribution.• For umbrella organisations, at least one of its member organisations must satisfy the above requirements.• If the organisation has existed less than one year, it may only apply for a maximum of DKK 500,000.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The NF is unable to support interventions eligible for support from other organisations or institutions funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark such as the Centre for Church-Based Development (CKU), the Danish Youth Council (DUF), Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD), the Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora Programme and the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD).• The NF does not accept applications from organisations that have signed a strategic partnership agreement, fund agreement, or similar agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.• The NF does not accept applications from foundations engaged in commercial activity, consulting firms, educational establishments or entities set up by law, including folk high schools (højskoler).

4.3. Requirements for eastern partners

The eastern partner(s)

The eastern partner(s) must be a CSO capable of taking on the necessary administrative and financial responsibility of the grant as described in the application and in CISU's Grant Administration Guide.

If a partner is without legal recognition or an informal organisation (e.g., a social movement, or is by some means prevented from being able to receive and administer funds according to CISU's requirements for financial management), then another organisation – even one that does not belong to civil society or is based in a DAC country, if this can be justified – may act as fiscal and legal agent, a link between the Danish organisation and the eastern partner(s). This other organisation must be able to administer the funds according to CISU's requirements for financial management. This could be the case, for instance, in countries where CSOs in general or certain groups are subject to legislation that restricts their right to organise or access to international funding, or organisations that are forced to work underground.

Other actors as part of an intervention

Interventions may include cooperation with other actors such as authorities, research institutes and educational establishments, or the private sector. They may play a part in, for example, activities, assignments, training, capacity building, and advocacy that have specific relevance to and advance the purpose of the NF and of an intervention.

For instance, interventions aimed at economic development may include relevant private businesses or social enterprises as actors as long as this does not conflict with the rules on state subsidies. Activities with public institutions may also feature in the intervention if they are included strategically to ensure the rights of target groups. Cooperation with research institutes and educational establishments can support the accumulation of knowledge and documentation for the purpose of supporting interventions and advocacy with evidence-based knowledge.

It is also possible to cooperate with authorities that are duty bearers and who are key to succeed in an intervention and bring about sustainable change. However, civil society must play a primary role in the cooperation, implementation and realisation of the intervention.

Several interventions in the partnership

The purpose of the NF is to strengthen civil societies. Strong, independent, and sustainable civil society actors are central, and although NF supports long-lasting cooperation between the same partners, partnerships must work towards the long-term objective that all partners are able to be self-sustaining or secure additional funding from other sources.

If an intervention is an extension of previous cooperation, it will be assessed based on the following:

- It does not merely repeat a former intervention. A new intervention must build on results and experiences and contain new desired changes, a new or adjusted strategy or a new or extended target group.
- The expectations of learning, reflection, and positive changes and results are increasing with each extension.

REQUIREMENTS TO THE EASTERN PARTNERS	INELIGIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern partners must form part of civil society in the country where activities will be implemented. • The partner's senior management and governing body must be locally anchored. If the partner has a governing body, the chairperson and the majority of members of its governing body must be citizens or foreigners with their permanent residence in the country concerned and none of them affiliated with the Danish partner. If governed differently, similar anchoring must be shown in the application. • If the eastern partners are locally based chapters of international civil society organisations, including those to which the Danish organisation is affiliated, the partners must be registered in the country concerned and have its own governing body as described above. 	<p>The eastern partners cannot be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals and families. • The local, regional, or national government or political parties. • Public authorities or bodies. • Private businesses. • On the UN's or EU's list of terrorist organisations. The Danish organisation is responsible for checking this.

5. Support Modalities

Interventions should address specific challenges in the context through partnerships between Danish organisations and civil society actors from the neighbourhood countries. It is a prerequisite for support that all work is based on local needs.

In addition to funding interventions in each of the neighbourhood countries, the NF may also support interventions with a regional perspective, involving activities in multiple of the six countries.

Overview of Project Modalities

	Max Grant Size	Eligibility	Application Deadlines*
Small Project	DKK 150,000	The partners must live up to the general requirements in section 4. No requirements of previous collaboration in the partnership. No requirements of previous project experience.	Three times per year
Large Project	DKK 700,000	The partners must live up to the general requirements in section 4. Previous collaboration in the partnership is required.	
Development Intervention	DKK 4,500,000	The partners must live up to the general requirements in section 4. Previous collaboration in the partnership is required.	Twice per year
Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine	DKK 4,500,000	The partners must live up to the general requirements in section 4. Previous collaboration in the partnership is required.	
Support for Application Process	DKK 50,000	The partners must live up to the general requirements in section 4. The total budget of the application to the main donor must be at least DKK 200,000.	Ongoingly
Co-funding	DKK 1,000,000	The partners applying must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live up to general requirements in section 4. • Have previously managed a grant of at least DKK 200,000 from one of CISU's funds or from a donor with similar reporting requirements. • Justify that there is chance of receiving the grant from the main donor by supplementing with Co-funding from the NF. • Either be lead applicant or co-applicant of the application to the main donor. 	

*All deadlines are at 12:00 (noon) Danish time, and the exact dates are available at www.cisu.dk.

The max number of project applications to the Civil Society Fund does not apply to the Neighbourhood Fund.

5.1 Project modalities, amounts and assessment criteria

The NF offers six types of support modalities:

- Small Projects up to DKK 150,000.
- Large Projects up to DKK 700,000.
- Development Intervention up to DKK 4.5 million.
- Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine up to DKK 4.5 million.
- Support for Application Process up to DKK 50,000.
- Co-funding up to DKK 1 million per grant.

Applications will be assessed according to the assessment criteria for the support modality concerned, and whether the purpose of the intervention aligns with one of the overall purposes of the NF.

The fragile and volatile situation in several of the neighbourhood countries call for special attention to the safety and organisational approaches. This situation also imposes special requirements for oversight, integrity and transparency, which partnerships and interventions must consider. Applications can be anonymised if necessary.

Applications for interventions should be submitted using the application forms for the NF.

5.2 Project modalities fit for various approaches

The very diverse and complex challenges in the region require nuanced approaches and strategies to support civil society actors. The different project modalities enable the strengthening of organisations and partnerships, based on the specific context and for the benefit of local communities. This can for example include support to organisations to:

- Build partnerships.
- Strengthen organisational capacities.
- Try out new approaches and explore new areas of intervention.
- Expand on impactful approaches.
- Enhance engagement with authorities for public service delivery for vulnerable groups.
- Foster resilience for vulnerable groups.

The projects should be defined by a set of goals that can be realised within a specified timeframe. Project goals should be used to guide implementation and show whether the approach is successful, or changes are required. Projects must contribute to improving the lives of people living in poverty, vulnerability, hostility and marginalisation in the communities wherein the project activities take place.

Civil society actors in exile

In cases where it is impossible to work in and with civil society within the national borders, for example, due to the oppression of authoritarian regimes, the Neighbourhood fund may support work involving civil society actors in exile.



PROJECT EXAMPLE 1

Empowering Democratic Movements in and outside Belarus

Since the 2020 presidential election in Belarus, which was widely regarded as neither free nor fair, the Belarusian government has intensified its crackdown on pro-democracy advocates. Activists, journalists, and political leaders face arrest, intimidation, and violence, forcing many to flee the country. These exiled advocates, scattered across Europe and beyond, play a vital role in keeping the prodemocracy movement alive and amplifying the voices of those still inside Belarus.

In this challenging environment, networking between advocates within Belarus and those operating from exile is critical. It fosters collaboration, resource-sharing, and strategic planning, ensuring that the pro-democracy movement remains unified and resilient.

A Danish pro-democracy organisation has with its partner organisation registered in Latvia, comprising largely of members of the Belarusian diaspora, taken a leading role in supporting these efforts. The partnership is dedicated to empowering Belarusian activists, strengthening cross-border networks, and amplifying calls for democratic reforms in Belarus.

Budget: DKK 425,000, which covers expenses for network meetings and preparation of messages and materials on the internet. Costs include the development of encrypted communication platforms for activists to coordinate activities safely.

6. Assessment Criteria

Each project modality has a set of assessment criteria. In addition to the assessment criteria for each project modality indicated in the tables on the following pages, the assessment of each application is guided by these three principles: 1) there is no rigid formula*, 2) adaptability of requirements, and 3) flexibility when working in fragile contexts.

There is no rigid formula means that with the purposes of the fund in mind, the assessment committee can undertake an integrated assessment of an application that considers the overall picture of the context and project described in the application.

Adaptability of requirements means that the larger the budget, the stricter the requirements regarding the capacity of the organisations involved and the desired changes of the intervention. There are also higher requirements for organisations that have longer experience and more grants from CISU and/or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark compared to organisations that have less experience and have received fewer grants.

Flexibility when working in fragile contexts means that the assessment of the interventions considers the context, risks analysis and strategy and allows for greater flexibility in terms of cost types (e.g., for security measures or flexible funds) and balancing of the development triangle (e.g., a higher level of strategic deliveries or less/no advocacy).

**in Danish "skøn under regel"*

Strategic deliveries

Public services can be perceived as strategic as long as this is strengthening the ability of CSOs to enhance the engagement and collaboration with local, regional, and national authorities to improve the delivery of essential public services to vulnerable groups.

Moreover, the higher the degree of fragility in the context where the intervention is implemented, the greater the flexibility to include strategic deliveries. Support cannot be granted substantially to fund infrastructure and building constructions. However, in contexts with conflict and high fragility, significant investment in, for instance, technology for civic engagement or equipment's for groups such as e.g. internally displaced persons, children, veterans and people with disabilities can be eligible for support if necessary for the implementation of the intervention.

Resilience

In countries in conflict and instability it is vulnerable groups such as e.g. internally displaced people, children, veterans and people with disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable due to the conflict. It is important to ensure their support and protection to withstand the consequences of conflict and instability. It can, among other things, include psychosocial counselling to families and individuals affected by conflict, and secure access to support to veterans and people with disabilities. Fostering resilience also apply to staffs and volunteers in CSOs working with the effects of conflict, who at times need counselling and support to avoid burnout.

Please refer to [CISU's tool paper on working in fragile contexts](#) with a focus on resilience on www.cisu.dk/en/tools.



EXAMPLE 2

Strengthening resilient local communities in Ukraine

The Ukrainian partner works to strengthen local communities' capacity to resist and recover from the war. The project includes several initiatives, such as vocational training, psychosocial counseling, and equipment provision, all aimed at enhancing the population's resilience.

A key aspect of the project is the development of local networks and support groups, which provide essential resources and assistance during crises while helping individuals cope with stress and trauma. A component in the project is supporting veterans' mental and physical well-being, aiding their recovery and reintegration into society.

The project collaborates closely with local authorities and organisations to ensure efforts are aligned with existing initiatives, fostering synergy and avoiding duplication. These coordinated efforts aim to build a stronger, more resilient community prepared to face future challenges.

Budget: DKK 3,650,000, which covers expenses for capacity building, counseling, equipments, salaries, and operating costs.

6.1. Assessment Criteria for Small Project and Large Project

	Small Project	Large Project	Weight Criteria	
			Small	Large
1. Relevance	1.1 The purpose of the project falls within at least one of the three purposes of the NF and adheres to its principles.		15%	15%
	1.2 The project is relevant in the context in which it is to take place and is based on local needs.		15%	15%
2. Partnership	2.1 The eastern partner(s) have 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 intervention will strengthen the partners and/or the relationship between them.		8%
3. Strategy	3.1 The activities and the expected outputs and outcomes are clear and coherent.		16%	8%
		3.2 The strategy and intervention logic are coherent and builds on results and learnings from previous interventions.		5%
	3.3 The roles, responsibilities and contributions of partners and other actors are clear and relevant.		12%	5%
		3.4 The project contributes to sustainable improvements for the target group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For interventions implemented in contexts of conflict and high fragility, requirements for sustainable improvements can be waived if sufficiently explained in the application. 		5%
		3.5 The approach to monitoring clearly shows the ways of examining and following up on whether the project meets the expected outputs/outcomes.		5%
4. Target group	4.1 The target groups are well defined and relevant.		12%	6%
		4.2 The relevant target groups have been included in the process of designing the project.		6%
5. Cost level	5.1 The cost level in relation to the project strategy, expected outputs, context, and size of and level of engagement with the target group is reasonable.	5.1 The cost level in relation to the project strategy, expected outputs/outcomes, context, and size of and level of engagement with the target group is reasonable.	12%	8%
		5.2 The partners and local communities provide relevant financial and/or non-financial contributions.		4%

6.2. Assessment Criteria for Neighbourhood Development Intervention and for Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine

	Neighbourhood Development Intervention and Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine	Weight Criteria
1. Relevance	1.1 The purpose of the intervention falls within at least one of the three purposes of the NF and adheres to its principles.	8%
	1.2 The intervention is relevant to the context in which it takes place and is based on local needs. The context analysis shows how the intervention is complementary and properly coordinated if other organisations are working with the same target groups and/or the same theme.	8%
2. Partnership	2.1 The eastern partner(s) have relevant experience, capacities, systems and resources to implement the intervention and manage their financial and reporting requirements.	8%
	2.2 The Danish partner has relevant experience, capacities, systems and resources to implement the intervention and manage the financial and reporting requirements.	8%
	2.3 The intervention will strengthen the partners and/or the relationship between them.	4%
3. Strategy	3.1 The intervention strategy demonstrates clear coherence between outcomes, outputs, activities, and outcome-level indicators. It must be clear what outcomes the intervention is expected to achieve.	8%
	3.2 There is a balance between the elements in the Development Triangle, and the intervention builds on results and learnings from previous interventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For interventions implemented in a context characterised by conflict and high fragility advocacy is not a requirement if sufficiently explained in the application. 	6%
	3.3 The approach to monitoring and evaluation clearly sets out procedures for examining and following up on the expected outcomes of the intervention.	6%
	3.4 The roles, responsibilities and contributions of partners and other actors are clear and relevant.	6%
	3.5 The intervention contributes to sustainable improvements for the target group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For interventions implemented in contexts of conflict and high fragility, requirements for sustainable improvements can be waived if sufficiently explained in the application. 	4%
	3.6 The risk analysis includes a specific assessment of potential risks, and the intervention strategy considers the conditions and risks that may hinder or delay the achievement of the expected results.	6%
4. Target group	4.1 The target groups are well-defined and relevant.	6%
	4.2 The target group(s) or their legitimate representatives are involved in the design and planned delivery of the intervention.	4%
5. Cost level	5.1 The cost level in relation to the project strategy, expected outputs/outcomes, context, and size of and level of engagement with the target group is reasonable.	8%
	5.2 The partners and local communities provide relevant financial and/or non-financial contributions.	4%
6. Popular engagement	6.1 The approaches and activities to foster information and popular engagement in Denmark reach relevant audiences or target groups and strengthen the understanding of and engagement in the neighbourhood countries.	6%

Flexible funds

The support modality Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine permits the allocation of up to 25% of the activity budget to “flexible funds” if the activities contribute to supporting the goal of the project. This means that funds can cover activity costs and ideas that arise locally during implementation of the intervention. You do not need to describe what the money will be used for in your application, but you must describe the decision-making process with your partner and target group, how these flexible funds are to be spent. No pre-approval from CISU is required before spending flexible activity funds, but you must describe how they were spent in the final report.

6.3. Assessment Criteria for Co-funding and Support for Application Process

The purpose is to support users of the NF to diversify their fund base with two types of support:

- Co-funding can help partnerships obtain funding from other donors that require and/or favour applications with a cofinancing element.
- Support for Application Process support developing applications to new donors such as private companies, foundations, or institutional donors.

For both types of support, it is not possible to use the grants to apply for funding financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Conditions Co-funding

Applications can be submitted at any time of the year, but not after the application has been submitted to the main donor. If the main donor's application process contains a first stage of submitting a concept note, an application based on this concept note and a budget summary may be submitted.

Applications are normally processed within four weeks. In case of a comprehensive application to the primary donor, the processing time can be extended for up to six weeks.

Applications for co-funding assessed worthy of support are awarded a grant commitment in advance, whereas the contract with CISU cannot be issued and the grant cannot be disbursed before the main donor has given its final approval.

	Co-funding	Support for Application Process
Relevance	The application to the main donor adheres as a whole to the NF's purposes and principles.	The application developed will generally adhere to the NF's purposes and principles.
Chances of success	The probability of the application to the main donor being approved for support is sufficiently justified.	The probability of the application to be developed being approved for support is sufficiently justified.

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7. Application and Assessment

Applications will be scored and will compete for the amount allocated for each application round. All applications are scored using the LEADS scoring 1-5 and prioritised, allowing for selection by CISU if there are insufficient funds for all applications worthy of support.

In cases where several applications share “the lowest score” and not all can be awarded a grant, priority will be given to applications with the lowest requested amount.

Grants from the NF are included in the Civil Society Fund’s annual grant ceiling of DKK 5 million. However, grants through the special support modality Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine are exempted from this limit.

CISU programme organisations may apply under the Resilience and Democratic Development Ukraine support modality.



PROJECT EXAMPLE 3

Support to human rights defenders in Georgia

As human rights are curtailed in Georgia, the project aims to strengthen civil society by assisting human rights defenders in overcoming negative psychological impacts of state violence by providing psychosocial support to individuals and groups affected by political repression. This will enhance the capacity to defend civil rights and promote civic engagement, as an increasing number of individuals will be empowered to continue participate actively in public life in order to counter a hostile state that has curtailed human rights, undermined the rule of law and impeded democracy.

Professionals capacitated by the project will provide psychosocial attention to human rights defenders. Thereby, the intervention contributes to a strong and vibrant civil society. The establishment of a referral system with other human rights organisations will secure the provision of legal and other kinds of support. The information gathered shall be used for advocacy when or if appropriate. The ambition is the different elements of capacity building can be sustained by the partner beyond the project period, while the continuous psychosocial support to individuals and groups affected by political repression most likely requires further support beyond this project.

Budget: DKK 1,325,000, which covers expenses for capacity-building, experience exchange, and establishing a network of legal support.

CAN BE SUPPORTED

- Activities, including costs for mobilisation, coordination, studies, materials, equipments, training, travel, security measures, salaries.
- Monitoring, including costs for travel, meetings, salaries.
- Investments, meaning the purchase of equipment that last beyond the project.
- Administration, including costs for financial management, reporting, digital solutions, auditing.

CANNOT BE SUPPORTED

- Non-strategic service delivery.
- Major constructions or the purchase of buildings.
- Activities (e.g. training) only benefitting an individual/a few individuals.
- Interventions with the partial or full objective of distributing a party-political or religious messages.
- Emergency aid or humanitarian interventions.

7.1. How to apply

All applications are submitted via the online grant management system ‘Vores CISU’ (Our CISU) before the given deadline. For modalities with application deadlines, the system will be open for applications two weeks prior to the given deadline.

Formats

For each modality, there are formats for the application and the budget, as well as any required annexes.

See www.cisu.dk/en/funding/the-neighbourhood-fund/

LEADS STANDS FOR	SCORE	THE SCORE IS GIVEN WHEN THERE IS
L Little action/evidence	1	Weak indication that supports the criteria.
E Some evidence	2	Some indication that supports the criteria.
A Action taken	3	Indication that supports the criteria.
D Developed	4	Solid indication that supports the criteria.
S Sustainable	5	Comprehensive indication of implementation and /or indication of an established approach/system in supporting the criteria.

7.2 Screening and assessment

CISU will initially screen applications to ensure that they live up to all formal requirements. The lists used for screening is available at www.cisu.dk. If an application does not meet all formal requirements, it will be administratively rejected.

When an application fulfils all formal requirements, it is forwarded to an assessment consultant and an assessment committee member. The consultant assesses each application based on the criteria set for the modality and submits a

recommendation to the assessment committee indicating whether the application should be approved or rejected. The assessment committee makes the final decision.

Each applicant will receive an assessment note, explaining the reasons for either approval or rejection. This note is useful to guide a potential re-application, as it provides comments on what is deemed critical and thus what can be improved.

The assessment of an application will take 6 weeks to complete. Note that the assessment process for all modalities will be prolonged if the deadline collides with holiday periods in Denmark (summer, Christmas, Easter, fall, and winter breaks).



PROJECT EXAMPLE 4

Cross-Sectoral Social Prevention network in Moldova

The intervention aims to establish a Cross-Sectoral Social Prevention (CSP) network in Moldova to strengthen child protection and prevent juvenile crime. Building on the Danish SSP model—designed to foster collaboration between schools, social services, and law enforcement—the project will adapt this approach to Moldova’s specific needs. The CSP network will operate at national, district, and local levels, ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive approach to social prevention.

The project integrates key social services to strategically enhance the partner’s ability to engage with authorities. Core activities include capacity building through study trips, seminars, and workshops, bringing together stakeholders from multiple sectors.

The local partner leads, coordinates, and facilitates the various activities in close collaboration with Moldova’s Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, other civic actors, and local CSP teams. These teams will implement tailored interventions for at-risk children and youth, such as school reintegration programs, family counseling, and mentoring initiatives, focusing on general, targeted, and individualized prevention measures.

By fostering collaboration and community resilience, these efforts aim to reduce juvenile delinquency and promote social cohesion across Moldova.

Budget: DKK 3,200,000, which covers expenses for capacity building, training, social services, network meetings, exposure visits, salaries, and operating costs.

7.3 Principles for administration and grant approval

Transparency and openness in the administration. This means, among other things:

- All assessment criteria and processes are explicit and available to all applicants.
- All applicants receive a written response explaining the reasons for the approval or rejection.
- All approved applications are publicly available (anonymity can be requested if reasoned).

Orderly administration applying the highest standards of administrative conduct (e.g., ensuring impartiality, making decisions on an informed basis, writing in an understandable manner, complying with deadlines, and stating the reasons for decisions as detailed in the legal principles of CISU that are outlined in CISU’s Code of Conduct).

Clear separation between the advisory process/the advisers and the assessment process/assessment system. Accordingly, CISU’s advisers and the rest of CISU’s secretariat are not in any way involved in the process from the moment the application is submitted until the grant decision is made.

Feedback and complaints

CISU’s procedures for feedback and complaints are set out in CISU’s Code of Conduct.

More information is available at: www.cisu.dk/en/about-cisu/how-to-file-a-complaint

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