

Guidelines for the Civil Society Fund – DRAFT

The Civil Society Fund is an independent support facility funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by CISU – Civil Society in Development. The guidelines for the Civil Society Fund are made by CISU in dialogue with CISU’s members and users and approved by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Preface

Welcome to the reformed version of the Civil Society Fund. On the following pages you can read all about the principles, requirements, and modalities in the fund.

First, we will go through some of the thoughts of that we want to promote and strengthen with this reformed version of the Civil Society Fund and present the framework that we are navigating within.

The Civil Society Fund is guided by the “How-to” note for implementation through Civil Society:

“Danish support for civil society aims:

- To contribute to the development of a strong, active, independent and diverse civil society, which is a cornerstone of a consolidated democracy and a goal in its own right.
- To strengthen locally based civil-society actors that have a local constituency and champion the cause of the poorest, most marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- To secure the defence of civic space, including online space, in developing countries, also by providing emergency assistance to human-rights advocates in danger.
- To help engage the Danish population at large in development policy.”

And the formulation in the Danish Finance Act in relation to the Civil Society Fund:

“... CISU will be provided with a framework amount for a civil society pool, which provides financial support for civil society efforts that both support popular engagement and development efforts, with a view to distribution to a wide range of Danish civil society organisations.”

Starting with this frame and based on the experiences of members and partners, we have attempted to make an ambitious funding modality based upon these considerations:

- We want to **maintain the engagement and broad involvement of Danish CSOs** in global issues, and therefore maintain two project modalities where requirements are easier to meet for smaller and new partnerships and a differentiated program modality for more experienced organisations.
- We want to **allow more partnerships to benefit from the flexibility and predictability in the strategic program modality** and promote flexibility in relation to which organisations have a strategic program. We have introduced small, medium and large programs, increased the financial contribution for medium and large programs, and lowered the maximum budget for programs.
- We want to **promote a broader financial foundation for civil society’s engagement in the global south**, and therefore have a revised funding diversification modality.
- We want to facilitate strong independent civil society organisations, working in equal and mutually benefitting partnerships, to address relevant issues and represent marginalized groups. We therefore emphasize **Locally led development as an underlying guiding principle** to promote that decisions are made by local organisations and their constituency.
- We want to **strengthen our impact and the change that we facilitate**. Therefore, competition is now a parameter in all funding modalities, promoting that it is the most impactful interventions that are supported by the Civil Society Fund.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The **purpose** of the Civil Society Fund (CSF) is to support the strengthening of the capacity 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 marginalized 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 organizations, movements, and initiatives. This diversity is crucial for a well-functioning democracy.

Civil society actors can pilot innovative approaches, reach marginalised groups, and advocate for policy reforms, thereby allowing citizens to actively participate in social, economic and political life, contributing to more inclusive and equitable societies.

The Civil Society Fund supports partnerships between civil society actors and movements in the Global South and Denmark. **Global partnerships built on mutual trust and respect are valuable** as they bring together actors with different capacities and perspectives to reach common goals.

The Global South partners are closer to the problems than the Danish partner, and they are well-situated to develop solutions. Therefore, the development and implementation of interventions funded by the Civil Society Fund must be **led by the Global South partners**, who must in turn be anchored in and accountable towards the communities wherein they work.¹

The Danish partners typically contribute with experience, perspectives, technical inputs, and network, as well as access to decision makers and funds from institutional donors and private foundations in Denmark and Europe. Also, the Danish partners are strong allies and advocates for marginalised people in the Global South, can address issues that requires political or practical action in Denmark, and can play an active role in cross-border solidarity work.

Civil society is a generic denomination for those groups, movements, and activities in society that belong neither to the public nor the private sector

Role of Civil Society:

The role of civil society is diverse. Civil society is often the framework for people fighting collectively for rights, improved living conditions, and a fair distribution of the resources of society. Civil society is an important counterbalance to the authority of the state and the private sector as civil society holds both the state and the market accountable for their actions and priorities. At the same time, civil

'Global South' is generally referring to a grouping of countries and people that experience economic marginalisation within the global system and have elements of a shared history of colonisation and exploitation ([Too Southern to be Funded](#))

Eligible countries for Civil Society Fund projects and programmes: All countries on OECD's DAC list, which can be found on www.cisu.dk.

¹ Definition of local led development is inspired by the DAC paper and the DAC working group meeting on Measuring progress on locally led development from 2 May 2024. In CISUs understanding "Locally" does not necessarily mean a community level, but relevant and legit actors in specific geographical locations.

The partnerships must be meaningful and relevant to all partners involved and the work done must be valuable for the communities benefitting hereof. This is ensured by **giving local communities a voice to express needs** and **power in deciding the solutions addressing those needs**.

Sustainability of the work supported by the Civil Society Fund is enhanced when **local communities are the principal change agents in interventions** and when **the Civil Society Fund is not the only contribution of resources**. Communities and partners can contribute to the work themselves e.g. by hosting meetings in the community hall free of charge or supplementing agricultural inputs to a farming project with seeds gathered from local farmers. These **community contributions** are resources contributed by communities or local partners. All interventions supported by the Civil Society Fund are expected to include community contributions. However, it is only a requirement for medium and large programme grants to contribute with financial resources.

Definition of Locally Led Development: 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.

The Civil Society Fund 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 all require long-term strategies and flexibility to react to opportunities as they present themselves. The Civil Society Fund recognises that based upon context, priorities, experiences, and position different approaches and strategies can be applied to achieve sustainable change.

The Civil Society Fund does not prioritise specific development issues over others but are guided by a human rights-based approach.

All projects and programs financed through the CSF address one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1.2. Principles

The Civil Society Fund is based on the following principles, which all grants must comply with. The assessment of compliance is based on the application. Additional resources related to the principles are available at www.cisu.dk.

Human Rights

Fundamental human rights must be respected, protected, and fulfilled. On one hand, a human rights-based approach focuses on enabling people to demand their rights and holding duty-bearers accountable. The approach focuses on eliminating unequal power relations and unequal distribution of resources. The approach rests on four fundamental principles: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, and Transparency (PANT). On the other hand, it is expected that the affected rightsholder are adequately involved in the entire development cycle. In the case of tribal and indigenous people and according to their collective human rights, this requires a process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

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

Do no harm

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.

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

Poverty orientation

The Civil Society Fund supports work that directly or indirectly secures participation, interests, and rights of people living in poverty. 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 in different ways, and various types of poverty often affect each other.

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

Sustainability

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 that remain viable and impactful even after their completion, thereby contributing to ongoing sustainability efforts.

Hence, interventions should 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 minimizing ecological footprints and preserving natural resources.

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

1.3. The Development Triangle

The development triangle is a tool to describe the different elements in a development intervention. The triangle illustrates the elements and the potential synergies between them.

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** strengthen the capacity of partners, networks, platforms, and/or target groups. Capacity can include strategic and organisational capacity, technical and thematical capacity to conduct projects and programmes, and 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 strengthen or are necessary to better work with the two other elements of the triangle. Strategic deliveries can be necessary but will never in themselves create lasting and sustainable change.
- **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. Civil society driven advocacy is based on the capacity of civil society and the knowledge gained from strategic service.

2. Who can apply

The Civil Society Fund supports partnerships between civil society actors and movements in the Global South and Denmark. There are different requirements 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 as well as the target groups of the intervention.

2.1. Requirements for the Danish partner organisation

The Civil Society Fund accepts applications from popular, Danish organisations that meet the minimum requirements for support laid down by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ If the organisation applies for up to DKK 500,000, it must have a minimum of 25 paying Danish contributors. If the organisation applies for more than DKK 500,000, it must have a minimum of 50 paying Danish contributors. They may be members, volunteers in the association or other persons providing a financial contribution. The contributions must have been given in the current year or the latest 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 requirement.
- ✓ If the organisation has existed for at least one year, it may apply for more than DKK 500,000. If the organisation has existed for less than one year, it may apply for a maximum of DKK 500,000.

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.

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

They cannot apply

- The Civil Society Fund is unable to support interventions eligible for support from other funds 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 Civil Society Fund 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 Civil Society Fund 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).

2.2. Requirements for the Global South partners

2.2.1. The Global South partner(s)

The Global South partner(s) must be based in the country where the activities will be implemented and will be responsible for implementing the local activities. It can be from any country on OECD/DAC's list of ODA recipients (link to the list).

The Global South partner(s) must be 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 an indigenous or tribal authority without legal recognition or an informal organisation, e.g., a social movement, or is by some mean 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 Global South partner(s) and beneficiaries. 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 civil society organisations 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.

GLOBAL SOUTH PARTNERS MUST BE	GLOBAL SOUTH PARTNERS CANNOT BE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Global South Partners MUST form part of civil society in the country and locality 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, <i>and</i> 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 	<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, which are continuously updated. The Danish organisation is responsible for checking this.

<p>differently, similar anchoring must be shown in the application.</p> <p>✓ If the Global South 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>	
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2.2.2. 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 Civil Society Fund 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 with an intervention and bring about sustainable change. However, civil society must play a primary role in the cooperation and implementation and realisation of the purpose of the intervention.

2.2.3. Several interventions in the partnership

The purpose of the Civil Society Fund is to strengthen civil societies. Strong, independent, and sustainable civil society actors in the Global South are central, and although the Fund 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.

3. Types of support

3.1. What can be supported

Grants across the Project Support and Strategic Programme Support modalities can support several different elements, described in the table below.

CAN	CANNOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities, including costs for mobilization, coordination, studies, materials, 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 message. • Emergency aid or humanitarian interventions. • Political parties and religious missionary work

How much can be applied for?

To ensure sufficient experience among new applicants, the following grant ceilings apply to the Civil Society Fund:

- A first-time applicant with no prior grants from CISU or a donor with similar reporting requirements to those of CISU and/or the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs can apply for projects up to DKK 500,000.
- To apply for projects and programmes of more than DKK 500,000, the applicant organisation must have completed at least one intervention funded by CISU or a donor with similar reporting requirements to those of CISU and/or the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
 - o This requirement is also fulfilled when the applicant organisation as part of a consortium has been responsible for at least DKK 200,000 of the total budget of a grant with similar reporting requirements as CISU's and/or the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs'. It is the applicant organisation that must provide documentation to CISU that it has had budget responsibility of at least DKK 200,000 which includes implementation and narrative, financial reporting and auditing.

Organisational Grant Ceiling

Each organisation can obtain grants across the Project Support and Strategic Programme Support modalities for a **maximum total amount of up to DKK 5 million per year**. Organisations awarded a large programme can exceed the organisational grant ceiling. Grants for Funding Diversification and Capacity Analysis are not included in the organisational grant ceiling.

For other funds administered by CISU, it is determined in the guidelines for the specific fund, whether grants from the fund is included in the grant ceiling of the Civil Society Fund.

Depending on the experience and capacity of the Danish organisation, partnerships can apply for the following grants.

3.2. Project support

3.2.1. 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.

Projects are defined by a set of goals that can be realized 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 and marginalisation in the communities wherein the project activities take place, as reflected in the purpose statement of the Civil Society Fund.

Organisations can apply for small projects up to DKK 150,000 or large projects up to DKK 700,000.

Eligibility requirements and assessment criteria are different depending on the size of the project support applied for. See illustration below.

3.2.2. Requirements

PROJECT SUPPORT		
Type	Small Project Up to 150,000 DKK	Large Project Up to 700,000 DKK
Eligibility	<p>No requirements of previous project experience.</p> <p>No requirements of previous cooperation in the partnership applying for support.</p>	<p>For projects below DKK 500,000 there is no requirements of previous project experience.</p> <p>To apply for projects above 500,000, the Danish applicant must have completed at least one intervention funded by CISU or a donor with similar reporting requirements to those of CISU.</p> <p>Previous cooperation in the partnership applying for support is required.</p> <p>Danish organisations with a medium or large programme from CISU cannot apply.</p>
# applications	Maximum 3 applications per Danish organisation per year. This number does not include applications that are rejected and re-applications.	Maximum 3 applications per Danish organisation per year. This number does not include applications that are rejected and re-applications.
Application deadlines	Three deadlines per year.	

3.2.3. Assessment criteria

Each applicant is assessed using the below set of criteria. The assessment is also guided by three overall principles: 1) There is no rigid formula², 2) adaptability of requirements, and 3) flexibility when working in fragile contexts.

There is no rigid formula means that there is always room for the assessment committee to look at the overall picture in terms of an integrated assessment of an application in view of the purpose of the fund.

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 and risk analyses and the strategy and allow 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 services or less advocacy).

Criteria	Up to 150,000	Up to 700,000	Weight of criteria	
			Up to 150,000	Up to 700,000
1. Relevance	1.1 The project contributes to the purpose and principles of the Civil Society Fund.		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 the financial and reporting requirements.		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%
3. Target group	3.1 The target group(s) are well defined and relevant.		12%	6%
	3.2 The target group(s) have been included in the process of designing the project.			6%
4. Expected results	4.1 The project justifies their use of the elements of the development triangle, and the activities and expected results are clear and coherent.		16%	10%
	4.2 The strategy is coherent and builds on results and learnings from previous projects or			6%

² In Danish: *Skøn under regel*.

		experiences in the partnership and by the partners.		
	4.3 The roles, responsibilities, and contributions of partners and other actors are clear and relevant.		12%	6%
		4.4 The monitoring approach clearly shows the ways of examining and following up on whether the intervention meets the expected results.		6%
5. Cost level and community contribution	5.1 The cost level in relation to the project strategy, 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%

3.2.4. Internal competition

The applicants will be scored individually for approval and will compete for the amount allocated for each round of applications. If CISU receives applications for more money than available in the modality, the applicants with the highest score will receive a grant. In case, more than one applicant shares the same score, the applicant with the smallest budget amount will be granted and so forth. This is to allow for more grants being given.

See section 4.4 for more details on the scoring system used.

3.3. Strategic Programme Support

3.3.1. Purpose

Locally led development is at the centre of Strategic Programme Support. The funding modality provides strong partnerships with the possibility to engage with their target groups, strengthen civil society, and deliver on their strategy. It allows civil society organisations, movements, and other actors to implement programmes based on a programme strategy coherent with the partners' own institutional strategies³, thus, bringing together the array of expertise, ensuring relevance and decision-making power of local actors.

A programme makes it possible to work with a wider range of partners, create synergies, and enables dynamic learning across such a diversity of partners and beneficiaries.

Working with locally led development and acknowledging the need for supporting processes of change beyond shorter project cycles, the strategic programme support provides the foundation to work in long-term partnerships. Partnerships can receive support for multiple programme periods⁴.

Engaging in partnerships over multiple years the partners can engage in the work to create sustainable change – both in the local context and in Denmark, and to strengthen and diversify funding to further reinforce the predictability and stability of funding.

Long-term partnerships also provide strong environments for learning and development for the Danish partners and a solid foundation for them to build popular support and engagement in Denmark.

Strategic programme support is divided into three types defined by the size of the grant (small, medium, large). Each type has a set of requirements and assessment criteria.



³ The individual partners' institutional strategies can take different forms, e.g. vision/mission statement, but it is essential that it states the goals of the organisation/movement and a work plan to achieve these.

⁴ Strategic Programme Support grants are given to the partnership, meaning that if a partnership is awarded a small programme and then later a medium programme, this second grant is considered phase two in the partnership.

3.3.2. Requirements

Strategic Programme Support			
Type	Small programme	Medium programme	Large programme
Eligibility ⁵	Minimum DKK 750,000 in total CISU grants in the last 3 years. Previous experience from the context and cooperation with at least one of the partner(s).	Minimum DKK 3 million yearly on average in grants from CISU in the last 4 years. Previous experience from the context and cooperation with at least two of the partners.	Having been granted two Medium programmes from CISU in the partnership within the past 10 years. Previous experience from the context and cooperation with at least two of the partners.
No of Global South partners	Minimum one	Minimum 2	
Max grant size	DKK 4 million in total (max DKK 0.8 – 1.3 million per year)	DKK 15 million in total (max DKK 2.5 – 3.75 million per year) <i>(divided in annual grants)</i>	DKK 27 million in total (max DKK 4.5 – 6.75 million per year) <i>(divided in annual grants)</i>
Duration (chosen by the applicant)	3 – 5 years	4 or 6 years	
Possibility for the Danish organisation to apply for additional programme support	Yes, but only small programmes up to organisational grant ceiling. However, maximum 3 applications for small programmes per year.	Yes, but only 1 small programme per year up to organisational grant ceiling.	No.
Possibility for the Danish organisation to apply for project support	Yes, up to organisational grant ceiling. However, maximum a total of 3 project applications per year.	No	No

⁵ There will be a transition period moving from the current Civil Society Fund to the new Civil Society Fund, including a structure for current partnerships and programmes so they do not have to start building their qualifying portfolio from scratch.

3.3.3. Financial own contribution

Medium and Large programmes must ensure a degree of financial own contribution. For a medium programme minimum 10%, and for a large programme 20%. The contribution can be either 'Funds raised in Denmark' and/or 'Co-financing' (see information box), thereby aligning the financial own contribution of large programmes to the criteria used by Danida for Strategic Partnership Agreements.

Co-financing grants, secured by a program partner, can be included if the Danish organisation has had a role in securing the funds or plays a role in the grant implementation.

Financial own contribution can be in the form of:

- ✓ 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 program.

The financial own contribution requirement must be completed by the end of a given grant period, i.e. 4 years. If the requirement is not achieved, the maximum grant amount for the next grant given under Strategic Programme Support shall be aligned to the financial contribution that the partners have secured to supplement CISUs funding for the program.

3.3.4. Assessment criteria

Each applicant is assessed using the below set of criteria. The assessment is also guided by three overall principles: 1) There is no rigid formula⁶, 2) adaptability of requirements, and 3) flexibility when working in fragile contexts.

There is no rigid formula means that there is always room for the assessment committee to look at the overall picture in terms of an integrated assessment of an application in view of the purpose of the fund.

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 and risk analyses and the strategy and allow 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 services or less advocacy).

Criteria	Small	Medium	Large	Weight criteria
1. Relevance	1.1 The programme contributes to the purpose and principles of the Civil Society Fund.			10%
	1.2 The programme addresses locally identified needs, and concerns.			10%

⁶ In Danish: *Skøn under regel*.

2. Capacity	2.1 The Global South partner(s) have the relevant experience, capacities, systems, and resources to implement the programme and manage the financial and reporting requirements.	8%
	2.2 The Danish partner have the relevant experience, capacities, systems, and resources to support programme implementation and manage the financial and reporting requirements.	8%
	2.3 The Global South partner(s) frames the challenges to be addressed based on their knowledge of and anchoring in local communities.	4%
3. Strategy	3.1 The programme strategy and intervention logic, including methods and approaches, builds on the strengths of each partner, and ensures synergies and a collective direction towards shared goals.	6%
	3.2 The programme justifies their use of the elements of the development triangle.	2%
	3.3 The programme has shown ability to deliver results and impact and is based on learning from previous cooperation and the work of the individual partners.	5%
	3.4 The Global South partner(s)' strategic plans are reflected in the programme strategy.	4%
	3.5 The programme strategy promotes sustainable changes within its area of work beyond the duration of the programme.	4%
4. Target group	4.1 The target group(s) are well defined and relevant.	4%
	4.2 The target group(s) or legitimate representatives have a leading role in the design and planned delivery of the programme.	4%
5. Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning	5.2 The framework and methods for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) is suitable for documenting the expected changes of the programme.	8%
6. Managing risks	6.1 The programme considers likely risks and possible mitigating measures in the context.	3%
7. Financial sustainability	7.1 The partners work towards being able to sustain their work beyond funding from the Civil Society Fund through a funding diversification plan that is relevant, realistic, and based on previous experience.	5%
8. Cost level and community contribution	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.	4%
	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.	4%
	8.3 The partners and local communities provide relevant non-financial contributions.	2%

9. Popular engagement in Denmark	9.1 The approaches and activities to foster information and popular engagement in Denmark reaches relevant audiences or target groups and strengthen the understanding of and interest in global development challenges.	5%
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3.3.5. Application process

The application process differs depending on the type of Strategic Programme support applied for, as described in the following section.

Small programmes

There are two deadlines for applying for small programmes each year - one in February and one in September. It is a one-step process, where applicants apply before the deadline (read more on how to apply under section 4). Applicants must use fixed formats for the narrative application, budget, and relevant appendices, which can be downloaded on www.cisu.dk.

The Danish applicant can only submit three applications per calendar year.

Medium and large programmes

There is an application round every second year for medium and large programmes. The application process is divided into three steps.

The Danish applicant can only submit one application per round for medium and large programmes. Danish organisations with a large programme grant can only have one active programme grant at a time. Danish organisations with an open medium programme grant can only apply for small programme grants.

Steps	Deadlines
1) Expression of Interest (Eol)	December 1
2) Eligibility check and capacity dialogue	December – January 15
3) Monitoring visit at the Danish partner by CISU	January 15 – March 1
4) Application submittal	March 15
5) Decision of the Assessment Committee	June 1
6) Final decision by Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Mid-September

1. Step: Expression of Interest

If an applicant is interested in applying for a medium or large programme, the applicant must submit a short Expression of Interest (Eol) that describes the programme partnership, a brief programme outline, and the budget size of the desired grant. CISU will check whether the applicant and the partnership fulfil the basic eligibility requirements. The check determines whether the applicant will proceed to the second step of the application process.

2. Step: Eligibility Check and capacity dialogue

CISU will check whether the applicant and the partnership fulfil all the eligibility requirements. The check determines whether the applicant will proceed to the next step of the application process.

Along with the eligibility check CISU will initiate a dialogue between the Danish partner and the CISU secretariat. The dialogue will revolve around the Eol and the track record documents on all partners.

After the dialogue and eligibility check, relevant organisations can start the writing the full application. The application formats are available at www.cisu.dk.

3. Monitoring visit at the Danish partner by CISU

During the period of writing the full application, CISU will conduct a monitoring visit at the Danish organisation. After the visit, CISU submits a report, including recommendations, to the applicant organisation by March 1. The management response to this shall be included in the programme application.

4. Step: Application submittal

Deadline for submission of applications is March 15 (second Wednesday in March).

5. Step: Decision by the Assessment Committee

By early June, all applicants receive a reply on their application.

6. Step: Final decision by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

All applications for medium or large programmes are subject to approval by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Organisations that have been awarded a medium or large programme and have unfinished projects under the Civil Society Fund must terminate the project grants and incorporate the corresponding activities into the programme as per the programme commencement date.

3.3.6. Internal competition

The applicants will be scored individually for approval and will compete for a certain amount allocated for each round of applications. If CISU receives applications for more money than available in the modality, the applicants with the highest score will receive a grant. In case, more than one applicant shares the same score, the applicant with the smallest budget amount will be granted and so forth. This is to allow for more grants being given.

See section 4.4 for more details on the scoring system used.

3.3.7. Addressing funding gaps

For long-term partnerships, a rejected application can result in significant insecurity for all partners involved and challenges to the continuation of the long-term strategic work of the partnership.

Whereas partnerships with a small programme can re-apply within a timeframe of six months, medium and large programmes must reconsider and re-strategize their programme should their application be rejected.

As medium and large programmes receive the response on their application early June, the next window of funding is to apply for either small programme(s) in September and/or project funding in October.

3.4. Funding diversification

3.4.1. Purpose

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

1. **Co-funding** can help partnerships obtain funding from other donors that require and/or favour applications with a co-financing element.
2. **Support for applications processes** aid partnerships with 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.

3.4.2. What can and cannot be supported

Co-funding	Support for application process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-financing can cover up to 35% of the total budget applied for to the main donor. • Up to DKK 2 million per grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant expenses of the application process of each partner, e.g., salaries, consultant fees, workshops, and studies. • Up to DKK 50,000 per grant.

3.4.3. Requirements

	Co-funding	Support for application process
Eligibility	The partners applying must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live up to general requirements as described in section 2. • Have previously managed a grant 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 Civil Society Fund. • Either be lead applicant or co-applicant of the application to the main donor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partners must live up to the general requirements as described in section 2. • The total budget of the application to the non-CISU donor must be at least DKK 200,000.
# of applications	1 application per year	2 applications per year

3.4.4. Assessment criteria

Criteria	Co-funding	Support for the application process
Relevance	The application to the main donor generally contributes to the Civil Society Fund's purpose and principles.	The application developed will generally contribute to the Civil Society Fund's purpose and principles.

Need	-	It is clear how the application process will be strengthened from the support.
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.
Partnership	-	All partners will be included in the application process.

3.4.5. Application process

Co-funding

Applications can be submitted at any time of the year, but not after the application has been submitted to the primary donor. If the primary 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 processed as fast as possible and normally 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 primary donor has given its final approval.

Support for application process

Applications for can be submitted at any time of the year. Applications are processed as fast as possible and normally within four weeks.

For both types of support, fixed application formats must be used, which can be downloaded at www.cisu.dk. The applications must be submitted via CISUs online grant management system *Vores CISU*, as described in section 4.2.

3.5. Capacity analysis

3.5.1. Purpose

A capacity analysis targets Danish organisations that wants to get an external review of the organisation's professional, organisational, and administrative capacity and may include its South-partners. A capacity analysis will contribute to valuable learning in terms of strategy, management, and capacity development and can be considered in relation to a Strategic Programme readiness process.

The focus of a capacity analysis is one or several specific areas on which the organisation wishes to shed light to strengthen and further develop the organisation, such as:

- The Danish organisation's partnerships, including the number and nature of existing and planned partners or approaches to entering into new cooperation.
- The Danish organisation's strategic and thematic work with Global South partners.
- The Danish organisation's popular roots, internal decision-making processes, and work with information on global issues in Denmark.
- Other areas that can support the further development of the organisation.

3.5.2. Application process

A capacity analysis can be initiated by three different actors, but it is always the Danish organisation who submit the application. The different actors are:

- 1) *The Danish organisation* can apply for a capacity assessment as part of a long-term strategy development or process of change.
- 2) *CISU's Assessment Committee* can recommend or make it a precondition that an organisation carry out a capacity analysis. This requirement could be motivated by the committee finding it necessary to obtain an assessment of the organisation's capacity across the organisation's interventions.
- 3) *CISU's secretariat* may, in connection with its advisory services, in response to a report, or because of a monitoring visit recommend a capacity analysis, which will then form part of the organisation's track record and future applications from the organisation concerned. If CISU recommends or requires a capacity analysis, the specific recommendations/requirements must be listed in the application.

CISU receives applications on an ongoing basis and processes them as fast as possible, normally within four weeks.

3.5.3. Conducting a capacity analysis

If an organisation is awarded a capacity analysis grant, CISU will make a contract with the organisation as well as with the external consultant, who will conduct the analysis. One of CISU's advisers and possibly a member of the Assessment Committee (if they have recommended the Capacity Assessment or have good advice) will cooperate with the grantee to draw up the Terms of Reference (ToR) that describe the focus and scope of the task. The ToR must be approved by CISU.

CISU pays all costs for the consultant and activities. An organisation in the process of a capacity analysis can still submit applications to the Civil Society Fund.

The consultant will prepare a draft report to be discussed with the organisation and one of CISU's advisers. Hereafter, the consultant writes the final report that must subsequently be approved by an assessment consultant, one of CISU's advisers, and CISU's management.

To follow up, the organisation must write a reply to the recommendations of the capacity analysis (management response), which must be approved by CISU. It is then the responsibility and duty of the organisation's board of directors to follow up on the capacity analysis. It is recommended that the organisation use the learning and the recommendations of the capacity analysis in future applications to the Civil Society Fund.

3.5.4. Assessment criteria

The application for a capacity analysis is assessed based on two criteria:

1. **Civil society relevance.** The organisation's work generally contributes to the Civil Society Fund's purpose and principles.
2. **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.

4. Application and assessment

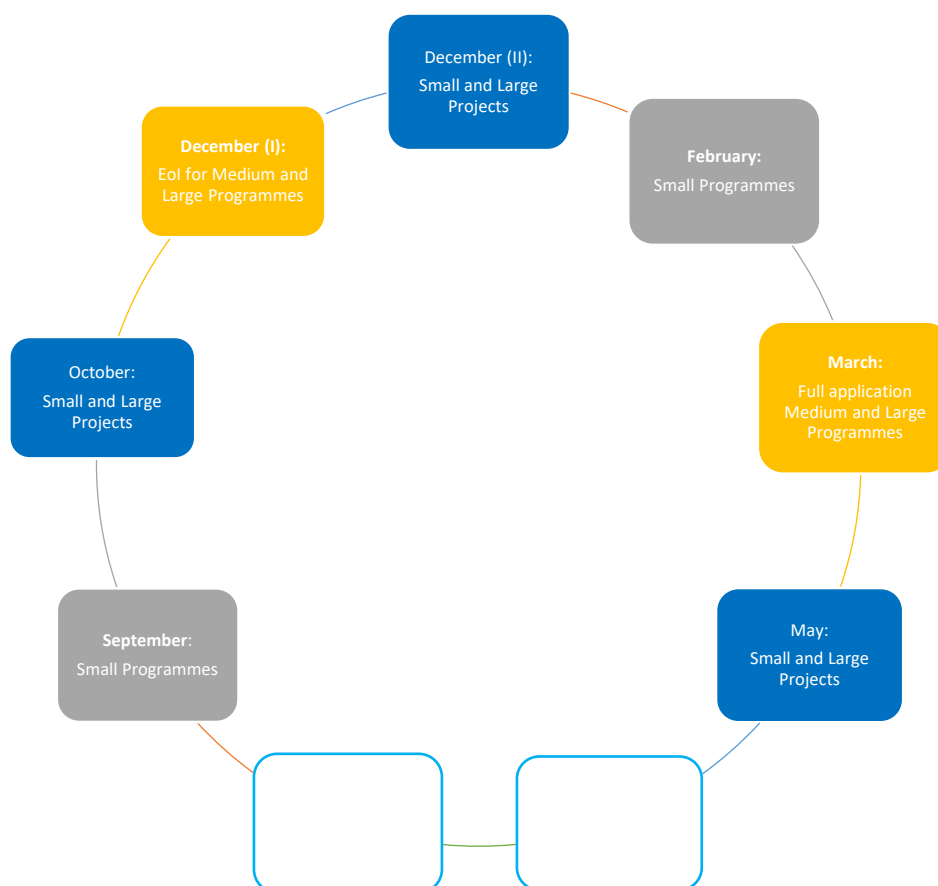
4.1. Deadlines

There are application deadlines for the Project and Strategic Programme support modalities. For project support, there are three deadlines a year to allow for more frequent and flexible opportunities to access funding.

There are no deadlines for funding diversification and capacity analysis, and these modalities can be applied for any time of the year until the budget set aside for these support modalities has been spent.

Modality	# of deadlines per year
Project support	3
Small programme	2
Medium and large programme	1 every second year

The illustration below shows how the deadlines are spread across a year. All deadlines are at 12:00 (noon) Danish time.



The application processes for strategic programme support are described under section 3.2.6. Be aware that there is only an application round for medium and large programmes every second year.

4.2. How to apply

All applications are submitted via the online grant management system 'Vores CISU' (*Our CISU*) before the given deadline. The system will be open for applications two weeks prior to a deadline.

For each modality, there are formats for the application and the budget, as well as any required annexes. See www.cisu.dk/en/funding/funding-materials/

4.3. 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 up against the criteria set for the modality and recommend the application to approval or rejection for the assessment committee member. 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.

Depending on the modality, the assessment will take a certain amount of time, which is shown in the table below.

Modality	# weeks of assessment
Project support	6
Small programmes	8
Medium programmes	<i>See process in section 3.2.6</i>
Large programmes	<i>See process in section 3.2.6</i>
Support for co-funding	4
Support for application process	4

Note that the assessment process for all modalities will be prolonged when colliding with holidays (three weeks over the summer, and one week for Christmas, easter, fall and winter break).

4.4. Scoring

All applications are scored using the LEADS scoring 1-5. The assessment committee gives a score to each criterion, which are weighted in terms of what is most important in terms of contributing to the purpose and principles of the Civil Society Fund.

The score is used to prioritise between approved applications when there is not enough money to grant all approved applications.

LEADS SCORING METHOD

	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

4.5. 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 (for instance, 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 as set out 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.

4.6. Budget commitments

Every year, CISU's Board determines, upon approval by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, what share of the total Civil Society Fund will be allocated to the different types of support modalities.

5. 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/complaint

6. Central concepts

On CISU's website, a list of resources is available to learn more about central concepts within development work. See www.cisu.dk/xxx