

CISU STRATEGY 2026-2030

HEARING MATERIAL, DECEMBER 2025

PHOTO: PERNILLE BÆRENTSEN



CISU CIVIL SOCIETY IN
DEVELOPMENT

HEARING MATERIAL
CISU Strategy 2026-2030

HEARING PERIOD
10.12.25 - 15.01.26

SUBMIT INPUT VIA
www.cisu.dk/strategi_2026

The strategy will be formally adopted at CISU's General Assembly on 18 April 2026.

Once the strategy has been approved, measurable indicators will be developed to track the implementation of this strategy.

Who are CISU?

CISU - Civil Society in Development - is an association of Danish civil society organisations engaged globally

What do we work for?

We contribute to a world, where strong civil society organisations and communities secure human rights, promotion of global justice and sustainability, and counteracts the causes of poverty and inequality.

How do we make it happen?

CISU supports member organisations to work in partnership with civil society and popular movements around the world to create locally anchored changes.

In Denmark CISU and CISU member organisations work to raise awareness of global issues and engage the public in a shared world.

Why is civil society important?

People act on the issues that matter to them and their lives. An organised civil society strengthens individual engagement in creating a sustainable world. A strong civil society holds powers to account and supports the building and maintenance of democratic societies.



What values does CISU stand for?

TO CISU THESE VALUES ARE APPLICABLE IN OUR PRACTICES AND HOW WE MEET THE WORLD.

■ DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION

We will ensure a wide array of approaches to civil society work because different methodologies and types of stakeholders are the hallmark of a thriving civil society.

We will offer everyone an equal opportunity to participate, because everyone has something valuable to contribute.

■ TRUST, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We strive for trust in our behavior towards each other. This is necessary so that each person can take responsibility for their own actions and decisions and expect the same from others.

We strive for transparency in all our actions and decisions.

■ COURAGE AND INNOVATION

We go courageously into the world and confront structures and systems that are unjust.

We develop what works and rethink and innovate when demanded.

■ RESPECT, DIGNITY AND HUMILITY

We will meet people with dignity where they are, and support them in pursuing their own goals, so we can all learn something on the way.

We are humble towards the fact that changes are best created when locally anchored in people and communities, and their own resources and opportunities.

■ COOPERATION AND VOLUNTEERISM

We cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders, because this is an inspiring, necessary and constructive path to sustainable results.

We will create space for voluntary involvement in civil society, because people's free will and volunteerism drives engagement in civil society work.



A LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED CIVIL SOCIETY

CISU's STRATEGY 2026-2030

What change does CISU contribute to?

With CISU's 2026–2030 strategy, CISU will strengthen civil society. The strategy outlines how CISU aims to contribute to a locally and globally connected civil society.

CISU WANTS TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY TO BE:

INDEPENDENT

A strong civil society builds robust, **independent** and sustainable organisations that create political, economic and social change, and counteracts the causes of poverty and inequality.

DIVERSE

A **diverse** civil society includes, represents and is accountable towards people and communities and their strives for change.

LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED

A **locally and globally connected** civil society works together in partnerships and engage their members, constituency and a broader public to act in solidarity and in community on local and global agendas.

How does CISU contribute?

CISU supports and strengthens Danish civil society organisations and their partnerships in the world.

CISU WILL IN THE STRATEGY PERIOD 2026-2030 FOCUS ON BEING:

A CONVENER OF LEARNING AND NETWORKS

Mutual learning and cooperation is the foundation for sustainable changes and solutions created in solidarity.

- » CISU will learn from and with member organisations, partners and international stakeholders.
- » CISU will convene civil society to exchange experiences and knowledge and build bridges to other sectors and actors in society.
- » CISU will strengthen focus on all parts of the partnership in our activities and include local and global inputs in our granting systems.

A RECOGNISED AND VISIBLE ACTOR IN DENMARK

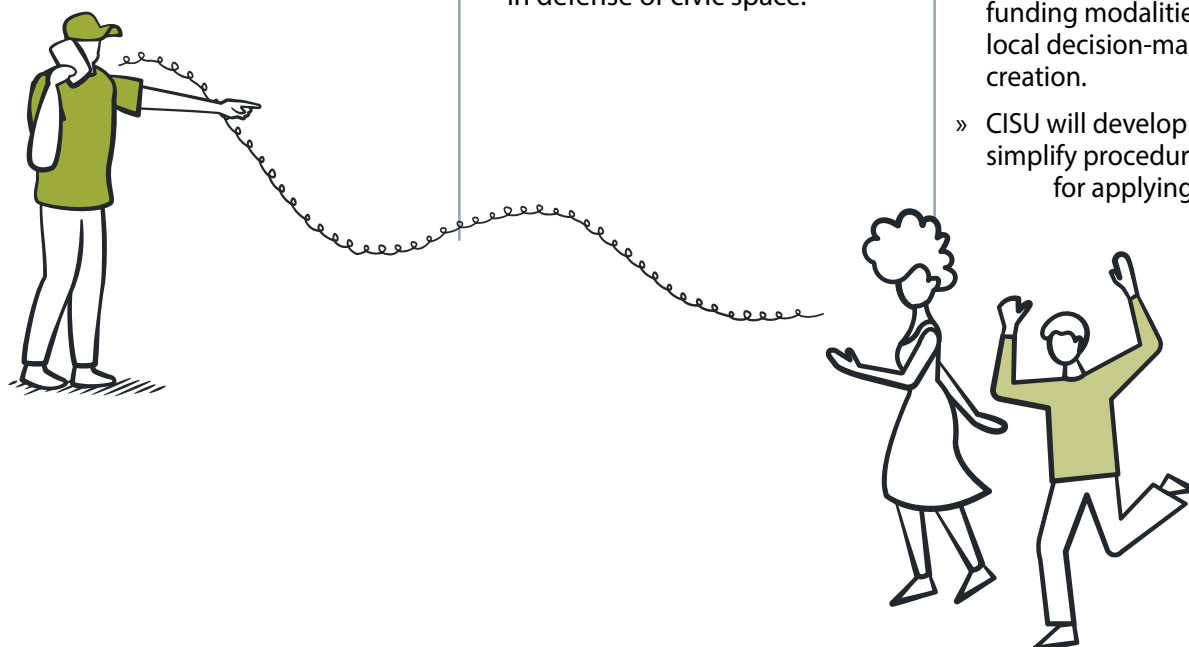
Recognition and visibility are essential for stronger civil societies in Denmark and globally.

- » CISU will foster a community of actors that engage the broad public in Denmark on global issues.
- » CISU will use our collective power with member organisations to work for necessary changes in the enabling environment for civil society.
- » CISU will be a public voice in the defense of a strong civil society as a purpose in itself, based on the clear contribution and role of civil society locally and globally.
- » CISU will speak up in alliance with civil society across the world in defense of civic space.

A CHAMPION OF REIMAGINING PARTNERSHIPS

CISUs privileged position obliges us to be ambitious in partnership and funding mechanisms to support locally led development and a more equal power sharing in the partnerships.

- » CISU will further develop the partnerships with a focus on how each part's unique contribution create the greatest possible mutual value.
- » CISU will support the Danish civil society to strengthen a diverse collaboration to engage the broader public in Denmark on global solidarity with respectful and deliberate inclusion of global voices and power dynamics.
- » CISU will stimulate new approaches to partnerships and funding modalities that supports local decision-making and co-creation.
- » CISU will develop initiatives that simplify procedures and processes for applying partnerships.



What world does CISU operate in?

The context in which CISU, its member organisations, and partners operate presents both challenges and opportunities for the way we aim to contribute.

CISU WANTS TO BE A CONVENER OF LEARNING AND NETWORKS, BECAUSE

■ WE ARE CHALLENGED BY:

- » Globally, civil society, freedom, democracy, and human rights are under attack.
- » Climate change causes destruction, while human made conflicts drive people to flee and into desperation.
- » Access to truthful information is difficult for far too many.

■ WE SEE GREAT POTENTIAL IN:

- » Despite crises, capable civil societies are flourishing and finding new ways and directions.
- » Civil societies that are strong on mobilisation, action, analysis and ways to organise.
- » The future strong alliances between civil society will be driven by the global south to a much higher degree.
- » Innovation and locally led initiatives will increase in magnitude, quality and scale.



CISU WANTS TO BE A RECOGNISED AND VISIBLE ACTOR IN DENMARK, BECAUSE:

■ WE ARE CHALLENGED BY:

- » The political framework for civil society through public strategies are less clear than previously.
- » An increasing pressure in Denmark on which type of civil society that can operate on which issues.
- » In countries we can compare ourselves with there is a diminishing popular support for development cooperation in general.
- » Civil society is in a position where we have to fight for support and legitimacy about our cause and the work that we do.

■ WE SEE GREAT POTENTIAL IN:

- » The collective force behind CISU play a strong role in influencing Danish public and society.
- » The globally engaged civil society in Denmark is bigger and more diverse.
- » Organisations, diasporas and movements constantly develop new approaches of solidarity and operate as a locally and globally connects civil society.
- » Civil society globally and in Denmark play essential roles in promoting just and democratic societies. This collaboration has been taking place for decades but is more important than ever.



CISU WANTS TO BE A CHAMPION OF REIMAGINING PARTNERSHIPS, BECAUSE:

■ WE ARE CHALLENGED BY:

- » The number of global challenges are increasing while there is a decrease in the funding and investment in addressing these challenges.
- » CISUs own support modalities are under pressure due to a global decrease in development funding and a more active civil society in Denmark and internationally.

■ WE SEE GREAT POTENTIAL IN:

- » CISU operates with a high level of trust in our systems both from main donors and internally from grant holders.
- » Locally led development and partnerships across borders mutually strengthen each other.
- » Solutions are more sustainable when they are locally anchored.
- » Global civil society voices are leading in an effort to reimagine the development cooperation.



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