



EVALUATION OF DANISH SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY

EVALUATION

2013.01



Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society

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International NGO Training and Research Centre

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N.B. The informal background working papers are not intended as complete or polished reports but as notes primarily for use by the consulting to feed into this report.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>AusAID</i>	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
<i>CBO</i>	Community-Based Organisation
<i>CDRN</i>	Community Development Resource network
<i>CISU</i>	Civil Society in Development
<i>CIVICUS</i>	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
<i>Confederation</i>	Confederations and Federations
<i>CS</i>	Civil Society
<i>CSF</i>	Civil Society Fund
<i>CSO</i>	Civil Society Organisation
<i>DAC</i>	Development Assistance Committee
<i>Danida</i>	Danish International Development Assistance
<i>DAPP</i>	Danish-Arab Partnership Programme
<i>DfID</i>	Department for International Development, UK
<i>DGF</i>	Democratic Governance Facility
<i>DKK</i>	Danish Kroner
<i>DPOD</i>	Disabled Peoples' Organisation in Denmark
<i>DUF</i>	Danish Youth Council
<i>EVAL</i>	Department for Evaluation of Development Cooperation (Danida's Evaluation Department)
<i>FCS</i>	Foundation for Civil Society
<i>FIC</i>	Forum for International Cooperation
<i>HCP</i>	Civil Society Department (formerly known as HUC) (Danida)
<i>HRGGP</i>	Human Rights and Good Governance Programme
<i>HUGGO</i>	Danida Human Rights Good Governance Office
<i>HUGOU</i>	Human Rights and Good Governance Advisory Unit
<i>IDF</i>	Independent Development Fund
<i>INGO</i>	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<i>INTRAC</i>	International NGO Training and Research Centre
<i>LGA</i>	Local Grant Authorities
<i>LGAF</i>	Local Governance Accountability Facility
<i>LGCDP</i>	Local Governance and Community Development Programme
<i>LO-FTF Council</i>	The Danish Federation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants (FTF)

<i>M&E</i>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<i>MDG</i>	Millennium Development Goal
<i>MFA</i>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>MICs</i>	Middle-Income Countries
<i>MS</i>	Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (ActionAid – Denmark)
<i>NGO</i>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<i>NNGO</i>	Northern Non-Governmental Organisation
<i>Norad</i>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
<i>ODA</i>	Overseas Development Assistance
<i>PPA</i>	Partnership Programme Agreements
<i>QuAM</i>	Quality Assurance Mechanism
<i>RAM</i>	Resource Allocation Models
<i>RDIF</i>	Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund
<i>REFLECT</i>	Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
<i>RFE</i>	Rapid Funding Envelope
<i>SG</i>	Strategic Goal
<i>Sida</i>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<i>ToR</i>	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

Danish support to civil society in developing countries is highly regarded by Southern partners as both relevant and effective. There is evidence it has contributed to strengthening civil society and supporting open, vibrant debate in priority countries. In particular, Danish support to capacity development, advocacy and networking continue to be seen as important pathways to achieve a stronger, more independent, diverse civil society. Danida's Civil Society Strategy has performed an important role in formalising the role of civil society in Denmark's development cooperation, but it has not been systematically operationalised, monitored and reported on across Danida's cooperation modalities.

Danida can build on its achievements to strengthen the impact and influence of its support to civil society i.e.:

- Developing a Civil Society Policy in support of Denmark's development cooperation strategy;
- Supporting Danish civil society organisations (CSOs) to develop innovative, effective partnerships with Southern CSOs that reflect the changing dynamics of civil society in developing countries; and
- Maintaining a mix of funding windows to respond to the diversity of civil society in developing countries.

Background and methodology

Danida's current Civil Society Strategy, first developed in 2000 and updated in 2008, was the product of close collaboration with Danish development CSOs. It sets out a series of strategic goals to guide Danish support to Southern civil society across Danida's cooperation modalities, including Danish non-governmental organisations (NGOs), embassies and multi-donor funds. Danida commissioned this evaluation to review how well the strategy was operationalised from 2008 onwards and how it might be more effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated in the future.

However, the strategy was not 'operationalised' in the sense of being systematically rolled out and monitored across all cooperation modalities in Danida. No operational framework was produced for the Strategy with explicit methods or indicators with which to monitor progress. The evaluation, therefore, developed a draft intervention logic and impact framework from the content of the Strategy. This was supplemented by an evaluation framework based on the DAC evaluation criteria. A mixed methods approach gathered evidence from a variety of sources including two country studies, two 'at distance' country reviews; interviews with key stakeholders and a variety of desk reviews. The evaluation also conducted an online survey of 1,000 Southern CSOs partners in 11 countries and an analysis was drawn from 273 'clean' responses.

Key findings

Relevance

Although knowledge of the Civil Society Strategy was limited, local CSOs affirmed the continuing relevance to the local context of the first three strategic goals of the strategy – vibrant, open debate; independent, locally based civil society; and the importance of capacity development, advocacy and networking. These were seen to be particularly relevant to the objectives of governance, democracy and human rights programmes.

However, country studies indicated that civil society gains at local or district level may not be reflected by pro-poor policy or practice changes at national level. This highlights an important assumption in the strategy i.e. the link between a strong, vocal civil society and pro-poor governance and development. This assumption of a government capable and willing to respond to the needs of its citizens needs to be reviewed as Danida works increasingly in fragile or conflict-affected contexts. Support to civil society should be more explicitly coordinated with state-building and humanitarian efforts.

Local stakeholders perceive Danish support to civil society as very relevant in terms of target populations, thematic focus and diversity of cooperation modalities. Danida supports a wide range of civil society actors, from district to national level, but it was not possible to draw any definitive conclusions about the relevance of the partner portfolios of different modalities. Each modality has different mechanisms to ensure it is targeting the right populations and partners in line with programme objectives. Both embassies and Danish NGOs would benefit from a more explicit, dynamic analysis of civil society at country level in order to assess the relevance of civil society partners and approaches.

Effectiveness

Open, vibrant debate

Danida support to civil society contributes to open, vibrant debate on development issues in partner countries, in Denmark and at international level. At an international level it has promoted civil society engagement in following up the Paris Declaration through its support to the BetterAid and Open Forum initiatives, and by supporting civil society participation in Busan. It has supported civil society participation in climate change processes at COP 15 in Copenhagen and as a key funder of the *Southern Voices* project, strengthening the voice of those most vulnerable to climate change in national and international climate debates.

In Denmark, Danida has supported public awareness initiatives such as the *World's Best News*, a Danish campaign to influence public awareness on progress to the Millennium Development Goals. Danish NGOs also foster public debate through their public awareness and campaigning work. It should be acknowledged that “points of difference”, including overt criticism of Danish government policy if relevant, are a feature of open, vibrant debate.

Danish support in Nepal and Uganda has increased civil society public debate despite legal and regulatory frameworks that enable governments to inhibit debate, if necessary. For example, Danish support to CSOs in Nepal has significantly increased space for public debate and citizen participation in local governance, particularly at micro- and meso-levels. CSO representatives in Uganda also credit Denmark with a distinctive

role among the donor community in supporting civil society advocacy on good governance and human rights. In both cases, however, an increased civil society voice has yet to lead to improved operating conditions for civil society and pro-poor outcomes at a national level.

Independent, representative, locally-based civil society

Southern civil society partners of embassies and Danish Programme NGOs (including CSO pooled funds in Denmark) were more positive about the contribution of Danish support to this goal than partners of other modalities.

Support to improve the transparency and accountability of CSOs was a key aspect of the Danish support to civil society across modalities. This can take several forms – by taking representativeness and diversity into account in the choice of strategic partners (Human Rights and Good Governance Advisory Unit (HUGOU) in Nepal); helping CSOs improve their internal governance including elected, representative Boards (Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) in Uganda); support to NGO networks in Nepal and Uganda to establish Codes of Conduct for the sector; strengthening the internal democracy of a trade union movement (Danish Federation of Trade Unions and the Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants Council in Zanzibar); or, more generally, increasing the awareness of rights holders and duty-bearers about democratic processes and the importance of inclusion.

Southern CSOs generally considered that Danish support had enhanced a sense of local ownership, with some qualifications. The strategic partnership model in both Uganda and Nepal was thought to strengthen local ownership by providing multi-annual core funding to the strategic programmes of partners and by helping to strengthen their internal governance. Project-based support, whether provided by a pooled fund or NGO, tended to be seen as not as conducive to local ownership if project priorities are determined by the donors. Some CSO partners criticised the perceived ‘conditionality’ of Danish NGO programme funding – although this can also be explained in terms of their tougher accountability demands of partners.

Respondents believed the ‘indigenisation’ of some support mechanisms in recent years, such as the Independent Development Fund in Uganda and the Foundation for Civil Society in Tanzania had strengthened local ownership. The membership of some Danish NGOs of international confederations and federations with Southern members or affiliates was seen by some respondents as strengthening locally-based civil society; others viewed it as competing with local NGOs/CSOs access to Southern funding.

Supporting a strong, diverse civil society presents a challenge in balancing the principles of effectiveness and diversity. Although specific funding windows also exist for smaller CSOs, the trend is for Danish support modalities to work directly with fewer, ‘strategic’ partners to maximise impact, demonstrate results, reduce transaction costs and minimise risk. To continue to be relevant to the complex, changing environments in which it works Danida support must be able to identify and support new, emerging civic actors. It needs to avoid ‘institutionalising’ its partner profile – by supporting today’s civil society actors on the basis of yesterday’s performance rather than investing in tomorrow’s drivers for change.

Capacity development, advocacy and networking

CSOs reported a high level of satisfaction with the support provided to their capacity development through all modalities. CSO partners value capacity development support not only in terms of funding or training but through on-going monitoring, advice and support (as is found in different forms of Danida strategic partnerships). Danish NGOs play an important role in supporting the organisational development of partners; capacity development in their areas of technical competence; and through people-to-people initiatives. There is need, however, for Danish NGOs to more systematically monitor and report the effectiveness of these efforts at outcome level.

Both country studies reported examples of CSO advocacy in both ‘invited’ and ‘claimed’ spaces. Danish support to CSO advocacy in Nepal has contributed to positive changes for poor and marginalised people at local and district level despite a difficult political environment. The Uganda country study documented examples of CSOs advocacy in ‘claimed spaces’ – e.g. in relation to anti-corruption. The experience of Danish NGO/CSO’s work with partners – e.g. in the forestry sector, on child labour issues and trade unions – indicates that successful coalition building for advocacy may take years of effort.

Danish support to networking is particularly evident at a local and national level, although less so with regard to cross-sectoral and international networking. The Nepal country study highlighted the support provided by the Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund and Danish NGOs to networking at a local and district level. Similarly, Danish support, including that of Danish NGOs, in Uganda has been instrumental in creating and strengthening issue-based national and district networks. The Danish-Arab Partnership Programme, which supports professional dialogue and networking through partnership programmes addressing existing processes of reform and democratisation, provides an interesting example of ‘horizontal’ partnerships, as do a number of other examples of networking between specialised or professional networks in Denmark and developing countries.

Efficiency

The evaluation was unable to make any authoritative comparison of the efficiency of different cooperation modalities since this requires an analysis of both the costs, outputs and/or outcomes of comparable entities. The current system for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on Danish support to civil society is not robust enough to provide this information. There is a tendency to view multi-donor funding arrangements as cost-efficient since administrative costs are shared and potential impact increased by pooling resources. However, initial transaction costs may be high and on-going costs are dependent on the management arrangements adopted and the ‘value-added’ offered to grantees. Calls for proposals can also involve high transactions costs for both funders and particularly for applicants. Strategic partnerships are seen as cost-efficient by investing in a fewer number of partners over a longer period of time. In comparison, project funding – particularly short-term grants – is perceived as more resource intensive.

Sustainability

Local NGOs/CSOs in the countries under review have a high level of financial dependence on foreign donors, especially those engaged in advocacy work. Survey responses indicate that CSO partners of pooled funds are more reliant on that source of funding than CSOs partners of other modalities. The strategic partnership/framework funding model is seen by some to enable CSOs to establish a greater level of sustainability through longer-term funding. Investment in the organisational sustainability of partners, by supporting their improved organisational efficiency including ability to meet donor requirements, was common across modalities. There is less evidence of specific strategies to encourage financial sustainability. There was some criticism of Danida's reluctance to allow funds to be invested e.g. in endowment funds. There are few income generating and local fund-raising opportunities available to CSOs in most partner countries, but they merit more investigation and support. In the meantime, diversifying sources of funding is a realistic strategy for CSOs to manage the risk of financial dependency. In this regard, some Southern CSOs were concerned that large multi-donor funds tended to create 'funding monopolies' that might reduce the fundraising opportunities available in the sector.

Cooperation modalities

A mix of cooperation modalities in support of civil society enables Danida to support a wide range of civil society actors and to reach marginalised areas and populations in partner countries.

Danida is committed to providing more direct funding to Southern civil society. The evaluation found that the existence of dedicated programme management units to support Governance and Democracy programmes in Uganda and Nepal enabled Danida to read and respond effectively to the changing local context. Local Grant Authorities potentially are flexible funding mechanisms that could support timely, innovative civil society initiatives or new civil society actors, but are under-utilised. CSOs often play an effective service delivery or capacity development role in sector programmes (usually through earmarked components) but the connection with the rights-based approach of the Civil Society Strategy is less obvious. It is likely that civil society contributes less to the planning and monitoring of sector programmes than anticipated in the Civil Society Strategy.

Danida support to civil society through multi-donor funding arrangements is expected to increase. Danida should preserve special funding windows or other kinds of affirmative action such as the use of quotas to ensure that smaller, less experienced CSOs or new emerging civil society actors can access funds. It should avoid 'false economies' and ensure that the critical success factors in the HUGGO/HUGOU model – skilled experienced teams working with both civil society and government that are capable of innovating, taking risks, and providing outreach support to civil society – are incorporated in new modalities.

Danish NGOs/CSOs retain an important role in Danish support to civil society in the South. The long-term commitment, local knowledge and specialised expertise of Danish framework NGOs remain valuable assets for Danish support to Southern civil society. The evaluation also found numerous positive examples of Danish/Southern links and

development projects supported through pooled funds in Denmark. A number of factors, however, such as the evolving maturity of Southern CSOs; the increase in funding windows in the South; and the growth of international NGO confederations and federations (con/federations); suggest it is time for a constructive, collaborative reappraisal of the added value of channelling Danida support to Southern civil society via Danish NGOs/CSOs, and how it can be measured and maximised.

Lessons

Strategy

Stakeholders in Denmark value the Civil Society Strategy as an affirmation of the role that support to Southern civil society plays in achieving Denmark's developmental objectives and of the distinctive role of Danish CSOs in this process. The absence of an explicit intervention logic/s and implementation framework has undermined Danida's ability to communicate what Danish support to civil society aims to achieve; how it aims to achieve it; and how it will measure its success. A future civil society strategy/policy should serve both the *political* purpose of enshrining the importance of support to civil society in developing countries, and the *technical* purpose of enabling Danida to monitor, demonstrate and communicate how this support contributes to Denmark's development priorities.

Danida as an organisation

Southern CSOs across different cooperation modalities highly regard Danida support to civil society. This offers an opportunity for Danida to build on its expertise and credibility to be an influential as well as an effective development partner in civil society programmes. Danida should retain a programming capacity that draws upon the learning and experience of the sector to influence the design of bilateral and multi-donor funds for civil society.

An appropriate mix of funding mechanisms is necessary to ensure that Danida can respond to the diversity of CSO roles, capacities, constituencies and approaches. Danida should endeavour to ensure that the strategic objectives of civil society support rather than, for example, the need to reduce transaction costs, determine the choice of cooperation modality and partners.

The existing arrangements for reporting to the Civil Society Strategy are not an effective monitoring framework. Not all the systems and processes required to monitor and report on the effectiveness of a 'sub-strategy' are currently in place. This has broader implications for the status of such sub-strategies and how they are to be operationalised and reported on.

Country level

No specific guidance is available to embassies on how support to local CSOs should be incorporated in the design, implementation and monitoring of its programmes, other than that available in the Strategy itself. The development of Country Policies and Country Programme Documents in 2013 provides an opportunity to incorporate the drivers for change in civil society at country level in relation to Danida's strategic

priorities; to guide embassies in the choice of civil society programmes, partners and support mechanisms; to improve the coordination of the different sources and channels of support to civil society at country level; identify programme synergies; and facilitate knowledge-sharing.

Recommendations

1. A Civil Society Policy in support of Denmark's development cooperation strategy

The Civil Society Strategy should be replaced by a Civil Society Policy aligned to *The Right to a Better Life* in order to mainstream Danida good practice on working with civil society across the full range of cooperation modalities. The Policy would define the role that civil society plays as an agency of change in achieving each strategic priority; develop a change pathway which includes causal links and assumptions between strengthening civil society and pro-poor outcomes; an impact assessment framework highlighting the dimensions of change relevant to work with civil society on each priority; and suggest indicators for these dimensions of change.

2. Support Danish CSOs to develop innovative, effective partnerships

The Civil Society Policy should develop the concept of 'flexible partnerships' in *The Right to a Better Life* to elucidate the distinctive contribution that Danish NGOs/CSOs make to Danish development cooperation. Framework agreements with Danish NGOs should support programmes aligned to the strategic priorities of *The Right to a Better Life* and/or demonstrate their added value to Southern civil society. Danida support to CISU and other pooled fund arrangements should be based primarily on their contribution to a strong, diverse civil society and, where relevant, to development outcomes.

Danida should encourage Danish NGOs to explore new ways of collaborating with Southern CSOs – e.g. by reassigning budget holding and contracting responsibilities in Danish/Southern CSO partnerships; providing decentralised funds that Southern CSOs can access directly for capacity development support; and providing decentralised funds for problem solving, multi-sectoral partnerships around specific issues or challenges.

3. A mix of funding modalities that reflects the diversity of civil society

Danida should invest in its programming capacity that draws upon learning, innovation and good practice in the sector to design and develop bilateral and multi-donor initiatives that enable CSOs of diverse sizes, approaches and capabilities to access funding.

Recommended actions

For MFA:

- Retain the capacity to draw upon learning, innovation and good practice from the sector to contribute to the design of multi-donor and bilateral funds for civil society.
- Collaborate with Danish NGOs to develop a Civil Society Policy aligned to the four strategic priorities and the concept of Flexible Partnerships in *The Right to a Better Life*.
- Incorporate the guidance of the Civil Society Policy on drivers for change, indicators, tools and methodologies in relation to the strategic priorities in the guidelines on Country Programme Documents to be developed in 2013.
- Incorporate the monitoring and reporting of Danida's engagement with Southern civil society in future reporting to the Country Programme Documents.
- Conduct regular external reviews, perhaps as a joint donor initiative, to monitor how civil society is changing at country level.
- Explore the possibility of revising the project database to enable it to better track and monitor civil society initiatives e.g. by introducing marker/s for civil society programmes.
- Develop a communications framework to continue to communicate and celebrate the pivotal role of poor and marginalised people and organised citizens in achieving Danida's priorities – to be published on the Danida website or as an annual publication.
- Articulate the distinctive contribution of Danish NGOs to a strong, independent, diversified civil society under the concept of 'Flexible Partnerships'; develop a separate intervention logic and impact framework to clarify their added value in the development results chain; the dimensions of change that encapsulate this added value; and plausible indicators to monitor and measure these changes.
- Focus the monitoring of and reporting on Danish NGO performance on the dimensions of change that demonstrate their added value; revise the Guidance Notes to Framework organisations to establish a standard reporting template; specify Southern CSO partner input into Danish NGO reporting and/or independent reviews of their performance.
- Develop a framework based on a set of transparent criteria to review the funding of framework NGOs every four years on the basis of performance so that poor performance can be identified and addressed before funding is affected.

- Provide incentives to Danish NGOs to find new ways of collaborating with Southern CSOs and emerging civil society actors. For example, through an Innovation and Partnership Fund to pilot innovative, 're-balanced' partnerships with Southern CSOs. Commission an independent review of the pilot/s in two or three years.
- Review the status of the Humanitarian Strategy in the context of a new Civil Society Policy to ensure that the interdependence of humanitarian and development support to civil society is encapsulated in the Policy.
- Improve the overall coordination of civil society funding initiatives in Danida e.g. of Humanitarian and Civil Society framework agreements, through a system administrative and communications protocols.
- Commission further research into the contribution of pooled funds to a strong, independent, diversified civil society, with particular reference to their management and governance structures and what can be learnt from different approaches and practices.

For embassies:

- Conduct a drivers of change analysis (perhaps as a joint donor initiative) as part of the preparation of Country Programme Documents to inform civil society funding in-country. Commission regular external reviews to monitor how civil society is changing.
- Support a mix of cooperation modalities that takes into account the diversity of CSO roles, capacities, constituencies and approaches. Where appropriate, this should:
 - Encourage large multi-donor funds to include a variety of funding windows within the same initiative to enable a diverse range of CSOs to benefit from support;
 - Incorporate a capacity and/or organisational development element into a cooperation modality so that a CSO can 'progress' through different modalities e.g. from project funding to strategic partnership;
 - Ensure that Danida support is capable of identifying and supporting emerging new civil society actors in line with a drivers of change analysis.
- Promote multi-donor funds with an independent programme management capacity and governance systems involving civil society representation to promote local ownership.
- Invest in the management capacity of bilateral programmes and multi-donor funds to read and respond to changes in civil society as well as innovate and take risks.
- Coordinate Danish NGOs/CSOs to meet on regular basis to promote a more strategic dialogue to improve the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society.

For Danish NGOs:

- Framework organisations should develop an explicit statement of their distinctive contribution to Southern civil society and of the theory of change involved in their concept of partnership. Members of global con/federations should demonstrate their specific contribution to Southern civil society through their con/federation.
- Innovate with new approaches to partnership that test new forms of collaboration and communicate their responsiveness to Southern partner feedback on their performance.
- Reflect upon and experiment with their approaches to helping develop the capacity of Southern CSOs to ensure that they are responsive to the needs and demands of partners.
- Invest in improving their M&E frameworks so they are capable of monitoring and reporting the impact of their value-added efforts in, for example, capacity building, networking, advocacy, and people-to-people support etc. at output/outcome level.
- Collaborate with Danida in developing a Civil Society Policy that articulates their distinctive contribution to Southern civil society; and an intervention logic and impact framework that identify the dimensions of change and relevant indicators by which they can systematically monitor, measure and report on their support to Southern civil society.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and context of evaluation

A Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries was first drawn up in October 2000 in the context of the development of Denmark's overall strategy for development assistance, Partnership 2000. Partnership 2000 identifies three elements contributing to the overall objective of poverty reduction – pro-poor economic growth; human development through social sector development; and the promotion of democratisation and popular participation in the development process. The Civil Society Strategy, with partnership as its core approach, was seen as contributing particularly to the third element of Danish development cooperation.

In 2007 Danida initiated a participatory process to update the Strategy. The updated version of the Strategy, launched in December 2008, was seen as the product of collaborative effort involving Danida and Danish civil society organisations (CSOs). The overarching objective of the 2008 Strategy is to contribute to *'the development of a strong, independent and diversified civil society in developing countries'*¹. The Strategy defines CSOs as *'all types of informal and formal structures through which people organise themselves'*². Key shifts of emphasis in the updated strategy from the original 2000 strategy include:

- Emphasis on the Paris Declaration (2005) and the aid effectiveness agenda;
- Increased emphasis on the need for local ownership and for working through partnerships;
- Attention to fragile states and situations;
- The recognition of diversity of CSOs as a goal in itself both in developing countries and in Denmark.

The Strategy includes nine strategic goals which guide the scope and type of Danish support to promote the overarching objective of a *'strong, independent and diversified civil society'*. The Strategic Goals can be seen as having different statuses in the implicit intervention logic of the Strategy. For example, a representative, legitimate and locally based civil society, and a vibrant and open public debate can be defined as desired civil society outcomes in the strategy; whereas capacity building, advocacy and networking can be considered 'pathways to change' to the achievement of these strategic goals. The full list of strategic goals is listed below:

1 *A Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries*. Danida, 2008, p. 7.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Box 1 Strategic Goals (the first three are the primary focus of the evaluation)

Goal 1	A vibrant and open debate both nationally and internationally
Goal 2	A representative, legitimate and locally based civil society, through
Goal 3	Capacity development, advocacy work and networking
Goal 4	Strengthening the cooperation with CSOs focusing on human rights
Goal 5	Support to fragile states and situations
Goal 6	Bilateral and multilateral assistance
Goal 7	Involving Danish civil society in development assistance
Goal 8	CSO collaboration with other stakeholders such as business community, research institutions, media and political parties
Goal 9	Stronger results focus to the activities supported

It was decided from the outset that the implementation of the updated Strategy would be evaluated in 2012. In late 2011, the Department for Evaluation of Development Cooperation (EVAL) commissioned a pre-study³ for the evaluation with the purpose of generating a comprehensive overview or mapping of Danish support to civil society. In the event, the pre-study found it difficult to gain an authoritative overview of Danish direct and indirect support to civil society due to the range and diversity of support offered through different modalities and the limitations of internal reporting systems.

A new strategy for Denmark's development cooperation *The Right to a Better Life* was published in August 2012. *The Right to a Better Life* highlights four strategic priorities – human rights and democracy, green growth, social progress, and stability and protection. The role of civil society is acknowledged in all of these priorities. The new strategy also emphasises the importance of a rights based-approach, flexible partnerships, results and efficiency. Specific attention is paid to partnerships with CSOs under the concept of 'flexible partnerships'. Plans are underway to operationalise the new development cooperation strategy which provides an important context for the recommendations of this evaluation.

1.2 Purpose and scope of evaluation

In October 2012 Danida Department for Evaluation (EVAL) commissioned a consortium formed by INTRAC in the UK, TANA in Denmark and Indevlop in Sweden to conduct an evaluation of the Civil Society Strategy. The overall purpose of this evaluation is to collate the lessons learned from the operationalisation of the Strategy with a particular focus on results relating to Strategic Goals 1, 2 and 3⁴. Two key evaluation questions were identified for the evaluation:

3 Watson, Olsen, Gaynor and Gayfer. *Pre-study for the Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish support to Civil Society: Final Report*. IOD/PARC, 2012.

4 See Annex A for the key elements of the ToR.

1 INTRODUCTION

1. *To what extent and how has the Danish Civil Society Strategy, its operationalisation and use of different modalities, enabled and supported the development of a stronger, more independent and diversified civil society in developing countries?*
2. *What lessons can be learned for improved operationalisation and future monitoring and evaluation of Danish support to civil society development in the South?*

The focus on Strategic Goals 1, 2 and 3 was prioritised as these goals most directly support the overarching objective of the Strategy, i.e. the development of a strong, independent and diversified civil society in developing countries, although it was expected that other goals should be addressed where relevant. The evaluation was expected to identify what has worked well and less well in the operationalisation of the Strategy with a particular focus on the different cooperation modalities/ and funding mechanisms used to support civil society in the South.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) recognised that the Strategy contains some elements of intervention logic though this is not explicitly stated. The evaluation was expected to develop a more explicit intervention logic for the Strategy to increase the understanding of how different elements in the Strategy are or are not linked.

The evaluation was to be forward looking and contribute to and inform decision-making on future Danish support to civil society in the South. It was to include lessons at a strategy level; a country level; and at an organisational level, as well as recommendations directed at Danida, Danish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other implementing partners.

2 Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Civil Society Strategy: an intervention logic/impact framework

During the inception phase the team conducted a ‘structuring’ exercise designed to provide a systematic line of enquiry through the evaluation that is derived from the intervention logic implicit in the Civil Society Strategy.

This involves three elements:

*An Intervention Logic*⁵ i.e. the development of an explicit intervention logic, the elements which were derived directly from the Civil Society Strategy, focusing principally on Strategic Goals 1, 2 and 3.

*An Impact Framework*⁶: i.e. a framework that identifies the changes in civil society anticipated by the intervention logic. This includes the dimensions of change identified for each of the three Strategic Goals prioritised in the evaluation; the lines of enquiry to be followed to assess whether they have been achieved; and the assumptions upon which they have been predicated and which will be tested during the evaluation.

An Evaluation Framework: that translates the Impact Framework into a series of evaluation questions in line with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria prioritised in the ToR. This includes the evaluation questions to guide data collection, the indicators associated with these and the data sources to be drawn upon in the evaluation. Interview protocols for different stakeholder groups were subsequently drawn up in line with the Evaluation Framework.

The structuring phase was a critical element of the inception phase since Danida support to civil society has been provided from many sources and through many and diverse mechanisms – and often without explicit reference to the Civil Society Strategy itself. This emphasises the need for a clear conceptual framework with which to gather and analyse data and to provide a clear and consistent narrative in the evaluation.

The aim was to test the adequacy of the intervention logic and impact framework in the in-depth country studies to help identify how these draft frameworks might be revised and improved to better reflect the realities of how the Strategy is operationalised, and to suggest how the Strategy might be more effectively monitored and evaluated.

5 See Annex D, p. 117.

6 See Annex F.

2.2 Data collection methods

Data was collected in line with the evaluation framework through a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods e.g.:

- Two in-depth country studies in Uganda and Nepal provided an analysis of the totality of Danish support to Southern CSOs in the two countries. These are available separately as annexes to the report.
- Briefer ‘at-distance’ reviews of Danida support to civil society in Somalia and Tanzania provided analysis of Danish support to civil society in different operating conditions.
- An on-line survey⁷ of approximately 1,000 Southern CSOs in 11 countries directly or indirectly in receipt of Danish funding produced 273 responses which provided quantitative and qualitative data on Southern civil society perceptions of the effectiveness of Danish support.
- A ‘Learning Review’ of Danida evaluations and other relevant documentation sources sought to synthesise some key lesson relevant to the Civil Society Strategy.
- A brief, comparative review of other donor approaches, learning and best practice in supporting civil society helped to contextualise the conclusions and learning of the evaluation.
- A short study on how Danida contributes to the promotion of a vibrant debate in support of civil society at international and national levels offered an analysis of Danish non-financial support to the strategy.
- In addition to country study interviews approximately 50 interviews and consultations⁸ took place with key informants from Danish civil society, Danida and Danish embassies to ensure that Danish stakeholders have substantial opportunity to contribute to the evaluation’s findings and analysis.

The evaluation team met on two occasions to consider the findings from different data sources and develop a joint analysis of the key findings. The initial findings of the country studies, from the other data sources, and possible options for the operationalisation of a future Civil Society Strategy were presented and discussed at a meeting of the Reference Group on 31st January 2012.

2.3 Limitations of approach

The diversity and complexity of Danida support to civil society made it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about different cooperation modalities. For the purpose of analysis, different ways of funding civil society have been categorised e.g. Danish NGOs, multi-donor funds etc. However, these modalities function in very diverse ways. Any generalisation about a Danish NGO or multi-donor fund will have its exceptions. The evaluation has had to draw a fine line at what level of analysis it is possible to draw a conclusion.

7 See Annex E for a summary of the survey methodology.

8 See Annex B.

Similarly, a number of factors – e.g. the direct and indirect nature of Danish support to civil society; the lack of indicators to measure the achievement of Strategic Goals; and the absence of baseline – make it difficult to confidently identify Danida’s contribution to changes in civil society observed in the country studies.

The two in-depth country case studies provided the opportunity for a closer examination *in situ* of Danish support to civil society. However, the two countries chosen as case studies share a history of a distinctive Danish approach to supporting civil society – a dedicated project management unit to support governance and democracy programmes, referred to in the evaluation as the Danida Human Rights Good Governance Office (HUGGO)/Human Rights and Good Governance Advisory Unit (HUGOU) approach. The approach has had a definitive imprint on Danish support to civil society in both Uganda and Nepal but is not typical of Danish support to civil society in other partner countries. In retrospect an opportunity was lost to compare and contrast different Danida models of country-based support. However, data from the two country studies has been supplemented by other sources including short at-distance reviews of civil society support in Somalia and Tanzania, interviews with seven other Danish embassies and evidence from other evaluations.

The survey of Southern CSOs perceptions was designed to ensure that ‘partner’ perspectives on the effectiveness of Danish support fed into the evaluation. The final sample of responses provided useful quantitative and qualitative data to help to triangulate evidence gathered through other sources. However, there a number of limitations to the data produced by the survey:

- As an on-line survey, only CSOs with an email address were included. Views of CSOs without access to email are not reflected in the analysis.
- The number of CSOs surveyed in different countries varies significantly. This may reflect the level of CSO support in each country but also reflects difficulties in obtaining CSO details from joint donor initiatives supported by Danida.
- The disproportionate number of responses from Nepal and Uganda (43.2%) may influence the high scores achieved by embassies in the survey. The higher response rate from these countries might reflect more regular contact with Danida and recent contact with evaluation teams. When data on embassies is disaggregated into responses from Nepal/Uganda and responses from other countries, it shows that results from Nepal/Uganda may be inflating overall scores for embassies quite significantly.
- A significant number of respondents were not clear which mechanism their organisation received funding from and answered the wrong questions. Although this limitation has been mitigated through data cleaning and quality assurance, some caution is still required regarding comparative analysis of funding mechanisms.

Survey data has been included in Chapter 4 to introduce the findings drawn from other sources such as the country studies and documentary review. As per good practice, it is recommended that definitive conclusions are not drawn from the survey results alone, but triangulated with the findings derived from other data sources.

3 Danish Support to Civil Society

This chapter provides a summary overview of how Denmark directly and indirectly supports civil society in developing countries through different cooperation modalities; what systems and processes are in place to monitor, evaluate and report on that support; before setting this in the context of other donor approaches to supporting civil society.

What follows is a brief description and assessment of the different cooperation modalities through which Danish support is channelled to Southern civil society. A distinction should be made between Danish support to civil society and the operationalisation of the Civil Society Strategy, although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The Civil Society Strategy aims to provide a strategic framework for all Danida's direct and indirect support to Southern civil society and includes specific prescriptions regarding the involvement of civil society in different cooperation modalities⁹. Danida and embassy staff are expected to refer to Danida 'sub-strategies' such as the Civil Society Strategy in the development and implementation of their programmes. However, no operational framework was developed to 'roll out' the strategy and it contains no intervention strategy or impact framework with which to assess progress. Rather, it was hoped/anticipated that, as a Danida sub-strategy, it would be observed and referenced across Danida and the embassies¹⁰. It cannot be said, therefore, that the Strategy has been operationalised in the sense of being systematically rolled out and monitored across all cooperation modalities in Danida.

3.1 Danish Support to Civil Society: Cooperation modalities

Danida supports civil society through a diverse range of cooperation modalities. A pre-study¹¹ conducted prior to this evaluation sought to provide a summary of Danish funding support to civil society. The pre-study suggests that Danida bilateral support to civil society between 2009 and 2011 totalled DKK 6.97 billion; DKK 3.07 billion of which was allocated directly to Danish CSOs through the Civil Society Department.

The pre-study acknowledges that these figures are incomplete and an underestimate. This is particularly true for support channelled through Danish embassies. Calculations for bilateral assistance to civil society were verified by only 38% of embassies and 20% of Danida departments. The pre-study, for example, estimated civil society support to represent 22.3% of total bilateral aid and 16% of total aid in 2010. The real percentage figures for bilateral assistance to civil society e.g. through sector and thematic programmes managed by the embassies, is likely to be significantly higher. Similarly, the figures do not include civil society support channelled through multilateral organisations with the exception of the United Nations offices in Geneva and New York.

This diversity of funding approaches enables Danida to engage in different ways with a range of local CSOs of varying size and organisational maturity. It also presented some

9 See Section 5 on Cooperation Modalities in Danida. *A Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries*. Danida, 2008, p. 36-41.

10 Email correspondence 4th February 2013.

11 All financial data in this section is drawn from: Watson, Olsen, Gaynor and Gayfer. *Pre-study for the Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish support to Civil Society: Final Report*. IOD/PARC, 2012.

challenges to the evaluation. In some cases, a cooperation modality such a multi-donor fund incorporates different funding windows e.g. calls for proposals and strategic partnerships. Similarly, Danish NGOs vary significantly in size, approach, and thematic priorities, ranging from framework organisations affiliated to global NGO con/federations to the 280 smaller Danish CSOs networked through Civil Society in Development (CISU). The same qualification applies to embassies, which implement programmes through diverse funding mechanisms and multi-donor initiatives whose management arrangements vary significantly. This complexity works to undermine any attempt at categorising Danish support mechanisms and any attempt at generalisation.

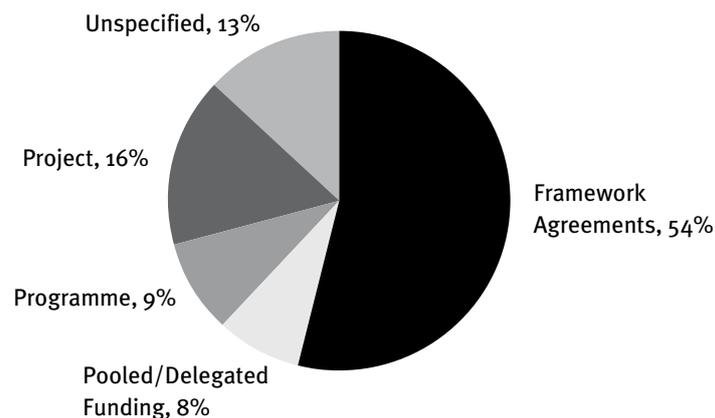
A number of evaluations¹² have developed a variety of typologies of donor funding and support. For the sake of simplicity, this evaluation will review the support provided to Southern civil society by different Danida funding windows under the following categories:

- Danish NGOs, including both framework, pooled fund and programme arrangements
- Embassies, including framework/strategic partnerships, Local Grant Authorities (LGA) and sector programmes
- Multi-donor funds for democracy and governance and to support smaller NGOs.

Support to Danish NGOs/CSOs

The Civil Society Department in Danida funds a broad spectrum of Danish CSOs through a series of funding mechanisms, framework agreements constituting the majority of direct funding. The data on this direct support to Danish CSOs is comparatively reliable with 84% of projects/programmes funded providing information.

Figure 1 Funding allocations by Civil Society Departments (2009 to 2011)



Source: *Pre-study for the Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish support to Civil Society, 2012. IOD/PARC, p. 20.*

12 See Scanteam. 2008. Support Models for CSOs at Country Level. Scanteam for Nordic+ Donors Agencies. Available at: <http://www.norad.no/en/tools-and-publications/publications/publication?key=109753> ; Giffen, J. and Judge, R. Civil Society Policy and Practice in Donor Agencies. INTRAC for DfID, 2010.

Civil Society Department funding of Danish NGOs/CSOs is to be streamlined to increase administrative efficiency and promote strategic dialogue. It is planned to increase the number of framework agreements from six to potentially 18 by 2015 by converting current programme agreements to framework agreements, despite significant differences in size and approach of the organisations in receipt of both types of agreements. In addition, it is planned to streamline Project and Pooled funding. This would leave two principal cooperation modalities for support to Danish NGOs/CSOs – framework and pooled funds – with some continuing funding from Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) departments.

Framework agreements

The six largest Danish NGOs have framework agreements with Danida – ActionAid Denmark, DanChurchAid, Ibis, Danish Red Cross, CARE Denmark, and Save the Children Denmark. The aim of the agreements is to enable the NGOs to develop long-term strategic programmes based on their own vision and goals in cooperation with their partners in developing countries. Frameworks agreements are for a four year period although formal applications are required from the NGOs every two years. Five additional organisations became framework organisations in early 2013, ADRA Denmark, Danske handicaporganisationer (Danish Organisations for the Disabled), 3F, U-landssekretariatet and Verdens Skove (World's Forests).

Danish NGOs are expected to align their programming to Denmark's development cooperation strategy and Civil Society Strategy. Individual NGOs present detailed multi-year proposals with objectives and indicators which they report on annually. The performance of Framework NGOs is currently externally assessed by the Civil Society Department through the quality of their reports using a variety of criteria e.g. relevance of objectives/indicators in relation to the Civil Society Strategy, and formally reviewed every three or four years. The funding of the six framework organisations has remained relatively stable over the last decade although this may change with the increase in the number of framework agreements and a stronger emphasis on the quality of reporting.

The Civil Society Department independently administers humanitarian strategic partnerships with international humanitarian organisations and Danish NGOs which are similar in nature to framework agreements. The four largest of these agreements are with the Danish Red Cross, Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid and Save the Children Denmark. All but the Danish Refugee Council also have a civil society framework agreement. Humanitarian framework agreements are restricted to countries affected by prolonged conflict-related emergencies.

Danish NGOs identify their 'added value' as the quality of their partnership approach; expertise in capacity development and advocacy; and their ability to link national with the international. Several Danish NGOs have also developed distinctive 'technical' competencies – e.g. ActionAid Denmark in governance and accountability, CARE Denmark¹³ in climate change, natural resource management and environment; and Save the Children Denmark in child rights – and, by having a lead role in their competence in their con/federation, have been able to 'scale up' their impact. Some of these competencies are strategic and timely in the context of the country studies – e.g. natural resource management in the context of Uganda and governance in the case of Nepal.

13 See <http://www.careclimatechange.org>.

The long-term commitment, local knowledge and specialist expertise of Danish NGOs remain a valuable asset for Danish support to Southern civil society. These distinctive competencies are highlighted in variety of roles, for example, as a trusted intermediary in fragile contexts such as Somalia; as a neutral mediator in politicised environments such as Nepal; and potentially as professional resource, monitoring and supporting embassy-funded projects. Nonetheless, Danida and embassy staff, in particular, frequently referred to the need for Danish NGOs to clarify their added value in their partnerships with Southern CSOs and, in the case of members of international con/federations, to demonstrate how a distinctive Danish NGO contribution can be traced through to country-level programmes.

Table 1 Assessment of role of Danish Framework NGOs in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Potential for flexible, effective partnerships responsive to the needs of local CSOs.	Pressure to demonstrate results risks leading to a more contractual relationship with Southern partners.
Membership of global con/federations provides the potential to 'scale up' influence/impact.	Membership of global con/federations weakens the Danish 'footprint' and relationship with embassy.
Strong added value potential e.g. technical competencies; networking; knowledge sharing.	Competition with southern CSOs for country-level funding.
Long-standing presence and expertise at country level in many cases.	Potential of being targeted or restricted by unsympathetic governments.
Interface with Danish public helps create public awareness of, support to and engagement in development.	Organisational imperatives e.g. too raise funds and profile, undermine primary function to strengthen Southern civil society.
Role as trusted intermediary e.g. in fragile context.	

Pooled funds in Denmark

Danida has established a system of pooled funds in Denmark to support cooperation between small and medium-sized Danish CSOs (though some are larger than some framework organisations) and their partners in developing countries. Danida supports three umbrella organisations in providing funding for mini-projects/programmes – the Danish Youth Council (DUF), the Danish Mission Council-Development Department and Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark (DPOD). In addition Danida supports the CISU network, an independent association of over 280 Danish CSOs with the principal objective of developing the capacity of Danish CSOs to partner with Southern CSOs to promote a strong, independent, diversified civil society. CISU funds projects and programmes that are expected to reference the Civil Society Strategy. A recent review of CISU¹⁴ concluded that the pooled fund arrangement currently provides an effective means of linking smaller Danish and Southern CSOs with relatively high degree of satisfaction among members.

14 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida. *Civilsamfund i Udvikling Review Rapport*. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/c5nb9l6>. 2012.

Table 2 Assessment of role of Danish Pooled Funds in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Support a wide, diverse range of civil society support and links between Denmark and developing countries.	Predominantly project focus discourages broader synergies and learning.
Self-administration of pooled funds is cost-efficient.	Multiple smaller-scale impacts rather than policy or practice change at meso or macro level.
Helps to build awareness of and support development issues among Danish public.	Monitoring and evaluation of overall impact difficult.
Horizontal linkages between Danish and Southern civic actors develops capacity and solidarity.	

MFA departments

In addition to the Civil Society Department, individual MFA departments also grant fund Danish NGOs through programmes such as ‘Arab Partnership for Dialogue and Reform’ (renamed as the Danish Wider Middle East Initiative in 2010/11) managed by the Middle East and North Africa Department and the former ‘Women in Africa Initiative’ managed by the Africa Department. Other departments also have framework agreements with international NGOs e.g. the Green Growth Department with International Institute for Sustainable Development, International Institute for Environment and Development and other ‘intellectual partners’. There is no overall coordination of departmental funding of Danish or international NGOs although all such funding is expected to comply with the Guidelines for Programme Management.

Embassies

Embassies provide support to civil society mainly through sector and thematic programmes and the LGA, using a variety of approaches including multi-donor funds, and strategic partnerships/ framework agreements. The pre-study found that of DKK 1.19 billion in civil society funds disbursed between 2009 and 2011 – the majority was channelled through multi-donor basket funds (39%); framework agreements (21%); sector support programmes (15%); and the LGA (11%). However, information was supplied by only nine embassies. The last three of these will be reviewed under embassy funding before multi-donor funds are reviewed separately.

Framework agreements or Strategic Partnerships

Framework agreements in country, also referred to as strategic partnerships, involve longer-term funding of CSOs’ strategic and operational plans with capacity development support. This features prominently as a preferred Danida approach to supporting CSOs. Danida cites a number of reasons in support of this approach – to increase management efficiency by reducing the portfolio of partners; to increase programme effectiveness by providing longer-term strategic support to legitimate, capable CSO partners; and to reduce partner transaction costs by adapting to CSO’s fiscal year and accounting, monitoring and reporting systems. The rationale is that such long-term, strategic support will enable partners to focus on programme implementation, widen their popular support and strengthen their internal accountability structures.

In general, NGOs prefer this type of funding and support since it strengthens their organisational capacity to pursue their mission objectives. Danida's framework agreements with Danish NGOs have been seen traditionally as strategic partnerships and Danish NGOs themselves have promoted this kind of relationship with Southern partners. Danida uses the term to describe funding relationships with Southern CSOs through both bilateral and multi-donor funding. Among multi-donor funds, the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) and Civil Society Fund (CSF) in Uganda, and Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) (to a lesser extent) in Tanzania support strategic partnerships in addition to other forms of support. The Nepal country study highlights the introduction of the strategic partnership model by HUGOU in 2009 as part of the Human Rights and Good Governance Programme (HRGGP). This led to a reduction of HUGOU CSO partners from 59 to 13 but partners valued highly the technical assistance, transparency and strategic dialogue that characterised their relationship with HUGOU. Recent programme reviews¹⁵ in Nepal have also found that partners have improved internal controls and reporting as a result of the capacity development support offered.

Nonetheless, the strategic partnership approach faces some challenges. Not all donors have harmonised reports and accounts in Nepal. Several partners expressed concern that they will be less equipped to revert to project-based funding at the end of the funding cycle. Both Danish and Southern CSOs expressed concern that this approach might reinforce the position of the 'capable few' and establish *de facto* CSO oligopolies within their sectors. No evidence was produced by the country reports to confirm these risks but the implementation and implications of the model should be closely monitored.

Table 3 Assessment of role of Strategic Partnerships in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Allows for long-term investment in a strategic approach to delivering impact.	Fewer CSOs are supported and entry for smaller NGOs is hard.
Supports local ownership and allows CSOs to broaden popular support and focus on quality and results.	Secure funding breeds complacency in CSO who cease to innovate and achieve results.
CSO have more strategic dialogue with donors. Regular dialogue and joint review help to counteract potential risks.	Requires good knowledge of civil society to be able to select the most suitable strategic partners.
Capacity development support contributes to organisational development e.g. reporting and accountability systems.	CSOs, with security achieved through the strategic partnership, constitute a <i>de facto</i> oligopoly in the sector which excludes new actors.
	Other donors sometimes reluctant to buy-in to such partnerships.

15 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. Review Report Nepal Peace Support Programme Human Rights and Good Governance Programme In Nepal Phase 3, 2009/2010-13 ; and Thapa, M. M. Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Strategic Partnership Modality. 2011.

Sector programmes

Danida support to sector programmes, e.g. in health, water and sanitation and agriculture is normally channelled through government budgets. This is often through a Joint Financing Arrangement with other donors so multi-donor funding for sector programmes is increasingly common. Funding can be earmarked for specific civil society activities and takes different forms – e.g. as ‘strategic partnership’ with the NGO Forum in Bangladesh to deliver a capacity building component of the water and sanitation support programme, or as a pooled fund to support civil society capacity in relation to HIV/AIDS, as is the case with the CSF in Uganda and the Rapid Funding Envelope (RFE) in Tanzania. In all these cases, civil society funding plays a ‘niche’ role in a broader sector programme, most frequently involving capacity building, networking and awareness-raising. A rights-based vocabulary rarely features in the programme documents.

The governance structure of the pooled funds for sector programmes is often linked to Government entities e.g. the TACAIDS Commission for the RFE, although some pooled funds expressed the intent to ‘indigenise’ their governance arrangements in the current planning period. The management of the civil society funding window or component can be assigned to consultancy firm/s (Deloitte & Touche for the RFE in Tanzania) or an international NGO (SNV and Hivos for the Agricultural Development Trust in Zimbabwe). A reliance on calls for proposals involves high transaction costs for applicants. The RFE, for example, funded 32 proposals from around 500 concept notes received in 2012 and acknowledges that grantees were more capable NGOs. Donors of the RFE are currently interested in refocusing its efforts at district level.

The Civil Society Strategy makes a number of recommendations regarding the involvement of civil society in sector programmes including the involvement of *“relevant civil society organisations in the dialogue regarding planning, monitoring and evaluation of Danish-supported programmes”*¹⁶. The Uganda country study reports the embassy involving CSOs in monitoring sector programmes. More generally there is less evidence of civil society being systematically involved in the planning and monitoring of these programmes. Civil society is often not represented on the Steering Committees of the relevant sector programmes though it may have a minority representation on the steering committees of the relevant pooled funds. Being closely aligned to government systems and processes can also present challenges. One strategic partner indicated that it was more difficult to protect the programme from corrupting influences. On the positive side, investment in sector programmes can offer an opportunity to influence government policy and practice. The NGO Forum in Bangladesh, for example, describes Danida as having an important influence over water and sanitation policy in Bangladesh over the years. The Uganda country study concluded the work of the CSF was effective in supporting local CSOs contribution to the government HIV/AIDS programme but demonstrated few obvious links to the Civil Society Strategy.

16 *A Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries*. Danida, 2008, p. 36.

Table 4 Assessment of role of Sector programmes in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Opportunity to influence government policy and practice in the sector.	Less alignment with the Civil Society Strategy.
Enables national and international NGOs to scale up impact by providing technical services and capacity building extensively in the sector.	Restricted to a sub-contracting or service delivery role. Little CSO influence over the design and implementation of programme.
	Alignment with government systems and processes may risk corruption.
	Tends to benefit established, capable NGOs/ CSOs.

Local Grant Authorities (LGA)

The LGA is a small grants fund in each country – with a budget of DKK 15 million annually from 2008-12, decreasing to DKK 5 million in 2013 – which embassies manage at their own discretion. The LGA funds activities that cannot be funded by other embassy programmes although grants are expected to be in line with the country strategy and other Danida strategies. Most grantees are CSOs and grants are provided for one to three years.

Different views were expressed about the degree to which the LGA is used effectively by embassies to complement other cooperation modalities. The LGA has traditionally funded smaller-scale civil society initiatives. However, country studies, embassy interviews and other studies¹⁷ have noted a tendency to make fewer, larger grants, usually explained by embassy staff in terms of reducing transaction costs. Nonetheless, the LGA is the most flexible of all Danish modalities and can be used to support innovative civil society initiatives. For example, in Nepal the LGA funded an Open Learning Exchange piloting innovative teaching methods with ICT in schools that has since been taken on board by the Ministry of Education.

Table 5 Assessment of role of embassy LGA funds in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Provides flexible, responsive support.	Limited human resource capacity leads to fewer grants; limited follow up and support to partners.
Potential to support strategic pilot projects that can later be scaled up.	Limited human resource capacity undermines strategic use of funds e.g. support to emerging actors; and synergies with other support.
Potential to complement other support to civil society.	Short-term project grants do not contribute to sustainability.

17 Summary Report Bolivia/Nepal/Tanzania. CISU. 2009.

Multi-donor funds

Danida cooperation with CSOs in partner countries is increasingly channelled through multi-donor funds which are expected to continue grow in number in the future, especially in fragile countries¹⁸. This trend is driven by Denmark's commitment to donor harmonisation; to reach out to more CSOs in the South; and reduce transaction costs. Multi-donor funds typically try to respond to the needs of different contexts, programmes and partners through different funding windows. Most frequently, but by no means exclusively, grants are awarded through a call for proposals, with applications evaluated according to predefined and uniform criteria. The range of civil society actors supported through such funds can be quite diverse including both formal and informal groups, well established NGOs, community based organisations, networks and coalitions.

A recent Danida mapping exercise¹⁹ highlighted some important lessons from the use of multi-donor funds to support civil society in Governance, Democracy and Human Rights i.e.:

- *The need for affirmative action to support smaller NGOs.* The principal beneficiaries of the funds tended to be larger and better established organisations, especially in the case of strategic or core funding. Special funding windows such as the Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF) in Nepal and Independent Development Fund (IDF) in Uganda – or other kinds of affirmative action such as the use of quotas for marginalised groups by the Justice Initiatives Facilitation Fund in Vietnam – are required to ensure that smaller, less experienced CSOs can access funds.
- *The need to invest in civil society expertise and outreach.* There is a risk of achieving 'false economies' in terms of the impact of such funds by under-investing in their capacity to identify and support civil society actors that are capable of making a difference. The effectiveness of multi-donor funds requires an investment in a Secretariat with the professional expertise, not only to administer the grant making process efficiently, but to provide outreach support and capacity development to CSOs.
- *The growing interest in establishing independent funds* i.e. by national partners assuming the leadership of funds in the interest of inclusion, transparency and accountability and registering them as independent funds, governed by a board or steering committee including civil society representatives. In addition to the IDF in Uganda and the FCS in Tanzania, it cites the Red de Participacion y Justicia in Bolivia which is institutionalised within a network of national NGOs and in the process to transfer ownership of the Zambia Governance Foundation to a board of Zambian CSO representatives.

These lessons are supported by the findings of the evaluation. This section reviews briefly the experience of multi-donor funds in support of governance programmes and in support of smaller NGOs, drawing upon the experiences of Nepal, Uganda and Tanzania.

18 This overview draws heavily from: Danida. *Danida support to Governance, Democracy and Human Rights through Civil Society Funds*. December 2012.

19 Ibid.

Support to Governance, Democracy and Human Rights

The FCS in Tanzania is perhaps the best known example of a multi-donor fund established as an independent, ‘indigenous’ entity. The FCS was established as a limited company in 2002 by a group of donors with the purpose of supporting a vibrant, effective and innovative civil society sector. It has a Group of Members and Board of Directors, all of whom are Tanzanian nationals. The FCS awards four types of grants, from one off registration grants to three-year strategic grants. It is possible for individual CSOs to start with a small grant and work towards bigger and bigger grant-types. Capacity building has become increasingly important to the FCS in recent years and the strategy adopted has been to link up to and build the capacity of regional CSO networks. The FCS emerged highest in the area of grantee satisfaction in a survey of eight East African grant-makers conducted by Keystone in 2009. It has become a key player in Tanzanian civil society and is frequently consulted in matters which perhaps should be directed to networks with a formal mandate to represent civil society e.g. Tanzanian Association of NGOs (TANGO).

The DGF in Uganda was recently established in July 2011 following on from HUGGO’s earlier administration of the multi-donor funded Deepening Democracy Programme and a Legal Aid basket fund. The DGF has three components – Deepening Democracy, Rights, Justice and Peace and Voice and Accountability. State bodies as well as CSOs are eligible for funding under each component but approximately two thirds of its funding was allocated to CSOs in its first year of operation. DGF funding modalities show the evidence of its HUGGO ‘footprint’ – strategic partnerships, specific requests for proposals, and a competitive call for proposals²⁰ – as does the composition of its Secretariat of national and international staff.

A range of Ugandan stakeholders engaged in comprehensive consultations on the design of the DGF and particular effort has been exerted to ensure local ownership – e.g. by including elected Ugandan resource persons on the Board; including civil society representatives along with government agency representatives and parliamentarians in a “High-Level Stakeholders” group; funding selected state institutions; linking and funding smaller CSOs through the IDF which is seen as an ‘indigenised’ funding mechanism; operating through Ugandan networks such as the Uganda National NGO Forum and the National District Networks Support Programme; and using indicators relevant to the local context in its reporting systems.

In Nepal, Denmark played a key role in the establishment of the Local Government Accountability Facility (LGAF), a multi-donor fund with the aim of supporting citizen engagement in local governance processes. The LGAF provides an illustration of how lack of local ownership can undermine a multi-donor initiative. The LGAF forms part of the Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) of the government of Nepal which aims to contribute to poverty reduction through inclusive, accountable local governance and community-led development. It was intended that the LGAF, although a part of LGCDP, would function independently under a Steering Committee. In practice all financial resources have been channelled through the Government of Nepal but even so the initiative has not had government support. It has launched only one out of three anticipated rounds of funding since 2009, the second and third rounds of programming being stalled. The Nepal country study highlights a number of challenges to the LGAF such as weak capacity development and monitoring

20 *Partnership Approach Paper*. DGF, August 2012.

of local CSOs but nonetheless describes it as having “a unique relevance” by helping to compensate for the absence of locally elected representatives since 2002.

Table 6 Assessment of role of joint funding for thematic programmes in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Harmonisation lowers transaction costs for CSOs and donors.	Creation of a funding monopoly enables donors to define the agenda.
Effective if supported by skilled, experienced staff.	Concentration of resources on donor trends restricts funding for civil society’s own priorities.
	Loss of direct relationship and dialogue with individual donors.

Support for smaller NGOs

The RDIF in Nepal and IDF in Uganda offer two examples of multi-donor governance funds set up to target smaller NGOs. The RDIF was launched in 2006 and re-launched in June 2009 as a rapid, flexible means to promote human rights and democracy in the fast-changing post-conflict situation. It closed at the end of 2012 though there is donor interest in supporting a new RDIF in the future. The RDIF was seen as a mechanism for supporting innovative ideas and projects of higher risk. It provided capacity-development support to grantees – including financial administration, monitoring and evaluation, strategy development and basic governance issues. The RDIF undertook only two calls for proposals between 2009 and 2012 and funded 76 short-term projects out of 962 project proposals. A network of five regional offices enabled RDIF greater geographic reach; it is estimated that RDIF projects have reached an estimated 200,000 direct beneficiaries located in 90% of the districts in Nepal. A 2012 evaluation concluded that the RDIF had been effective in strengthening the capacity of marginalised and excluded communities to organise and access public services and resources but that it would be a challenge to sustain the many community-based structures created by the fund.

The IDF in Uganda was established in 2008 is currently funded by Danida through the DGF. Its mission is to promote a human rights approach in the development of civil society and it focuses on access to information, governance, poverty reduction and local democracy initiatives. The IDF has issued four calls for proposals since 2009 and funded 90 CSOs from more than 1,000 applications received. Grants are for 2-3 year period and do not exceed USD 100,000. The IDF provides close monitoring support to grantees but no systematic capacity building.

The RFE in Tanzania, launched in 2002, offers an example of a multi-donor fund to support smaller NGOs to participate fully in the national multi-sectoral response to the AIDS epidemic. The RFE issues one call for proposals each year and awards grants of one to two years. In 2012 it received 500 concept notes and funded 32 proposals. The RFE claims to fund a wide range of CSOs of different capacities working in regions all over the country. Successful applicants undergo a four day organisational survey to define the capacity development needs which usually focus on leadership, governance, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E).

The three multi-donor funds share some characteristics. They all offer comparatively short-term, project funding which is unlikely to contribute to the longer term sustainability of grantee organisations. The high ratio of applicants to successful grantees (approximately 13 or 11:1) indicates a high level of demand but potentially high transaction costs for both applicants and fund managers. The governance structures of the RDIF and RFE, however, are closely aligned with government and donor mechanisms, whereas the IDF is incorporated in Uganda as a company limited by guarantee with a board drawn from Ugandan NGO networks and donor representatives.

Table 7 Assessment of role of joint funding for smaller CSOs in supporting civil society

Potential or actual strengths	Shortcomings or potential risks
Harmonisation of donor processes and pooling of resources.	Is not conducive to local ownership; does not support grantee strategies and align with their systems.
Provides support to smaller, sub-national CSOs outside the capital through decentralised offices.	Short-term project funding does not contribute to sustainability.
Competitive process through call for tenders.	Unlikely to make an impact at meso or macro level.
Provision of basic capacity building support.	High transaction costs associated with high ratio of applicants to grantees.

3.2 Danish Support to Civil Society: Monitoring and evaluation systems

Such a complex variety of support mechanisms to civil society presents a challenge to monitoring and evaluation systems. In order to identify lessons relevant to the future monitoring and evaluation of a civil society it is necessary to briefly review the monitoring and reporting systems in place in Danida.

There is some evidence that these are not currently well-equipped to track, monitor and report on Danida's overall portfolio of civil society support. In 2007, the Auditor General's Office (Rigsrevisionen) pointed to the need for strengthened documentation of the results of the support to civil society in developing countries financed through the MFA. A recent evaluation²¹ highlighted the need for long-term monitoring of appropriate, qualitative impact indicators disaggregated by gender and age as part of the overall monitoring of the Civil Society Strategy. Even when these are in place they need to be applied in practice. The Women in Africa evaluation found that although relatively well-designed programme documents had targets, and indicators, these were rarely monitored or tracked and connected to the organisational planning process²².

21 *Evaluation of the Danish Regions of Origin Initiative in Afghanistan*. Danida, May 2012.

22 *Evaluation of Danida's "Women in Africa" Regional Support Initiative*. Danida, March 2011.

The M&E of Danida's support to civil society is dependent on Danida's corporate M&E and reporting systems which are described below:

- i. *Planning and approval:* All Danida programming is required to conform to a detailed set of Guidelines for Programme Management. The Guidelines set out requirements, providing detailed tools and templates in the process, for setting objectives, developing SMART indicators and baselines, and how information will be collected, analysed and used. Although the guidelines focus more on the planning, approval and reporting stages of the programme management cycle, they provide sufficient detail to ensure oversight while allowing significant flexibility of monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Country-based programmes such as LGA grants and sector programmes are all subject to the Guidelines for Programme Management. Reports on individual sector programmes are included in the Country Assessment Reports. Monitoring and evaluation of direct budget support is done via agreements with the respective government and where possible uses those governments' own planning, M&E and reporting systems. In the case of multi-donor funds Danida negotiates programme management processes with other development partners.

Danida also has a number of materials to support its approach to M&E – e.g. sector papers on environment, good governance, gender, agriculture, transport, and education. These provide standard indicators for the sector although there are no indications that different programmes are expected to use these, or suggestions for how work could be summarised and/or aggregated across different programmes. There is no equivalent guidance support on civil society.

- ii. *Information storage:* A Programme and Project Database holds information on all on-going and completed projects and programmes. The includes:
 - Basic data on Danida programmes and projects supported through different cooperation modalities;
 - Attached documents generated as part of the programme management cycle;
 - A section with objectives, risks and indicators for projects/programmes over DKK 1 million which can be viewed and updated but is not processed to assist wider decision-making.

Information is 'coded' and can be filtered – e.g. by type of organisation funded and cross-cutting areas such as gender. There is no coding for civil society although there is a coding for public participation and good governance. This coding system may be amended to include progress markers or tick boxes for the four strategic priorities of the new corporate strategy.

It is not possible to conclude how accurate the information entered into the database is at country level. Embassies are reported to have some flexibility on how to enter the information and the quality of data entry can be variable. It should also be noted that the database and the financial management system are not completely reconciled. The information recorded is, therefore, not 'real time' due to the time lag for information being transferred between systems.

It should be noted, with regard to its potential contribution to the M&E of Danish support to civil society, that the database was designed to track the disbursement of funds (e.g. where activities take place) and not to track progress to, for example, sub-strategies. The database can provide information on outcomes and impact of individual programmes or projects and can 'cluster' projects or programmes through the use of filtering boxes. It is not possible, however, to interrogate the database beyond the first level of disbursement. Thus, while funds disbursed directly to CSOs can be filtered and identified as support to civil society; funds disbursed to pooled funds with the intention of supporting civil society cannot be automatically filtered. This is the primary reason why it is currently difficult to track Danida support to civil society outside of direct funding of Danish NGOs.

- iii. *Reporting:* Danida's corporate reporting systems are currently linked to the implementation framework developed for the 2010 Strategy²³ with five priority areas each with associated objectives, indicators and activities. Danida departments and Denmark's embassies are required to report against this framework as defined by the Guidelines for Programme Management though this was described as an 'uphill battle' as many of the indicators were difficult to report against. Embassy reporting draws together information from different sources e.g. sector programme reports, to provide an overall country assessment.

Embassies submit an annual Country Assessment Report which provides an overview of progress on programmes supported at a national level. Since 2011 the report has included a short section on civil society covering:

- Changes in the national framework conditions for civil society;
- Civil society involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring of Danish bilateral activities;
- The embassy's promotion of and dialogue about civil society support with partners.

Embassies are requested to assess whether the situation has got better, worse, or stayed the same under each of these sub-sections, together with a short qualitative analysis. From 2013, Danida priority countries will be developing new Country Policy Papers and Country Programme Documents detailing Danida development cooperation strategy. The new Guidelines²⁴ issued to support this process make no reference as to how progress to strategic objectives will be formally reported on.

Since 2009 reporting to the strategy more broadly has been supplied by an annual Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report²⁵ which provides narrative reporting against six issues derived from the nine strategic goals of the strategy. It is largely based on qualitative case studies submitted by Danish CSOs with some supplementary information delivered by embassies. The report is more a communication than an impact framework providing a summary of the range of work supported by Danish NGOs and their Southern

23 *Freedom from Poverty: Freedom to Change 2010*. Danida, 2010.

24 *Guidelines for the Development of Policy Papers for Denmark's Relations with Priority Countries*. Danida, 2010.

25 *Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida, 2009.

partners through series of case study illustrations with some analysis of lessons learned. In addition, Danish NGOs supported by framework or pooled funds submit an annual results report in addition to project progress and completion reports.

Danida posts on its website an annual report on its development assistance. The 2011 report provides financial and narrative detail on Danida's activities in the last year, including details on humanitarian activities and cross-cutting thematic efforts in, for example, gender. It does not include any specific references to the Civil Society Strategy.

In summary, Danida's current monitoring and evaluation systems are not able to adequately track and monitor the overall portfolio of Danish support to civil society. The 2011 Cross-Cutting Monitoring report concluded, for example, *"the quality and coverage of the reporting from the embassies is insufficient to adequately represent and monitor the support provided under the Civil Society Strategy through the embassies"*²⁶. Country assessment reports are an inadequate source of monitoring data for Danish support to civil society. M&E systems have been developed for different modalities e.g. NGO frameworks and embassies, but there are few linkages between different systems. This makes it difficult to monitor any sub-strategy that covers all Danida programming – such as the Civil Society Strategy.

3.3 Support to Civil Society: Other donor policies and practices

This evaluation of Danish support to civil society comes at a time when a number of donors²⁷ are reappraising the role of civil society in development cooperation and, more specifically, the role of direct and indirect funding of civil society in developing countries.

Most donors struggle to provide global figures on their support to civil society due to the multiplicity of budget lines and mechanisms that this support is channelled through²⁸. An OECD/ DAC study²⁹ suggests that in 2009 support to civil society ranged from 11% (AusAID, Danida) to 30 and 37% (Netherlands, Irish Aid) of bilateral overseas development assistance (ODA). Support for civil society has steadily been increasing since the 1990s but there is evidence that donors are changing the emphasis within it.

An increased focus on Southern civil society

Historically, a significant percentage of donor support to civil society has been channelled through their own national NGOs³⁰. In recent years, however, donors have been stating more clearly an end objective of strengthening Southern civil society. The Netherlands states that its overall aim is to *"help build a strong and diverse civil society tailored to the local situation. In this connection, strengthening the capacity of local CSOs is an aim in and of itself"*³¹ Norad aims to *"enable southern civil society actors to take the lead in partnership*

26 *Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2011, p. 17.

27 This section draws upon a short review of civil society policies and practices of several major donors supplemented by more detailed interviews with Sida, DfID, AusAID and Irish Aid.

28 See Norwegian example in Norad Civil Society Panel. *Tracking Impact: An exploratory study of the wider effects of Norwegian civil society support to countries in the South*. Norad. March 2012, p. 25.

29 *How DAC Members work with Civil Society Organisations: An Overview*. OECD. 2011.

30 Ibid. p. 30. In 2009 DAC members provided around five times more aid to NGOs based in their countries (national NGOs) than to INGOs and local NGOs in developing countries.

31 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands. *Our Common Concern: Investing in Development in a Changing World: Policy Note Dutch Development Cooperation 2007-11*. The Hague. 2007.

between Norwegian actors and themselves³² and Sweden's overarching objective is a "vibrant and pluralistic civil society in developing countries"³³. This emphasis has been given further impetus by the Aid Effectiveness Agenda with its strong emphasis on local ownership.

A number of donors are now exploring ways of 're-balancing' of support to domestic and Southern civil society. Sida now requires Framework NGOs to focus their programming on supporting Southern CSOs and would like them to provide more core funding to Southern partners³⁴. It questions whether the current focus on results counteracts this since Northern NGO (NNGO) partners feel a greater need to control Southern partner outputs and outcomes³⁵. Sida also encourages Southern CSOs to apply for funding through creating partnerships with Swedish NGOs, or directly from in-country programmes or thematic funds. Irish Aid from 2013 will require Irish NGOs to provide fuller reports of Irish NGOs grant funding of Southern CSOs including evidence of results. Current co-financing funding arrangements for Dutch NGOs (MFS II) make it clear that the objective of funding is to *'establish and contribute to strengthening civil society in the South as a building block for structural poverty reduction. CSOs should have strategic partnerships with Southern partners and must work efficiently to strengthen civil society'*³⁶.

Norad has gone farthest in questioning the role of Northern NGOs. In a recent discussion paper³⁷ it states that *"it is a goal for Norad to make civil society support more demand driven with the northern based CSOs remaining in the background to a greater extent"*. The paper challenges whether Norad is supporting the right partners. It acknowledges that Norway tends to cooperate with more 'modern' local organisations and asks whether it should be more actively considering working with religious movements, traditional organisations, labour associations, ethnic groups and social movements as partners in social change. The paper describes civil society in many countries in the South as becoming more influenced by forces deeply rooted in national traditions. It suggests that the traditional partnership model is changing and that perhaps the number of northern based intermediary organisations and coordination mechanisms should be reduced. The paper is intended as a reference document for the on-going dialogue between Norwegian stakeholders in civil society, and Norad continues to review its position on these issues.

Changes in support to Domestic NGOs

Most donors, however, continue to rely on their domestic national NGOs as a major channel for providing support to Southern CSOs. They recognise that national development NGOs continue to play a prominent public role in their domestic contexts – e.g. AusAID and Irish Aid cite their public fundraising; development education work; and public awareness work on development issues. They also recognise the role that NNGOs can play in supporting the capacity development or advocacy of Southern organisations. Some recent donor reports highlight that, in general, this is an area that is insufficiently

32 Norad. February 2013 *A need to reform Norad's support scheme for civil society? Notes for Discussion*.

33 Giffen, J. And Judge, R. Civil Society Policy and Practice in Donor Agencies. INTRAC for DFID. 2010, p. 8.

34 *Sida's Instructions for Grants from the Appropriation Item Support via Swedish Civil Society Organisations*. Sida, 2010 p. 8.

35 Personal interview.

36 See EuroResources website. "Co-financing (MFS II)". Dutch Foreign Ministry. Accessed 8 April 2013. http://www.euroresources.org/guide/funding_programmes_open_to_national_applicants/nl_1_co_financing_system_mfs_ii.html.

37 Norad. February 2013 *A need to reform Norad's support scheme for civil society? Notes for Discussion*.

documented³⁸. Support tends to focus on strengthening the capacity of Southern CSOs to respond to the demands of funding rather than their institutional capacities³⁹. It is also not clear how far support for individual organisations strengthens civil society as a whole. Many donors are pushing NNGOs to define more clearly what their “value added” is in the development chain and how they will measure it.

Most donors still provide multi-annual, strategic funding for domestic NGOs, often known as framework agreements, in addition to project funding windows. Several of these framework schemes are likely to be modified in the near future. DfID’s current Partnership Programme Agreements (PPAs) have recently been reviewed and will cease in March 2014. There is no fixed commitment to continue them in their current form. A recent review of Sida’s framework funding scheme recommends opening the scheme to non-Swedish CSOs; providing more funding directly to the South; and providing core funding to consortia of CSOs⁴⁰. The revised Dutch framework scheme MFS II, currently funding 20 consortia over the period 2011-15, is unlikely to continue in its present form⁴¹. Norad is also rethinking roles for Northern NGOs, questioning their added value as providers of capacity building and exploring options for them to administer and monitor the funding of Southern CSOs. AusAID, in contrast, wants to increase its collaboration with Australian NGOs as key partners in the development of AusAID country strategies and contributors to policy debate in Australia.

Global NGO con/federations such as ActionAid and Save the Children have continued to grow in recent years, most often as a result of an explicit strategy to grow their membership in middle income and developing countries. ‘Global’ NGOs continue to benefit from domestic framework agreements although they present a challenge to donors as it becomes more difficult to isolate the added value of the domestic member or affiliate at the higher level of the results chain⁴². Donors are aware of the trend and the issues it raises – e.g. whether Southern affiliates constitute ‘indigenous’ CSOs and can apply directly to Southern funds – but there is no consensus on how to address these.

More generally, all bilateral donors examined are introducing changes to the funding mechanisms for NNGOs. For example:

- *Broadening out of framework agreement and transparent selection processes.* There has been some broadening out of the framework funding to enable more organisations to access this, based on transparent processes (Irish Aid, Sida, Netherlands, and DfID). Donors such as Irish Aid and Sida acknowledge that, in the past, framework funding for a few of the larger domestic development NGOs was often based on historical relationships rather than a transparent selection process.

38 Norad Civil Society Panel. *Tracking Impact: An exploratory study of the wider effects of Norwegian civil society support to countries in the South*. Norad. March 2012; and Danida. *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida. 2010 and 2011.

39 *How DAC Members work with Civil Society Organisations: An Overview*. OEDC. 2011.

40 Interview.

41 Personal communication.

42 See “*Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*”. Danida. 2009.

- *Establishment of due diligence procedures.* AusAID has required Australian NGOs to undertake an accreditation process since 1974 as a requirement for accessing AusAID funding. DfID's Civil Society Department recently introduced pre-contract due diligence procedures as a requirement for the PPA grants and states that due diligence processes will become mainstream for all funds. Irish Aids new Programme Funding mechanism includes due diligence and Sida introduced a new two stage selection process for framework organisations in 2011.
- *Introduction of competitive bidding processes and scoring for resource allocation.* Irish Aid and DfID have introduced resource allocation models for their framework/programme funding based on scoring processes. The Dutch MFS II granting process, which is project based, allocates resources according to the scoring of successful applications⁴³.
- *A focus on results.* All of the selected donors are focusing more on provision of evidence of results, or management for results. DfID funding is primarily about the delivery of 'tangible' outcomes and is evident in the processes involved in the funding application processes⁴⁴. All DfID PPA applicants are asked to outline their Theory of Change and Theory of Action in addition to providing log frames with targets and milestones. AusAID has replaced the logframe by requiring all grantees to develop a theory of change. Irish AID focuses on management for results rather than the measurement of results i.e. an organisation's ability to plan for results, ensure systems are in place for delivery etc. rather than quantifying outputs and outcomes. Sida also is putting more emphasis on reporting against results. It has recently established an online 'Contribution management system' which includes a database to enable better monitoring and management of organisations. Both DfID and AusAID make specific mention of the need for value for money and require some evidence about how this is built into planning processes and organisational systems.
- *Monitoring and evaluation.* AusAID is piloting a new M&E and Learning Framework to be used by all NGOs built around 50 indicators based on the DAC codes. Irish Aid has also asked programme-funded NGOs to relate their results to specific DAC codes to enable it to aggregate results although it does not have a prescribed reporting framework. DfID requires Annual Reports against the logframe for PPA holders and assesses results through weighting the DAC evaluation criteria⁴⁵. A 'traffic lights' system then gives an overall assessment of the performance of the organisation which can affect the volume of the next tranche of funds. Sida will score framework organisations against standard indicators (currently being developed) and those that score poorly may have subsequent funding reduced until problems are rectified.

43 There is no core funding under this scheme and programmes are focused on specific results. There is no expectation that consortia funded under previous rounds will continue to receive funding in later rounds.

44 DfID admits that its focus on 'tangible outcomes' means that there is less tendency to fund advocacy and campaign work, especially at global level.

45 These categories include sub-sections, thus effectiveness includes: added value; learning; innovation; partnership approach and M&E.

A brief summary of these trends in relation to framework funding is found below:

Table 8 Framework funding trends

	AusAID	Irish Aid	Sida	Dfid
Open to other INGOs	No	No	No	Yes
Number of years	5	4	4	3
Competitive bidding	No	No	No	Yes
Due diligence checks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intervention logic required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Resource allocation model	No	Yes	No	Yes
Performance related funding	No	No	Yes	Yes
Use of standard indicators	Yes	No	Yes	No

In-country funding for Southern CSOs

Donors are funding Southern CSOs in-country through a variety of mechanisms ranging from small grant funds, strategic partnerships, via international NGOs, and increasingly through joint donor mechanisms. Donors face similar challenges about how best to support civil society when their own human resources are constrained. This, combined with a commitment to donor harmonisation, has been a factor in driving the growth of multi-donor funds for civil society. There appears to be some debate amongst donors about the pros and cons of pooled funds⁴⁶. There have been few evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of pooled funds as a cooperation modality compared to others, although individual funds have been evaluated. On the positive side, individual donors see them as an opportunity to reach more CSOs while reducing transaction costs; as a means to bring funding more directly to Southern organisations; and to increase ownership by developing them into locally owned institutions. There is some evidence that they are often not the cooperation modality favoured by Southern CSOs themselves, who express concern that they tend to favour more capable organisations. A Sida study⁴⁷ on support to civil society in Zambia found that local organisations preferred funding by individual donors. They expressed concern that, under joint funding mechanisms, there would be less space for dialogue with individual donors and that a disagreement with one donor could jeopardise support from all donors. This echoes issues raised in earlier studies⁴⁸. More research would be needed, however, to produce clearer conclusions.

An emerging debate, fueled in part by recent developments such as the Arab Spring, is also how far donor funding is capable of reaching beyond ‘traditional’ NGOs to different types of civil society actors. Norad⁴⁹ talks of the need to fund *“the organisations that you have, not the ones you wish you had”* and is looking to pilot a process of in-depth analysis of civil society at a country level to identify potential new partnerships⁵⁰.

46 Interviews.

47 Fällman, 2010 in OECD 2011, p. 30.

48 Norad. *Support Models for CSOs at Country level*. Scanteam. 2008.

49 Norad. *A need to reform Norad’s support scheme for civil society? Notes for Discussion*. February 2013.

50 Suggested pilot countries are Myanmar, Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Vietnam. Interview.

The impact of wider trends in development cooperation on civil society funding

Donors are currently taking stock on different aspects of their development cooperation in preparation for 2015 when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework will be re-assessed. Key to these discussions is the changing geography of global poverty⁵¹ characterised by a significant decrease in the number of poor countries and a concentration of the world's poor (around three quarters) in middle-income countries (MICs). It is anticipated there may be as few as 20 remaining low income countries in the foreseeable future, most of which will be classified as fragile or conflict-affected and found in sub-Saharan Africa. Many MICs will no longer require ODA resource transfers, indeed may be new donors themselves. The European Report on Development, for example, suggests that new forms of 'differentiated funding', responding to the different needs of different countries, will be more common in the future. Countries with sufficient resources to ensure their own development will no longer receive bilateral grant aid and will instead benefit from new forms of partnership⁵², including innovative cooperation modalities such as the blending of grants and loans.

The prevailing paradigm of support to civil society from the mid-1990s, focusing on the importance of strengthening Southern civil society as a pathway for broader pro-poor outcomes, is under review in a number of countries. While it is generally thought that work through CSOs in fragile and weak states will continue to be a focus, the future role of support to CSOs in MICs is more open to debate. There is increasing talk of support to a wider range of actors who can be involved in the delivery of development outcomes. Both DfID⁵³ and AusAID speaks of support to civil society as part of a more general approach that involves a range of other actors e.g. private sector and philanthropic groups, and of the application of models of social partnership or social compacts in development work. A recent publication by the World Economic Forum on the Future Role of Civil Society also argues that, "*more effective ways of tackling societal challenges are required, which by necessity will transcend traditional sector barriers*". It argues for a new role for civil society as an enabler of partnerships and trust amongst different stakeholders⁵⁴. This type of role is one that some CSOs are actively seeking⁵⁵ although others argue that there is a danger of civil society losing its independence or ceasing to support the real voice of the poor and marginalised. In contrast as strong commitment to promote an independent, diverse civil society as a public good in itself continues to feature in Nordic countries.

51 Sumner, Andy and Mallet, Richard. *The Future of Foreign Aid: Development Cooperation and the New Geography of Global Poverty*. 2012.

52 It is proposed that 17 Upper MICs and two large Lower MICs (India, Indonesia) graduate to new partnerships that are not based on bilateral aid.

53 The DfID website information on funding opportunities for Northern and Southern CSOs shows a new emphasis on availability of funds which are not exclusively for the CSO sector.

54 World Economic Forum. *The Future Role of Civil Society*. World Scenario Series. World Economic Forum in collaboration with KPMG International. 2013.

55 Green, Duncan. "From Poverty to Power – Why people in power don't do the right thing, supply, demand or collective action problem and what we do about it". January 2013. <http://www.oxfamblogs/fp2p>.

4 Findings

The evaluation findings are presented in relation to the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The contribution of Danish support to civil society to the Strategic Goals of the Civil Society Strategy is reviewed under Section 4.2 on Effectiveness. Particular attention is paid to the first three strategic goals of promoting open, vibrant debate; a representative legitimate, locally-based civil society; and capacity development, advocacy and networking. Some key issues to emerge in the evaluation with relevance to the other six strategic goals are also highlighted in this section.

4.1 Relevance

The DAC definition of relevance refers to *“the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor”*. This section reviews the relevance of Danish support to Southern Civil Society in terms of the relevance of the Civil Society Strategy itself and the relevance of the target groups and partners selected.

The relevance of the strategy

Local stakeholders – including local CSOs, international NGOs, embassy staff, and multi-donor fund managers – generally perceived Danish support to civil society to be very relevant in terms of target populations, thematic focus and the diversity of cooperation modalities. The Civil Society Strategy itself was less known, although stakeholders, when introduced to its content, generally agreed with the relevance of its analysis of the role and contribution of civil society to pro-poor outcomes. Many respondents in Danida and Danish society in particular see the strategy as having a particular relevance as a means of enshrining the importance of a strong, independent civil society as a public good and the distinctive contribution of Denmark’s development cooperation to global civil society. Interviews with Danish embassy staff revealed a more instrumental approach to civil society in which CSOs are a means to the end of reaching Danida’s programmes objectives, rather than as an end in itself. The Strategy, however, retains numerous ‘champions’ from the time of its inception and updating – in Danida, at embassy level and perhaps most of all among Danish NGOs. They all assert that the relevance of the Strategy is reflected in the central role of civil society in the current and previous Danida development cooperation strategies.

Nonetheless, few stakeholders have detailed knowledge of the Strategy and it is difficult to assess how much it has influenced Danish support to civil society more broadly. Danish NGOs tend to have a greater level of awareness of the strategy although it is not frequently referenced. Danida and embassies staff are expected to refer to Danida strategies when developing and implementing programmes, but evidence from a number of CISU⁵⁶ studies concludes that embassy staff give it relatively low priority. Reference to the Strategy was incorporated into the Aid Management Guidelines in 2011 but country studies and interviews indicate that the Strategy does not feature prominently in embassy thinking and programming.

56 CISU Synthesis Report on Bolivia/Nepal/Tanzania 2009. CISU 2009.

The country studies found that local CSOs affirmed the continuing relevance to the local context of the first three strategic goals of the strategy – vibrant, open debate; independent, locally based civil society; and the importance of capacity development, advocacy and networking. The first two of these were considered to be particularly relevant to the objectives of governance, democracy and human rights programmes in both Uganda and Nepal.

The relevance of the intervention logic

Both country studies also illustrate a weakness in the implicit intervention logic of the Strategy which potentially undermines its broader relevance. Their evidence indicates that Danida support contributes to a more representative, vocal civil society in both countries, despite a less than conducive operating environment for CSOs. However, the intervention logic of the Strategy is implicitly based on the assumption of a state which is capable and willing to respond the needs of its citizens. In other words, that increased demand via an independent, representative civil society results in a government more responsive and accountable to the needs of poor and vulnerable people. In the case of Nepal there is some evidence that the assumption was valid at a local level in a context where resources had been made available to local government through the LGCDP to meet demand. However, country studies report that civil society gains at local or district level in both contexts have, in general, not yet been reflected by pro-poor policy and practice changes at the national level.

Some respondents also question whether the intervention logic adequately addresses the diverse, changing nature of civil society activism. The emergence of new civic actors and forms of organising independent of traditional civil society organisations⁵⁷ might imply new explanations of how change happens that are hard to capture in static intervention models. This is not to say that the intervention logic does not retain some relevance. The value of an intervention logic or theory of change is that it provides a framework to plan change pathways in different contexts, and review what changes can or cannot be directly influenced and what assumptions are involved. If, as is likely, Danida increasingly works in low-income countries classified as fragile or conflict-affected, it is all the more relevant to have an explicit theory of change or intervention logic at country level that is reviewed on a regular basis.

The challenge of fragility

Danida continues to focus much of its support to civil society in countries with a high concentration of poverty and vulnerability and governments with limited capacity to respond to the needs of the poor and marginalised people. An assumption of responsive government in fragile contexts is highly tenuous. Danida, for example, supports the strengthening of civil society in Somalia through a variety of modalities including Danish NGOs and joint donor funds. The Danida programme in Somalia illustrates how support to civil society must be balanced with state-building in the absence of stable, responsive government and state apparatus. This is not to downplay the role of civil society in fragile contexts. On the contrary, as one Danish NGO expressed it, supporting civil society is more important in a fragile context since civil society is the primary actor in people's lives – in providing services or security and pressing for the emergence of a legitimate, representative state.

57 PRIA, INTRAC, et al. *Civil Society @ Crossroads*. PRIA. and Biekart, K. and Fowler, A. 2012, "A civic agency perspective on change", *Development*, Vol. 55, No. 2, 2012. pp. 181-189.

The country studies and the increasing focus on work with fragile states illustrate the necessary limitations of a stand-alone Civil Society Strategy. Danida will be increasingly working in contexts where support to civil society e.g. on the demand side, must be accompanied with support to government on the supply side, or indeed support to state building. The governance ‘deficit’ and lack of probity and integrity in public life in some developing countries⁵⁸ has a further implication for the relevance of the strategy: Service delivery may play a more important role in these contexts than is currently acknowledged in the Strategy e.g. Danish support to provide basic services to Somali refugees in Kenya, highlights the important transitional role that service delivery can play in ‘fragile’ contexts.

Relevance of target groups and partners selected

The right systems in place

The diversity of cooperation modalities available to Danida enable it to target and work with, directly or indirectly, a diverse range of civil society actors. Both country studies describe a range of civil society actors being supported by different modalities at different levels – e.g. in Uganda, Danida supports district networks up to the national-level NGO Forum.

However, each cooperation modality has different mechanisms to try to ensure it is targeting the right populations and partners in line with programme objectives. The relevance of programme objectives in turn is dependent on the quality of contextual analysis. The relevance of programme objectives and partners across modalities is difficult to gauge. Previous reviews⁵⁹ have pointed to the absence of a dynamic civil society analysis at embassy level. This is particularly important if Danida intends to identify and support ‘drivers for change’, for example, in relation to its work on governance, democracy and human rights. Danish Framework NGOs were able to identify strategies and tools for targeting poor and marginalised populations in association with their country programmes. In the case of bi- or multi-donor funds that operate through a call for proposals the relevance of the targeting is dependent on their programme objectives and internal criteria and procedures. The choice of partner, for example, depends on whether the objective is to maximise impact or to nurture diversity and capacity in civil society.

Stronger, fewer partnerships

The evaluation noted a tendency across modalities to seek stronger, fewer partnerships with CSOs. Two factors were most frequently mentioned as influencing this trend – an increasing focus on CSO partners capable of meeting the demands of a results-based development agenda, and pressure to reduce transaction costs and fiduciary risk. This is reflected in the growing popularity of the concept of strategic partnerships in Danida i.e. flexible, multi-year funding and capacity development support to comparatively small number of CSO partners.

58 See <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results>.

59 See, for example, Danida. 2009. *Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*. Danida, and CISU. 2009. *CISU Summary Report on Bolivia/Nepal/Tanzania*.

The strategic partnership model, based originally on larger Danish NGO framework agreements is a strong part of HUGGO/HUGOU experience in Uganda and Nepal; and is also found elsewhere in Danida although the concept is not always interpreted in exactly the same way. Embassy staff interviewed referred to a small number of strategic partners as being central to their programming. The concept has also been adopted as an important modality in the multi-donor initiative, the DGF in Uganda. The Uganda country study suggests that the choice of DGF's CSO partners was determined by the principle of effectiveness i.e. which organisations were likely to deliver results for the programme. These are a mix of CSOs with previous experience of Danida funding; CSOs with established expertise in a particular area; and CSOs that have demonstrated new and innovative ideas and tools. The principle of effectiveness works to reduce risk in choice of partnership and to select partners who have a track record and/or are able to comply with due diligence standards. Section 3.3 reviewed how other donors are increasingly applying organisational assessments and due diligence checks as a condition of Framework agreements with domestic NGOs. Similar processes feature, for example, in the operation of the DGF.

The popularity of strategic partnerships fits the criterion of relevance inasmuch as it specifically seeks to identify and assess CSO partners most capable of delivering programme objectives and benefits to target populations. It is also very relevant to the CSO partners involved as it meets their own priorities i.e. long term flexible funding, with low transaction costs, and the 'added value' of capacity development support. However, it does reinforce the evidence from the country studies, reviews and interviews with embassy staff that Danida support is increasingly concentrated on fewer more capable CSO partners⁶⁰.

Reaching out to smaller NGOs

This concentration of Danida support is counterbalanced by funding windows that are specifically targeted at smaller CSOs such as the RDIF in Nepal and IDF in Uganda. Danida has also provided support to civil society at district level in association with decentralisation processes in both countries. In Uganda, for example, it was instrumental in creating the National District Networks Support Programme. This is now renamed the Support Programme for Advocacy Networks and, with DGF support, supports 25 district networks that bring together small local organisations to hold local government accountable. The CHF, based in Nairobi, provides an interesting example of a Danida-supported multi-donor fund providing short-term support to an impressive range of indigenous CSOs across Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland.

Danish support to the pooled fund schemes in Denmark, such as CISU, also provides links between smaller-scale CSOs in Denmark and developing countries. These links have traditionally been project-based but also exemplify the 'people-to-people' approach at the heart of strengthening North/South civil society links as means of promoting global understanding, solidarity and 'citizenship'. The evaluation found numerous positive references to such people-to-people links⁶¹.

60 *CISU Synthesis Report on Bolivia/Nepal/Tanzania 2009*. CISU. 2009.

61 See section below on networking.

The relevance of Danish NGOs

Traditionally, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) with a local presence, knowledge and expertise have been skilled at identifying poor and marginalised target populations and relevant local partners to support them. It was not possible to make any definitive conclusion about the relevance of diverse NGO partner ‘portfolios’. The Uganda country study concluded that Danish support to civil society through different cooperation modalities was broadly representative in terms of geography, ethnicity and religion, and Danish NGOs such as ADRA and DanChurchAid were found to target their support to regions with very weak local organisations e.g. Karamoja.

There is evidence, however, of the relevance of INGOs in specific contexts. For example, Danida support is channelled to the Danish Refugee Council, Save the Children and others to work with CSOs in Somalia. Both provide an example of the role of INGOs as ‘trusted intermediaries’ working effectively through local staff and using local knowledge to navigate fragile, complex situations. The Somalia evaluation⁶² identified that Danida was highly reliant on its relationship with a few Danish NGOs in the context of Somalia. This close partnership was seen as adding value in terms of flexibility, knowledge, and competency.

Other examples of Danish NGOs as ‘trusted intermediaries’ is the use of a Danish NGO to provide monitoring and support to Danida strategic partners in country and as a source of local knowledge and intelligence. However, there is evidence of a lessening of strategic dialogue between Danish NGOs and embassies. A contributory factor to this may be the number of Danish framework organisations that are members of global con/federations (e.g. ActionAid Denmark, Save the Children, Danish Red Cross). In these cases the immediate ‘partner’ of the framework organisation is the national affiliate or member of the confederation in the developing country and therefore the strength of relationship with the Danish embassy can be diminished. In some cases, e.g. the Danish Red Cross, framework funding can be used to strengthen the national affiliate.

Non-traditional actors

In light of the changing, complex environments in which Danida works, it would be prudent for Danida to be wary of its support to civil society becoming too ‘institutionalised’ – supporting today’s civil society actors on the basis of yesterday’s performance rather than investing in tomorrow’s drivers for change. This raises the issue of how Danida can be flexible enough to support emerging new civic actors. A recent joint donor review⁶³ in three countries on civil society engagement with policy dialogue pointed to the increasingly diverse nature of civil society in the South, and the emergence of ‘non-traditional’ civil or social actors. It draws attention to the impact of the rapid spread of communication technologies on popular mobilisation and argues that this suggests that donor support for civil society advocacy should evolve from support to traditional CSO actors to support that facilitates citizen and community activism. It suggests that if donors wish to support such emerging movements for change in civil society they will need to explore new cooperation modalities to support a range of organisations and movements that may not be registered but which contributes importantly to policy dialogue.

62 *Evaluation of the Danish Engagement in and around Somalia 2006-10*. Danida. May 2011.

63 ITAD and COWI. November 2012. *Joint Evaluation of Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue*. Danida.

4.2 Effectiveness

This section will review the degree to which Danish support to civil society has contributed to achieving, at different levels, the key strategic goals of the strategy.

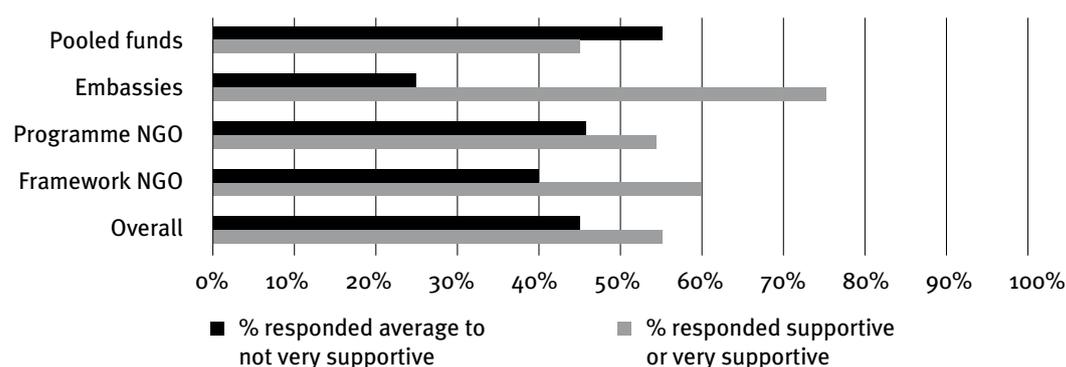
Strategic Goal 1:

Promotion of open, vibrant debate.

Danida's promotion of open, vibrant debate can be considered at three levels – international; national (Denmark); and in developing countries. It is interesting to note that the percentage of Southern CSOs who rated Danish support to this strategic goal supportive or very supportive was lower (55%) than SG 2 (65%) and SG 3 (66%). However, embassy support was rated particularly highly in relation to other modalities with Pooled Funds scoring lowly (see Figure 4). The exceptional high rating for embassy support, which is repeated in the other two strategic goals, reflects a bias in the sample to those countries with a history of the HUGGO/HUGOU facility.

Figure 2 Southern CSO perceptions of Danish support to open, vibrant debate

To what extent has Danish support contributed to an open and vibrant debate on poverty reduction?



Source: INTRAC Survey of Southern CSOs, January 2012.

“The Danish support has improved the relationship between the state and the Church and therefore it opened up opportunities for the Church and state to discuss issues affecting the poor. Initially the state was very sceptical of the Church, but the Danish support created a situation where these parties realised they mutually exist and now debate issues without suspicion”⁶⁴.

The Strategy provides limited definition of what constitutes vibrant debate, making reference to three dimensions of change in association with the goal: national and international debate on poverty reduction; a better framework for civil society's participation and work in developing countries; and civil society involvement in the further development of the Paris Declaration. This is perhaps the most difficult goal to monitor since data tends to be partial and anecdotal. The 2009 Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report included a specific section on vibrant and open debate which later reports do not. The report recorded the difficulties in outlining trends in relation to this area since *“there were few descriptions of the organisations' initiatives and interventions to promote a vibrant and open debate in developing countries considering that this is one of the strategic*

64 Survey respondent comment (Programme NGO partner).

goals in the *Civil Society Strategy*⁶⁵. In a similar vein, the 2011 report, commenting on civil society operating space, notes that although Danish organisations and their partners “are attentive to developments in framework conditions for civil society ... only a few cases cite how partners have tried to exert influence on the framework conditions”⁶⁶.

International debate

There is evidence of Danish support in ensuring the involvement of civil society in the implementation and further development of the Paris Declaration. For example, interviewees commented on Danida playing an open, inclusive and supportive role vis-à-vis civil society involvement and participation in Busan. Danida has also funded two global CSO coalitions: Civil Society Voices for BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. Better Aid focused on development effectiveness in aid reform and Open Forum focused on CSO development effectiveness. A recent evaluation⁶⁷ of these two programmes found that they made very relevant contributions to the aid and development effectiveness debate at the global level.

There are other examples of Danida support for civil society engagement with international debates – for example on climate change. Danish NGOs referred to good access for civil society at COP 15 in Copenhagen and more than usual flexibility to hold the government to account and push for ambitious outcomes. CSO access has been more limited⁶⁸ recently at COP 17. Favourable comments were also made on efforts to involve CSOs in the run up to, and during, the Rio+20 process.

Danida has also been a key funder of the *Southern Voices* project which aims to strengthen the voice of people most vulnerable to climate change in international climate negotiations and in domestic climate policies. More than 20 climate networks and their member organisations have contributed their experiences of advocacy on climate change in a report, including over 70 case studies from a wide range of countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. A review⁶⁹ of the first year of the programme found that, for example:

- CSOs and networks had increased their capacity for carrying out advocacy and monitoring activities and for raising public awareness at national, regional and international levels;
- More than 20 participating networks have been able to influence different national policies and engage in active dialogue with their governments on climate change policies.

Denmark also hosted the 23rd Session of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly in May 2012 at which several CSOs arranged side events and debates on, for example, smallholder farming; Rio+20; the European Development Fund; biofuels and policy coherence for development; food speculation, price volatility and food security; global health and R&D.

65 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida. 2009, p. 12.

66 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2011, p. 7.

67 Christie, Angela, Jean-Michel Rousseau, Jonas Norén, with Ian Christoplos and Jessica Rothman. *Evaluation of the BetterAid and Open Forum Programmes*, Indevlop AB for Sida. December 2012.

68 See Civicus. *The State of Civil Society 2011*. CIVICUS. 2012.

69 *Review of the first phase of the Southern Voices programme 2011-13*. INKA Consult. April 2012.

Debate in Denmark

Recent polling in Denmark suggests that the relatively high level of support for aid is fragile since there is a general lack of confidence that aid works. A study done for the *World's Best News* suggests that support for development has dropped amongst Danes in recent years. Polling showed that 75% of Danes answered the question 'To what extent do you think that there is progress with regard to eliminating global poverty?' with the answers: "not at all" and "to a lesser extent". 80% answered the question 'Do you think that one day, we will succeed in combating the majority of the world's hunger, poverty and need?' with "no"⁷⁰. Further research conducted for Danida⁷¹ found that while there is strong support for the development aid, this has declined in 2011. The polling suggested that the deeper the knowledge about development that segments of the public have, the more likely they are to support development aid, suggesting that a vibrant debate in Denmark would stimulate such support.

One of the key public awareness initiatives that Danida has supported in recent years is the *World's Best News*, a Danish campaign formed by the UN, Danida and more than 80 Danish aid organisations. The campaign, which started in 2010, sought to highlight MDG progress, set standards for a new discourse and ultimately seeks to change the view of Danes on development. It claims to have "moved the needle" on the awareness of Danes on these issues and is one of the few such initiatives that engages the private sector.

Danida has also recently supported the initiative of Danish state broadcaster DR to promote debate about international development and poverty in the recent series of TV programmes and debates called *Why Poverty?* The initiative is widely appreciated although it is a little early to see any evidence of impact.

There was concern amongst CSOs that the redirection of development education funds from NGOs by Danida in 2006 to shore up public support for aid might dilute a rights-based approach to public communications. Some CSO interviewees also said that said that the challenge of raising counterpart funding has diverted resources and energy from advocacy to public communications for fundraising.

There is evidence also of an open and vibrant debate, in the media and in other public fora, between Danish CSOs and the government. CSOs pointed out the contribution that these debates made to people's knowledge, awareness, understanding of, and engagement with, international development issues. It was not entirely clear to most interviewees, however, whether work on policy coherence could be financially supported from the funding that CSOs get from Danida, or indeed whether it is a healthy thing for an independent civil society to rely too heavily on government funding.

The campaigning undertaken by Danish CSOs is also an area which can support, foster, and be part of a vibrant debate. One interviewee said that it was not always appreciated by government that campaigning and advocacy needs "points of difference" in order to make a debate vibrant and open. While campaigning work in Denmark was described as "fragmented" and "ad hoc" it is seen to have become more professional and coordinated in recent years. However, there are different interpretations among Danish NGOs of what kind of open, vibrant debate conforms to the Danida guidance and parameters surrounding the 2% of framework funding allocated on public awareness in Denmark.

70 Ravn-Pedersen, Thomas, (Head of Secretariat NGO FORUM, Denmark). 2012. *Verdens Bedste Nyheder Presentation August 28th, 2012*. United Nations Association of Norway.

71 Epinion. 2011. *Danish Attitudes to and Knowledge of Development*. Danida.

Debate in developing countries

“The Danish support has improved the relationship between the state and the Church and therefore it opened up opportunities for the Church and state to discuss issues affecting the poor. Initially the state was very sceptical of the Church, but the Danish support created a situation where these parties realised they mutually exist and now debate issues without suspicion”⁷².

The recent Joint Donor Evaluation⁷³ on CSO engagement in policy dialogue concluded that pressures to scale-up disbursements, reduce transaction costs and produce short-term development results have affected the donors’ financing available for CSOs policy work. However, both country studies provided examples of Danish support to civil society engagement in policy debate. Danish support to CSOs in Nepal has significantly increased space for public debate and citizen participation in local governance, particularly at district level. It has brought to the fore the voice of disadvantaged groups at the micro level, who have become more active in influencing decision-making processes that affect their lives. The inclusion and rights of marginalised groups has been a central theme in Danish Support to civil society contributing, for example, to stronger mobilisation and activism among women at community level. The country study notes a growing body of trained local activists and human rights defenders making their presence known to both rights-holders and duty-bearers, and of CSO partners using the media effectively to promote civic engagement, human rights and peace-building. Overall, stakeholders confirmed that CSO work at micro and meso levels remains highly relevant to strengthening democratic governance and combating poverty

The Nepal country study could not draw firm conclusions on the relative effectiveness of different cooperation modalities to this increase in citizen engagement in public debate. It is likely that different forms of support had varying impact depending on geography and type of disadvantaged group. There was little evidence, however, of Danish support promoting links between the micro/meso level and the macro-level debates – with the exception of the land rights movement. This is partly due the political impasse at national following the dissolution of the legislature in May 2012 by the Supreme Court.

The Uganda country study reported CSO representatives crediting Denmark with a distinctive role among the donor community in supporting civil society advocacy on good governance and human rights while respecting the importance of local ownership. The role of Danida HUGGO in supporting – financially and non-financially – CSO advocacy was singled out by a number of interviewees in the country study. There was also an expectation that the Danish embassy was supportive of an enabling environment for civil society in its dialogue with Ugandan Government on governance issues, though this cannot be corroborated.

The study also reported local CSOs acknowledging the support of Danish NGOs in advocating for space for CSOs. ActionAid Uganda, for example, has actively lobbied for the promotion of the NGO policy and for its translation into a more positive NGO law. In general, Danish NGOs contributed to public debates on the issues on which they have specialised expertise – e.g. Save the Children on child rights, CARE on natural resource management, and ActionAid on governance issues, especially on local government

72 Survey respondent, Pooled Fund partner.

73 ITAD and COWI. *Joint Evaluation of Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue*. Danida. November 2012.

accountability. ActionAid, for example, was instrumental in the creation of Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda.

The 2011 Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report provides a number of illustrations of activities in support to open, vibrant debate but these tended to be general descriptions of local awareness-raising activities. The report noted that examples of outcomes were rare.

The enabling environment for open, vibrant debate

Danida supports World Alliance for Citizen Participation's (CIVICUS) work on the Civil Society Index. CIVICUS's latest State of Civil Society report, which draws heavily on primary data from the Civil Society Index, suggests that the political and legal conditions for civil society to flourish are generally deteriorating across the world although civil society activism continues to grow. This general trend has been identified in a number of sources⁷⁴. The country studies identified an increase in a civil society 'voice' in both countries despite legal and regulatory frameworks that enable the governments to close down the space for open and vibrant debate. This is clearly a sensitive area. It is clear that INGOs in certain circumstances find it difficult to work directly on civil society space, especially as they are prone to getting singled out as agents of foreign agendas, as witnessed for example in Ethiopia⁷⁵. Danish NGOs sometimes look to embassies to influence governments to ensure an enabling framework for civil society. A number of interviewees felt that the embassies' staff could be more active and outspoken in this regard. The Joint Donor Evaluation⁷⁶ suggested that although donors had made some efforts to encourage enabling environments (particularly by providing support to oversight bodies) they are sometimes too cautious in challenging diminishing freedoms. CSOs are reported to be critical of donors for not speaking out on behalf of civil society in such circumstances and, conversely, donors criticised CSOs for not being outspoken enough in *invited spaces*. A thematic evaluation of Danish NGOs⁷⁷ conducted in 2009 made a similar point that they had not challenged power relations between state and citizens, describing Danish NGOs and partners as adopting a more collaborative than confrontational approach, operating in invited space. This has to be balanced by a recognition that discrete lobbying of embassies may not be known to civil society and, indeed, open criticism may be counterproductive in some contexts.

Strategic Goal 2:

A representative, legitimate and locally based civil society

The Civil Society Strategy identifies Danida support under this goal being directed towards the application of Paris declaration principles by CSOs; standards of good governance and inclusivity in CSOs; and the increased diversity of CSOs to ensure that needs of different groups are addressed.

Southern CSO correspondents rated support from Danish embassies and Programme NGOs (which includes CSO pooled funds in Denmark for the purposes of the survey) to contribute most to building a representative, legitimate, locally-based civil society.

74 See for example, Sida. 2011. *CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment: A review of the Evidence* p. 10; and Danida. 2010. *Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida.

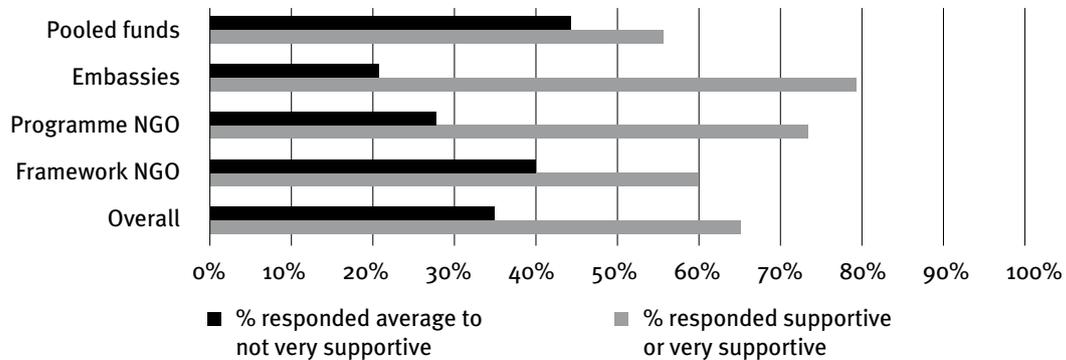
75 See the adoption of the *Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation* in 2009.

76 ITAD and COWI. *Joint Evaluation of Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue*. Danida. November 2012.

77 Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia. Danida. 2009.

Figure 3 Southern CSOs perception of Danish support to building a representative, legitimate and locally based civil society

To what extent has Danish support contributed to building a representative, legitimate and locally based civil society?



Source: INTRAC Survey of Southern CSOs, January 2012.

The challenge of legitimacy

The growth of civil society and increase in the number of CSOs is neither a guarantor of their legitimacy nor indeed of increased diversity. CSOs in both Uganda and Nepal felt pressure to demonstrate their transparency and accountability. The Nepal country study considered that most Nepalese CSOs do not have a broad membership base; continue to have weak internal governance systems; and have poor representation of women, ethnic and marginalised social groups. A lack of transparency and accountability, and a frequently uneasy relationship with the authorities, has led to public criticism in the media.

There have been efforts by NGO networks in both countries to address the issue. The NGO Federation in Nepal regards the challenge to legitimacy in the sector as a major concern and has passed a Code of Conduct though its impact has yet to be evaluated. The NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM), developed in Uganda in 2006, aims to promote improved NGO accountability to stakeholders at all levels. The introduction of QuAM as a system of self-regulation is positively viewed by stakeholders as a necessary exercise in the context of increasing corruption, particularly in the public sector. It is adopted by both major NGO networks but the take up by local CSOs is reported as low.

Danish support to the Paris Declaration principles

There is evidence from both country studies that Danish support has made efforts to address the challenge of legitimacy and help CSOs improve their transparency and accountability.

The Nepal country study found the promotion of accountability and legitimacy to be a key aspect of the Danish support to civil society. The HRGGP, for example, has taken legitimacy and representativeness and diversity into account when selecting strategic partners. Most of the 13 Strategic Partner CSOs are membership-based and most have solid ties with the grassroots level; their constituencies represent most of the different types of marginalised groups of Nepal; and women make up a significant proportion within their governance structures. HUGOU has also sought to increase the diversity of CSO govern-

ance structures through the inclusion of women and people from marginalised groups in governing boards.

The RDIF is a multi-donor fund designed as a rapid, flexible means to promote human rights and democracy in the fast changing post-conflict situation of Nepal. A 2012 evaluation⁷⁸ found RDIF effective in helping marginalised and excluded communities to organise to access public services and resources, and to have contributed to reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among families affected by Nepal's conflict. It reported it had increased awareness of rights-holders and duty-bearers about democratic processes, human rights and the importance of inclusion; and created space for political decision-makers and CSOs to constructively engage with each other. A local-level focus facilitated a sense of local ownership by the communities.

However, RDIF was less successful in linking local-level activism with national-level issues; in promoting inclusion within political parties; and tended to have ambitious objectives beyond the reach of short-term projects. The evaluation also highlighted the challenge to the sustainability of the many community-based structures supported by the RDIF, although village-level human rights protection groups may be sustainable since they have strong local ownership.

Ugandan CSOs also recognised that Danish support through, for example, DGF, CSF and Danish NGOs had helped them to improve their governance structures including elected, representative boards; separation of roles; and financial management systems. As a result, stakeholders in Uganda perceived an improvement in the representativeness and legitimacy of CSOs.

Danish NGOs and CSOs provide some interesting examples of support to strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of partners. For example:

- ActionAid and CARE in Nepal have undertaken social auditing activities at different levels.
- A number of NGOs e.g. ActionAid and DanChurchAid have governance or active citizenship programmes that seek to empower women and socially marginalised groups; and support citizen action and dialogue with government.
- The Danish Federation of Trade Unions and the Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants (LO-FTF) Council has supported its trade union movement partner in Zanzibar in reviewing its statutes and strengthening its internal democracy through regular and transparent elections at all levels⁷⁹.
- The National Association for People with Learning Disability has increased the representativeness of local Uganda parental organisations by doubling the number of local chapters and preparing statutes to cover rules for elections, mandate and roles and responsibilities⁸⁰.

78 Enabling States Programme. "Rights, Democracy and Inclusion Fund (RDIF) Cluster Evaluation", January 2012.

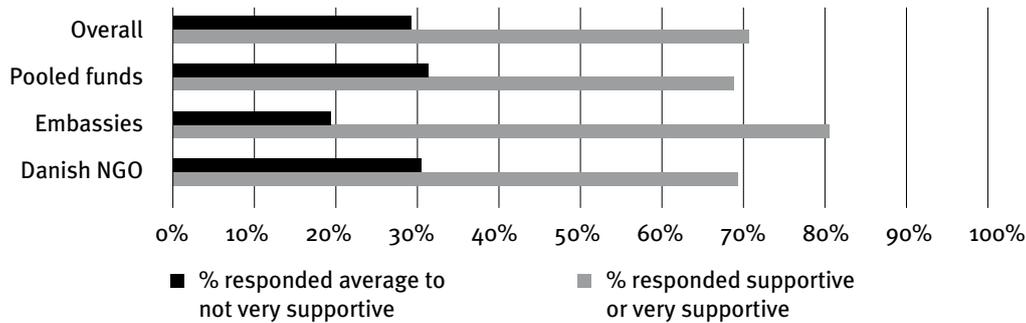
79 Danida. *Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida. 2010, p. 39.

80 Ibid.

Local CSOs, both in the survey results and country studies, generally considered Danish support through different modalities to enhance a sense of local ownership, as illustrated below:

Figure 4 Support to leadership and ownership by Southern CSOs

To what extent does this funding support leadership and ownership of development activities by Southern CSOs?



Source: INTRAC Survey of Southern CSOs, January 2012.

However, qualitative comments from the survey revealed a mixed picture as illustrated below.

“[We] feel total leadership and ownership of the projects we are carrying out because all the activities are carried out by us. We select the projects; we plan and select the areas of operation, the end beneficiaries and the project life; and we suggest changes. The funding has also enhanced the capacity building of personnel at all levels e.g. beneficiaries and implementers. This empowerment has instilled more confidence in the people to feel they can go on”⁸¹.

“Our funded development activities are always aligned to goals and objectives of Danish funding agencies. Therefore, we don’t have control over the ultimate results from our development interventions because outcomes and impact results are pre-determined by the Danish NGOs”⁸².

The strategic partnership model in both Uganda and Nepal was seen to enhance local ownership by providing multi-annual core funding to the strategic programmes of partners and helping build their internal governance systems. Likewise Ugandan CSO representatives claimed that they increasingly defined their own agendas instead of being implementers of government, INGO or donor programmes.

Project-based support – whether provided by a pooled fund or NGO – was not seen as equally conducive to promote local ownership if project activities are driven by the donors. In this context, the country studies and survey revealed some CSO partners to be critical of the perceived ‘conditionality’ of Danish NGO funding whose focus was on their own programme priorities rather than those of the local partner. Some Danish NGOs have countered this criticism by pointing out that results-based reporting required them to link funding to programme outcomes or outputs.

81 Survey respondent, Programme NGO partner.

82 Survey respondent, Framework NGO partner.

An interesting development in Uganda in recent years has been the attempts to ‘indigenise’ support mechanisms. IDF, for example, is managed by Ugandans and has a majority of Ugandans on the Board. Although donors are represented on the Board they are reported to keep a low profile. The process of indigenisation is also to be found among NGOs. The Danish NGO Mellemløst Samvirke (MS) closed its office in Uganda in 2010, for example, following affiliation to ActionAid International, and ActionAid Uganda is a Ugandan organisation with a Ugandan board and management. This trend was seen by some as strengthening local ownership and locally based civil society.

In relation to harmonisation, the affiliation of some Danish NGOs to global NGO confederations can be seen as an expression of harmonisation, although the 2011 Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report questioned the efficiency gains for Southern partners⁸³. There are also some examples of harmonisation efforts among other Danish NGOs and CSOs. For example, DPOD convened meeting of donor organisations supporting the disability movement in Rwanda to improve coordination, joint planning, monitoring and reporting which led to basket funding with one lead organisation⁸⁴. The development of the strategic partnership model in Nepal is also an example of good intent to promote donor harmonisation through a common management mechanism and by aligning donor support with the CSO systems and procedures.

The challenge of balancing effectiveness and diversity

The description of this goal in the Strategy highlights a potential tension between the principles of effectiveness and diversity in Danida support to civil society. While continuing to target smaller CSOs both in Denmark and developing countries, the evaluation has noted the tendency for Danida and Danish NGOs to fund fewer partners, in part as result of a commitment to increased effectiveness. CISU⁸⁵ has noted that the trend also for Danida to prioritise advocacy and governance programmes could work against the building of a broad-based civil society since it limits the number of eligible CSOs with the requisite capacity. It noted a growing gap in some countries e.g. Tanzania, between national NGOs and small, rural CSOs/community based organisations and that access to policy spaces is still restricted to the ‘capable few’. It also observed that an emphasis on advocacy work might also have the unintended consequence that local CSOs have less opportunity to build their capacity and legitimacy with their own communities through grass-roots development work.

Strategic Goal 3:

Capacity development, advocacy and networking

This strategic goal focuses on Danida support for the capacity development of Southern CSOs, their involvement in advocacy work; and their participation in national, regional and international networks. This goal identifies the pathways to change that contribute to the first two strategic goals. It is also perhaps the goal most relevant to Danish NGOs demonstrating their added value to Southern civil society.

83 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2011, p. 11.

84 *Guidelines for the Development of Policy Papers for Denmark’s Relations with Priority Countries*. Danida. 2010, p. 32.

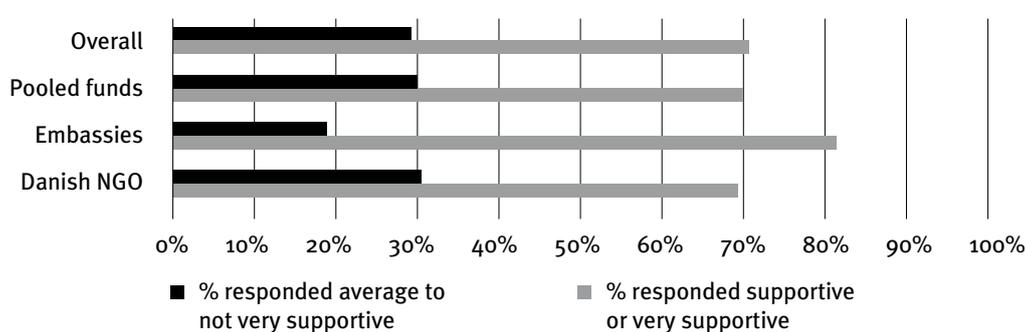
85 *CISU Synthesis Report on Bolivia/Nepal/Tanzania 2009*. CISU. 2009.

Capacity development

Embassy support to capacity development, including support through HUGGO/HUGOU, was rated higher (82%) than other modalities overall (see below) and also scored higher across all dimensions of capacity building – internal systems, leadership and governance, M&E, accountability mechanisms, technical skills, organisational sustainability. The exception was learning and sharing with peers where pooled funds scored highest. This is mostly likely a reflection of the bias in the survey due to the high number of respondents from Uganda and Nepal. Support to organisational sustainability scores lowest among dimensions of capacity development.

Figure 5 Southern CSO perceptions of Danish support to capacity building

To what extent has Danish funding supported your organisation to build its capacity?



Source: INTRAC Survey of Southern CSOs, January 2012.

“Before the capacity building, the board and management was in constant conflict because of lack of clear roles. Through capacity building these roles have been clearly defined. Business was based on mutual understanding and trust. Now business is carried out based on signed contracts, signed written agreements. Programmes are planned and budgeted for and budget outlines are followed. Our role in advocacy for rights and services from the local and national government has been aroused”⁸⁶.

Both country studies confirmed that capacity development had been an important component of the combined Danish support. CSOs reported a high level of satisfaction with the support provided, though it has not been possible to assess the quality of the support provided.

The CSO strategic partners of Danida in Nepal recorded the highest level of satisfaction with the support offered, highlighting the on-going dialogue that they have enjoyed with Danida HUGOU, the respectful relationship and the responsiveness to their needs. Similarly, CSO partners valued highly the contribution of Danida HUGGO/DGF to their capacity development, not only through funding but through their engagement and advice e.g. on strategies and plans. This was seen as a constructive and positive contribution, and not as a wish to unduly influence the content of plans. Smaller CSOs in Uganda acknowledged the contribution of the joint donor fund IDF to their capacity development through on-going monitoring, advice and support. The CSF also provides close monitoring and capacity development of weaker organisations.

86 Survey respondent. Programme NGO partner.

Although the capacity development efforts of Danish NGOs are not highlighted in the survey results, a 2009 thematic evaluation⁸⁷ of Danish NGOs in 2009 was more positive. It found that the ‘Danish approach’ to capacity development through partnership was much valued by partners and that all Danish NGOs had engaged comprehensively in enhancing capacities of partner organisations. This evaluation found that Danish NGOs frequently quoted the quality of partnership as a distinctive added value they offer Southern CSOs.

However, the 2010 Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report commented that Danish NGOs/CSOs vary in terms of the level of reciprocity that characterises their partnership relationships. It was also critical of the lack of reflection on how the power inequalities arising out of the funding relationship might be addressed⁸⁸. It quoted an exception in the ‘Moshi Dialogue’ the Danish Mission Council Development Department had with partners which resulted in joint partnership policy with a clear formulation of roles and rights⁸⁹. It commented also on the scarcity of confidential feedback mechanisms from partners, highlighting an exception in a web-based complaint handling system introduced for all DanChurchAid stakeholders in Asia⁹⁰.

Most Danish NGOs offer organisational support to at least some of their partners. CARE, for example, supports the organisational development of some partners through the Community Development Resource Network (CDRN) in Uganda. ActionAid Denmark has also provided people-to-people capacity development support to CSOs in Uganda through their programme of Development Workers, Inspirators (development practitioners placed as volunteers) and Advisors. In Nepal, it has sought to strengthen Nepalese NGOs internal governance and accountability through social audits, community score card and REFLECT processes.

Some Danish NGOs also offer formal training in their specialised area of competence. ActionAid Denmark, for example, has provided training on governance-related topics in both Uganda and through its Global Platform in Nepal. In the latter case, its materials on governance have been ‘scaled up’ and used throughout Nepal at district and village level through the nationwide LGCDP programme.

It has not been possible to conduct a more detailed comparative analysis of the capacity development support offered by Danish NGOs/CSOs. This would be assisted by Danish NGOs continuing to improve the monitoring and reporting of capacity development activities and outcomes. The thematic evaluation⁹¹ recommended that Danish NGOs should be more systematic in documenting outcomes of capacity development efforts. The most recent Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report⁹² continues to develop this point, identifying capacity development as weak spot in its reporting. The report points out that

87 *Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*. Danida. 2009.

88 Danida. *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida. 2010, p. 11.

89 *Ibid.* p. 37.

90 *Ibid.* p. 36.

91 *Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*. Danida. 2009.

92 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida. 2011, p. 13.

4 FINDINGS

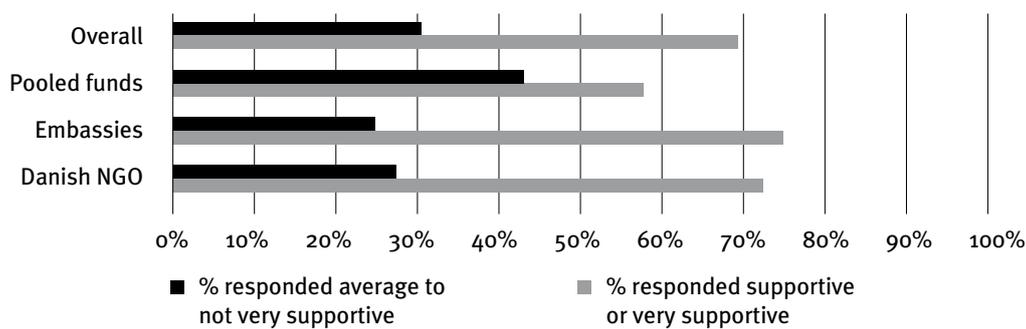
capacity development for Danish NGOs tend to be restricted to training and workshops and that no evidence was provided of more innovative approaches. It also commented that the capacity development of partners tends to focus on programme/project management tools i.e. capacity to manage resources rather than, for example, advocacy tools i.e. capacity to influence policy and practice.

Advocacy

On average 69% of respondents thought Danish support to advocacy supportive or very supportive. Pooled funds scored lowest at 57%, as illustrated below.

Figure 6 Southern CSO perception of Danish support to advocacy

To what extent has Danish funding supported your organisation's capacity to engage in advocacy and influence policy and practice?



Source: INTRAC Survey of Southern CSOs, January 2012.

Southern CSOs felt they had received most support to raise awareness of issues but also rated Danida support highly in increasing their support to action by poor and excluded groups, their engagement and influence with local government; and their own profile and influence at national level.

Most examples of advocacy/influencing success are at local or district level. The Nepal country study reported a number of examples of Danish support to CSO advocacy contributing to positive changes despite a difficult political environment (a constitution pending since 2007 and no legislature since May 2012). The acquisition of land certificates and access to land by poor families has had a significant effect on local livelihoods. The access of disadvantaged groups to earmarked resources at local level has significantly enhanced the income of poor families. Further examples include raising the minimum wage; passing legislation to fight impunity and promote ethnic inclusion; and, establishing social security schemes for single/widowed women.

Many of the examples of NGO/CSO advocacy confirm that the point that successful locally-based advocacy can take several years of support. For example:

- CARE has invested nearly ten years of support to build a coalition of CSOs working in forestry sector (Forest Watch Ghana) to hold the government and the private sector to account for sustainable forest management. Forest Watch Ghana is the only civil society voice in the forest sector acknowledged by the government.

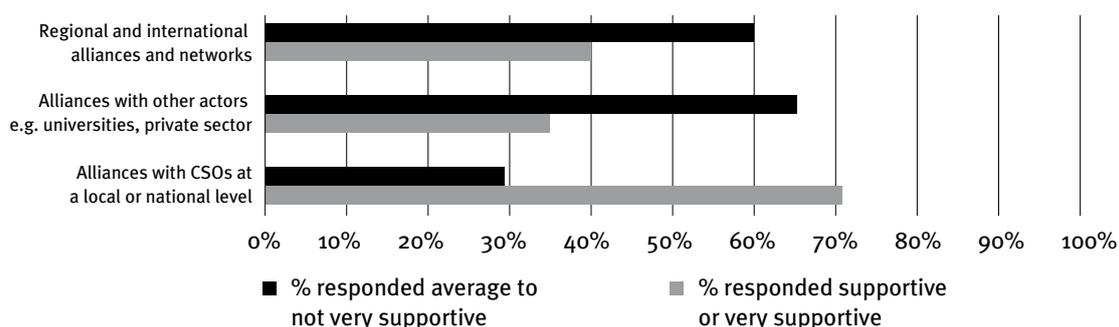
- Save the Children in Bangladesh has supported the network ‘Together Working with Children’ since 2005 in its advocacy for the legal abolition of child labour, working with the Ministry of Labour and other stakeholders. The relevant legislation was passed in 2010.
- LO-FTF Council has worked with two national trade union centres in Nepal since 2000 in their advocacy for the development of social security system. An agreement was reached in 2011 with the employers’ organisations and Labour Department on establishing a social security fund that will benefit an estimated 1-2 million workers.

Networking

On average 64% of respondents thought Danish support to networking supportive or very supportive without a significant variance between cooperation modalities. However, this referred principally to networks and alliances at a local and national level. In contrast, the majority of respondents found support to cross-sectoral alliances and international networking average to not very supportive, as illustrated below.

Figure 7 Southern CSOs’ perception of Danish support to improving networks and alliances

To what extent has Danish funding supported your organisation to build its capacity?



Source: INTRAC Survey of Southern CSOs, January 2012.

The country studies provide different evidence on Danish support to networking. The Nepal study acknowledged that networking was a feature of support provided by the RDIF and Danish NGOs. Linking Southern CSOs to regional and international networks is frequently seen as a competence of INGOs. There were some examples of Danish NGOs supporting Ugandan CSO participation in regional and international alliances and networks. ActionAid Denmark’s people-to-people approach, for example, has linked up Ugandans and Danes, especially youth, in joint policy and campaign efforts such as the ‘Tracing Project’ through which young Ugandans and youths from other countries were involved in hitchhiking trips across Denmark to foster raise awareness of development issues, including climate responsibility. Save the Children also supported the participation of a Ugandan child rights network’s participation in relevant child rights fora in Geneva.

Danish assistance from both Danish NGOs and DGF has been instrumental in the creation and strengthening of issue based national and district networks in Uganda since 2008 – e.g. the child rights network UCRNN is supported by Save the Children; the

disability movement and NUDIPO has benefitted from the support from DPOD; and the water and sanitation network UWASNET has been supported by the Danish embassy. The Danish commitment to strengthening civil society networks has now become a joint donor objective through DGF.

The networking experiences between specialised or professional organisations in Denmark and the developing countries offers an insight into 'horizontal' partnerships that offer opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of good practice. For example:

- The Danish Ornithological Society shared its own experience of setting up caretaker groups and local chapters in Denmark with its partner in Indonesia, both using a global concept developed by Birdlife International⁹³.
- The Forum for International Cooperation (FIC) and its partner in Kenya, the Africa Youth Trust, have developed targeted employment and entrepreneur courses, counselling models and strategies together on the basis of FIC's experience from similar employment initiatives in Denmark⁹⁴.

The Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP) could also be considered an example of such horizontal partnerships. The DAPP, whose budget was increased from DKK 100 million to DKK 275 million at end of 2011 with the objectives of improving dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Arab region, and supporting existing reform and democratisation processes in the Middle East and North Africa. The DAPP has country, regional and multilateral programmes and focuses on professional cooperation, exchange of knowledge and sharing of experience. Regional programmes, for example, are developed and driven entirely by NGOs/CSOs from Denmark and their partners in the region.

A report⁹⁵ published in 2011 concluded that the DAPP served to dismantle mutual prejudice and to build social capital between Denmark and the Arab world. While partners were often aware of the intrinsic power imbalance, given Danish partners' proximity to the donor, joint decision-making and the high degree of mutual professional respect served to maintain the perception of an equal partnership⁹⁶.

The 2009 thematic evaluation reported that⁹⁷ Danish NGOs had made considerable 'investments' in building up networks and in supporting partners' advocacy. However, the evaluation found little evidence that strengthened networks had an impact on promoting popular participation and democracy in the context of Ethiopia. The 2011 Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report confirmed this is a growing trend – *“there is a strong tendency towards partners joining networks and umbrella organisations in order to increase*

93 Ibid. p. 38.

94 Danida. *Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*. Danida. 2010, p. 41.

95 Danida. *Dansk-Arabiske Partnerskaber i Mellemøsten og Nordafrika – Resultater af Partnerskab for Dialog og Reform 2009-10*, Udenrigsministeriet. 2011.

96 “The professional affinities of DAPP partners allowed them to view their Arab or Danish counterparts as part of a professional ‘in-group’ as well as part of a cultural or national ‘out-group’” in DIIS Policy Brief. *Building Intercultural Bridges: Lessons from the Danish-Arab Partnership Program*. DIIS. 2010

97 *Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*. Danida. 2009.

*their capacity to exert influence*⁹⁸. The report provides a number of examples of Danish NGOs/CSOs facilitating access to international fora – e.g. DPOD and the Stuttering Association in Denmark have introduced the Nepal Stutterers Association to the International Stuttering Association which it has joined⁹⁹. The 2010 report reinforced the observation of the 2009 thematic evaluation commenting that *“further reflection on the strengths and limitations of networking would be useful”*¹⁰⁰.

Other Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 4:

Promotion of focus on rights

This goal focuses on Danida strengthening its support to CSOs adopting a rights-based approach to poverty reduction. Both country studies found an increased focus on a rights-based approach among Danish-funded CSOs although this cannot be attributed directly to Danish support. A rights-based dialogue is prominent in much of the work of Danish NGOs and Danish strategic partners whose work, particularly in Nepal, often involves support to disadvantaged communities or groups to organise and claim rights or benefits from the relevant authorities.

This strategic goal was a focus of the Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report in 2011. The report documents numerous examples of rights-oriented development work by Danish NGOs/CSOs in a wide range of sectors and involving diverse stakeholders and right holders, although the vocabulary of ‘rights holders’ and ‘duty bearers’ is not always common. The report offers illustrations of Danish NGOs such as DanChurchAid in Ethiopia and Caritas Denmark in Uganda supporting partners to work in a more rights-based manner and adopt advocacy approaches. However, it also points out a potential tension between the promotion of a rights-based approach and the emphasis in Strategic Goal 7 on the need for local ownerships of partnerships since partner organisations’ capacity for rights-based work is often very limited.

Strategic Goal 5:

Promotion of flexible and relevant interventions in fragile states and situations

This goal focuses on the cooperation with local and international CSOs in fragile situations and on creating a better transition between short-term humanitarian and long-term development assistance.

- Local and international CSOs in fragile contexts. A number of Danish NGOs play an important role as trusted intermediaries for Danish humanitarian/development assistance in fragile situations, working mostly through local staff and partners. Work in weak and fragile societies requires sensitive ways of working. Save the Children Denmark, for example, recruited and trained local staff in order to continue project activities due to a deteriorating security situation in Somalia¹⁰¹.

98 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2011, p. 9.

99 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2010, p. 37.

100 *Ibid.* p. 23.

101 *Danish Organisations’ Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2011, p. 49.

Working in fragile contexts may also present challenges when partners are limited in number and capacity. IBIS, for example, refers to ‘testing’ partnerships in these circumstances i.e. working together initially on specific project activities while assessing the opportunity for long-term partnership. There is also an example of South-South cooperation; the Danish Red Cross Youth, the Uganda Red Cross Society and the South Sudan Red Cross have been working in partnership to reach vulnerable war-affected young people in northern Uganda and South Sudan.

- The transition between humanitarian and development assistance. The Civil Society Strategy aims to “combine better with and complement efforts and activities presently financed through humanitarian assistance”¹⁰². The same intent is echoed in *The Right to a Better Life* which commits Danida to “strengthen the link between our humanitarian efforts and long-term development cooperation”¹⁰³. The evaluation confirms that there remains a need for improved coordination between Danida humanitarian and development efforts, particularly those channelled through Danish NGOs. A Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action was published within a year of the Civil Society Strategy¹⁰⁴. The strategy focuses on early recovery responses to natural and conflict-related disasters and on supporting prevention and building resilience e.g. to climate change. It makes no reference to the Civil Society Strategy although several priority areas of work e.g. disaster preparedness, strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable, and climate change advocacy fall in the ‘transition between humanitarian and development assistance’. Humanitarian and Civil Society framework agreements are currently negotiated separately (although relevant staff from different departments and embassies are invited to comment and/or participate). A systematic approach to strengthen the links between the two strategies and the activities they support might contribute to the overall effectiveness of the work supported.

Strategic Goal 6:

Promotion of civil society support in Danish bilateral and multilateral assistance

This goal relates to CSO involvement in the planning, formulation, implementation and monitoring of official bilateral and multilateral assistance. Both country studies reported that CSO support had been incorporated, for example, in bilateral sector programmes and, in the case of Uganda, that CSOs had been involved in actively monitoring sector programmes. More generally there is less evidence civil society being systematically involved in the planning and monitoring of these programmes. Neither study considered multilateral organisations to be a significant source of support to civil society.

Strategic Goal 7:

Involvement of Danish civil society organisations in development assistance

This Goal emphasises the importance of Danish NGOs promoting local ownership of CSO partnerships; prioritising on the basis of professional competencies; strengthening their results-orientation; and setting goals for popular support in Denmark.

102 *A Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries*. Danida. 2008, p. 14.

103 *The Right to a Better Life*. Danida, Danida. June 2012, p. 31.

104 *Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-15*. Danida. September 2009.

- *Promoting local ownership.* Key to building local ownership of partnerships is to involve partners in formulating and implementing the programme or project. The 2011 Cross-Cutting Monitoring Report¹⁰⁵ cites several examples of Danish NGOs/CSOs seeking to build local ownership through a variety of tools including joint workshops, joint preparation of documents and joint programme quality monitoring. However, both country studies noted that some local CSOs were critical of the quality of the partnership and dialogue they had with Danish/INGOs. They felt that this could be improved. Local CSO partners perceived their relationship with Danish NGOs to be becoming more conditional, more project-focused and less flexible than other modalities¹⁰⁶. This might be the product of several factors. Some Danish NGOs explained this reaction as a product of the increasing pressure on them to demonstrate results being displaced on to Southern partners. More positively, another NGO said that the perception that INGOs were more demanding of partners was an indication of their added value e.g. emphasis on quality assurance and accountability. Whatever the explanation, such perceptions suggest a need for Danish NGOs to re-examine the concept and practice of partnership in the context of an evolving Southern civil society and an increase in direct funding to Southern civil society.
- *Prioritise on the basis of professional competencies.* Several Danish NGOs have developed distinctive 'technical' competences which have enabled them to 'scale up' their influence within their international con/federations (see Section 3.1). It is not known how widespread this consolidation of professional competencies has been across Danish NGOs more generally. The networking of specialised or professional organisations in Denmark and the developing countries has been commented on.

Strengthening results orientation. See Strategic Goal 9.

- *Popular support in Denmark.* The communications interface of Danish NGOs with the Danish public has been reviewed under Strategic Goal 1. It has not been possible to review, for example, the public fundraising performance of Danish NGOs.

Strategic Goal 8:

Collaboration with other stakeholders

This goal focuses on promoting collaboration between civil society and private sector and the harmonisation of reporting tools and methods of funding.

- *Partnerships with private sector.* The evaluation found little evidence of civil society collaboration with the business community. The Cross-Cutting Monitoring reports, for example, contain almost no examples. There is more evidence of cross-sectoral partnerships e.g. the work of the LO-FTF Council in Ethiopia working with employers' associations, government and trade unions to conclude local agreements on benefits for HIV-infected workers from large mining corporations¹⁰⁷.

105 Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy, Danida. 2011, p. 35.

106 ITAD and COWI. *The Joint Evaluation of Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue Synthesis Report*. Danida. November 2012, p. 56 reports the same findings.

107 Danida. *Danish Organisations' Cross-Cutting Monitoring of the Implementation of the Civil Society Strategy*, Danida. 2011, p. 29.

- *Harmonisation efforts.* The trend towards multi-donor funds for civil society has led to increased harmonisation of reporting systems for partners/grantees of these funds, although there continues to be exceptions to the rule. This has been seen in the context of the more balanced assessment of multi-donor funds and strategic partnerships in Section 3.1. To some extent this process of ‘harmonising’ funding and reporting is reflected in the intended integration of framework and programme NGOs in Denmark. Some examples of NGO efforts to harmonisation efforts are described under Strategic Goal 2.

Strategic Goal 9:

Goals and results

This Goal focuses on strengthening results orientation of civil society support and commits to reporting on progress in relation to strategic goals.

- *Reporting to strategic goals.* Section 3.2 addressed the limited value of current Danida reporting to the strategic goals through the Cross-Cutting Monitoring Reports (as does its own self-assessment).
- *Strengthening a results oriented approach.* It has not been possible to extensively review the planning, monitoring and reporting systems of Danish NGOs. However, there are numerous examples¹⁰⁸ of Danish NGOs/CSOs investing in developing a results-oriented approach with partners through support to planning and strategy development – e.g. the strategy development by the Danish Association of the Blind in Mongolia and Laos; ADRA support on M&E systems in East Africa; and Danish Leprosy Mission support to participatory annual monitoring in Bangladesh. However, the observations in the 2009 thematic evaluation of Danish NGOs¹⁰⁹ regarding the need to find better ways of assessing NGO partnership relations and capacity development, and to isolate and measure the results of Danish NGOs belonging to global con/federations remain a challenge. There is also some evidence that a results-oriented approach to civil society partnerships can undermine local ownership, by increasing conditionality and upwards accountability, if not managed collaboratively.

4.3 Efficiency

An efficiency assessment requires an analysis of both cost and the value created by that investment. The evaluation was unable to make any authoritative comparison of the efficiency of different cooperation modalities. The cost-effectiveness of individual organisations e.g. NGO or pooled fund will vary considerably as each will have a different cost-base and management arrangements as well as different objectives, target groups and approaches. A plausible comparison would require an analysis of the costs and outcomes of comparable entities. However, it is possible to make some generalisations based on stakeholder interviews. These relate to the perceived cost-efficiency of a modality not on evidence of its impact or effectiveness.

108 Ibid. p. 45.

109 *Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*, Danida. 2009.

There is a trend to view multi-donor funding arrangements as cost-efficient since the administrative cost is shared by pooling resources. The pooled funds in Uganda (IDF) and Nepal (RDIF) have relatively low administrative costs (12%). However, initial transaction costs may be high and the on-going costs are dependent on the management arrangements adopted by the joint funding arrangement. For example, contracting the management of joint-funding schemes to international consultancy firms is frequently cited – e.g. in the case of CSF in Uganda – as having comparatively high management costs. The DGF in Uganda, in contrast, is managed by a programme management unit which was seen by several local stakeholders to have number of advantages including improved efficiency.

Calls for proposals can generate high transaction costs both for funders and applicants, as illustrated by the ratio of successful grantees to applicants in both RDIF and IDE. Some cooperation modalities (NGOs, some pooled funds), seek to add value to their funding through associated support in capacity development and networking. Others do not. Stakeholders in the country studies perceived, for example, that the value of a cooperation modality in terms of its results, is closely linked with the level and quality of human resources invested in its management.

Danida stakeholders tend to describe strategic partnerships, core support and framework agreements as the cost-efficient modalities. The reduced transaction costs are commonly associated with a reduction in the number of partners. In contrast, project funding is perceived as resource intensive in administrative terms – thus the tendency for the LGA to make fewer grants.

In all cases, a comparison of cost-effectiveness would require an analysis of outputs and outcomes which in turn requires robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems. The limitations of these in relation to Danida civil society funding have been discussed in Section 3.2.

It can be argued that Danida successfully leverages additional resources and potential impact through its commitment to joint donor funding initiatives. For example, in providing 10% of the resources for RDIF in Nepal it helps to leverage the other 90% from other donors. A similar argument regarding leverage can be made with regard to Danish NGOs that are members of con/federations. This is not a very convincing case for efficiency since the ‘leveraged’ resources cannot be attributed to the Danish input. A stronger case for leverage as a measure of cost-effectiveness are the examples provided in the country studies where Danish funding leverages outcomes greatly in excess of the level of investment e.g. the benefits in land, material or financial resources leveraged by Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC) and Holistic Development Service Centre in Nepal.

4.4 Sustainability

The country studies found evidence, not surprisingly perhaps, of a high level of financial dependency on foreign donors among local NGOs/CSOs. In Nepal, for example, CSOs expressed a concern that their dependency on donor funding made them open to accusations of being ‘stooges’ of a foreign agenda. Some CSOs criticised the reluctance of Danida to allow funds to be used to purchase real estate or to establish endowment funds as a means of contributing to organisational sustainability. The survey found some evidence that CSOs in receipt of pooled funds were somewhat more dependent on that source of funds than those in receipt of funding from the embassy or NGOs (half of whom reported that it accounted for less than 25% of their total income). CSOs engaged in advocacy work are likely to be even more dependent on foreign funding. The Uganda country study concluded that, if funding were withdrawn, the advocacy networks that have been established would continue in some form but their scale of activities would reduce significantly.

The strategic partnership model was sometimes quoted as a means of enabling CSOs to establish a greater level of sustainability by providing comparatively longer term funding to build the foundations of sustainability. Investment in the organisational sustainability of partners e.g. by supporting them to improve their internal and external accountability was common across modalities, but there was little evidence of specific strategies deployed to encourage financial sustainability. Country studies encountered some examples of income generating and local fund-raising activities among CSOs. These opportunities for CSOs are comparatively few but merit more investigation and support. One example of Danida contributing to the financial sustainability of a civil society partner is its support to two business ventures of the NGO Forum in Bangladesh – a Water Quality Testing Laboratory and National Resource Centre – as part of its support to the water and sanitation sector. More generally, there remains a need for a more systematic and explicit approach to addressing the challenge of sustainability.

Meanwhile, the most realistic way for local CSOs to address the issue of financial dependency, if not sustainability, is to seek funding from more than one donor. In this respect, there is some concern that a tendency to create ‘funding monopolies’ through the creation of large multi-donor funds may reduce funding opportunities for many CSOs.

5 Conclusions and Lessons

5.1 Conclusions

Impact

The relevance and effectiveness of Danish support to Southern civil society is rated highly by Southern CSOs, and other stakeholders. Danish support to civil society has contributed to more open, public debate on development issues in Denmark and priority countries. It has supported Southern CSOs to increase their representation, accountability and effectiveness despite deteriorating conditions for civil society in many countries. However, progress towards a stronger, more articulate civil society has not always resulted in demonstrable improvements in pro-poor governance and human development.

The strategy

The positive impact of Danish support for civil society in developing countries cannot be directly attributed to the operationalisation of the Civil Society Strategy document. The Strategy has not been explicitly or systematically operationalised across Danida cooperation modalities. As a reference for the design and implementation of Danida-supported programmes it may be considered to have had an indirect influence on Danish support to civil society. Danish support to civil society at country level was generally considered compatible with the Strategy but the evaluation found only limited awareness of the Strategy beyond Danish NGOs. Democracy, Governance and Human Rights programmes are particularly in line with the rights-based approach and implicit intervention logic of the Strategy. There is less obvious convergence of other sector programmes with the Strategy.

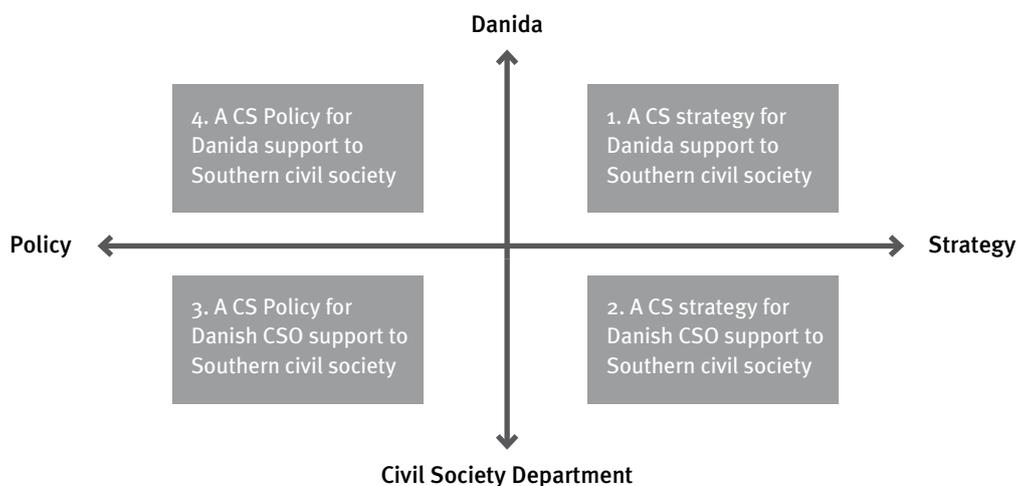
In considering, therefore, how to “*improve operationalisation and future monitoring and evaluation of Danish support to civil society development in the South*” Danida needs to reconsider the scope and status of a future strategy:

- *Scope* i.e. whether the strategy covers all Danida support to civil society or focuses on its support to the Danish civil society contribution to Southern civil society.
- *Status* i.e. whether Danida requires a *strategy*¹¹⁰ *for civil society which it can operationalise and monitor as a discrete entity and/or a policy* for support to civil society which sets out the principles, approaches and good practice in relation to the role civil society plays in contributing to Danida development objectives.

This leads to four potential scenarios for how Danida’s support to Southern civil society might be ‘formalised’ as illustrated below:

110 See <http://oxforddictionaries.com> for definitions of strategy “a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim and policy” and policy “a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation...”.

Figure 8: Future scenarios for Danida's support to Southern civil society



1) A Civil Society Strategy for Danida support to Southern civil society

This option would seek to improve the status quo by operationalising a Civil Society Strategy more effectively. It would require a major investment of time, effort and money (e.g. in planning and reporting systems), to establish the conditions required for Danida to operationalise and monitor a stand-alone Civil Society Strategy. The value of such an investment is questionable at a time when work is underway to operationalise the development cooperation strategy *The Right to a Better Life*.

2) A Civil Society Strategy for Danish CSO support to Southern civil society

This option would restrict a Danida Civil Society Strategy to the work supported directly by the Civil Society Department. This option focuses on the distinctive contribution of the Danish NGOs/CSOs to Southern civil society. Such a restricted focus would assist its operationalisation and allow an appropriate implementation and monitoring framework to be developed. However, the opportunity is lost to influence Danida support to civil society across all cooperation modalities and risks marginalising the Strategy within Danida and, in particular, the embassies.

3) A Civil Society Policy for Danish CSO support to Southern civil society

This option envisages a Policy document restricted to the work of Danish CSOs which sets out principles and good practice guidelines. This would elaborate the distinctive contribution that Danish NGOs/CSOs to Southern civil society and would provide clearer guidance on how this would be monitored and evaluated. It would not require additional systems and reporting changes. However, as above, a Policy document focusing exclusively on Danish CSOs potentially marginalises their work in Danida and de-links it from *The Right to a Better Life*.

4) *A Civil Society Policy for Danida support to Southern civil society*

This would replace the *Strategy* with a *Policy* that provides policy and practical guidance on how Danida will support civil society in Denmark and developing countries in line with *The Right to Better Life*. The Civil Society Policy would be supplementary to and focused on the new development cooperation strategy rather than a stand-alone strategy. It would have no measureable goals itself but offer guidance on how civil society contributes to the priority areas of *The Right to a Better Life*.

The OECD/DAC¹¹¹ recently published a review summarising the key lessons of DAC evaluations on partnering with civil society. The first of these is that a Civil Society Policy should spell out the objectives, goals and principles, as well as different cooperation modalities, for supporting civil society and CSOs, which then can be translated into operational guidelines. It acknowledges that CSO Policies are sometimes inconsistently applied across development cooperation and suggests that “Support for strengthening civil society should be included in the ...overarching strategic vision for development co-operation to ensure political attention and support”.

A Civil Society Policy that provides guidance for all of Danida’s support to Southern civil society, therefore, would have the advantage of mainstreaming support to civil society in the planning, monitoring and reporting of Denmark’s development cooperation strategy, and encourage broader ownership of the Policy. A stand-alone Civil Society Strategy that would enable Danida to operationalise, monitor and evaluate all its support to civil society in parallel to *The Right to a Better Life* is impractical in current circumstances. A Civil Society Strategy Policy focusing on the work of Danish NGOs/CSOs risks marginalisation and a weakening the status of work with civil society across Danida as a whole.

Relevance

Southern stakeholders continue to find the overall analysis of the Civil Society Strategy relevant to developing countries. For example, the two principal strategic goals – an independent, representative civil society and open, vibrant debate on poverty reduction – are seen as highly relevant to the achievement of pro-poor development outcomes. Similarly, the focus on capacity development, advocacy and networking was affirmed as an appropriate way in which Danida support can help CSOs contribute to the achievement of the strategic goals. Most Southern CSOs surveyed considered Danish support to have contributed significantly to these strategic goals in their country.

However, there is no obvious correlation between perceived progress in strengthening civil society and demonstrable advances in pro-poor governance in the country studies. This indicates a weakness in the implicit intervention logic of the strategy i.e. the assumption of a government responsive to the voice of an independent, representative civil society. This assumption will become less plausible the more that Danida continues to support civil society in fragile contexts where government is incapable or unwilling to respond to the needs of its citizens. It also indicates that pro-poor development outcomes are dependent on support to other sectors such as government and, indeed, the private sector.

111 *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*. OECD. 2012.

There is evidence that Danida currently supports a wide range of relevant civil society actors through diverse support mechanisms. However, interviews and country studies indicate that there is a trend for Danida to support fewer, more capable Southern partners across modalities (with the exception of funding windows explicitly targeting smaller CSOs). This has come about from pressure to demonstrate the results of its support and reduce transaction costs and risk. Danida must continue to ensure that the relevance of Southern partners is gauged not only by their effectiveness i.e. ability to deliver programme objectives, but also by their diversity i.e. reflection the diverse roles, capacities and constituencies in civil society. For Danida support to continue to be relevant it must also be able to identify and support new, emerging civil society actors that are tomorrow's drivers for change.

Effectiveness

More vibrant and open debate

There is evidence of Danida support contributing to open, vibrant debate on development issues in partner countries, in Denmark and at international level. At an international level it has promoted civil society engagement in following up the Paris Declaration through its support to the BetterAid and Open Forum initiatives, and by supporting civil society participation in Busan. It has supported civil society participation in climate change processes, for example, at COP 15 in Copenhagen and as a key funder of the *Southern Voices* project (strengthening the voice of those most vulnerable to climate change in national and international climate debates and negotiations). At a domestic level Danida has supported public awareness initiatives such as the *World's Best News*, a Danish campaign which claims to have influenced public awareness on progress to the MDGs. Danish NGOs public awareness and campaigning work, which is perceived to have become more professional in recent years, also fosters public debate although there is a degree of uncertainty about whether, for example, this supports public points of difference with the government.

Despite political and legal conditions that are less than conducive for civil society to flourish civil society activism continues to grow in the two countries studied. The Nepal country study found Danish support to CSOs had significantly increased space for public debate and citizen participation in local governance, particularly at micro and meso-levels. The Uganda country study reported CSO representatives crediting Denmark with a distinctive role among the donor community in supporting civil society advocacy on good governance and human rights. In both countries, however, increased public debate has not yet led to an improvement of the operating conditions for civil society or to pro-poor outcomes at a national level.

Representative, legitimate and locally based civil society

There is an ongoing need to support Southern partners to improve their representativeness and legitimacy at a time when CSOs in developing countries are often under pressure to demonstrate their transparency and accountability. Both country studies found that the promotion of accountability and legitimacy to be a key aspect of the Danish support to civil society and reported progress in this area. There is also evidence of Danish NGOs and CSOs deploying a variety of methods to strengthen the representativeness and accountability of their partners.

Southern CSOs, both in the survey results and country studies, generally considered Danish support through different modalities to enhance a sense of local ownership. The strategic partnership model in both Uganda and Nepal was seen to strengthen local ownership by providing multi-annual core funding to the strategic programmes of partners and helping build their internal governance systems. Project-based support – whether provided by a pooled fund or NGO – was not seen as equally conducive to promote local ownership. The country studies and survey revealed some CSO partners to be critical of the perceived ‘conditionality’ of Danish NGO programme funding although some Danish NGOs replied that this can be viewed more positively in terms of the ‘tougher’ accountability demands of partners by NGOs than some other modalities.

Capacity development, advocacy work and networking

Both the country studies and survey indicate that CSO partners have a high level of satisfaction with the capacity development support offered through different modalities, not only in terms of funding or training but also through on-going monitoring, advice and support. Danish NGOs also play an important role in supporting the organisational development of partners; capacity development in their area of technical competence; and through people-to-people initiatives. There are also interesting examples of ‘horizontal’ partnerships between professional organisations in Denmark and developing countries that offer opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of good practice.

Responses to the survey indicate that CSO advocacy work is least likely to be supported by a pooled fund. Most examples of CSO advocacy from country studies are at local/district level. The Nepal country study, for example, included a number of examples of CSO advocacy contributing to positive changes at local and district level. The Uganda country study documented instances of CSO advocacy in ‘claimed spaces’ in relation to governance and accountability e.g. on anti-corruption. Danish NGOs provide examples of successful networking or coalition building in support of advocacy that have taken years of effort.

The country studies provide evidence on Danish support to local and national networking. In particular, Danish support, including that of Danish NGOs, has been instrumental in the creation and strengthening of issue based national and district networks in Uganda. Cross-sectoral alliances e.g. with the private sector or academia, and international networking was one of the few areas where Danish support was not rated highly by the majority of survey respondents across all modalities although some examples of international linking were provided by Danish NGOs.

Capacity development, advocacy and networking are the ‘pathways to change’ leading to a strong, articulate civil society. They are also core competencies claimed by many Danish NGOs to add value to the work of their Southern partners. As Cross-Cutting Monitoring Reports have noted, while it is clear that Danish NGOs are working with partners in these areas, they need to better document their approaches and systematically monitor and report on their effectiveness at both output and outcome level.

Efficiency

An efficiency assessment requires an analysis of both cost and the value created by that investment. The evaluation was unable to make any authoritative comparison of the efficiency of different cooperation modalities. The cost-effectiveness of an individual organisation or fund will vary considerably as each will have a different cost-base and management arrangements as well as different objectives, target groups and approaches. A plausible comparison would require an analysis of both the costs and outcomes of comparable entities.

However, it is possible to make some generalisations, based on the stakeholder perceptions and literature reviews, on the cost-efficiency of modalities without taking into account evidence of impact. There is a trend to view multi-donor funding arrangements as cost-efficient since the administrative cost is shared by pooling resources. However, initial transaction costs may be high. On-going costs are dependent on the management arrangements adopted by the joint funding arrangement – e.g. contracting the management of joint-funding schemes to international consultancy firms is frequently cited as having a higher management cost than alternatives. Strategic partnership arrangements are partly justified by the reduced transaction costs as they are commonly associated with a reduction in the number of partners. In contrast, project funding is perceived as resource intensive.

Sustainability

There is a high level of financial dependency on foreign donors among local NGOs/CSOs in the countries under review (though not exclusively on Danida). The survey found that CSOs in receipt of Danish support from pooled funds were more dependent on that source of funding than those in receipt of support from embassies or NGOs. CSOs engaged in advocacy work are likely to be even more dependent on foreign funding.

The strategic partnership model was sometimes quoted as a means of enabling CSOs to establish a greater level of sustainability by providing comparatively long-term longer term funding to build the foundations of sustainability. Investment in the organisational sustainability of partners e.g. by supporting them to improve their internal and external accountability was common across modalities, but there was little evidence of specific strategies deployed to encourage financial sustainability. Some CSOs criticised the reluctance of Danida to allow funds to be used to purchase real estate or to establish endowment funds as a means of contributing to organisational sustainability. Opportunities to establish financial sustainability through income generating and local fund-raising activities in most partner countries are few but merit more investigation and support. In the short term, diversifying donor funds remains the most realistic way for local CSOs to address the issue of sustainability. In this respect, a tendency to create 'funding monopolies' through the creation of large multi-donor funds may reduce the number of fund-raising opportunities available to local CSOs.

Cooperation modalities

In the countries under review Danida has developed a ‘balanced portfolio’ of cooperation modalities in support of civil society (though obviously this may not be the same in other countries). Interviews and country visits revealed poor communication between embassies, Danida departments and especially Danish NGOs at country level, though there were some exceptions to this. Improved coordination of the different sources and channels of support to civil society, particularly at country level, would provide opportunities for synergy in programming; facilitate knowledge exchange; and mitigate the risk of duplication of effort.

The specialised governance programme management units, HUGGO/HUGOU, have played a distinctive and influential role in support to civil society in Uganda and Nepal. The units have been an important factor in Danida’s ability to read and respond to the development challenges in the changing contexts in each country. The relative independence of the units has also enabled Danida to innovate, be flexible and adopt different modalities, take risks and take the initiative in the donor community to harmonise donor support to civil society engagement with governance issues. This, in turn, has been dependent on giving experienced development professionals sufficient flexibility to make strategic decisions and take appropriate risks. The challenge facing Danida is how best to replicate these critical success factors – resources, flexibility and expertise to read and respond to the context – in other modalities.

Successive evaluations have commented on the implications of the limited human capacity of embassies, particularly in fragile contexts¹¹². This evaluation also concludes that under-resourced embassies have limited capacity to strategise, to innovate, and indeed to monitor and report on the programmes they support. Although the LGA has the potential to support timely and/or innovative initiatives that supplement the country programme its use appears to be increasingly influenced by the limited capacity to identify and monitor grantees. It will be important for Danida to retain the capacity to design and monitor bilateral and multi-donor funds that continue to innovate in response to changes in civil society in developing countries.

Danida support to CSOs through multi-donor funding arrangements is expected to continue to grow in the future. A recent Danida review¹¹³ noted that the principal beneficiaries of multi-donor funds tend to be larger and better established organisations, particularly in the case of strategic or core funding, unless special funding windows or other kinds of affirmative action are used to target smaller, less experienced rural CSOs. The effective management of sector and multi-donor funds requires sufficient investment in the management arrangements and professional expertise to provide outreach support and capacity development to CSOs. In line with the Paris Declaration, there is growing interest in encouraging and embedding local ownership of multi-donor funds by enabling national partners to assume the leadership of funds and establishing them as independent funds with representative systems of internal governance including the participation of CSOs.

112 See *Evaluation of the Danish Engagement in and around Somalia 2006-10*; Danida. August 2012. *Evaluation of the Danish Regions of Origin Initiative in Afghanistan*. May 2011.

113 *Danida support to Governance, Democracy and Human Rights through Civil Society Funds*, Danida. December 2011.

Danish NGOs retain an important role in Danish support to civil society in the South. The country studies noted some Southern partners question the way their partnership with Danish NGOs is evolving. This may apply particularly to the larger NGOs. A number of other factors e.g. the evolving maturity of Southern CSOs; the increase in funding windows in the South; the growth of international NGO confederations suggest it is time for a constructive reappraisal of the added value of Danish NGOs to Southern civil society. This would be in line with other donors. It has been more difficult for the evaluation to assess the role of smaller Danish CSOs supported through pooled funds though interviewees affirmed their importance in strengthening Danish/Southern civil society links and contributing to small-scale development impacts. There is support for continued Danida support to the Nordic model of strengthening international civil links as means of strengthening civil society as a public good.

5.2 Lessons

A number of lessons – at a strategy, organisational and country level – can be identified from the evaluation with regard to the improved operationalisation and future monitoring and evaluation of Danish support to civil society development in the South.

Strategy

The value of the Civil Society strategy is as a statement of the distinctive role that support to Southern civil society can play in achieving Denmark's developmental objectives and an affirmation of the distinctive role of Danish CSOs in this process. It was described as a 'political' rather than a 'technical' document. A future Strategy or Policy should serve both purposes i.e. a:

- 'political' purpose of defining and 'enshrining' the importance of support to civil society to Denmark's development cooperation strategy, and a
- technical purpose of enabling Danida to monitor, demonstrate and communicate how support to civil society contributes to Danida's strategic priorities.

A plausible way to fulfil both purposes is to 'mainstream' a Civil Society Strategy or Policy within Danida's development cooperation strategy and incorporate it in Danida planning, monitoring and reporting systems for all cooperation modalities.

The need for explicit intervention logic/s and assumptions for Danida programming has been highlighted in other evaluations¹¹⁴. It is unlikely that one intervention logic will apply in all conditions as Danida will continue to work in very diverse contexts. The draft intervention logic developed by the evaluation has some generic validity for the current strategy but needs to be adapted to country context or thematic priority. The assumptions and dependencies linking civil society outcomes with development outcomes e.g. pro-poor governance and/or economic growth are of critical importance.

114 See, for example, Danida. *Thematic Evaluation of Support by Danish NGOs to Civil Society in Ghana and Ethiopia*. Danida. 2009.

Danida as an organisation

Danida does not have all the necessary systems and processes in place to implement and monitor the Civil Society Strategy, across the range of Danida cooperation modalities. It is not currently possible to gain a comprehensive overview of Danida support to civil society through existing systems e.g. through the project data base. These limitations are likely to apply to any sub-strategy that is relevant to the wide range of Danida support mechanisms.

Nonetheless, there is evidence that Danida has provided a wide range of good quality support to civil society in developing countries. This depends, in turn, on the quality of the design and implementation of the support mechanisms used. Danida has chosen to decentralise much of its development cooperation and is committed to increasing direct funding to Southern civil society. The issue of limited financial and human resources at both HO and embassy level has emerged in this and other evaluations. The limited programming capacity at embassy level, for example, reduces the choice of cooperation modality available to support civil society. Recommendations for the improved operationalisation and M&E of Danish support to Southern civil society should, therefore, seek to minimise the resource implications of any proposed changes. Nonetheless it will be important for Danida to retain a programming capacity that draws upon its experience and learning in the sector if it is to continue to be a leader in its support to civil society in developing countries.

Country level

An appropriate mix of support mechanisms is necessary to ensure that Danida supports a representative and wide range of civil society actors. There are indications that, unless specific windows are created and measures taken, there is a tendency for organisational imperatives to concentrate support to a smaller number of more capable CSOs. Danida must continue to ensure that its support mechanisms are sufficiently flexible to enable it to support smaller, less sophisticated CSOs; influential 'traditional' civic associations; and new emergent civil society actors when necessary.

There is a tendency for Danida to increasingly support multi-donor funding arrangements, including pooled funds, in line with harmonisation efforts. While attractive to donors, there is evidence that the concentration of resources that it involves can have disadvantages for Southern CSOs. More comparative research is needed on the contributory factors to the performance of multi-donor funds. However, the management arrangements and different approaches of joint donor initiatives are clearly important regarding their effectiveness in engaging with civil society.

The HUGGO/HUGOU 'model' of support to civil society on democracy and governance issues is regarded as very effective by civil society partners and has had some influence, for example, the design of the multi-donor fund DGF in Uganda. It has not been possible to research in depth the critical success factors of the model but the evidence suggests that a key determinant of its success has been having experienced national and international staff, with the resources and flexibility to read and respond to a complex, changing context.

In this regard, a number of evaluations have also referred to the need for embassies to have a contextual analysis of civil society, preferably a ‘dynamic’ analysis identifying drivers for change to guide the choice of civil society programmes and partners. No specific guidance is available to embassies, other than that available in the Strategy itself, on how support to local CSOs should be incorporated in the design, implementation and monitoring of its programmes. The new guidelines for the development of Country Policy papers require a “drivers of change” analysis for the Country Policy papers but this does not include a social element. Guidance on a political economy analysis of civil society should be an important element of the Guidelines for Country Programme Documents to be developed in 2013.

6 Recommendations

The evaluation recommends that Danida continues to invest in supporting civil society in developing countries and suggests three ways forward to further strengthen and better monitor this support:

- Replace a Civil Society Strategy with a Civil Society Policy aligned to the Danida development cooperation strategy.
- Clarify the distinctive contribution of Danish NGOs through flexible, effective partnerships.

Develop a mix of funding windows to respond to the diversity of civil society.

6.1 A Civil Society Policy in support of *The Right to a Better Life*

Civil Society in The Right to a Better Life

Support to civil society will continue to play a pivotal role in Danish development cooperation. It features in all four of the strategic priorities of *The Right to a Better Life* – human rights and democracy; green growth; and social progress. For example:

- The strategy commits Denmark to “*support the development of strong and independent civil societies*”¹¹⁵ in association with the promotion of human rights and democracy.
- Green growth emphasises the role of poor farmers in sustainable food production and of poor, marginalised communities in relation to access to energy and adaptation to climate change; and the crucial role of civil society in promoting women’s access to land, technology and financial services¹¹⁶.
- The role of civil society in promoting social progress is highlighted in “*monitoring and holding the state accountable for social targets and obligations*” and support to health and education in fragile states¹¹⁷.
- A commitment to strengthen civil society in fragile states e.g. in building local ownership and capacity, is emphasised again under the strategic priority of stability and protection – “*we need a civil society with strong local partners and first-hand knowledge of local conditions*”¹¹⁸.

In addition, the section on Flexible Partnerships offers some important signposts for future Danida partnerships with CSOs – in particular to making greater use of framework agreements with Danish CSOs; prioritising CSO partnerships that focus on

115 *The Right to a Better Life.*, Danida. June 2012 p. 13.

116 Ibid. p. 22.

117 Ibid. p. 25.

118 Ibid. p. 29.

advocacy, capacity development and popular participation which are most capable of delivering results; and increasing direct support to CSOs in developing countries¹¹⁹.

A work plan to operationalise *The Right to a Better Life* anticipates the development of a series of strategic frameworks or sub-strategies in 2012/13 including gender, culture and development, natural resources and climate. A revision of the Civil Society Strategy is not included although the work plan does include the development of a number of policy notes and tools e.g. on green growth, social sectors and partnerships with new development actors.

It is not yet known how Danida will monitor and report to *The Right to a Better Life*. A results framework for priority areas is programmed for 2013 and new guidance¹²⁰ has recently been published on how strategic priorities are to be implemented in Denmark's priority countries. Programming for development cooperation will shift from sector or programme level to country level. Country Policy Papers will be developed for priority countries (interestingly, civil society does not appear among the 14 topics to be covered in the Policy Papers). These will be followed up by a Country Programme Document which describes how programmes contribute to the strategic priorities. The Guidelines stress that the strategies for achieving the strategic priorities must be spelled out in sufficient detail to enable progress to be monitored but no specific guidance is offered on how best to do this. The section on monitoring and evaluation refers only to a rolling plan for evaluations. However, Guidelines for the Country Programme Document are due to be developed in 2013.

A Civil Society Policy aligned to Danida's development cooperation strategy

The evaluation recommends that Danida initiate a collaborative process with Danish NGOs to replace the current Civil Society Strategy with a Civil Society Policy aligned to the four strategic priorities and the concept of Flexible Partnerships in *The Right to a Better Life*. The development of the Policy would be incorporated into the work plan to operationalise *The Right to a Better Life*.

A Civil Society Policy would reference a theory of change analysis developed for the different priorities in *The Right to a Better Life*. This would help to:

- Define the role that support to civil society plays as an agency of change in relation to other actors in achieving each strategic priority – e.g. Human Rights and democracy – and where each has potential direct or indirect influence.
- Develop change pathways which include causal links and assumptions – e.g. between strengthening civil society and pro-poor outcomes.
- Develop an impact assessment framework which includes dimensions of change relevant to work with civil society – e.g. the increased legitimacy and representativeness of Southern CSOs participating in public debate.

119 Ibid. p. 35.

120 *Guidelines for the Development of Policy Papers for Denmark's Relations with Priority Countries*. Danida. January 2013.

- Suggest indicators associated with these dimensions of change – e.g. the existence of gender-sensitive structures of representation in the organisation¹²¹.

Danida departments, embassies and NGOs¹²² would be encouraged to use at least some of these indicators in their programming while retaining some flexibility to adapt these, since dimensions of change and the associated indicators will be sensitive to the local context. This would enable Danida to summarise, although not aggregate, M&E results across civil society programmes in a consistent way – e.g. report systematically on progress towards representative governance structures of Southern CSO partners. This would enhance the quality and consistency of planning, monitoring and reporting of support to civil society without placing undue time-demands and constraints on flexibility.

The Policy would offer good practice guidance and principles working with civil society towards the strategic priorities. This might include, for example, guidance on drivers of change analysis; appropriate funding mechanisms; tools and methodologies to guide planning, monitoring and evaluation; and relevant civil society indicators for advocacy, capacity and organisational development. The Policy need not be restricted to static guidance but could be a ‘living’ source of current knowledge and knowledge sharing through web-based learning platforms for Danida staff and partners.

The Civil Society Policy would also provide an important opportunity for Danida to ‘join up’ its thinking about the humanitarian and civil society support in recognition of the interdependence of humanitarian and development efforts, not only in relation to the strategic priority on stability and protection.

Mainstream monitoring and reporting of support to civil society

The monitoring and evaluation of Danida’s engagement with Southern civil society should be incorporated into future reporting on Denmark’s development cooperation strategy – e.g. into the reports on progress to the Country Programme Documents. This would help to ensure that Danida’s distinctive contribution to strengthening Southern civil society is reported on across the full range of Danida operations for example by:

- Integrating reporting on support to civil society in Danida corporate reporting avoiding duplication of effort and parallel reporting systems.
- Providing good practice guidelines and tools for incorporating civil society actors in Danida development and humanitarian programmes.

The guidelines on the development of Country Programme Documents could also incorporate the guidance of the Civil Society Policy on indicators, tools and methodologies in relation to the role of civil society within the strategic priorities. Since an analysis of the drivers of change in civil society is not currently included in the guidance on the Country Policy, it will be important to include this analysis in the Country Programme Document. The adaptation of the global theories of change/impact frameworks to the country context could be piloted in a few countries. One option would be to:

121 See the Cafod’s Voice and Accountability Tool for indicators e.g. on constituency building. Available at: http://www.e-alliance.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/docs/Advocacy_Capacity/2011/13._CAFOD_VATool_2010_final.pdf.

122 DanChurchAid has produced such a change analysis viz. their role in capacity development in India.

- Draw upon the theory of change analysis of *The Right to a Better Life* to develop a country-based analysis of the drivers of change in relation to the relevant strategic priorities.
- Include a clear change pathway for each priority area which identifies the roles of different stakeholders and includes the links and assumptions that are being made.
- Include an impact assessment framework which would enable specific baselines to be set and relevant indicators for each priority area.

This would provide useful, impact data that could be compared across countries and strategic priority areas. It would also provide a shared framework for critical reflection. For example, are we working with the right people, in the right way? Are short-term changes contributing to the longer term changes we aspire to? Which assumptions proved valid and which did not?

This approach could also be useful in planning realistic change pathways to suit different contexts. In fragile states, for example, it would enable stakeholders to clarify what changes they might be able to influence; what changes are beyond the scope of their influence; and the assumptions they are making. These could then be regularly reviewed and adapted.

It is also recommended in association with Country Programme Documents that regular external reviews are conducted, perhaps as a joint donor initiative, to monitor how civil society is evolving in different countries. This would provide more focused, in-depth and revealing studies on civil society outcomes than annual embassy reporting.

Revise project data base to track civil society support

The project database would need to be updated to ensure that support provided to civil society is explicitly recorded. At its most simple, this could be done via a simple check box (or marker) for each programme and project, filled in by Danida staff that would indicate whether or not all or part of a programme or project is intended to support Danida's civil society objectives. To go further and assess the amount of resources targeted at civil society, or any other area of support, the system needs to allow a 'weighted' score for civil society to be entered. This would allow for the proportional inclusion of projects or programmes which may have only a small component of civil society support. Such a system is easy to develop from a database point of view, but ensuring consistency of data entry becomes progressively more difficult.

Communicate the contribution of poor and marginalised to development cooperation

It will continue to be important to communicate and celebrate the pivotal role of organised citizens in achieving Danida's strategic priorities through, for example, case study narratives published on the Danida website or in the form of an annual publication.

6.2 Support Danish CSOs to develop innovative, effective partnerships

Danish NGOs/CSOs should continue to make an important contribution to the development of a strong, independent and diversified civil society in developing countries. Key to this will be to:

- Re-assess and clarify the distinctive contribution of Danish NGOs/CSOs to Southern civil society.
- Manage and monitor their contribution to Danish development cooperation.
- Explore innovative, re-balanced partnerships between Danish and Southern NGOs/CSOs.

Clarify the distinctive contribution of Danish civil society to development cooperation

The concept of ‘flexible partnerships’ in *The Right to a Better Life* provides an opportunity to elucidate the distinctive contribution to Danish development cooperation that Danish NGOs provide in their support to Southern CSOs. This could be taken forward in partnership with Danish CSOs themselves (as per the update of the Civil Society Strategy in 2008) so as to incorporate best thinking and build shared ownership.

An expansion of the concept of flexible partnerships would clarify:

- The added value of Danish NGOs in the development results chain i.e. the case for their continued funding in the context of increased direct funding of Southern CSOs.
- The dimensions of change to encapsulate this added value e.g. in capacity development, networking, knowledge sharing, innovation etc.
- Plausible indicators of change and methodologies to monitor and measure them.

A focus on the dimensions of change that demonstrate the added value of Danish NGOs would be the basis for future monitoring and reporting on Danish NGO performance, and provide a consistent framework to assess and summarise the contribution of Danish NGOs to Southern civil society. Moreover, it would be possible to have a clear and transparent process to include Southern CSOs in Danish CSO reporting or independent reviews or evaluations of their performance.

Danish CSOs would be encouraged or required to identify their distinctive competencies and, if necessary, to develop new ways to monitor and evaluate this. Danish CSOs would continue to support Southern partners to implement and monitor their programmes effectively and would continue to gather and disseminate case study illustrations of impact at local level. The important distinction is that their own performance would be assessed by the value they add to Southern partners’ delivery of development results, not by the results themselves.

Manage and monitor the contribution of Danish NGOs/CSOs

There is an ongoing need for Danida to demonstrate how Danish NGOs/CSOs contribute to Denmark’s development cooperation at a time when other development partners are reassessing how they monitor, measure and reward the performance of domestic NGOs that they fund. It is neither practical nor desirable to suggest a uniform system of monitoring and reporting for the wide range of Danish NGOs/CSOs with diverse missions and different levels of capacity that Danida supports through a range of funding mechanisms. However, the evaluation recommends a number of steps that might contribute to more effective partnerships with Danish NGOs/CSOs.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Align framework agreements to the Civil Society Policy

Framework agreements with Danish NGOs should be aligned to Denmark's development cooperation strategy and Civil Society Policy in two ways i.e. by:

- Supporting programme activities that contribute to the achievement of one or more of the four strategic priorities of *The Right to a Better Life*.
- Demonstrating added value to Southern civil society e.g. in advocacy, capacity development and popular participation, as highlighted in the section on 'flexible partnerships' in the strategy.

It is advisable that this process of alignment be generic rather than too specific i.e. focuses on the role of civil society in a thematic area such as human rights and democracy rather than any specific commitments in the strategy. This would ensure the Civil Society Policy is supportive of *The Right to a Better Life* but would not lose its relevance in the event of it being replaced with a new development cooperation strategy.

Invitations to apply for a framework agreement in line with the Civil Society Policy should be issued periodically (every four years). Agreements would be approved on the merits of the proposals submitted according to the criteria below, and subsequent to a due diligence assessment. The performance of framework organisations would accordingly be monitored and reported at different levels of the results chain as appropriate i.e. outcomes associated with the four priority areas and/or outputs associated with 'flexible partnerships' such as added value in advocacy, capacity and organisational development. The Guidance Notes to Framework Organisations should be revised to include the dimensions of change and associated indicators outlined in the Civil Society Policy.

Danida funding of framework agreements should be reviewed and readjusted according to the organisation's effectiveness in meeting the defined outcomes/outputs. However, the experience of other development partners, such as DfID and Irish Aid, suggests, that translating this principle into practice requires careful management. Competition for resources based on a narrow definition of performance over short time periods can inhibit learning and distort reporting by providing incentives to present data in the best light to ensure funding. Danida should establish a performance framework that enables it re-allocate funding to framework organisations on the basis of a transparent process and set of criteria. Building on the methodology employed to review the performance of framework organisations in 2011¹²³, the evaluation recommends that the following general criteria (although these would need to be developed further):

- Relevance and distinctiveness of the contribution to Danida's development cooperation strategy e.g. priority areas, and complementarity with other actors.
- Clarity of defined objectives and coherence with the Civil Society Policy.
- Level of achievement of objectives especially in relation to the value added to Southern partners.

123 Information supplied by Civil Society Department (HCP), Danida.

- Adequacy of monitoring and evaluation systems; quality of reporting; and ability to generate learning and improve.
- Quality of verification by Southern partners of progress towards objectives.

To alleviate the distortional effects of financial rewards and penalties, funding allocations on the basis of performance should be reviewed, for example, every four years rather than mid-term. This would also enable poor performance to be identified and addressed before funding is affected.

Monitor people-to-people initiatives using civil society indicators

The Right to a Better Life commits to continue to work with small and medium-sized CSOs in Denmark¹²⁴. The support of a wide range of civil society links and comparatively small-scale development projects between Danish NGOs/CSOs and Southern civil society reflects a deeply held cultural commitment in Denmark to promote the global civil society exchange and citizenship. While such people-to-people links and interventions contribute to an independent, diverse civil society in both Denmark and developing countries they do not always contribute directly to development outcomes. Nonetheless, these types of links – e.g. between Northern and Southern professional associations and trade unions, offer a valuable model of partnership that could grow into the future. The concept of promoting these small scale development initiatives and linkages between Danish and Southern civil society as a means of strengthening civil society should be formalised in the Civil Society Policy. Danida support to CISU and other pooled fund arrangements, therefore, should be based primarily on indicators that monitor and measure their contribution to a strong, diverse civil society – e.g. by strengthening partnership, capacity or technical skills – and, where relevant, their contribution to development outcomes.

Improve coordination of Danida support to Danish NGOs/CSOs

Danida recognises that the uncoordinated bilateral funding of Northern and Southern NGOs by different Danida departments represents both an administrative and an opportunity cost. There is a strong *prima facie* case for maintaining separate Humanitarian and Civil Society framework agreements as humanitarian interventions will frequently fall outside, for example, the geographic focus or *modus operandi* of Civil Society framework partners. However, closer coordination of the negotiation and management of these agreements would reduce transaction costs on both sides; identify synergies and complementarities in programming; and avoid duplication of effort. The scheduling of the negotiating and reporting schedules could be synchronised and a set of management and communication protocols established to clarify lead responsibilities. Similarly, other Danida departmental funding of Danish CSOs should be governed by the same protocols to increase transparency and ensure consistency in agreements.

Explore innovative, re-balanced partnerships

The evolving nature of Southern civil society and the increasing pressure to demonstrate results require Danish NGOs to both experiment with new, more flexible partnership approaches to demonstrate their added value to Southern CSOs. The dynamics of the partnership relation between Danish NGOs and Southern partners are changing as Southern CSOs have more opportunities to access direct funding from other sources in their own countries. Danish NGOs will increasingly have to demonstrate how Danida

124 *The Right to a Better Life*. Danida. June 2012, p. 35.

funding enables them to add value and bring complementary strengths to partnerships with Southern CSOs.

Anticipating these future trends, Danida should seek to innovate and provide incentives to Danish NGOs to look for new ways of collaborating with Southern CSOs. Finding ways to pilot new types of partnership relationships would enable Danish NGOs to anticipate a future role for themselves in a changing context. There are a number of ways in which Danida could continue to provide support to Danish NGOs while experimenting with new concepts of 'flexible partnerships'. For example:

- New ways of funding Danish/Southern CSOs partnerships
- Decentralised funds for capacity development of Southern CSOs
- Decentralised funds for multi-sectoral partnerships.

New ways of funding Danish/Southern CSOs partnerships

There are number of new ways in which Danida can encourage innovation and promote local ownership in Danish/Southern CSO partnerships. A percentage of each framework grant could be earmarked for innovation and Danish NGOs encouraged to present proposals that enable their partners to more pro-actively and transparently influence the partnership. Alternatively, a percentage of framework grant funds could be allocated to an Innovation in Partnership Fund. Danish NGOs, in collaboration with Southern partners or new emerging civil society actors, could make joint bids to this fund through an open, competitive process to conduct a pilot scheme. This would have the advantage that interested, motivated NGOs would apply, giving pilot schemes more chance of success. Possible areas to explore in such pilots might include:

- Reassigning budget holding and contracting responsibilities in the partnership. This might involve joint funding of Danish/Southern CSO partnerships where funding is shared equally or transferring budget-holding responsibilities from Danish to Southern partner/s with the latter responsible for contracting services or support from the Danish partner.
- Re-designing and upgrading of accountability mechanisms at country programme level to allow for greater feedback from partners, and their incorporation into framework reporting¹²⁵.

A number of questions would need to be resolved in the administration of such pilots e.g. whether due diligence guarantees are required to channel funds directly to Southern CSOs, and whether national and Danish affiliates of international con/federations can apply in partnership.

125 For example, the Keystone Development Partnership Survey in 2010 surveyed over 3,000 local partners of 28 international NGOs. Each INGO received a confidential individual report on how their partners rated their performance compared to sector benchmarks. Several of these INGOs have publicly released their reports, along with their plans to improve, in an effort to increase accountability, responsibility and transparency with their partners. Available at: <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/services/surveys/ngos>.

Decentralised funds for capacity development

Another way in which Danida could innovate is to support more demand-led funding for capacity development. This could be done by establishing decentralised funds that local NGOs/CSOs can access directly for specific types of capacity development support¹²⁶ according to their own specifications. This funding could be restricted to approved providers including Danish NGOs. Locally-based capacity development facilities could be administered independently, by the embassy, by a Danish or local NGO; or included in sector or thematic programme with a capacity development component for CSOs.

Decentralised funds for multi-sector partnerships

A recent high-level analysis of the future of civil society suggest that multi-sectoral collaboration e.g. between public, private and civil society and academic sectors, are required to resolve common problems such as poverty and climate change¹²⁷. There is growing donor interest in problem-solving, multi-sectoral partnerships, brought together around specific issues or challenges. However, there are few reported instances of Danish NGOs taking the initiative with cross-sectoral collaborations. It may be that positive incentives are required to encourage new ways of working. One way of doing this is for Danida, perhaps in collaboration with other donors, to establish a funding window to support multi-sector collaborations¹²⁸, set up with clear, time-bound objectives, rather than individual organisations or established networks. These might be of particular interest as part of sector programmes.

6.3 A mix of funding modalities that reflects the diversity of civil society

Draw upon good practice in the sector: the need for a mix of funding approaches

The Right to a Better Life anticipates increased direct funding of Southern civil society. This recognizes the maturing development of the civil society sector in many developing countries and is in line with Denmark's commitment to the Paris Declaration and its promotion of local ownership of development.

Danida is held in high esteem as a flexible development partner of civil society in developing countries. Two recent evaluations comment on Danida's flexible use of humanitarian funding in fragile or complex settings – for example as a “key strength” in Somalia¹²⁹ where Danida is described as “*maintaining its reputation for being flexible, risk-taking and un-bureaucratic*”. Danida's management of the Regions of Origin Initiative in Afghanistan¹³⁰ is also positively referred to as ‘*flexible*’. To increase the relevance and effectiveness of increased direct support to Southern civil society Danida should ensure that it both builds on and draws on the lessons of this and other evaluations to further its reputation as a flexible donor.

126 See, for example, SNV Local Capacity Development facilities that provide advisory services for small enterprise and market development. Available at: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/regions/world/our-work/services>.

127 See, for example, The Future of Civil Society World Economic Forum 2013.

128 The DfID funded States Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) in Nigeria focuses funding not on individual organisations but on partnerships and strategic alliances between CSOs and other actors to improve voice and accountability at a local level. Available at: http://www.grminternational.com/projects/state_accountability_and_voice_initiative.

129 *Evaluation of the Danish Engagement in and around Somalia 2006-10*. Danida. May 2011.

130 *Evaluation of the Danish Regions of Origin Initiative in Afghanistan*. Danida. May 2012.

The OECD recently published a review¹³¹ summarising the key lessons of DAC evaluations on partnering with civil society. The review highlights a number of lessons with regard to the operationalisation of a civil society policy – e.g. the need to balance a results-orientation with the virtues of partnership; provide a mix of cooperation modalities that take into account the diversity of civil society; and reduce the transaction costs associated with donor reporting e.g. through harmonising support and providing more strategic and programmatic funding.

The value of a range of funding modalities was emphasised throughout the review. Donors should “*have a mix of funding modalities that take into account the diversity of CSO roles, capacities, constituencies and approaches and which enable donors to finance, when it is a priority, development activities initiated by CSOs*”¹³². It also argues for cost-efficiency to CSOs of multi-donor initiatives “*While there are advantages for CSOs in having access to diverse sources of donor financing... donors should strive to harmonise their support to international CSOs and CSOs in developing countries to reduce the burden of responding to multiple donor requirements*”¹³³.

A recent joint evaluation on policy work¹³⁴ also highlighted the need for a mix of funding approaches. It identified three types of support required:

- *Long-term support* e.g. core funding to trusted CSOs should be continued (and expanded where appropriate) for long-term advocacy support.
- *Specific targeted support* i.e. to support well-orchestrated action around policy change outcomes e.g. a single legislative objective.
- *Opportunistic right moments* i.e. to quickly respond to seizing ‘right moments’ to raise issues in the public domain or influence decision makers.

The need to retain a capacity to innovate

Danida will continue to play a distinctive role in supporting Southern civil society if it can invest in the design, development and administration of bilateral and multi-donor support mechanisms that enable CSOs of diverse sizes, approaches and capabilities to access funding. A critical issue, in light of financial and human resource constraints, is how Danida can retain a programming capacity that draws upon learning, innovation and good practice in the sector to design and develop cooperation modalities that respond to the changing needs of a diverse civil society. Two possibilities arise if additional programming capacity is not to be made available to embassies:

- Invest in a ‘mobile’ programming capacity in Danida centrally that could support a number of countries.
- Contract in additional programming capacity to work on specific projects or to provide specific elements of support.

131 *Partnering with Civil Society: 12 lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*. OECD. 2012.

132 Ibid.

133 Ibid.

134 ITAD and COWI. *Joint Evaluation of Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue*. Danida. November 2012.

By maintaining a programming capacity Danida can draw upon the expertise and credibility it has derived from decades of support to civil society to scale up its impact on civil society funds by, for example, influencing multi-donor initiatives.

Some positive features of direct funding to Southern civil society

The evaluation suggests that a mix of funding approaches should take into account the following features:

- *Include a variety of support mechanisms in multi-donor initiatives.* There may be a tendency to concentrate resources in very large multi-donor thematic or sector funding mechanisms. The evaluation has noted CSO concerns about such large funds might distort the ‘market’ e.g. by reducing funding for other priorities; encouraging CSOs to adjust their missions and approach to access funds; and create a culture of insiders and outsiders in civil society. This concern might be allayed by ensuring CSOs of different sizes and capacity can access funding through variety of ‘windows in the same initiative. However, a plurality of funding mechanisms of different sizes would more actively avoid the distortions mentioned above.
- *Research and understand what makes multi-donor initiatives successful.* Civil society funds are administered through a variety of management arrangements and include a variety of practices and approaches. There is little comparative research about the relative cost-effectiveness of different multi-donor funds. Further research is needed, on how the management capacity and governance systems of multi-donor funds contribute to their effectiveness and promote local ownership, and on how different practices and approaches have been more or less successful at supporting capacity development and encouraging diversity. This could be done relatively easily by building on the initial Danida mapping of pooled funds in support of good governance but should eventually include more in-depth longitudinal studies funded jointly with other donors.
- *Incorporate a capacity and/or organisational development element.* Support for smaller organisations is likely to be critical to the success of most cooperation modalities other than those that target the ‘capable few’. It is important to recognise that this will be labour and resource intensive.
- *Identify how to support emerging civil society actors as drivers of change*¹³⁵. This will require an admission of a higher level of risk.
- *Enable Southern CSOs to ‘progress’ through modalities.* A mix of funding approaches should allow for CSOs to ‘progress’ through different modalities e.g. from project funding to strategic partnership, with the appropriate organisational and programme management support.

135 For example, the DAPP describes itself as being ‘designed to address complex reform-dynamics in a swift and flexible manner’. While typically a Danish organisation is the contract holder a partnership programme can include a ‘mini pool’ that can support minor projects.

6.4 Summary of action points

For MFA:

Maintain and enhance Denmark's reputation as a leader in civil society funding by investing in the recommendations below:

- Retain the capacity to draw upon learning, innovation and good practice from the sector to contribute to the design of multi-donor and bilateral funds for civil society.
- Initiate a collaborative process with Danish NGOs, as part of the work plan to operationalise *The Right to a Better Life*, to replace the current Civil Society Strategy with a Civil Society Policy aligned to the four strategic priorities and the concept of Flexible Partnerships.
- Incorporate the guidance of the Civil Society Policy on drivers for change, indicators, tools and methodologies in relation to the strategic priorities in the guidelines on the development of Country Programme Documents to be developed in 2013.
- Incorporate the monitoring and reporting of Danida's engagement with Southern civil society in future reporting to the Country Programme Documents.
- Conduct regular external reviews, perhaps as a joint donor initiative, to monitor how civil society is changing at country level.
- Explore the possibility of revising the project database to enable it to better track and monitor civil society initiatives e.g. by introducing marker/s indicating whether all or part of a programme is intended to support civil society.
- Develop a communications framework to continue to communicate and celebrate the pivotal role of poor and marginalised people and organised citizens in achieving Danida's priorities – to be published on the Danida website or as an annual publication.
- Reassess and articulate the distinctive contribution of Danish NGOs to a strong, independent, diversified civil society in developing countries under the concept of 'Flexible Partnerships' in the new Policy. Develop a separate intervention logic and impact framework to clarify the added value of Danish NGOs in the development results chain; the dimensions of change that encapsulate this added value; plausible indicators to monitor and measure these changes.
- Focus the monitoring of and reporting on Danish NGO performance on the agreed dimensions of change that demonstrate their added value. Revise the Guidance Notes to Framework organisations to establish a standard reporting template. This could specify a level of Southern CSO partner input into Danish NGO reporting or independent reviews or evaluations of their performance.

- Develop a framework based on a set of transparent criteria, including the demonstration of added value to Southern partners, to review the funding of framework NGOs every four years on the basis of performance so that poor performance can be identified and addressed before funding is affected.
- Provide incentives to Danish NGOs to find new ways of collaborating with Southern CSOs and emerging civil society actors. For example, earmark a percentage of funds allocated for Framework funding for an Innovation and Partnership Fund and invite applications from Danish NGOs to pilot innovative, ‘re-balanced’ partnerships with Southern CSOs. Commission an independent review of the pilot/s in two or three years.
- Review the status of the Humanitarian strategy in the context of a new Civil Society Policy to ensure that the interdependence of humanitarian and development support to civil society is encapsulated in the Policy.
- Improve the overall coordination of civil society funding initiatives in Danida e.g. of Humanitarian and Civil Society framework agreements, through a system administrative and communications protocols.
- Commission further research into the effectiveness of pooled funds in contributing to a strong, independent, diversified civil society, with particular reference to the role of their management and governance structures and what can be learnt from different approaches and practices.

For embassies:

- Conduct a political economy or drivers of change analysis (perhaps as a joint donor initiative) as part of the preparation of Country Programme Documents to inform civil society funding in-country. Commission regular external reviews to monitor how civil society is changing.
- Support a mix of cooperation modalities that takes into account the diversity of CSO roles, capacities, constituencies and approaches. Where appropriate, this should:
 - Encourage large multi-donor funds to include a variety of funding windows within the same initiative to enable a diverse range of CSOs to benefit from support;
 - Incorporate a capacity and/or organisational development element into a cooperation modality so that a CSO can ‘progress’ through different modalities e.g. from project funding to strategic partnership;
 - Ensure that Danida support is capable of identifying and supporting emerging new civil society actors in line with a drivers of change analysis.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote multi-donor funds with an independent programme management capacity and governance systems involving civil society representation to promote local ownership.
- Invest in the management capacity of bilateral programmes and multi-donor funds to read and respond to changes in civil society as well as innovate and take risks.
- Coordinate Danish NGOs/CSOs to meet on regular basis to promote a more strategic dialogue to improve the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society.

For Danish NGOs:

- Framework organisations should develop an explicit statement of their distinctive contribution to Southern civil society and of the theory of change involved in their concept of partnership. Framework organisations that are members of global con/federations should demonstrate their specific contribution to Southern civil society through their con/federation.
- Innovate with new approaches to partnership that enables them to test new forms of collaboration and communicate their responsiveness to Southern partner feedback on their performance.
- Reflect upon and experiment with their approaches to helping develop the capacity of Southern CSOs to ensure that they are responsive to the needs and demands of partners.
- Invest in improving their M&E frameworks so they are capable of monitoring and reporting the impact of their value-added efforts in, for example, capacity building, networking, advocacy, and people-to-people support etc. at output/outcome level.
- Collaborate with Danida in developing a Civil Society Policy that articulates in line with *The Right to a Better Life* their distinctive contribution to Southern civil society; and an intervention logic and impact framework that identify the dimensions of change and relevant indicators by which they can systematically monitor, measure and report on their support to Southern civil society.

Annex A Terms of Reference

Main purpose and objectives

The overall purpose of the evaluation is:

“to collate lessons learned from the operationalisation of the Danish strategy for support to civil society with a particular focus on results relating to Strategic Goal 1 (Promotion of a vibrant and open debate nationally and internationally), Strategic Goal 2 (Promotion of a representative, legitimate and locally based civil society) and Strategic Goal 3 (Promotion of capacity development, advocacy work and networking opportunities).”

The evaluation will be forward-looking in nature and will provide recommendations for the future operationalization of the Strategy, including recommendations at three different levels: 1) Overall Strategy level 2) Country level and 3) Organisational level (see Section 5 of the ToR). The recommendations should be directed to Danida, the Danish NGO community and other implementing partners.

The strategic goals of the Strategy are interlinked and some of the goals may be said to represent means to achieve the overall purpose of the Strategy just as much as they represent actual goals (e.g. Strategic Goal (SG) 1, SG 4, SG 6, SG 7, SG 8 and SG 9).

The particular focus on SG 1, 2 and 3 is deemed relevant as these two strategic goals are the goals which most directly support the overarching objective of the Strategy, i.e. to contribute to the development of a strong, independent and diversified civil society in developing countries. The focus on SG 1, 2 and 3 does thus not imply that other goals should not be covered. For instance, SG 6 (Promotion of civil society support in Danish bilateral and multilateral assistance) and SG 7 (Involvement of Danish CSOs in development assistance) are obviously also very relevant because they cover the key modalities used to implement the Strategy. Moreover, inclusion of two case countries with elements of fragility will help shed light on the way Strategic Goal 5 has been operationalised. Lessons learned related to other goals in the Strategy crucial for the future operationalisation of the Strategy may also therefore be relevant and should be analysed by the evaluation to the extent possible¹³⁶.

The evaluation will document what has worked well and less well in the achievement of the results using both quantitative and qualitative data. This will include a particular focus on the experience with different modalities¹³⁷ used to support civil society in the South, including an analysis of the relevance of these. The evaluation will thereby contribute to and inform decision-making on future Danish support to civil society in the South.

136 Potential bidders are encouraged to present more specific suggestions as to how the various strategic goals should be covered as part of their technical proposal. The same issue will be discussed with the evaluation management, the reference group and key stakeholders as part of the inception phase of the evaluation.

137 See Pre-study and Section 5 in the Strategy dealing with Cooperation Modalities, where a range of modalities such as sector support, direct cooperation with local civil society organisations, joint funding mechanisms/civil society funds, framework agreements with Danish and international NGOs etc. are mentioned.

Finally, it is expected that the evaluation can contribute to the creation of a stronger baseline for future reference and use in monitoring and evaluating the Strategy by taking stock of how the operationalisation has developed so far in particular with regards to the overarching objective and SG 2, 3, 6 and 7. The stock taking will (as described below) take place both at the overall portfolio level (building on the Pre-study that was carried out in January 2012, but also making use of additional information) and at country level in selected countries.

The assignment will include an option for evaluation of further progress with respect to the implementation of the Strategy in 2014-15. The decision on whether to make use of this option rests with the Evaluation Department in Danida/Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions to be answered by this evaluation are the following:

1. *To what extent and how has the Danish Civil Society Strategy, its operationalisation and use of different modalities, enabled and supported the development of a stronger, more independent and diversified civil society in developing countries?*
1. *What lessons can be learned for improved operationalisation and future monitoring and evaluation of Danish support to civil society development in the South?*

The evaluation will apply OECD/DAC's five criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, (emerging) impacts, and sustainability to answer the overall evaluation questions through a number of detailed questions, some of which are listed according to these criteria below.

The main focus will be on relevance, efficiency and effectiveness as issues of sustainability and impact may be more difficult to trace and document.

It is acknowledged that causal links at outcome and impact level (i.e. extent to which a stronger, more independent and diversified civil society contributes to poverty reduction and development outcomes) may be difficult to establish and that developments at this level are influenced by numerous factors and may evolve in a non-linear manner. The evaluation analysis should take these factors into account, but should nevertheless – where possible – document emerging outcomes and impact.

Table 1: DAC Criteria and evaluation issues/questions

Criteria	Evaluation issues/questions
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>“The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance”.</p>	<p>What intended results (strength, independence and diversification) and unintended results have been achieved at the macro (policy, national or international), meso (district, sub-national) and micro (beneficiary and community) levels through Danish engagement with/support to Civil Society in developing countries?</p> <p>How and why have different funding channels, modalities and tools influenced the achievement of results? What has been the role of and interplay with contextual factors?</p> <p>What has been the value added of the various channels and modalities?</p>
<p>Relevance</p> <p>The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirement, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies”.</p>	<p>What is the relevance of the different modalities including both direct funding to CSOs in the South and indirect funding through pooled funding mechanisms, framework agreements etc.?</p> <p>What is the relevance of the partners selected and of the approach taken to the operationalization of the Strategy?</p> <p>How strategic and appropriate were the choices made by Danida and Danish organisations¹³⁸ in operationalising the strategy?</p>
<p>Efficiency</p> <p>“A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results”.</p>	<p>What are the results (outputs, outcomes) achieved relative to the investment (of CSO, intermediary, Danida)?</p>
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>“The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. Probability of long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time”.</p>	<p>What are the positive and negative factors determining sustainability of supported CSOs (e.g. capacity, representation, support base, clarity of vision and niche...)?</p> <p>To what extent have these factors been addressed; and with what effect?</p>
<p>Impact</p> <p>“The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended”.</p>	<p>What evidence is there that supported Civil Society (at the macro, meso and micro levels) are contributing/ likely to contribute to development outcomes as defined in the Civil Society (CS) Strategy? (taking into consideration the difficulties in tracing and documenting results at this level and including documentation of contribution to results generated with support provided by Denmark alone or in collaboration with others)</p>

138 A focus on Danish organisations in this connection is relevant because the Strategy was developed very much as a joint exercise between actors in Denmark including the Danish NGOs with some input from the South.

A more detailed overview of evaluation questions and the sources for answering these (evaluation matrix) shall be developed by the evaluation team as part of the development of the technical bid and the inception phase of the evaluation. The draft evaluation matrix will form part of the inception report and will be discussed with EVAL and the reference group prior to the initiation of the field work.

Outputs

The key outputs from the evaluation are as follows:

- An Inception Report (draft and final versions) including a detailed Work Programme further elaborating the methodology of the evaluation including the design, approach, sufficiency and appropriateness of evidence, data collection strategy and methods, analytical framework and reporting outline. The Evaluation Team will present a final inception report reflecting the agreed methodology to the Evaluation Management before the analysis and fieldwork is commenced.
- Two country reports (draft and final versions), comprising an analysis of the way in which the CS strategy has been operationalised at country level by Danida and its collaborating partners and including documentation of what has worked and what not with respect to promoting a strong, independent and diversified civil society.
- An overarching evaluation report (drafts and one final version) with conclusions, lessons and recommendations for adjustments in the CS strategy, including the use of different modalities for supporting civil society in the South.

Key elements to be included in the evaluation outputs are:

- A diagrammatic and narrative account of the underlying logic of intervention underpinning the implementation of the Danish Civil Society Strategy and the pathways through which civil society contributes to development outcomes and the overall goals of Danish development cooperation since the Strategy was launched in 2008. At present this is more implicit than explicit in the strategy but the evaluation should help surface the beliefs about such linkages and pathways and where possible document that these actually exist.
- A foundation on which to identify results, targets, indicators and milestones for future performance appraisal of support and monitoring of the CS strategy.

The draft Process Action Plan below provides the overall timing of the delivery of evaluation outputs. Timing and contents of the evaluation outputs shall be further specified in the technical bids and in the Inception Report.

Responsibility for the content and presentation of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation rests with the team leader of the Evaluation Team. Findings and recommendations expressed in the evaluation report will not necessarily correspond to the views of the Danish MFA (or other stakeholders). It is the responsibility of the evaluation team to ensure that there is a clear link between findings, conclusions, lessons learned

and recommendations and in general to ensure that the evaluation is based on solid evidence (and/or indicate solidity of evidence for the various judgements made).

The evaluation outputs will all be submitted to the dedicated person in EVAL and must comply with the Danida evaluation guidelines and the guidelines for report writing and layout which can be found at www.evaluation.dk.

Scope of Work

The evaluation will focus on interventions undertaken since the launch of the Strategy (December 2008), but not precluding CSOs with whom there were prior agreements.

It will include civil society support in both Danish bilateral and multilateral development assistance (SG 6) and the involvement of Danish CSOs in development assistance (SG 7).

The evaluation will explore the strategic choices made in operationalising the Strategy at three different levels:

- a. Overall strategy level
- b. Country level
- c. Organisational level

Key decision points at the different levels as well as results will be identified and linkages between the levels explored (including country strategies and if and how these link back to decisions at HQ) with a view to identify lessons learned and propose recommendations for future operationalisation of the Strategy.

The main emphasis at country level will be on support to civil society development in the South through a) different funding arrangements administered by embassies (joint funding mechanisms/civil society funds typically support as part of (sector) programmes; direct funding to CSOs etc.) b) CS support from Denmark channelled through Framework agreements, programmatic support and pooled project support administered by the Department for Humanitarian and Civil Society affairs (HUC) and implemented through Danish NGOs c) other types of Danish support administered by central level departments and channelled e.g. through multilateral organisations or international/regional NGOs or other intermediaries¹³⁹.

The portfolio of activities related to the Strategy is diverse and substantial. It is therefore not expected that the evaluation can cover all types of activities with equal depth.

The evaluation will, however, cover all the different types of CS support and all funding channels or mechanisms, but with a *particular focus on support to civil society development in the South*. The main emphasis will be on the results generated through the various funding arrangements and on documentation of how the results were achieved, i.e. a fit-for-purpose analysis exploring which modalities and mechanisms of change have been more successful with respect to different purposes. The analysis must take into

139 These funding channels (or modalities) cover a considerable amount of the total CSO funding.

account that other factors (apart from the support rendered) are also influential in generating results or hampering the generation of these¹⁴⁰.

The technical proposal should include initial considerations on how the broad range of funding channels will be covered with further considerations to be made as part of the inception phase.

It is not expected that the evaluation will be able to cover the entire geographical scope of the CS support in equal depth and the main emphasis is suggested to be on CS support to Africa and Asia. The evaluation should, however, include an overview analysis of the CS portfolio using available background documentation referenced below, and in particular the overview generated in the Pre-study and complemented with additional information collected by the team.

To ensure sufficient depth and specificity of the analysis, however, and in order to take into consideration the context specific issues related to CS development as well as the possibility of providing examples of induced changes at the outcome and impact level, it is suggested to include in-depth analysis of CS support to two countries in the South (see Section 5 concerning approach and methodology).

As part of assessing the possible strengths and weaknesses of the operationalisation of the Danish strategy for CS support, the evaluation should contain a brief comparison with the way in which other relevant/likeminded donors have operationalised their support to civil society and how the Danish way of operationalizing CS support relates to international best practices in the field (incl. DAC guidelines and other relevant documents such as the Code of practice for harmonisation of donor support to civil society through recipient organisations). It is expected that this analysis will include, but not necessarily be limited to Ireland, Sweden and Austria all of which have overall strategies for CS support that are similar in overall purpose to the Danish strategy¹⁴¹.

Approach and methodology

The evaluation shall be conducted In accordance with OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Evaluation (2010) and the Danida Evaluation Guidelines (2012). In line with these, the evaluation must be based on a sound methodology to be explained in the evaluation report. This section provides some initial thinking on the proposed approach and methodology which will need to be further developed by the evaluation team in the technical proposal and the inception report.

140 The context in which CSOs are operating and the nature of the enabling environment is a case in point, cf. also emerging findings from the ongoing joint evaluation of CSO effectiveness in Policy Dialogue.

141 See the pre-study for further info on donor strategies in the field of civil society support.

The evaluators should conduct the evaluation with careful consideration of the utility of the evaluation and bearing in mind the following principles:

- Judgments should be made relative to context (the evaluation will draw conclusions and identify trends taking consideration the role of and interplay with context);
- Strong utility focus (user engagement) in planning and implementation of evaluation (respecting time constraints);
- Using/building on previous studies and evaluations, whilst prioritising use and analysis of existing information of specific relevance to the Danish support;
- Attention to equality and rights in all aspects of the evaluation.

The evaluation will – as stated above – include an analysis of the portfolio of civil society support (SG 6 and 7) which will be based mainly on desk review and interviews with key implementing organisations in Denmark, with representatives of multilateral agencies administrating Danish funding and with organisations receiving funding in the South.

The evaluation will furthermore focus on CSOs in the South which receive funds either directly or indirectly from Danida. It will seek to establish to what extent these are strengthened, independent and overall diverse CSOs, and to what extent they are contributing to the establishment of a vibrant civil society in partner countries.

From this perspective it will investigate the utility, efficiency and any positive and negative features of the different funding modalities and mechanisms used to provide support to Southern CSOs, for example how appropriate Danish CSOs have been as partners or intermediaries in operationalising the Strategy and how relevant, effective and efficient the various modalities have been to CSOs in the South. The evaluation shall also consider usefulness of different modalities seen from an overall point of view ensuring optimal operationalisation of the strategy given the on-going challenges faced by Danida and other donor agencies to “do more with less”¹⁴². To the extent possible it will also investigate how these CSOs individually, and collectively as civil society, are contributing to development outcomes and ultimately to poverty reduction.

The evaluation will entail a combination of *desk studies*, and *primary data collection* in Copenhagen and in the countries selected and is expected to make use of both *quantitative and qualitative* methods. It should make maximum use of available *secondary data* from Danida/MFA and its partner organisations (including overall monitoring reports and in country monitoring reports, evaluation reports from Danish CSOs as well as multilateral agencies where appropriate etc.), along with different quantitative (e.g. survey questionnaire) and qualitative (e.g. informant and group/focus interviews) methods to provide both breadth and depth of coverage across key players, the CS portfolio and within selected countries. Maximum use should be made of existing national information

142 This is most likely a tendency that will continue and thus more lean solutions are being looked for.

such as the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI)¹⁴³. While making use of existing (monitoring and evaluation) data, the evaluators are also expected to carefully consider the limitations linked to these and the possibilities for complementing existing information with additional data collection.

Two countries (Uganda and Nepal) have been selected for field visits with a view to ensure learning from countries where Danish support to civil society development is considerable and covers a wide range of funding channels or modalities¹⁴⁴. Within the selected countries, there will be need for a context analysis, mapping of civil society and an in-depth mapping of Danish CSO support, including Danish funding for multilateral support to civil society development in-country.

The evaluation will be required to critically *analyse the intervention logic(s) behind the Danish support to civil society* in each selected country in order to provide a framework against which results can be measured, the strategies and decisions used can be assessed and gaps identified. Full recognition must be made to that fact that intervention logic(s) for CS support develop in an organic way by multiple actors and are not produced by any single unit (e.g. Danida; Danish NGOs or CSOs in the South). As an output of the evaluation, an overarching meta-intervention logic for the Strategy should be developed.

Once intervention logics have been established and theories of change assessed, the evaluation shall apply contribution analysis in recognition of the complexity involved. The Civil Society Strategy has been implemented in complex settings with numerous factors – and numerous actors – influencing outcomes. Establishing one-to-one cause-effect relationships may therefore prove difficult. In a number of cases, contribution rather than attribution appears likely to be a more realistic level to aim for. However, where possible, direct relationships shall be analysed and documented.

The analytical use and application of intervention logics, programme theory and theories of change must – where relevant – be done in manner that allows addressing complex and interrelated causal pathways, including interplay between intervention elements and contextual factors.

A pre-visit to Uganda and/or Nepal by the team-leader may be included as part of the inception phase. The pre-visit could be used to prepare field work and help the team test and refine elements of the proposed methodology for this.

The purpose of the actual field work in the two countries selected will be to set the findings within the national contexts in which the selected CSOs work as well as linking back to the Civil Society Strategy and related guidance documents. The team will focus on these CSOs to document and understand their results, and draw out lessons about the mechanisms for funding and support.

143 The CSI assesses four dimensions of civil society (1) structure of CS; (2) external environment in which CS exists and functions; (3) the values held and advocated by CS; and (4) the impact of activities pursued by CS actors. These dimensions have a number of sub-dimensions, each with a set of indicators. The 2011 CSI report has 30 country analyses (Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Guinea, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Liberia, Macedonia, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Slovenia, Tanzania, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Zambia).

144 Comments from bidders on the selection of countries for case studies are invited (as part of the technical proposal).

The country visits will include the following:

- Mapping of civil society (drawing on existing studies to the extent possible and using a short set of key indicators).
- Mapping and analysis of Danish support to CSOs (including interviews with representatives of intermediaries and analysis of key programme and background documents).
- A field visit to conduct selected informant interviews (consideration to be given to the option of a workshop attended by supported CSO representatives as an informant base) and inclusion of direct beneficiaries.
- Triangulation of evidence (information from secondary literature with interviews, focus group discussions etc.) concerning how and to which extent results are generated with respect to developing a stronger, more independent and diversified civil society in developing countries and the extent to which Danish support and partnerships with Danish CSOs contribute to these results.
- The use of workshops or electronic survey with a focus on a few specific areas for a broad range of CSOs.

The use of a case study approach (in addition to the overall portfolio review) is proposed as this will support an intensive and in-depth look at the changes brought about within and by individual CSOs in receipt of Danish funds – information which would be difficult to access by other means. To offset bias, a number of CSOs will be looked at in each country chosen, and they will be selected to be representative of the kinds of organisations supported and the funding mechanisms used by Danida (with a specific focus on those supported by framework organisations, through embassies and through the CISU, but not excluding possible CS-support channelled through multilaterals in the two countries selected for in-depth study). The chief sources of information will be interviews (including focus groups), documents and observation. Factual information will be collected as well as views and opinions. A common approach tool and semi-structured interview protocols will be developed. Data analysis will be built into the field visit schedule to ensure that a clear, plausible and relevant story emerges and that additional avenues and emerging themes/patterns can be probed if necessary.

The focus of the analysis will be on findings, issues and lessons concerning Danida's support to CSOs across the sample studied, although that these will be illustrative, not necessarily replicable; and the extent to which this has led to a stronger, more independent CSO (with overall diversity at country level); and increased capacity; and if and how this has contributed to better development outcomes. The analysis should allow for identification in the report of appropriate strategies for engagement and funding of Southern CSOs from Denmark and within country strategies.

Given the central evaluation questions it follows that the primary focus of the evaluation will be on Southern civil society. Two countries: Uganda and Nepal have been selected for in-depth studies, but this does not preclude consideration of experience from other countries based on existing documentation and/or complemented by interviews by Skype or similar.

The evaluation team will also be required to select supported Southern CSOs for inclusion in the study. It will be important to balance breadth and depth of investigation. Considerations in selecting individual CSOs for attention will include:

- Contribution to either or both SG 2 and 3 of the Strategy
- Working at macro (national or international), meso (district or regional) and/or micro level (directly with beneficiaries)
- Recipients of funds through a diversity of funding mechanisms , but including a significant number which have been supported through framework agreements and pooled funds (weighted towards this i.e. not a representative sample)
- CSOs focusing on selected thematic areas (possibilities for using one or two sectors as tracer sectors across countries should be considered; thematic areas to be discussed with reference group during inception phase or before).

Annex B List of people consulted

Danida

Einar Hebogaard Jensen	Head of Department	Civil Society Department (HCP)
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Toni Solveig Michelsen	Chief Consultant	Africa Department

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Fred Mukholl	Partnership Advisor	Save the Children, Kenya
Ruth Wanga	Child Protection & Child Rights Governance Coordinator	Save the Children, Kenya

Uganda – Representatives from organisations and institutions met individually or in smaller groups

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Santosh Acharya	President	Youth Initiative
Rinjin Yonjan	Culture Consultant	

Nepal – Focus Group Discussion

1. District Land Rights Forum, Dang – (12 men & 10 women)
2. Centre for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd) Mediation Group – (8 men and 3 women)
3. RDIF Nepalgunj grantees (3 women and 9 men)
4. ActionAid Nepalgunj partners (12 men)
5. District Peace Committee, Banke – (7 men and 3 women)

Tanzania – Interviews

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Minou Fuglesang	Executive Director	Femina HIP
Geoffrey Musisi	Project Director	RFE
Ernest Sungura	Executive Director	Tanzania Media Fund
Martha Oluto		Foundation for Civil Society

Kenya – Interviews

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Lars Iskjær	Country Coordinator	Danish Red Cross
Peter Klansø	Regional Director	Danish Refugee Council
Julie Broadbent	Senior Programme Officer	Interpeace
Jesse Karikui	Programme Officer	Interpeace
Pierre Bry	Head of Funding Unit	OCHA, Kenya
Brigitte Pedro	Common Humanitarian Fund	OCHA, Kenya
Fred Mukholl	Partnership Advisor	Save the Children, Kenya
Ruth Wanga	Child Protection & Child Rights Governance Coordinator	Save the Children, Kenya

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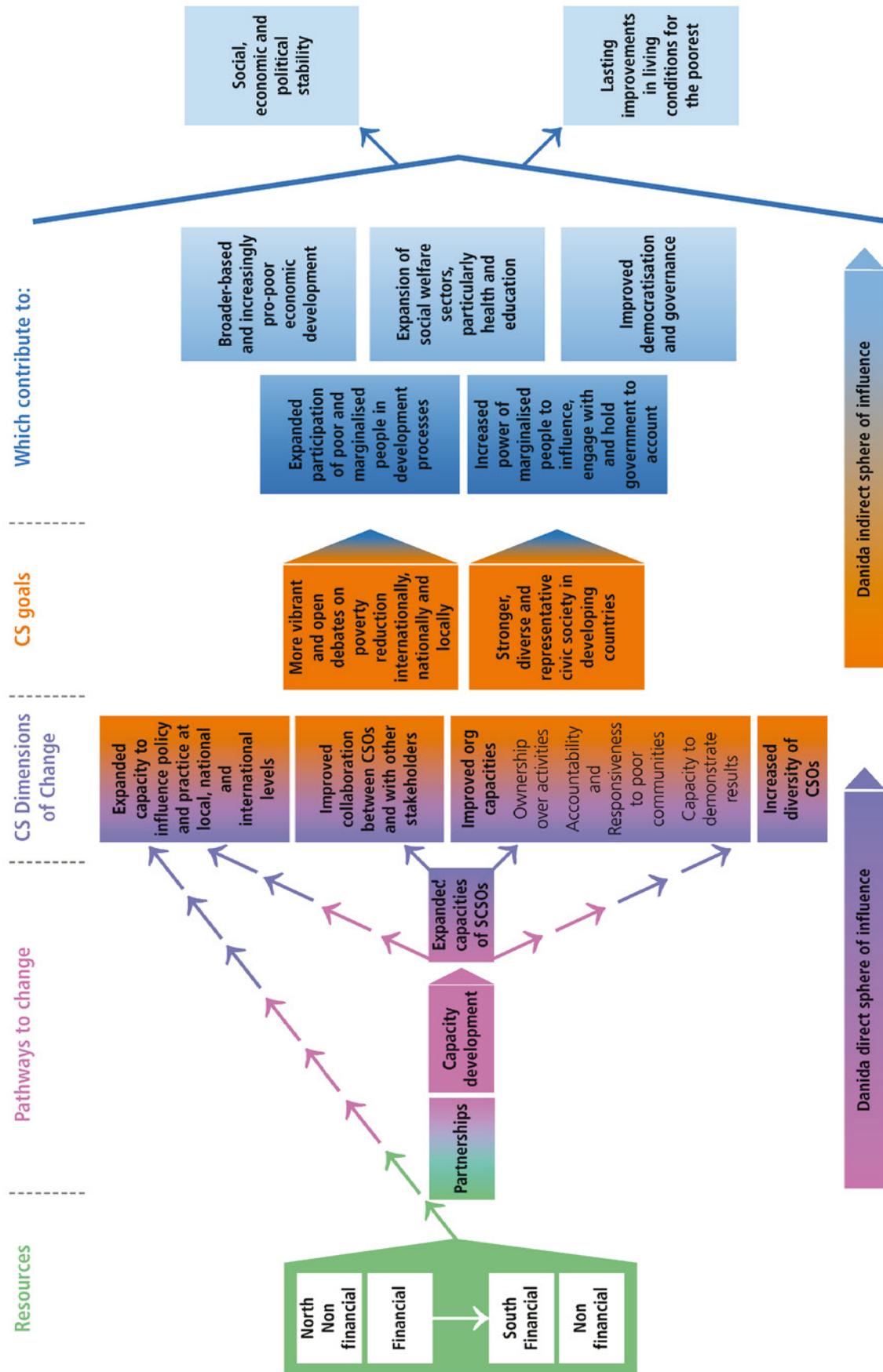
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Annex D Danish Civil Society Intervention Logic



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