



DANISH SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY: A MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK TO DEMONSTRATE RESULTS

EVALUATION

June 2017



Danish Support to Civil Society: A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to Demonstrate Results



June 2017

Production: Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
June 2017
Cover: Klaus Holsting/Danida
Graphic Production: Datagraf Communications A/S

ISBN: PDF: 978-87-93616-02-8
ISBN: HTML: 978-87-93616-03-5

This report can be downloaded through the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.um.dk or directly from the homepage of the Evaluation Department <http://evaluation.um.dk>.

Contact: eval@um.dk

Responsibility for content and presentations of findings and recommendations rests with the authors.

Contents

Executive Summary	8
Summary of Recommendations	13
1 Introduction	16
1.1 Background	16
1.2 Purpose and scope of evaluation	17
1.3 Approach	18
2 Danish Support to Civil Society: The Change Pathways	22
2.1 Partnership	22
2.2 Advocacy	26
2.3 Capacity development	29
2.4 The challenge of fragile contexts	33
3 Danish Support to Civil Society: An M&E Framework to Demonstrate Results	37
3.1 The purpose of an M&E framework	38
3.2 A revised theory of change	40
3.3 The M&E matrix	44
3.4 Summarising results	46
3.5 An M&E framework	53
Annex A: Adjusted Terms of Reference (edited)	56
Annex B: Learning Outputs of the Evaluation	58
Annex C: A Revised Theory of Change	59
Annex D: An M&E Matrix	60
Annex E: A specimen of portfolio results for Danish Framework CSOs, 2015	65

List of Abbreviations

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
Con/federation	Confederations and Federations
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DfID	Department for International Development, (UK)
DFPA	Danish Family Planning Association
DPOD	Disabled Peoples' Organisation in Denmark
EVAL	Evaluation Department
HMC	Department for Humanitarian Action, Migration and Civil Society
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LICADHO	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
LO/FTF Council	The Danish Federation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants (FTF)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCAT	Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
RAM	Resource Allocation Model
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
ToR	Terms of Reference

Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the second phase of the Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society in developing countries. We would like to thank the civil society organisations (CSOs), government agencies, and embassy staff who took time to collaborate with the three inception visits to Ghana, Tanzania and South Sudan; and to the staff of partner CSOs who responded to the online survey in those countries. We are also grateful to the staff of Danida and Danish CSOs who participated so generously and constructively in the learning processes and events during the second phase. We hope that we have at least in part done justice to the range and quality of experiences and perspectives that have contributed to this report.

Glossary of Terms

OECD Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-Based Management (OECD, 2002).

Accountability	Obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results, mandates, roles and/or plans.
Baseline study	An analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. It differs from monitoring in that it involves a judgment of the value of the activity and its results.
Fragile state	A state with weak capacity to carry out the basic state functions of governing a population and its territory and that lacks the ability or political will to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple, and reliable, means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.
Monitoring	A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specific indicators to provide management and stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.
Outcomes	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Results chain	The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback.
Results framework	The programme logic that explains how the development objective is to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions.
Theory of change	The description of a sequence of events that is expected to lead to a particular desired outcome.

Executive Summary

Background

1. An evaluation conducted by INTRAC and TANA to collate lessons learned from the operationalisation of Danida's then Civil Society Strategy was published in April 2013. The evaluation report made a number of recommendations that were subsequently incorporated into a new Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society in 2014. In December 2013, the Evaluation Department of Danida (EVAL) commissioned a second phase of the evaluation through to December 2016. However, detailed work could not be started until the Civil Society Policy was finalised in June 2014.
2. The initial Terms of Reference (ToR) for the second phase anticipated a real-time approach to the evaluation of Danida support to civil society through Danish Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with framework agreements with Danida currently in place, and in the country programmes in three focal countries with different operating contexts – fragile (South Sudan), stable (Tanzania) and in transition (Ghana). The primary objective was to facilitate, document and share learning through short evaluation inputs on how the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society could be better monitored, evaluated and reported on in line with the 2014 Civil Society Policy.
3. Following changes in EVAL, adjusted ToR for the second phase were agreed in May 2015 which restricted the focus of the evaluation principally to the work of Danish CSOs with framework agreements, although initial inception visits had been made to the three countries and partner surveys were subsequently conducted in each country. The adjusted ToR placed an emphasis on the evaluation providing *'a more systematic and robust basis for assessing and documenting the results of civil society support in 2020 by providing a draft evaluation framework indicating the dimensions of change and main lines of enquiry relevant to monitoring the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society through the change pathways of the Civil Society Policy, and a range of evidence-based materials in the form of good practice case studies, learning syntheses and tools relevant to monitoring and reporting on the change pathways¹.*
4. In line with a real-time approach, the evaluation has identified and shared good practice and learning from inside and outside the Danish context on how to track the contribution of the change pathways to the Civil Society Policy goals i.e. partnership, capacity development and advocacy, through a number of written outputs and learning workshops with Danish CSOs. The real-time approach to the second phase, however, has had to adjust to a number of changes in the context including the development of a new Danish strategy as a guiding framework for development cooperation; changes in personnel in Danida Evaluation and Civil Society depart-

1 Communiqué on second phase of the evaluation. p.3. Danida. July 2015.

ments; cuts in funding to Danish CSOs; and the introduction of a new strategic partnership modality for Danish CSOs – all of which have contributed to some instability in the context and ambiguity regarding the focus of the evaluation.

Danish CSOs and the change pathways

5. Danish CSOs have made good progress in recent years in improving their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks and the quality of their results reporting. There is a substantial body of good M&E practice which Danish CSOs can continue to build on to improve the evidence base that demonstrates their results, and to facilitate the summarisation of the achievements of Danish support to civil society. Improving the quality of monitoring and reporting on progress towards the change pathways i.e. partnership, capacity development and advocacy, would contribute significantly to results reporting at individual CSO and portfolio level since the pathways are integral to Danish CSO strategies and programmes, and to the achievement of the Denmark's strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action.
6. Danish CSOs should, therefore, continue to innovate and share learning in order to improve their monitoring and reporting of how the change pathways contribute to development outcomes. The evaluation highlighted the following areas for future learning and improvement:
 - *Partnership:* Ensure partnership objectives and indicators are included in results frameworks where appropriate; monitor and track changes in the partnership relationship; share learning on innovation in partnership from the issues identified in the evaluation; and explore how their added value in the relationship contributes to end results.
 - *Advocacy:* Describe and report on advocacy changes in results frameworks in terms of the stages of the policy cycle; specify the contribution Danish CSOs and/or their partners to advocacy achievements; and demonstrate how change at the level of organisations, communities or target groups contributes to wider systemic change.
 - *Capacity development:* Adopt a systematic approach to capacity development and the evaluation of its outcomes, outputs and activities; document feedback of different stakeholders about changes achieved; trace impact of individual capacity change on organisations; explore systemic impact by monitoring the evolution of network capacity; and through multi-stakeholder learning on broader social change.
7. Both Danish CSOs and Danida will have to pay special attention to the operational and technical challenges that hinder the M&E of the change pathways in fragile contexts as assistance is further concentrated in fragile contexts. The evaluation highlights the need for an ongoing context and/or conflict analysis; regular review of theory/ies of change to assess risk and adapt M&E frameworks; the use of disaggregated indicators; strong investment in the skills and capacities of national staff and partners in M&E; and the need to explore new ways of collecting and

triangulating data where access is difficult including ensuring that data gathering is quick, safe and practical.

Demonstrating change across the portfolio

8. There is a growing imperative to demonstrate and communicate the rationale and effectiveness of Danish support to national CSOs as an integral part of Danish development cooperation. Development cooperation budgets have come under pressure in recent years and a number of western governments have reviewed, or are in the process of reviewing, their support to civil society and, in some cases, have significantly reduced the funds available to domestic CSOs.
9. A key decision for Danida in this context is whether it wants to demonstrate and communicate at portfolio level the results of, and learning associated with, its support to civil society – and at what level of its civil society portfolio it want to summarise. Danish CSOs are accustomed to reporting annually on the progress towards their strategy objectives, and the evaluation has noted that the quality of their results frameworks and reporting has improved in recent years. In these circumstances, Danida will need to decide at the outset of the new partnership scheme whether portfolio reporting is to be a future option so that the ‘building blocks’ of an evidence base can be put in place from the outset.
10. The key building blocks of a coherent overview and summary reporting of Danish support to national CSOs are a shared theory of change, M&E matrix and approach to summarising results and distilling learning. It will be important to clarify at the outset the relationship between accountability and learning in an overall M&E framework, in particular the relationship between CSO reporting and resource allocation, and to ensure that incentives are in place to encourage an openness to learning in reporting.
11. The evaluation developed a revised theory of change as a first step towards a shared rationale or logic of why civil society support, and in particular strategic partnerships with Danish CSOs, is an important, effective element of Danish development cooperation. The theory of change seeks to more clearly sequence how the key change pathways contribute to the long-term goals; to identify the relationships between the pathways and the key actors; and to clarify the assumptions upon which the pathways are based.
12. The theory of change is supplemented by an M&E matrix to assist Danish CSOs and Danida, in partnership, to monitor, report, summarise and communicate the changes achieved by civil society support. The M&E matrix includes the short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes anticipated in the revised theory of change; suggests some portfolio indicators as a means of measuring these changes; and a series of learning questions to focus learning to improve performance.
13. The evaluation recommends that Danida consult with Danish CSOs to review the evaluation theory of change and M&E matrix to see whether or how they might be amended to form the basis of a shared framework for learning and accountability. The matrix could be used to identify a shared learning agenda (including for future

Danida evaluations and reviews) and develop a systematic, evidence-based body of knowledge – whether or not this is used for the purposes of portfolio reporting.

14. The evaluation suggests that, in order to establish ‘*a more systematic and robust basis for assessing and documenting the results of civil society support in 2020*’², it should be possible to use the M&E matrix to explore, without committing significant additional resources, how Danida and Danish CSOs can collaborate on summarising results and learning to demonstrate and communicate the effectiveness of their partnerships and to build up over time a strong body of evidence on results.
15. Danida should consider producing a regular e.g. annual or bi-annual report at output and outcome level on its support to Danish CSOs. The report might consist, for example, of aggregated outputs where appropriate; a summary analysis of key achievements and learning using a case study approach; distilled learning from research, reviews and evaluations; and a forward-looking learning agenda. This report could be assembled by Danida itself or by a third party to guarantee its independence.
16. Danish CSOs should continue to plan and report in their own formats to provide evidence of change although they might incorporate relevant elements of the M&E matrix into their own planning and reporting systems. Alternatively, information from reports can be subsequently ‘mapped’ against the portfolio indicators of the M&E matrix by Danida or by CSOs.
17. Summary reporting could aggregate outputs across the portfolio to a small number of predefined indicators agreed with Danish CSOs. This would enable Danida to demonstrate the ‘reach’ of its support i.e. the scale and diversity of activities, which can be useful for public communications.
18. The systematic use of case study material would also be an integral part of the portfolio reporting. Danish CSOs could be asked to produce ‘purposeful’ case studies according to pre-agreed criteria e.g. on key learning questions from the M&E matrix. This would facilitate subsequent analysis and summarisation of the case studies, which could be done by Danida or a third party. The focus of the case studies could be decided jointly and in response to issues emerging from the learning agenda.
19. Danida research, reviews and evaluations relevant to civil society could also be linked to priority learning questions from the M&E matrix and their findings incorporated in summary reporting.
20. There is considerable scope to use the M&E matrix to facilitate shared learning between Danida and its strategic partners – for example through annual sense-making workshop(s); or through ongoing Danish CSO working groups on priorities linked to the learning questions of the M&E matrix.

2 Communiqué on second phase of the evaluation. Danida. July 2015.

21. It will be important for Danida to verify results reported by CSOs in narrative form e.g. by testing a small random sample of claims or claims of strategic interest periodically through methodologies such as contribution analysis and/or process tracing. These could be written up into short case studies using a common structure to add to the body of evidence and learning.
22. Danida should draw upon the learning of the evaluation to consult further with Danish CSO strategic partners on how they can, within resource constraints, jointly demonstrate and communicate the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society as an integral part of Danish development cooperation.

Summary of Recommendations

The evaluation recommends that:

1. Danida should consult with Danish CSOs to review the evaluation theory of change and M&E matrix to see how they might be amended to form the basis of a shared framework for learning and accountability (p. 44).

Danish CSOs and the change pathways

2. Danish CSOs should continue to innovate and share learning in order to improve their monitoring and reporting of how the change pathways contribute to development outcomes in the following areas:
3. *Partnership*
 - Monitor and track how the partnership relationship changes with regards to partnership objectives in their results frameworks (p. 25).
 - Include objectives and indicators in their results frameworks that reflect their approach to adding value in partnerships and explore how to connect this to end results (p. 24).
 - Share learning on innovation in partnership as identified in the evaluation (p. 26).
4. *Advocacy*
 - Include a consistent interpretation of the stages of the policy cycle in their results framework, using appropriate indicators (p. 28).
 - Specify the contribution Danish CSOs and/or their partners have played in advocacy achievements (p. 28).
 - Demonstrate how change at the level of organisations, communities or target groups contribute to wider systemic change (p. 28).
5. *Capacity development*
 - Adopt a systematic approach to capacity development and to the evaluation of capacity development outcomes, outputs and activities (p. 29).
 - Danish CSOs invest in getting feedback from stakeholders on changes achieved through capacity development interventions. (p. 30).
 - Trace the broader, medium-term impact of individual capacity change on organisations (p. 30).

- Trace the impact of organisational development through the joint use of appropriate tools to encourage ownership of the process and results (p. 32).
 - Trace systemic impact via the use of specialist networking tools; monitoring at a sectoral level; and through multi-stakeholder learning on broader social change (p. 33).
6. *Fragile contexts.* Danish CSOs working in fragile contexts should:
- Monitor their programme context closely to identify drivers of change and make timely decisions to modify their assumptions and activities (p. 34).
 - Use a theory of change in an agile way as the basis of an M&E framework and to monitor risks and assumptions and enable the programme to adapt (p. 34).
 - Report at both output and outcome levels as appropriate, using indicators that enable disaggregation and are realistic i.e. reflect the practical difficulties of data gathering (p. 35).
 - Ensure data gathering is quick, safe and practical, including the use of software applications for mobile data collection where appropriate (p. 36).
 - Invest strongly in the M&E skills and capacities of national staff and local partners in fragile contexts and explore new ways of both collecting and triangulating data where access is difficult. (p. 36)

Sharing learning across the portfolio

The evaluation also suggests that:

7. Danida clearly defines the relationship between CSO reporting and the resource allocation model (RAM) and explores what incentives might be necessary to encourage an openness to learning in annual reporting (p. 39).
8. Danida links research and evaluations relevant to civil society to the learning questions of the M&E matrix and funds short pieces of in-depth research to investigate findings that emerge in its sense-making activities with Danish CSOs (p. 46).
9. Danida facilitates opportunities for Danish CSOs to share and discuss learning through annual sense-making workshop(s); or through ongoing working groups on their own learning priorities linked to the learning questions of the M&E matrix (p. 45).
10. Danida shares the revised theory of change and M&E matrix with reviews and evaluations of CSO umbrella organisations and relevant in-country programmes to assemble a more consistent analysis of the outcomes of its support to Southern civil society (p. 44).

Summarising results across the portfolio

11. Danida decides at the outset of the new partnership scheme whether portfolio reporting e.g. in the form of an annual or bi-annual summary, will be a future option so that the 'building blocks' of an evidence base can be put in place from the outset (p. 47).
12. Danish CSOs continue to plan and report in their own formats, incorporating relevant elements of the M&E matrix if appropriate or, alternatively, information can be subsequently 'mapped' against the portfolio indicators (p. 50).
13. Danida promotes the systematic use of purposive case study material, using pre-agreed criteria such as key learning questions from the M&E matrix, as an integral part of its annual portfolio reporting (p. 51).
14. Danida issues guidance to Danish CSOs on reporting to the M&E matrix; methodology and criteria for using a case study approach in results reporting; and on standard output indicators, to ensure that all CSOs collect information to consistent standards and definitions (p. 53).
15. Danida adopts a system to verify the results reported by CSOs in narrative form e.g. by testing a small random sample of claims and/or claims that are considered to be strategically important (p. 52).
16. Danida considers developing an online facility, or adapting its Open Aid website, to 'showcase' its support to civil society through stories of change, videos, results and analysis (p. 53).
17. Danida reviews its data management systems with a view to tagging funds allocated in support of civil society more clearly (p. 54).

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

An evaluation of Danish support to civil society was commissioned by Danida in October 2012 to collate lessons learned from the operationalisation of the then Civil Society Strategy³. The evaluation was to review how the operationalisation of the strategy through different modalities had contributed to a stronger, more independent, diversified civil society in developing countries. It was also asked to identify what lessons could be learned for the future monitoring and evaluation of Danish support to civil society in the South.

The evaluation report⁴ made a number of recommendations that were subsequently incorporated into a new Danida Civil Society Policy in 2014⁵. These included:

- Develop a Civil Society Policy in support of the new Danish Development Cooperation Strategy⁶ that defines the role civil society plays as an agent for change for pro-poor outcomes;
- Develop the concept of ‘flexible partnerships’ in the new strategy to elucidate the distinctive contribution that Danish civil society organisations (CSOs) make to Danish development cooperation;
- Develop a separate intervention logic for Danish CSOs that clarifies the dimensions of change that encapsulate their added value to Southern CSOs and plausible indicators to monitor and measure these changes;
- Encourage Danish CSOs to explore new ways of ‘re-balancing’ their partnerships with Southern CSOs, e.g. through the creation of a special fund⁷;
- Develop a performance framework to review the funding of Danish CSOs every four years.

The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) included an option for a second or follow-up phase to evaluate further progress with respect to the implementation of a new Civil Society Policy. In December 2013, the Evaluation Department of Danida (EVAL) commissioned a second phase of the evaluation through to December 2016. However, detailed work could not be started until the Civil Society Policy was finalised in June 2014 since the new policy was to provide a set of good practice commitments by which Danish support to civil society across support modalities could be monitored and evaluated.

3 “The Civil Society Strategy for Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries” Danida. December 2008.

4 “Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society”. Danida. April 2013.

5 “Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society”. Danida. June 2014.

6 “The Right to a Better Life”. Danida. August 2012.

7 The Danida Fund for Innovation in Civil Society Partnerships was set up in December 2013.

1.2 Purpose and scope of evaluation

The initial draft Terms of Reference⁸ for the second phase anticipated a real-time approach to the evaluation of Danida support to civil society through Danish CSOs and through its country programmes. The focus of the evaluation was to be on Danish CSOs with framework agreements with Danida currently in place, and the country programmes in three focal countries with different operating contexts – fragile (South Sudan), stable (Tanzania) and in transition (Ghana). The primary objective was to facilitate, document and share learning through short evaluation inputs on how the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society could be better monitored, evaluated and reported on in line with the 2014 Civil Society Policy.

The second phase was launched at a workshop with Danish CSOs in August 2014. This provided an opportunity to introduce the focus and approach of the evaluation and to illustrate how it aimed to facilitate ‘real-time’ learning and improvement. This was followed by short inception visits in November/December 2014 to the three focal countries to meet with key stakeholders and to form an overview of Danish support to civil society in the countries. A country inception report was produced for each country visited and was shared with the relevant embassy and other stakeholders.

Discussions on the scope of the evaluation were re-initiated in the early part of 2015 following changes in EVAL. Adjusted Terms of Reference for the second phase were agreed in May 2015, which restricted the focus of the evaluation principally to support to civil society through framework Danish CSOs, although it was also agreed that a survey of Southern CSOs in receipt of Danish support through different modalities in the three focal countries would be conducted.

The adjusted Terms of Reference for the second phase placed greater emphasis on providing *‘a more systematic and robust basis for assessing and documenting the results of civil society support in 2020 by providing a draft evaluation framework indicating the dimensions of change and main lines of enquiry relevant to monitoring the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society through the change pathways of the Civil Society Policy, and a range of evidence-based materials in the form of good practice case studies, learning syntheses and tools relevant to monitoring and reporting on the change pathways’*.⁹

Towards the end of the second phase, in October 2016, the Department for Humanitarian Action, Migration and Civil Society of Danida (HMC) announced the redesign of its funding modalities for Danish CSOs, including a new strategic partnership modality to replace the CSO Framework Agreements and Humanitarian Strategic Partnerships. The strategic partnership modality was to be fast-tracked so that a call for applications could be made early in 2017. The new strategic partnership scheme would combine humanitarian and development results frameworks and reporting, although funding streams would remain separate.

The evaluation sought to ensure the utility of its final report in light of the rapid introduction of the new modality. A subsequent meeting with HMC and EVAL took place in

8 Dated December 2013.

9 Communique on second phase of the evaluation. Danida. July 2015.

November 2016 that clarified that the scope of the proposed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework should be restricted to the strategic partnership scheme, although the report should address some of the issues and challenges associated with results reporting on other civil society support modalities. The evaluation team agreed with EVAL that the final report should be in the form of a structured commentary to an Evaluation Framework. The report would draw upon the lessons learned and good practice identified during the evaluation but would not attempt a comprehensive synthesis of the written outputs of the second phase. These would instead be attached as separate documents.

A draft of this final Evaluation Report was delivered to Danida in January 2017. Conclusions and recommendations were extracted from the draft report and shared with Danish CSOs at a workshop held in Copenhagen on 27th March 2017. The draft report was subsequently updated e.g. with references to the new Danish strategy for development cooperation¹⁰, and the final Evaluation Report delivered to Danida in April 2017.

1.3 Approach

The adjusted Terms of Reference in May 2015 identified three main elements of the approach to the second phase:

- a) Testing the role of the change pathways in the Civil Society Policy intervention logic;
- b) Facilitating a process of learning; and
- c) Developing an Evaluation Framework.

a) Testing the role of the change pathways in the Civil Society Policy intervention logic

The evaluation made short inception visits in 2014 to each of the three focal countries (Ghana, South Sudan and Tanzania)¹¹ but the follow-up visits planned for 2016 to test the relevance of the Civil Society Policy intervention logic and the utility of the Evaluation Framework in each country context were not conducted. This was due partly to a desire from Danida for the evaluation to focus primarily on support to Danish CSOs and partly to a lack of responsiveness from the country embassies. The evaluation, however, has produced a revised intervention logic/theory of change¹² for Danish support to civil society, which draws upon the theory of change of the current policy and the learning of the evaluation about the intervention logics of Danish CSOs. This revised theory of change has not been field-tested at country level as originally intended due to the cancellation of the proposed country visits.

b) Facilitating a process of learning

The facilitation of real-time learning among Danish CSOs has been key to the evaluation approach. The evaluation has identified and shared good practice and learning from

10 “The World 2030: Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action.” January 2017.

11 See Evaluation Reports 1, 2 and 3 for the Country Inception Reports.

12 See Annex C.

inside and outside the Danish context on how to track the contribution of the change pathways – partnership, capacity development and advocacy – to the Civil Society Policy goals in a number of ways, i.e.:

Learning outputs. The second phase produced a variety of written outputs¹³ to contribute to the learning process through workshops and online discussions. These included:

- *Three country inception reports* for Ghana, South Sudan and Tanzania.
- *Three summary analyses of partner surveys* at country level and a synthesis of lessons from all three.
- *Seven short learning syntheses* on how Danish CSO contributions to the Civil Society Policy goals are/can be monitored and reported. The topics of these syntheses were prioritised by Danish CSOs in workshop discussions. The learning syntheses proved to be very positively received by Danish CSOs since they responded directly to the priorities they identified for further learning on monitoring and reporting. The papers were designed to be short, easy to read and to draw upon good practice from Danish CSOs and more broadly in the sector. Key topics included how to summarise results; track capacity change; report a Danish contribution to the results of a global CSO; and good practice in documenting results in fragile contexts.
- *A learning review of Danish CSO innovation proposals, two short case studies and a summary of learning* of Danish CSO innovation projects. The summary of learning on the two case studies identified some key issues for future learning on aspects of innovation in North/South CSO partnerships.

Learning workshops. The evaluation held three learning workshops with Danish CSOs in Copenhagen in August 2014, October 2015, and March 2016. A final workshop planned for October 2016 was cancelled due to the complicating factors associated with the announcement of the new strategic partnership scheme. The objective of each workshop was to use the written output(s) above to facilitate a process of learning on how to monitor and report on the results of civil society support. The workshops were well-attended and Danish CSOs constructively engaged in peer learning.

Online knowledge sharing. The evaluation set up a web portal www.paths4change.info in January 2016 to enable stakeholders to easily access evaluation materials and other useful materials available in the sector relevant to the learning topics. While the portal was used by CSOs to access materials, it has not been maintained subsequent to the evaluation. It is intended to post the learning outputs of the evaluation on the website of Globalt Fokus¹⁴, as was originally intended.

Webinar. A webinar with Danish CSOs on the M&E challenges and opportunities facing global CSOs was held in July 2016.

13 See Annex B for a full list of written outputs.

14 <http://www.globaltfokus.dk>

c) **Developing an Evaluation Framework**

The evaluation, as per the adjusted Terms of Reference, has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework to suggest how Danida might evaluate the effectiveness of its support to Danish CSOs. The framework describes the relevant M&E systems and processes that Danida requires at an organisational level to enable it to monitor and summarise the changes that its CSO strategic partners achieve through the change pathways, including in fragile contexts. The M&E framework is accompanied by an M&E matrix¹⁵ that identifies the dimensions of change and lines of enquiry relevant to monitoring and reporting on civil society support. The M&E framework is linked to a revised theory of change for civil society support which the evaluation developed to refine the theory of change in the Civil Society Policy.

Limitations to the Approach

A real-time evaluation should be prepared to adjust and adapt in the event of a changing context. The evaluation acknowledges that a number of factors have placed some limitations on the effectiveness of the proposed approach. These are:

- *Changes in orientation in EVAL* in early 2015 led to renewed discussions on the scope of the evaluation; an adjusted ToR; and a loss of momentum in communication with the country embassies and Danish CSOs.
- *Changes in HMC and to civil society support modalities in Denmark* in 2016 contributed to delays in clarifying expectations of the final evaluation report and last-minute clarifications and adjustments to the scope of the Evaluation Framework.
- *Changes in government* subsequent to the election of a new government in June 2015 led to cuts in levels of funding to Danish CSOs and uncertainty about Danida's future approach and levels of support to Danish CSOs. This diverted the time and energy of Danish CSOs, and in some cases reduced their M&E resources, although Danish CSO engagement in the evaluation continued to be positive and constructive.
- *The development of a new Danish development cooperation strategy* in January 2017 has introduced a new guiding framework for Danish support to civil society including, for example, the new system of Danida/CSO strategic partnerships introduced in early 2017.

This report draws upon the evaluation learning of how Danish Framework CSOs implement, monitor and report on their work with Southern civil society to offer an M&E framework to enable Danida to demonstrate at portfolio level the results achieved through its support to CSO strategic partners.

Chapter 2 summarises some of the challenges and opportunities facing Danish CSOs in monitoring and reporting on the change pathways highlighted in the Civil Society Policy by drawing upon the evaluation lessons included in the learning syntheses produced in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

15 See Annex D.

Chapter 3 introduces the elements of an M&E Framework and an M&E matrix to assist Danida to demonstrate and summarise the achievements of Danish support to civil society, in particular the new strategic partnership scheme.

2 Danish Support to Civil Society: The Change Pathways

This chapter will summarise some evaluation findings of how Danish CSOs in receipt of framework agreements interpret and monitor the changes associated with the three change pathways of Danish civil society support – partnership, capacity development, and advocacy. The section draws on the learning processes and outputs of the second phase of the evaluation to describe some of the good practice examples of how Danish CSOs track change in these pathways, and suggests some areas for future learning and improvement. This is followed by an analysis of the key issues, and some suggestions for good practice, associated with monitoring change in these pathways in fragile contexts.

2.1 Partnership

Partnership is a core value and approach of framework Danish CSOs and features prominently in their strategies, theories of change and results frameworks. Most framework CSOs have partnership policies or strategies, usually developed in consultation with partners themselves that set out the principles, commitments and ways of working that are subsequently embedded in Partnership Agreements or development plans with Southern CSOs.

When considering partnership, it should be kept in mind that Danish CSOs use the term ‘partner’ to refer to quite different relationships. The Southern partners of Danish CSOs are diverse and each type of partnership presents a different set of challenges with regard to monitoring and reporting. The primary partnership of a global CSO such as the Danish Red Cross is normally with the national affiliate to the con/federation and its relationship with other national CSOs is most often an indirect one. This is true also for ‘single issue’ CSOs such as Disabled Peoples’ Organisation in Denmark (DPOD), Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA) and the Danish Federation of Trade Unions and the Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants (LO/FTF), who partner with similar organisations in the South. Many CSOs work with a small number of core or strategic partners who tend to be stronger or more established organisations. Several strategies make reference to working with more informal civic groups although this is most often indirectly via established partners.

The evaluation found that increased expectations of monitoring and reporting, combined with a decline in funding, have led many/most CSOs to reduce their number of partners. Some CSOs recognised that they had become more ‘interventionist’ in their approach, for example encouraging some traditional partners, e.g. churches, to adapt to a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). The 2016 evaluation partner surveys found confirmation of a more ‘hands on’ and sometimes ‘directive’ approach by Danish CSOs.¹⁶ This may illustrate a tension between the goal of encouraging civil society diversity and the imperative to demonstrate results.

16 See “Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions” p. 13.

Monitoring and reporting on partnership

Danish CSOs have begun to incorporate objectives that relate directly to partnership in their results frameworks¹⁷. For example, the DPOD strategy includes a specific partnership indicator referring to partners' programme management capacity in M&E and the documentation of results. Even when partnership is not an explicit objective, partnership indicators feature prominently in broader civil society objectives. For example, Oxfam IBIS indicators of civil society influence over governance include the number of partnership agreements committed to improving advocacy capacity. These examples illustrate how incorporating partnership indicators in results frameworks enables Danish CSOs to monitor and report on changes within their sphere of direct influence.

The Danish Civil Society Policy¹⁸ emphasises the importance of partnerships between civil society actors in Denmark and the global South as a central element of development cooperation. It highlights two elements of partnership that should be characteristic of Danish support in the changing context of Southern civil society that have particular relevance to Danida CSO strategic partners. These have been incorporated into the revised theory of change¹⁹. They are:

- a) Adding value through partnership, i.e. the need for Danish CSOs to demonstrate how they add value to the efforts of Southern CSO partners;
- b) Innovating in partnership, i.e. the need for Danish CSOs to re-balance the traditional dynamics of North/South partnerships and to engage in new partnerships, for example, with emerging civil society actors or partners from other sectors.

The evaluation found that Danish CSOs have actively sought to address and monitor these two dimensions of partnerships as follows:

Adding value through partnership

Southern CSOs' experiences of partnership with Danish CSOs are generally very positive. The majority of Southern CSOs view their relationship with Danish CSOs more as 'partnership' than 'donorship', i.e. of having an interest in the organisation and its development beyond the project relationship, and regard their partnership as flexible and supportive²⁰.

"[We] see them as partners despite their function as grant givers – they are flexible responsive to our suggestions and involve us in their strategic planning"²¹.

In the context of South Sudan, about half of the partners valued the longer-term accompaniment and tolerance of failure offered by Danish CSOs when times got tough.

17 The examples quoted in this section are from the CSO strategies for the current period. These are usually but not always for the period 2015-2017.

18 See pp. 18-20.

19 See Annex C.

20 See "Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions" p. 13. A small minority of CSOs reported average or negative experiences, often associated with changes in leadership or restructuring of the Danish CSO in question.

21 See "Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions" p. 37.

“Other agencies stopped their support during the crisis while [Danish CSO] continued their support ... it was the only organisation we were left with during the crisis”²².

The evaluation found that many Danish CSOs are exploring how they formulate the value they add to the work of Southern partners. Some CSOs describe their approach to adding value in their strategies and include objectives and indicators in their results frameworks that reflect this.

The elements of added value that Danish CSOs most frequently cite are:

- Capacity development, especially in HRBA;
- Supporting mutual and South-South learning, for example, through workshops or peer support groups that provide opportunities for CSOs to share experiences and good practice;
- Linking partners to national, regional and international fora;
- Advocacy in the North and within appropriate alliances.

A key issue is how Danish CSOs connect the value they believe they add to their partnerships to end results. DanChurchAid, for example, has constructed a results framework that links the changes it effects through adding value its work with partners (as measured by a ‘*strategy indicator*’) to broader programme outcomes linked to changes at partner level (as measured by an ‘*effect indicator*’), as illustrated below.

DanChurchAid strategy indicator

% of partners in Right to Food programme including structural work on food insecurity etc. in their policies and plans and implement.

DanChurchAid effect indicator

Combination of agricultural production, income generation and accessing rights contributes to a reduction in food insecurity.

Source: DanChurchAid 2015-17 strategy.

This has the advantage of identifying two links in the results chain and enabling CSOs to track and report on both the changes they effect directly with partners and the programme outcomes they affect indirectly through that support.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs to include objectives and indicators in their results frameworks that reflect their approach to adding value and explore how to connect the value they add to their partnerships to end results.

22 See “Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions” p. 27.

Innovation in partnership

The Civil Society Policy encouragement of Danish CSOs to reappraise and ‘re-balance’ their relationships with partnerships has taken various forms:

- *Partner representation in governance* – for example, the representation of DanChurchAid partners in a partner group that has an advisory function to its Board and Senior Management.
- *Greater transparency and accountability* – for example, both IBIS and DanChurchAid have participated in a Keystone Performance Survey on partnership in which partners comment and rate the relationship on a number of dimensions. Others, such as CARE Denmark conduct their own surveys or hold partnership meetings. Such mechanisms, especially if independently conducted, can help document how partnerships are evolving and the value Danish CSOs add to them.
- *Transferring budgetary responsibilities* – there is less evidence of this, though CARE Denmark has set targets for 2017 and 2020 to increase the percentage of country budgets which are managed and implemented by partners, and there has been some experimentation with delegating fund management at project level, as illustrated below.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs monitor and track how the partnership relationship changes in relation to partnership objectives in their results frameworks.

In October 2013 Danida invited 15 Danish CSOs with current framework agreements to submit proposals for innovative civil society partnership projects. The call²³ identified three dimensions of innovation – selection of partners, partnership dynamics and choice of methods. Priority was to be given to proposals with strong implications for future partnerships although most of the proposals received focused on choice of method e.g. the use of information and communication technology in advocacy-related projects. The evaluation identified two projects with the potential for future learning on ‘*the gradual transfer of responsibility to partners in the global South*²⁴’:

- *Social Movements in Cyber Age* (DanChurchAid). The project focused on the access to and use of social media by a social movement in support of human rights and democracy in Cambodia. The project also aimed to challenge a traditional model of partnership and implement the project through a Consortium consisting of DanChurchAid, its long-term partner the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO), citizen groups and Cambodian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on human rights. An important aspect of innovation in the project was that the Consortium would be responsible for a Social Action Fund and for allocating funds to provide timely, flexible support to civic action groups.
- *Insecure Lands: New alliances for the promotion of universal values* (CARE Denmark). The project focused on advocating for pastoral rights in relation to illegal

23 Call for proposals to the Danida Fund for Innovation in Civil Society Partnerships.

24 Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society p. 18.

occupation and land grabbing in pastoral lands in Niger. The project set out to change the balance of power in the partnership by establishing a management Board consisting of CARE Niger, CARE Denmark, project partners and relevant state officials, to act as a strategic decision-making body for the project.

The evaluation produced short case studies on both projects with the agreement of the CSOs and identified five areas for possible future learning regarding innovation in partnership²⁵. These were:

- Monitor the different challenges faced in introducing innovative approaches in both new and well-established partnerships. The trust gained in a well-established partnership might be an asset to innovation; alternatively, long-standing familiarity might act as a brake.
- Establish metrics to monitor how new forms of partnership evolve. If no metrics are identified in a results framework to monitor progress in innovation in partner dynamics, there is a risk it will not feature prominently in project management, learning and reporting.
- Research and monitor how stakeholders can best be supported by Danish CSOs to drive innovation from the outset – for example, to assume leadership roles or to assume fund management responsibility while retaining standards of fiduciary responsibility that meet donor expectations.
- Research how civil society groups of unequal resources and experiences, including informal civic action groups and individuals, might be jointly empowered in project governance.
- Research whether innovation in project governance is linked to greater innovation in programming, e.g. whether the participation of partners in decision-making enables or hinders greater flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances or the adoption of new ways of working with target groups.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs to share learning on innovation in partnership as identified in the evaluation.

2.2 Advocacy

The revised theory of change incorporates advocacy in the form of policy, practice, attitudes or behaviour change at local, national and international levels as a desired long-term outcome. Public awareness-raising in Denmark is also included as a short-term outcome. These policy and practice changes are linked to the achievement of the SDGs. The long-term outcome is expressed in a generic rather than specific way as it needs to cover a range of areas that Danish CSOs are working on and that are contained in the new Development Strategy. However, over time, it might be possible to identify more

25 See “Learning Synthesis 7: Innovation Case Studies” for a fuller account of the two projects and lessons learned.

specific advocacy changes that CSOs are working on collectively or where Danida is interested in documenting its contribution.

All Danish framework CSOs incorporate some elements of advocacy²⁶ in their strategies, although the results reported vary considerably to reflect the different types of programmes involved. Danish CSOs support advocacy initiatives at many different levels – from global campaigning, national-level initiatives to community-level advocacy with local duty bearers. They also support advocacy activities in different ways. They provide capacity development to partners; conduct policy-related research; facilitate access to policy makers or policy making fora; and conduct advocacy activities jointly with partners or directly with policy makers.

Monitoring and reporting on advocacy

The evaluation found that advocacy objectives in Danish CSO strategies were pitched at different levels or dimensions of change in a results framework. For example:

- *Activity*, e.g. “will lobby towards...”; “will play an active role....”
- *Output*, e.g. “to strengthen civil society advocacy...”, “develop an advocacy strategy”
- *Outcome*, e.g. “to improve equitable access to natural resources...”, “to contribute to the quality and accessibility of public services of the poor and marginalised”.

Another way of looking at this is that Danish CSOs support advocacy at different stages in the policy cycle – from agenda setting, raising awareness and policy dialogue; policy development or formulation, policy approval or adoption; to policy implementation and monitoring. The approach to advocacy and the stage in the policy cycle to which it is directed will affect, for example, the type of result and choice of indicator to measure that result. Thinking about outcomes at different stages of the policy cycle may allow for a way of tracking and reporting on progress even when the end outcome has not yet been reached, as illustrated below²⁷:

26 It is interesting to note that the 2016 evaluation partner survey in Tanzania nonetheless found evidence of resistance of some local communities to undertake advocacy. See “Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions” p. 34.

27 The stages of the policy cycle derived from Figure 1.1. in the “Joint Evaluation of Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue”, November 2012, p. 28 initiated by the Donor Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, and commissioned by ADC/Austria, Danida/Denmark and Sida/Sweden.

Table 1: Monitoring Change in the Policy Cycle

Policy cycle stage	Outcome	Specimen indicators
Agenda setting	Public awareness raised and attention focused on issue.	# and description of Southern partners/target groups/Danish public that report they are likely to take action on issue as result of Danish support.
Policy formulation	Policy/decision makers have taken up the issue and take action to address the problem.	# and description of targeted decision-makers making public statements or taking action in support of issue.
Policy adoption	Formal adoption of a policy through legislation or rules.	# and description of policies, laws, or practices that are adopted.
Policy monitoring	Stakeholders monitor whether policy is implemented well and are addressing the problem.	Monitoring procedures in place for policy/law/practice and # and description of their effective use.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs include a consistent interpretation of the stages of the policy cycle in their results framework, using appropriate indicators.

Danish CSOs are often directly involved in advocacy themselves in addition to supporting Southern partners in their advocacy, e.g. through capacity development. Some Danish CSOs such as CARE and DanChurchAid make a clear distinction in their results frameworks between changes in partner organisational capacity and wider societal changes. A lack of clarity about the precise role Danish CSOs have played in advocacy achievements, and achievements reported by their partners, is a frequent barrier to establishing contribution. Reporting not only on the advocacy achievement but also specifying the role and capacity development support of the Danish CSO in relation to a particular advocacy achievement can help establish a plausible contribution.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs specify the contribution they and/or their partners have played in advocacy achievements.

Like many others, Danish CSOs continue to struggle to demonstrate how change at the level of individual communities or target groups contributes to wider systemic change in terms of the rights and accountability assumed in the theory of change²⁸. This may be due to the long term and complex nature of societal change or the scale of their interventions. This is an area that merits greater joint research and learning – for example, through longitudinal research to track how different types of capacity development over time have contributed or hindered changes in civil society in a particular geographical location or sector. The evaluation will explore the difference between organisational and societal impact further in the next chapter.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs demonstrate how change at the level of organisations, communities or target groups contributes to wider systemic change.

28 See Annex E: A specimen of portfolio results.

2.3 Capacity development

Capacity development is a key ‘pathway to change’ and almost a universal element of Danish CSO support to Southern civil society²⁹. Danish CSOs employ a wide range of formal and informal approaches to capacity development including coaching and mentoring, technical assistance, training, peer learning, and facilitating access to knowledge. Capacity development is sometimes a messy, iterative process rather than a linear one so it can be difficult to track capacity changes through individual and organisational levels, to wider systems. It can also be difficult to separate out intended changes from those that evolve in response to a changing environment, and further complicated when more than one capacity provider has been involved.

The diversity of approaches means that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to the M&E of capacity development. Changes in capacity are easier to monitor and evaluate if the capacity development methodology is comparatively focused, for example, ActionAid Denmark’s training programmes on specific aspects of governance, or technically specialised. It is more difficult if the CSO has a complex portfolio of capacity development that combines a range of methods. The challenge is how to keep M&E of capacity development light and flexible. The more that M&E can be built into a project or programme as a vehicle for capacity development itself, the more organisations will find it easier to justify the time and expense.

Successive Danida thematic reviews and evaluations have highlighted the need for Danish CSOs to adopt a more systematic approach to capacity development, e.g. by adopting capacity development frameworks, and a more systematic evaluation of capacity development outcomes as well as outputs and activities³⁰. Since capacity development is integral to much of Danish CSO support to partners, improvements in this area will contribute significantly to results reporting. Findings from the evaluation demonstrate that a number of Danish CSOs have made progress in this area. The role of capacity development in their results frameworks has become more explicit and several – for example, CARE Denmark, LO/FTE, ActionAid Denmark and DanChurchAid – provide guidance on their overall approach to and understanding of capacity development.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs adopt a systematic approach to capacity development and to the evaluation of capacity development outcomes, outputs and activities.

The basic hypothesis in Danish CSO theories of change is that the individual and organisational development of Southern CSOs contributes to wider societal change by supporting poor and marginalised groups to claim their rights, and influence duty bearers and decision makers. This hypothesis informs the revised theory of change which, following on from previous theories of change, presents a more independent, diverse, inclusive, representative, accountable Southern civil society as an intermediate outcome of Danish

29 For a fuller discussion of the issues covered in this section see “Learning Synthesis 3: Tracking Capacity Change”.

30 The 2016 evaluation partner surveys confirmed that systematic approaches to track the results of capacity development initiatives are rarely used. Partners themselves do not have systematic ways of evaluating the capacity development they are getting. This could be an interesting area for further support and investment as it would empower them to be more discerning consumers of the capacity development on offer. See “Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions” p. 14.

support to civil society. This is accompanied by two separate but related short-term outcomes – stronger, more legitimate and sustainable Southern CSOs, and strengthened advocacy capacity of Southern CSOs. Some Danish CSOs are supporting areas of capacity development beyond the traditional focus on organisational systems and project cycle management. These include, for example: leadership, downwards accountability to rights holders and long-term financial and organisational sustainability. Tracking the results of these efforts and how far they contribute more successfully to the civil society outcomes in the theory of change is an interesting area for further research and joint reflection between Danish CSOs and Danida.

Many capacity development models look at capacity through three interlinked and interdependent levels – the individual, organisational and systemic. Danish CSOs' support to capacity development efforts often tries to work at all of these levels, i.e. support to individuals within partner organisations, the development of the organisations themselves, and their ability to interact with and influence their wider environment. Danish CSOs can try to assess change at individual, organisational and societal levels by using surveys, semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions to gather the perceptions of different stakeholders, or by commissioning independent reviews of evaluations to do so. Some of the other tools and approaches relevant to each of these levels are discussed below.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs invest in getting feedback from stakeholders on changes achieved through capacity development interventions.

Individual capacity

Danish CSO capacity development support is most often directed at changes in the knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviour of individuals or groups of individuals. Training³¹ continues to be the most common approach, and other methodologies such as peer learning, South-South exchanges, and the secondment of experts are also used. This is interesting since Southern partners frequently report³² that one-off trainings are less effective at embedding learning than longer-term approaches that allow for coaching and follow-up, and can be more tailored to their organisation.

The evaluation found that most reporting of capacity change as a result of training focused on the earlier stages of a capacity development process, i.e. participants' reactions to or learning from the training itself rather than tracing their subsequent behaviour or the impact on their organisations. The use of journaling, diaries and action learning sets can facilitate participants' own learning and reflection on the capacity development process and be used in reporting. The evaluation found comparatively little use of tracer or follow-up studies to track how participants have gone on to develop or to use their skills and provide evidence in support of short-term outcomes such as improved advocacy capacity.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs trace the broader, medium-term impact of individual capacity change on organisations and societal systems.

31 The 2016 evaluation partner surveys confirm that 'functional' short-term trainings, e.g. on M&E and fundraising was the most common approach. See "Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions" p. 13.

32 Ibid. "Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions" p. 13.

Organisational capacity

Changes in organisational capacity – for example, ‘stronger’ Southern CSOs – can be assessed directly by measuring changes in specific competencies or indirectly, by measuring the results of improved capacity. For example, it is easier to measure whether a CSO is successfully fundraising than it is to assess its capacity to do so, although the issue of attribution/contribution needs to be addressed. There are a number of different tools and methodologies available to measure changes in organisational capacity. Most commonly used are Organisational Capacity Assessment Tools (OCATs) and Scorecards.

OCATs can be used to monitor changes in pre-defined dimensions of organisational capacity. There are many different types of OCATs. Some are fixed and others can be tailored to the needs and preferences of the partner organisation³³. Many Danish CSOs use a fixed tool relating to the organisational support they provide and some include areas that are not always covered in OCAT tools, e.g. organisational legitimacy (CARE Tanzania) or political sustainability (LOFTF). OCATs can be a useful means of monitoring and reporting on organisational capacity. However, greater ownership of the process will be encouraged if Southern CSOs are supported in identifying and developing their own categories and indicators of success. OCATs should preferably not be used in association with resource allocation decisions as it will likely distort the organisational self-assessments.

Scorecards can also be used to assess and monitor specific areas of organisational capacity, e.g. leadership or financial management. The principles are the same as those of OCATS – divide work into discrete areas, rank or rate capacity, take action on the findings and then repeat the process at intervals to show how far organisational capacity has changed. When repeating scorecards, it is important to note not just the change in scores but to enquire into why things have changed. Some scorecards, for example, ask participants to rank how much of a contribution they think a capacity development initiative has made to the change and what evidence this is based on. Scorecards can be open to bias. Using them as part of self-assessment processes is good for learning and ownership but may be open to challenge as part of an M&E system. It is important to try to build some objectivity and consistency of approach when using scorecards for assessment across a portfolio – for example, by supporting participatory assessment but using an independent or semi-independent team who are trained in the methodology to facilitate it and to make final assessment on scoring.

33 See “Guide to Capacity Development”, CARE Denmark for further discussion of fixed and tailor-made OCATs.

Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses of OCATs and Scorecards

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They ensure that capacity development is formally monitored and evaluated. • They enable organisations to identify changes to help achieve their mission. • They provide a rolling baseline so that progress can be assessed over time. • Results can sometimes be aggregated or summarised across different organisations, sectors or countries. • They focus on the outcomes of capacity development rather than the activities. • They can identify unintended as well as intended consequences of capacity development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be hard to show how improved capacity is attributable to specific support provided. • They do not necessarily show how improved capacity contributes towards improved performance. • Ranking or rating is subjective, based on perceptions of different stakeholders. • A lower ranking/score does not always indicate weak capacity; it may indicate a greater awareness of limitations. • A higher ranking/score may reflect over-confidence in an organisation's capacities.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs trace the impact of organisational development through the joint use of appropriate tools to encourage ownership of the process and results.

Societal/systemic capacity

The two main ways that Danish CSOs work to develop social or systemic capacity are by developing networking capacity and/or supporting rights-based approaches to change at sectoral or societal levels.

Danish CSOs frequently support partners to join and strengthen local or national networks or alliances. There is a growing literature base on how the evolution of network capacity can be monitored. For example, there are numerous types of Network Frameworks to evaluate network and coalition capacity across a range of dimensions³⁴. OCATs can also be adapted, as in the case of CARE Denmark, to assess and monitor the advocacy capacity of a network.

Demonstrating a distinctive contribution to systemic change is more challenging. It is easier for 'single-issue' organisations to demonstrate a contribution to a specific sector, for example LOFTF and the trade union sector, DPOD and disability, and DFPA and sexual and reproductive health. In these cases, it may be possible to show how specific capacity development efforts within a sector have impacted on wider systems by changing perceptions or contributing to changes in the political, policy or legal environment. Monitoring systemic change more broadly is more complex. One approach is to provide opportunities for relevant multi-stakeholder reflection or learning alliances since multiple actors are likely to have contributed to broader social change. Save the Children, for example, has supported multi-stakeholder groups in Cambodia and Uganda as an opportunity for reflection and learning³⁵.

34 See "Next Generation Network Evaluation". Innovations for Scaling Impact and Keystone Accountability. June 2010.

35 See "Learning Synthesis 3: Tracking Capacity Change", p. 33.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs trace systemic impact by the use of specialist networking tools; monitoring at a sectoral level; through multi-stakeholder learning on broader social change.

2.4 The challenge of fragile contexts

The challenge of monitoring the progress of the change pathways of civil society support in fragile contexts requires special mention. The Danish Development Cooperation Strategy³⁶ indicates that Denmark is likely to further concentrate aid assistance to fragile contexts; to strengthen the links between humanitarian and development support to civil society; and to place even more focus on demonstrating results. Danish CSOs in receipt of both humanitarian and development funding from Danida will be required to demonstrate their results through one reporting framework. The emphasis on greater complementarity between its humanitarian and development assistance is in line with the recommendations of Phase 1 of this evaluation³⁷ and the recent evaluation of the Danida Strategy for Humanitarian Action³⁸.

The M&E matrix anticipates a unitary system of reporting for Danida CSO strategic partners. It includes as a short-term outcome the protection of lives and meeting of basic needs of communities/groups of rights holders through humanitarian assistance (see Box 3 in the theory of change)³⁹. It also identifies as a specific short-term outcome capacity development of strengthening local CSOs and communities in fragile and humanitarian contexts. This is in keeping with humanitarian commitments on the localisation of humanitarian aid and the practice of Danish CSOs. Other aspects of humanitarian work or work in fragile contexts fit appropriately in the general intermediate and long-term outcomes, and have been linked to specific learning questions in the M&E matrix. For example, the contribution of Danish CSOs to promoting the implementation of better coordination in humanitarian responses is included in the outcome on CSO alliances, and the influence of Danish CSOs on the better functioning of the humanitarian system is included in the long-term outcome on changing the policy, practice, attitude and behaviours of international actors.

Good M&E practice as summarised in the evaluation syntheses of the second phase of the evaluation will largely remain valid. However, the operational challenges, and political and security constraints that hinder M&E in fragile contexts are well known and M&E practices must adapt to these. In addition, studies⁴⁰ in recent years have highlighted a number of more technical challenges facing M&E frameworks in fragile contexts. These include implicit or unclear theories of change, overly ambitious and often unachievable goals and objectives, poor indicators, emphasis on output rather than outcome indicators, and poor, implicit or missing context analyses. With this in mind,

36 "The World 2030: Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action", January 2017.

37 See p. 16.

38 "Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-2015".

39 See Annex C "A Revised Theory of Change".

40 See "Measuring the Measurable: Solutions to Measurement Challenges in Conflict and Fragile Environments". Search for a Common Ground". March 2013.

the following aspects of M&E good practices are particularly relevant to monitor change in fragile situations⁴¹:

- *Context/conflict analysis.* There is a greater need for CSOs working in fragile situations to monitor their programme environments closely so that they understand conflict dynamics; identify conflict drivers and potential drivers of positive change and peace; and make timely decisions to modify their results frameworks, assumptions and activities. There are a number of relatively simple guidelines on how to conduct context/conflict analyses, including drivers of change analysis⁴².

Recommendation: Danish CSOs monitor their programme context closely to identify drivers of change and to make timely decisions to modify their assumptions and activities.

- *Theories of change.* A drivers of change analysis can inform a theory of change and provide the basis of an M&E framework in fragile contexts. Regular reviews of the theory of change can be used to monitor risks and assumptions and enable the programme to adapt⁴³. CARE International presents the following figure (Figure 1)⁴⁴ as an illustrative example of the relationship between results and the assumptions of a theory of change in a fragile context.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs use a theory of change in an agile way as the basis of an M&E framework and to monitor risks and assumptions and enable the programme to adapt.

41 See “Learning Synthesis 5: The Civil Society Policy and Fragility: Documenting Results”, September 2016 for a fuller examination of M&E good practice in fragile situations and selected bibliography.

42 See for example “Guidance for Designing, Monitoring and Evaluating Peace-building Projects: Using Theories of Change”. CARE International UK. 2012.

43 See “Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security and Justice Programmes: Part II: Using Theories of Change in Monitoring and Evaluation”. Search for Common Ground. 2013.

44 See “Guidance for Designing, Monitoring and Evaluating Peace-building Projects: Using Theories of Change”. CARE International UK. 2012.

Figure 1: Linking results and theory of change in a fragile context

3.4 Articulate the theories of change

Theories of change connect each level of results, explaining how programmed designers believe that lower-level results will contribute to higher-level results.

The example below presents the hierarchy of results and its corresponding theories of change. In each row, the right-hand box explains how the lower level results are expected to contribute to the result in the left-hand cell.

Diagram 3 : Hierarchy of results and corresponding theories of change

Hierarchy of results	Corresponding theory of change
Enhanced culture of non-violence in x region	If there is a reduced incidence of violence and an increased acceptance on non-violent forms of dispute resolution then there will be an enhanced culture of non-violence in region x
Reduced incidence of violence perpetrated by youth in x region through acceptance of non-violence	If youth (project youth and non-project youth) in region x accept and use alternative dispute resolution processes then there will be a reduction in violence in region x
Increased acceptance of non-violent methods of conflict resolution beyond project-trained youth	If youth undertake alternative dispute resolution processes with non-project youth in the x region then non-project youth will become aware of the value of alternative dispute resolution processes
x number youth conduct x number alternative dispute resolution interventions	If youth have participated in alternative dispute resolution training and understand the benefits to engaging in these processes then they will be open to applying their skills and knowledge and commit to using them instead of violent means to settle conflicts
Knowledge on alternative dispute resolution and the benefits of engaging in those processes as an alternative to violent resolution of conflicts is acquired by x number youth	If youth participate in trainings in alternative dispute resolution then they will obtain new skills in non-violent dispute resolution
Training modules in alternative dispute resolution are developed and training is conducted with x number youth in x region	

- Outcomes and/or outputs.* Most Danish CSOs in receipt of Humanitarian Partnership Agreements have reported to date at output level. In some situations, such as a quick-onset emergency, it may be realistic only to monitor and report at output level, e.g. number of persons treated or housed. However, in ongoing situations of fragility it is becoming more common for programmes, for example, to aspire to positive change in the form of outcomes such as peaceful relations or more resilient communities. It is likely that Danish CSOs working in fragile contexts will work towards change at both output and outcome levels.
- The right indicators.* The choice of indicators and approach to data gathering should be reconciled from the outset. An appropriate indicator should be realistic, i.e. reflect what the options for data gathering are given the practical difficulties of working in fragile contexts. In nearly all cases, the indicator should be disaggregated since vulnerable groups are often those most affected by fragility. A disaggregated indicator will enable the CSO to assess whether the programme is targeting and reaching the right groups, e.g. in relation to region, gender, religion, or ethnic origin.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs report at both output and outcome levels as appropriate, using indicators that enable disaggregation and are realistic i.e. reflect the practical difficulties of data gathering.

- Data gathering and risk assessment.* M&E in fragile situations needs to be quick, safe and practical as programmes are often implemented in unsafe and difficult-to-access environments. DanChurchAid and Save the Children Denmark, for

example, use the Danida Guideline to Risk Management⁴⁵ which identifies the following Core Risk Categories (Figure 2). The Guideline also provides a useful risk matrix that can be used to monitor risks at regular intervals.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs ensure data gathering is quick, safe and practical, including the use of software applications for mobile data collection where appropriate.

Figure 2: Core Risk Categories: the Copenhagen Circles



How best to collect monitoring data in a fragile context will vary from situation to situation but in some instances may need to be done remotely. International CSOs often rely on national staff or local CSO partners for this, which points to the need for greater long-term investment in their M&E skills and capacities. Alternatively, it may involve working directly on M&E with local communities/beneficiaries. Some Danish CSOs – for example, DanChurchAid and Danmission – are experimenting with community-based monitoring in conflict-affected situations. Alternatively, the use of software applications for smart phones that local people can use for mobile data collection is becoming more widespread. These offer opportunities for real-time data directly from the field but require robust data management measures and may be viewed suspiciously by powerful or armed groups. International CSOs need to be careful that their monitoring and data collection approaches do not transfer risk to national staff, local partners and communities. The use of multiple approaches and strong triangulation of data may be necessary to build up an accurate picture, in particular where access is a problem.

Finally, the need for more flexible and adaptive approaches in fragile contexts is a challenge also to donors, like Danida, to think about their demands for accountability; how they can simplify them but also how they can build in more flexibility in their requirements to allow programmes to adjust to monitoring information and changing circumstances.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs invest strongly in the M&E skills and capacities of national staff and local partners in fragile contexts and explore new ways of both collecting and triangulating data where access is difficult.

45 “Guideline to Risk Management”, Slide 5, Danida, August 2013.

3 Danish Support to Civil Society: An M&E Framework to Demonstrate Results

The evaluation is expected to provide *‘a more systematic and robust basis for assessing and documenting the results of civil society support in 2020 by providing a draft evaluation framework indicating the dimensions of change and main lines of enquiry relevant to monitoring the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society through the change pathways of the Civil Society Policy’*⁴⁶. The need for a draft evaluation framework must be seen in the context of an increased emphasis on demonstrating the effectiveness of development interventions as development cooperation budgets have come under pressure in recent years. More specifically, a number of European governments have reviewed, or are in the process of reviewing, their support to civil society and, in some cases, have significantly reduced the funds available to domestic CSOs. In these circumstances, there is a growing imperative for both Danida and Danish CSOs to demonstrate and communicate the rationale and effectiveness of Danish support to national CSOs, and the new strategic partnership scheme in particular, as an integral part of Danish development cooperation.

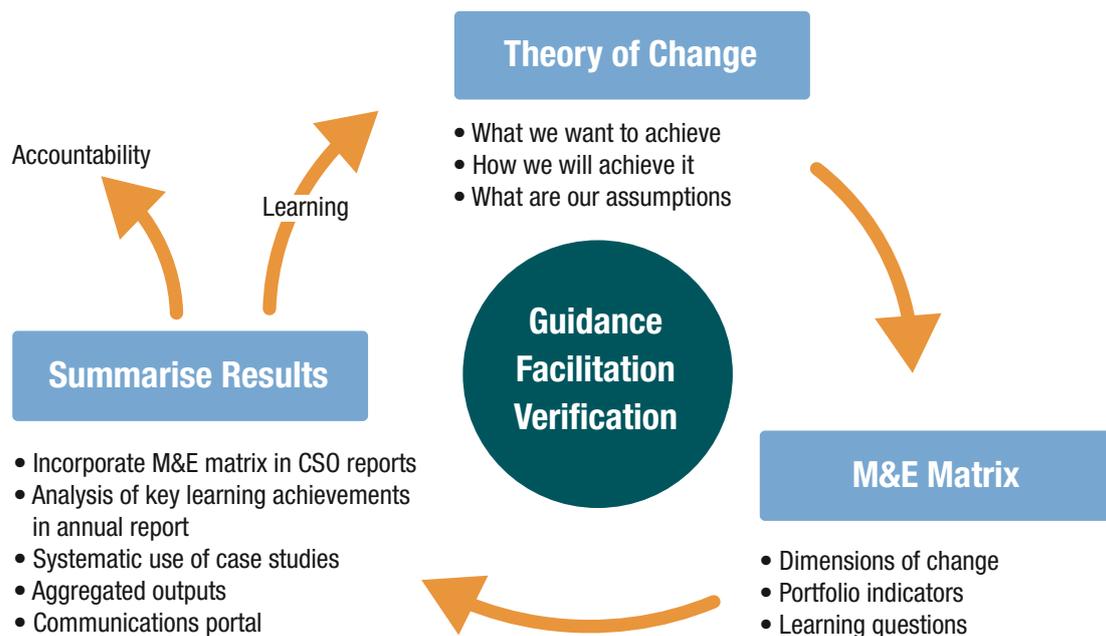
This chapter will first introduce two distinct purposes for monitoring and evaluating Danish support to civil society – learning and accountability – before introducing the components of an M&E framework for the strategic partnership scheme that should involve collaboration between Danida and its CSO strategic partners. These are:

1. A theory of change or intervention logic that identifies a vision of change, how it will be achieved, and the assumptions it entails;
2. An M&E matrix to monitor progress towards the anticipated changes at outcome level through the use of portfolio indicators and learning questions/lines of enquiry;
3. The methods Danida can employ with the cooperation of Danish CSOs to summarise and communicate these changes at portfolio level; and
4. How Danida can contribute to the quality of an M&E Framework for civil society support.

The diagram below illustrates how these components relate to each other to ensure that the results Danida communicates are both plausible for accountability purposes and rich for learning purposes.

46 Communiqué on Second Phase of the Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society. Danida. July 2015. p. 3.

Figure 3: An M&E Framework to demonstrate results



3.1 The purpose of an M&E framework

There are two distinct purposes in being able to clearly demonstrate and summarise the results of Danish society support to civil society. These are:

Accountability: Both Danish CSOs and Danida are under increasing pressure from the public to demonstrate that development assistance to civil society works.

Management or learning: At the same time, both need to understand how results have or have not been achieved in order to learn from experience and improve performance.

These two purposes can potentially conflict with each other and each has different implications for how results are monitored and reported⁴⁷. In summary, if accountability is the primary purpose, an M&E framework will tend to encourage risk-aversity, and to focus on more easily achievable, shorter-term and quantifiable results, e.g. outputs, rather than the outcomes which are more complex and difficult to measure. A management approach will seek to learn from both negative and positive performance. Each approach has implications also for data collection methods. Data collection for accountability purposes prefers aggregated information in order to demonstrate clear, consistent results at a corporate or organisational level. Alternatively, data collection for management purposes will tend to place more emphasis on learning from performance and, for example, the use of participatory methods. The different implications of the two approaches are illustrated in the table below.

⁴⁷ The following paragraph and table is derived from “Measuring and managing results in development co-operation: a review of challenges and practices among DAC members and observer”. OECD/DAC. November 2014, pp. 57-61.

Table 3: The Accountability and Learning purposes of an M&E Framework.

Accountability	Management/Learning
Requires transparency and accounting for the use of aid resources, e.g. to ministers, oversight agencies.	Focuses on communication of progress, achievements and expenditures.
May encourage more risk-averse behaviour, e.g. engage in less innovative initiatives; set un-ambitious targets; and focus on shorter term results.	Results information is used to improve organisational performance and achieve better results. Used for planning, tracking progress, learning and decision making.
Possible tension with the principles of ownership and alignment with partners' own systems; risk of developing additional results systems to inform aggregated indicators.	Requires results data to be integrated into management processes such as strategic planning, policy formulation, project or programme management, budget management, and human resource management.
Tends to emphasise the positive and focus on short-term results to which the public can easily relate.	Seeks to understand whether, why and how long-term effects have been achieved.
Requires aggregated information that tells a consistent performance story at country and corporate level. May require independent assessment.	Favours rapid low-cost data collection techniques to gather information on specific issues for decision making. Encourages participatory methods.

These two purposes are not mutually exclusive but the tension between reporting for learning and accountability can be difficult to manage, especially if linked to decisions on resource allocation. A focus on accountability will tend to encourage the production of success stories. A focus on learning should emphasise the quality of learning not the success or failure that is reported; seek to understand why outcomes were or were not achieved; and to learn from the experience.

Given Danida's preparedness to reallocate resources between CSOs on the basis of reported performance, there will be a tendency among CSOs towards positive reporting unless different behaviour is encouraged and supported. This can be done by a mixture of incentives to support deeper learning, some of which are explored below. For example, Danida could clearly define those sections of the Annual Report that fulfil the accountability and learning purposes or, alternatively, establish a distinctive form of recording and sharing learning separate from the Annual Reports. Both types of reporting might include case studies on the learning questions of the M&E matrix.

Recommendation: Danida to clearly define the relationship between CSO reporting and the resource allocation model (RAM) and explore what incentives might be necessary to encourage an openness to learning in annual reporting.

3.2 A revised theory of change

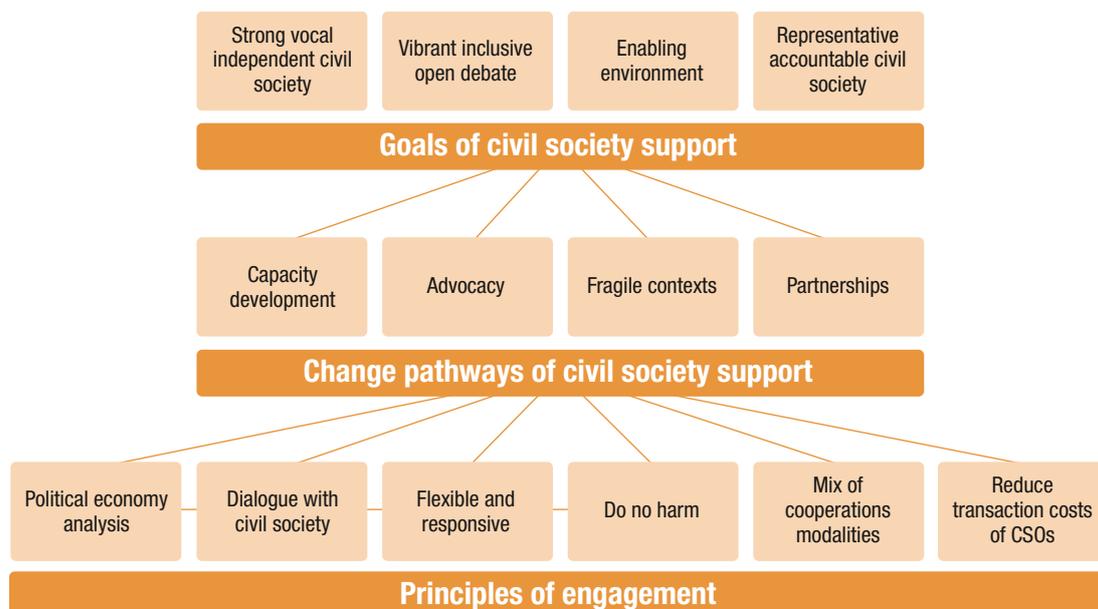
A theory of change as the foundation of demonstrating success

The first step in providing a coherent overview of support to Danish CSOs is to develop and agree a shared rationale or logic of why such support is an important, effective element of Danish development cooperation. Such a shared understanding should be a precondition of Danida/Danish CSO strategic partnerships irrespective of whether it is used to underpin an M&E framework for the partnership.

A theory of change offers a broad rationale for Danish support to civil society that is shared between Danida and Danish CSOs. It provides a shared logic and common framework, in the shape of the M&E matrix, that enable both Danish CSOs and Danida to summarise the achievements of civil society support and to frame an agenda for learning and enquiry over the period of support. Moreover, it supplies a framework by which both parties can test, monitor and adapt their assumptions about how support to civil society brings about positive change in the lives of poor and marginalised people.

The Civil Society Policy⁴⁸ set out a theory of change that envisaged a representative, accountable civil society contributing to more responsive governance and pro-poor developmental impacts. The evaluation used an adapted and simplified version of this theory of change as the basis of its enquiry (see Diagram 1). This enabled the evaluation to focus in on the main elements⁴⁹ of Danish civil society support – partnership, capacity development, and advocacy – as the key ‘change pathways’ to the achievement of the Civil Society Policy goals of a strong, vocal, independent civil society; vibrant, inclusive, and open debate; an enabling environment for civil society; and a representative, accountable, and locally-based civil society.

Diagram 1: Civil society support change pathways and goals



48 “Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society” p. 16.

49 See Section 5 of “Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society” on “Main elements of Danish support to civil society actors”.

A revised theory of change

While the evaluation found this rudimentary theory of change useful in structuring its enquiry, it has produced a revised theory of change to more clearly sequence the key change pathways and to identify the relationships between the pathways and the key actors. This provides a framework for an M&E matrix for Danish support to civil society and, in particular, the CSO strategic partnership scheme. The revised theory of change also takes into account the new Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action published towards the end of the evaluation. This indicates that Danish CSOs may be expected to reference their strategies and/or results to the new strategy although this in itself does not contain SMART strategic objectives nor a theory of change for development cooperation. However, the references it makes to civil society support are not incompatible with the current Civil Society Policy, and the strategies and programmes of Danish CSOs.

The diagram of the revised theory of change can be found in Annex C. The theory of change numbers the levels of change as follows – (SO) Short-term Outcome; (IO) Intermediate Outcome; (LO) Long-term outcome; (I) Impact – which cross-reference with the M&E matrix.

The role of civil society in a HRBA theory of change

The *impact statement* of the revised theory of change is to achieve large-scale changes in the lives and well-being of rights holders (I2) through the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (I1). The general hypothesis is that:

- Danish CSOs strengthen Southern civil society capacity through the value they add through partnership, capacity development and advocacy support (SO1&2);
- Southern civil society (IO7) plays a key role in supporting groups or communities to become aware of their rights; to organise to make their voice heard; and to connect them with wider alliances of stakeholders who can work to hold government and other duty-bearers to account (IO2);
- An independent, vocal civil society will contribute to changes in the policy, practice, attitudes and behaviours of duty bearers (LO1&2) that will deliver tangible benefits in the lives of the poor and marginalised (I2).

The logic of how short-term, intermediate and longer-term outcomes contribute to large-scale change is explained below.

Short-Term Outcomes: The Change Pathways

A key focus of the revised theory of change remains the way in which Danish CSOs add value in their partnerships with Southern civil society through capacity development and advocacy support. In addition to these change pathways Danish CSOs also add value to Danida's own efforts to influence change through the work they do raising public awareness of and support for development cooperation (SO4); contributing learning and technical expertise to the sector (SO6); and their work as part of global alliances and advocacy efforts seeking to influence duty bearers (SO5).

The partnership between Danish and Southern CSOs (SO1) and the changes they aim to bring about by developing their organisational accountability, legitimacy and advocacy

(SO2) remain a key element of the theory of change. A key dimension of change in these partnerships, in the light of an evolving civil society in the South, is the concept of ‘rebalancing partnerships’. This involves Danish CSOs shifting the power in their partnerships, for example, by listening to and seeking to be accountable to partners; and by transferring greater responsibility to them for governance and resources. The theory of change also anticipates new types of partnership with different forms of civil society organisation and the building of broader constituencies for change across different sectors and groups.

As a key element of strengthening Southern civil society, Danish CSOs support the organisational development of their partners. The emphasis on strengthened legitimacy and financial sustainability of Southern CSOs (SO2) reflects the hypothesis that independent Southern CSOs that are connected to and representative of groups and communities of rights holders are better placed to help them to organise, speak out and influence duty bearers. This is particularly important when the environment for civil society is becoming less conducive in many countries and Southern CSOs are sometimes accused of being ‘stooges’ of foreign governments.

Danish CSOs also strengthen the capacity of Southern CSOs or communities to engage in advocacy in support of rights holders (SO2). Support to the development of skills and capacities of Southern CSOs is complemented by the direct advocacy that Danish CSOs conduct in their own right by engaging in international alliances (SO5) to support inclusive and rights-based development and humanitarian assistance, and in helping to mobilise popular support for development and humanitarian assistance in Denmark (SO4). Danish CSOs play an important role in connecting Southern CSOs with international alliances and in supporting their access to and influence with international duty bearers.

The theory of change acknowledges the increasing prevalence of Danish CSO work in fragile situations and humanitarian crises by including a short-term outcome relating to humanitarian assistance (SO3) under rights holders. Danish CSOs also work to strengthen local communities, community-based organisations or CSOs and to influence the policy and practice of the humanitarian system. The element of fragility has been incorporated in the theory of change as a under capacity development as a separate objective (SO2) and in specific learning questions in the M&E matrix.

Intermediate outcomes: A strong, inclusive, vocal civil society

The key link between the pathways to change and the longer-term outcomes of policy and practice change in favour of the poor and marginalised is a stronger, inclusive and vocal civil society. This includes diverse national CSOs that are inclusive and representative of/accountable to rights holders, and communities or groups of rights holders that are aware, organised and able to hold duty bearers to account. Increasingly civil society actors will form part of broader, multi-stakeholder alliances that press for changes in policies, practices, attitudes and behaviours of duty bearers.

Longer-term outcomes: Changes in policies, practices, attitudes and behaviours of duty bearers

Progress towards the long-term outcomes of changes in policy, practice, attitude and behaviours of duty bearers in the theory of change is likely to happen as a series of changes over time. For example, rights holders must be aware and organised; develop

their knowledge and capacities; and act to monitor and hold duty bearers to account to achieve large-scale change in their lives. Similarly, duty bearers must act at different stages of the policy cycle – from agenda setting to policy monitoring – before a widespread impact on poor and marginalised people can be achieved. It is important to track these intermediate levels of change in order to review the assumptions in the theory of change and identify where early stages changes are not leading to wider, systemic change.

Whereas the theory of change in the Civil Society Policy saw an enabling environment as a goal, the revised theory of change includes it, along with fragility, as a key contextual factor that may underpin or undermine the theory of change. Improving the enabling environment is associated with the intermediate outcome of strengthening the legitimacy and financial independence of Southern CSOs and the long-term outcome of changes in the attitude or policy of national governments.

The revised theory of change is based on a number of assumptions with the regard to Danish CSOs and the pathways to change i.e.

- Danish CSOs innovate and add value to their partnerships with Southern CSOs. This assumption can be reviewed through systematic surveys and discussions with partners, and by monitoring the impact on the relevant target groups.
- Danish CSOs facilitate the capacity and organisational development of Southern CSOs. This assumption needs to be reviewed by monitoring partner feedback; tracing the distinctive contribution of Danish CSOs to capacity development in relation to other providers.
- Danish CSOs are an effective means of supporting Southern rights holders to organise and to articulate their voice. This requires evidence of who Danish CSOs are reaching and how they are involved.
- CSOs are well-positioned to catalyse multi-stakeholder alliances for change that include or reflect the voice of rights holders. This could be documented through case study material.
- Popular mobilisation in Denmark by Danish CSOs leads to increased public support for development and humanitarian assistance and pressure on international duty bearers to change. This can be monitored through attitudinal surveys, media logs and other approaches.
- Rights holders who are aware and organised will take action to influence duty bearers. This is a key assumption that requires changes in the policy cycle to be carefully monitored from the point of view of rights holders and duty bearers.
- CSOs and alliances both nationally and internationally have sufficient influence to cause national and international duty bearers to be more responsive to rights holders. This can be monitored through the use of advocacy monitoring tools such as contribution analysis and process tracing.

3.3 The M&E matrix

The second step the evaluation recommends is for Danida and Danish CSOs to agree an M&E matrix so that they share ownership and understanding of how, in partnership, they can best monitor, report, summarise and communicate the changes achieved by civil society support. Such matrix could be used to identify a shared learning agenda (including for future Danida evaluations and reviews) and develop a systematic, evidence-based body of learning – whether or not this is used for the purposes of portfolio reporting.

A theory of change identifies a vision of change and how it will be achieved. An M&E matrix adds to this by identifying how we will know when change has been achieved and how we will demonstrate how we have contributed to these changes. The evaluation M&E matrix includes the short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes anticipated in the revised theory of change; suggests some portfolio indicators as a means of measuring these changes; and a series of learning questions to focus learning to improve performance.

The evaluation intended to develop an M&E framework and matrix in late 2016 that reflected Danida's and Danish CSOs' consensual understanding of the key dimensions of change in civil society support and how they might be monitored and reported on. This was not possible due to the announcement and development of the new strategic partnership scheme. While the revised theory of change and M&E matrix are broadly representative of current CSO strategies, the evaluation recommends that Danida facilitates a process with its CSO strategic partners to review and adapt them. This will help to ensure that there is a shared ownership and understanding of how Danida and Danish CSOs, in partnership, can best monitor, report, summarise and communicate the changes achieved by civil society support.

Recommendation: Danida to consult with Danish CSOs' strategic partners to review the evaluation theory of change and M&E matrix to see how they might be amended to form the basis of a shared framework for learning and accountability.

Following such a consultation it may be appropriate to share a revised theory of change and M&E matrix more broadly to encourage a more consistent analysis of the outcomes of Danish Support to civil society across support modalities.

Recommendation: Danida to share the revised theory of change and M&E matrix, e.g. with reviews and evaluations of CSO umbrella organisations and relevant in-country programmes to assemble a more consistent analysis of the outcomes of its support to Southern civil society.

Portfolio indicators

The evaluation has suggested some possible portfolio indicators for each dimension of change identified in the M&E matrix. The evaluation recommends the use of mixed indicators for the purposes of summarisation at portfolio level since they can be used to report the 'big picture' in numbers whilst investigating the more qualitative, in-depth changes at the same time. Numeric indicators often need to be supplemented by qualitative information if they are to make any sense. A quantitative indicator such as '*number (#) of policy changes*' makes no sense on its own without understanding more about the nature of the policies changed and the broader political context. A mixed indicator such as '*#, type and description of policy changes with a verifiable contribution from Danida-supported civil society*' requires a fuller explanation of the advocacy approach adopted,

nature of the change reported, and how Danida/Danish CSOs' support has contributed to that change.

Some donors – for example, the UK Department for International Development (DfID) – have used ranking or rating indicators to measure performance at portfolio level⁵⁰. Some Danish CSOs – for example, Oxfam IBIS and CARE Denmark – also use ranking or rating indicators to report on the results of country programmes. Ranking or rating indicators convert qualitative processes into quantitative data using pre-established, consistent scales. This can indicate movement or change in a particular area or programme and offer a summarised indication of progress across the portfolio, including in graphic form⁵¹. Ranking or rating indicators can provide a clear summary of performance for accountability purposes but the approach has some limitations. There is a risk of subjectivity in rankings even though guidance is consistent, and ranking scores are not very meaningful for the learning of the CSO itself unless supplemented by other evidence, e.g. narrative illustration.

The M&E matrix does not include SMART indicators, baselines, milestones or targets at outcome level. These would not be appropriate at portfolio level. SMART indicators are commonly used in specific contexts and Danish CSOs have different goals and objectives, over different timescales and locations, and implemented in different ways. However, it remains good practice for CSOs to develop baselines at programme or project level and, in many cases, they may want to use different kinds of indicators and set targets and milestones to measure progress. The evaluation has summarised elsewhere⁵² the key criteria for the choice of indicator and the advantages and disadvantages to Danish CSOs of the use of different types of indicator to summarise change. These do and will vary according to the mission and type of programme of each CSO. In all cases CSOs will need to balance the quality of the data to be gathered with the cost and time to collect it.

Learning questions

A key element of an M&E framework is to understand the factors that contribute to the changes it monitors so that learning can lead to improvement. The matrix, therefore, includes a series of learning questions for each dimension of change to ensure that learning is consistently monitored. Learning questions may also be called, among other things, evaluation questions or lines of enquiry. They indicate areas where Danida and CSOs may wish to learn in order to test the assumptions in the theory of change and to make decisions to improve programming. These emergent areas of learning can become the focus of future research and data gathering.

Recommendation: Danida facilitates opportunities for Danish CSOs to share and discuss learning through annual sense-making workshop(s); or through ongoing working groups on their own learning priorities linked to the learning questions of the M&E matrix.

50 For example, the DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund used the DFID five-point rating scale (A++, A+, A, B, C) regarding achievement of outputs/outcomes to summarise portfolio performance.

51 See Annex E for an illustration of how this might be done regarding influencing policy. There are other ways of representing the analysis of quantitative data.

52 See "Learning Synthesis 2: Summarising Organisational Results. January 2016.

Recommendation: Danida links research and evaluations relevant to civil society to the learning questions of the M&E matrix and funds short pieces of in-depth research to investigate findings that emerge in its sense-making activities with Danish CSOs.

3.4 Summarising results

Reporting at corporate level is not a challenge unique to Danida. A recent publication reported all OECD members having difficulty in their external reporting, communicating their contribution to development outcomes and impact, and cautioned against a focus on short-term, easily quantifiable results. This section outlines how Danida might annually summarise the results of its strategic partnership scheme; discusses the implications for CSO reporting; suggests what Danida might do to support and verify the quality of reports it receives; and outlines how it might communicate those results more broadly.

The challenge of corporate reporting on development cooperation

“To report at corporate level and provide useful and credible information, members need to aggregate information across countries. Many ... tend to emphasise output level results instead of longer term outcomes, and focus reports on the immediate instead of the lasting impact. Some DAC members chose not to aggregate data at corporate level ... They also argue that data aggregated at corporate level do not necessarily provide meaningful information that can serve as a basis for discussion with parliament or the general public” p. 34.

“Pressure to account for clear and measurable results should not lead an organisation to focus exclusively on the short term. With all its complexities, the results agenda really only matters if it contributes to long-term sustainable improvements in the lives of the world’s poor, not just changes in the ways in which development partners manage and account for results.” p. 60.

Source: “Measuring and managing results in development co-operation: a review of challenges and practices among DAC members and observers”. OECD/DAC. November 2014.

An Annual Results and Learning report

A key decision for Danida, therefore, is whether it wants to summarise the results of, and learning associated with, its support to civil society – and at what level. Danish CSOs are accustomed to reporting annually on the progress towards their strategy objectives and on the learning associated with this. The evaluation has noted that the quality of Danish CSO results frameworks and reporting has improved in recent years. In these circumstances, the issue is to what extent Danida and Danish CSOs want to take advantage in the early stages of the new strategic partnership scheme to put in place the building blocks of portfolio reporting.

It should be possible using the M&E matrix to explore, without committing significant additional resources, how Danida and Danish CSOs can collaborate on producing an annual results and learning report. The report might consist, for example, of aggregated outputs where appropriate; a summary analysis of key achievements and learning using

a case study approach; distilled learning from research, reviews and evaluations; and a forward-looking learning agenda.

Recommendation: Danida to decide at the outset of the new partnership scheme whether portfolio reporting, e.g. in the form of an annual or bi-annual summary, will be an option so that the 'building blocks' of an evidence base can be put in place from the outset.

Aggregated outputs where appropriate

It is likely that Danish CSOs will continue to report at both output and outcome level in their annual reports. If Danida wants to be able to aggregate outputs under the M&E matrix, as is more likely with the combination of both humanitarian and framework funding under the new strategic partnership scheme, it could request CSO partners to quantify outputs for a small set of pre-defined indicators. Table 4 illustrates how basic quantitative data might be gathered to aggregate, for example, the 'reach' of civil society support.

Table 4: Specimen output aggregation table

Indicator	Number
# of beneficiaries reached in the areas of e.g. sexual and reproductive health, resilient communities etc.	
# (and type) of CSOs provided with capacity support or direct financial support	
# of women and girls supported directly through gender-based initiatives	
# of people receiving direct assistance via humanitarian programmes	
# and type of Southern CSOs supported to enhance advocacy work	
Danish Kroner disbursed to Southern civil society partners	

This would allow Danida to aggregate some results at output level including the 'reach' of CSO activities (although it should be noted that it is often difficult and impractical to accurately estimate the beneficiary 'reach' of an initiative so efforts should be proportionate). It is also important to bear in mind that, while summarising outputs or reach can be useful for public communications by demonstrating the scale and diversity of activities, it does not demonstrate the effectiveness of those activities, i.e. it is not an outcome. This kind of aggregation would need to be supported by guidelines that explain precisely what each indicator means and how and when it should be reported.

Examples of Danish CSOs summarising global outputs

215,318 men and women benefitted from HIV awareness campaigns (DanChurchAid)

52% of partner organisations carried out capacity building activities on Disaster Risk Reduction (DanChurchAid)

222 radio programmes produced through the ASC programme in 2014 (ADRA)

Source: 2014 Annual Reports.

A summary analysis of key achievements and learning using a case study approach.

The evaluation recommends the systematic use of case study material as an integral part of Danida annual portfolio reporting rather than, for example, a synthesis of the annual reports of Danish CSOs as previously produced⁵³. Danida could ask CSOs to produce case studies annually according to pre-agreed criteria. These might be based on a sampling method, e.g. best cases or deviant cases; area of work or theme, e.g. international advocacy or capacity development; or key learning questions from the M&E matrix, e.g. the challenges faced by Danish NGO operating in fragile contexts. The use of a case study approach could have a number of advantages. It would:

- Result in a large number of high-quality stories being produced each year that could then be analysed in-depth to look for patterns and trends;
- Generate targeted learning and be used to test the assumptions of the Theory of Change;
- Generate a portfolio of compelling, verified stories that could be used for public communications.

The analysis of the case studies would be done through some form of late coding but the purposive nature of their sampling would help to ensure that the information provided was reasonably consistent and easier to analyse⁵⁴.

Distilled learning from research, reviews and evaluations

The analysis should also draw upon results of relevant monitoring exercises, evaluations or research. The evaluation recommends a more strategic use of evaluation resources. Both Danida and Danish CSOs can ensure that investments in monitoring and evaluation are strategic and utility-based by linking them to key elements of the theory of change and M&E matrix. The key learning questions of the latter, for example, can be used to guide the focus of monitoring and evaluation activities relevant to civil society support. A core set of evaluation questions linked to the theory of change and M&E

53 See the “Cross-cutting Monitoring Reports” produced in previous years.

54 See Annex E for an example of such a late coding analysis based on Danish CSOs 2015 reports where the information was more diffused than it would be with selected case studies.

matrix would ensure evaluations serve the purpose of portfolio analysis at the Danida level, as well as benefiting individual CSOs through lessons and recommendations. For example, an evaluation can be used to test an assumption in the theory of change if evidence suggests change at one level is not being translated into change at other levels. Evaluations could also be linked to the case-based approach – for example, devoting some resources to investigating claims through contribution analysis or process tracing.

A learning agenda

The annual report could identify a forward-looking agenda for further learning, research and enquiry that would encourage a more strategic, coordinated use of Danida and CSO evaluation resources. This would help ensure that the M&E Framework is not a static system designed largely to hold CSOs to account but a dynamic system designed to shed light on Danida's support to civil society, and facilitate decision making and programme improvement. In this way, the evaluation also recommends that Danida explore the possibility of dedicating funds for short pieces of action-oriented, in-depth research that can be used to investigate findings that emerge in its sense-making activities with potential learning impact.

Implications for Danish CSO reporting

Any summary analysis or reporting of Danida support to CSO strategic partners is dependent on the information received by CSOs themselves who, in turn, are largely dependent on their Southern partners to provide the primary data. Danida has three options in this situation with regard to how it seeks to summarise results across the portfolio:

- Option one:** *“Early coding”*. Danida develops a reporting template – for example, based on the M&E matrix and use of indicators – that CSO strategic partners are expected to comply with. This makes it easier for Danida to assess and summarise reports but it may or may not be appropriate to the Danish and Southern CSOs' own needs. It may require them to gather data in a way that is time-consuming, of limited use to them, and involve some duplication of reporting.
- Option two:** *“Late coding”*. Strategic partners produce reports in their own formats, using their own indicators, that Danida subsequently analyses or interprets to summarise the portfolio. This approach fosters ownership and is easier for Danish CSOs and Southern partners but it may have resource implications for Danida.
- Option three:** Strategic partners produce their own reports and include a short supplement or executive summary explaining how the report corresponds to the M&E matrix and theory of change – for example, by providing key highlights with reference to the relevant sections of the report. This involves some extra work for the CSOs but they retain their own reporting formats.

In line with the guiding principle of ownership, the evaluation recommends that Danish CSOs plan and report in their own formats to provide evidence of change (Option 2). This information can then be mapped onto the portfolio indicators of the M&E matrix by Danida or separately by CSOs themselves (Option 3). Where appropriate CSOs might incorporate relevant elements of the M&E matrix into their own planning and

reporting in order to facilitate summary reporting at portfolio level and demonstrate how their work links to the development cooperation strategy.

Recommendation: Danish CSOs continue to plan and report in their own formats, incorporating relevant elements of the M&E matrix if appropriate or, alternatively, information can be subsequently 'mapped' against the portfolio indicators.

The plausibility of the results Danida reports is dependent on the quality of evidence that supports it. OECD/DAC has cited that “*The challenge most encountered when measuring results is weak data availability and reliability to inform baselines and indicators*”⁵⁵. The capacity of Southern partners to generate good evidence to demonstrate how Danish support has contributed to change will therefore be key.

The use of mixed indicators, as in the M&E matrix, offers CSOs the opportunity to ‘headline’ their achievements at outcome level through some level of aggregation while offering more insight into, for example, the factors contributing or impeding the success of the work through the methodical use of case studies. This will normally involve both quantitative and qualitative data – for example, numeric evidence of performance against targets and strong, compelling stories of change which illustrate positive trends from the evidence.

Danish CSOs need to be able to demonstrate or illustrate their contribution to the reported changes. The methods chosen to establish an evidence base should be relevant, proportionate and realistic:

- *Relevant:* To the needs and capacities of CSOs, partners and donors. Meeting the needs of the three stakeholders is not straightforward as each may have different expectations.
- *Proportionate:* Implementing an M&E framework, particularly at a time of reduced budgets, involves a number of trade-offs. CSOs and donors must decide an appropriate level of investment in M&E capacity vis-à-vis programme spend. CSOs must also negotiate with partners the costs and benefits and improved M&E. Unless partners acknowledge the benefits to their own organisations of improved M&E – for example, in terms of their increased effectiveness and/or ability to attract further funding – it is unreasonable to expect them to enthusiastically adapt to the needs of the Northern CSO or donor.
- *Realistic:* About what can be achieved. It is unrealistic to expect, for example, Southern CSOs to provide data for aggregation at portfolio level where that is theoretically and practically impossible.

There are two ways in which CSO strategic partners can provide evidence in support of reported changes – by using tools and/or using stories. These two methods are not mutually exclusive. There are a wide range of data gathering tools and methodologies

55 “Measuring and managing results in development co-operation: a review of challenges and practices among DAC members and observers”. OECD/DAC November 2014 p. 9.

available. Many of these tools have been developed by CSOs themselves.⁵⁶ The choice of methodology must be appropriate to the nature of the programme, type of indicator and within the resources available to the CSO and/or its partners. In general, gathering data on outputs is more straightforward, e.g. through the use of surveys, and more easily lends itself to aggregation when summarising results. The greater challenge is to demonstrate a distinctive, plausible contribution to development outcomes which often are the product of multiple, complex processes.

The Danish Civil Society Policy, for example, acknowledges the difficulty of reporting advocacy outcomes⁵⁷. As advocacy plays an increasing part in the programmes of Danish CSOs, some are using tools such as Outcome Mapping to track changes at outcome level. Theory-based methods such as process tracing and contribution analysis that seek to identify and/or validate the causal processes associated with the reported outcome are also becoming more popular. The use of these tools requires a significant investment of time and resources in, for example, in coaching and accompaniment for partners and to analyse and synthesis the data produced.

In many cases the findings of this work can be written up into case studies or stories of change. All Danish CSOs use stories of change in some form to supplement their results reporting. However, stories need to be more than illustrations of positive change if they are to be a valid and valuable element of a results summary. First the method by which stories have been chosen should be transparent and systematic. Secondly, the stories need to be accurately researched and honestly communicated.⁵⁸

Recommendation: Danida to promote the systematic use of purposive case study material, using pre-agreed criteria such as key learning questions from the M&E matrix, as an integral part of its annual portfolio reporting.

Verification

In order to support and improve reports of change and the use of stories, Danida should adopt a system to verify the results reported in narrative form by CSOs by investigating a few claims each year. There are a variety of methodologies that could be used to do this, including contribution analysis or process tracing. These would be used to test:

- A small random sample of claims – perhaps no more than five or six each year – and write up into short case studies in order to generate some reliable stories of change and to demonstrate are claims are liable to be selected for verification.
- Claims that are considered to be strategically important, e.g. that shed light on new areas or have the potential to influence future decision-making.

This would have the dual purpose of contributing to the development of a pool of reliable and well documented cases of change (i.e. as a complementary part of the case study

56 UK CSOs have collaborated in recent years to collate standard and ‘customised’ tools through the BOND Impact Builder. See <https://my.bond.org.uk/impact-builder>.

57 “Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society” p. 9.

58 See “Learning Synthesis 2: Summarising Organisational Results”, January 2016 for the systematic use of stories to illustrate change.

approach) but might also improve overall reporting by encouraging greater attention to rigour when reporting claims of change.

Recommendation: Danida to adopt a system to verify results reported by CSOs in narrative form e.g. by testing a small random sample of claims or claims of strategic interest.

Global CSOs and global reporting

The significant number of framework Danish CSOs that are members of global con/federations deserve special mention. The new draft strategy for Danish Development Cooperation⁵⁹ comments positively on the opportunity offered to the Danish to influence global results as result of their membership of global alliances, while highlighting the need to demonstrate more rigorously the value of the Danish CSOs in contributing to these results.

The evaluation conducted a short piece of research⁶⁰ to identify how a Danish CSO, affiliated to a global alliance, can demonstrate how it has contributed to the results it reports. The research highlighted five options, which are not mutually exclusive, as illustrated below:

- a) Summarising the results of their bilateral programmes in partner countries, e.g. DanChurchAid, CARE Denmark;
- b) Demonstrating a strong contribution to global results in areas where they have an explicit lead responsibility or are recognised as the centre of expertise in the global CSO, e.g. ActionAid Denmark, CARE Denmark;
- c) Demonstrating ‘thought leadership’ within the global CSOs that can have an impact on its ways of working and programmes, e.g. Save the Children Denmark and partnership, Danish Red Cross and HRBA;
- d) Demonstrating policy or practice change by working through Alliances or Coalitions; and
- e) Claiming an indirect contribution of global results – for example, through its funding by providing learning, research or tools used in global advocacy.

Guidance Notes

To ensure consistency in approach in any summary reporting, it is advisable that Danida issue guidance to Danish CSOs in three areas:

- *Reporting to the M&E matrix.* Each of the change areas and indicators in the M&E matrix should be explained. In the case of advocacy, for example, the use of the M&E Framework to summarise and synthesise data would be enhanced by the standard use of concepts and terminologies associated with the policy cycle – for example, raising awareness, policy development; policy change, and policy imple-

59 “Verden 2030. #voresDKaid. Udkast til Danmarks udviklingspolitiske og humanitære strategi” p. 10.

60 For a fuller discussion see “Learning Synthesis 4: Global CSOs and their Options for Results Reporting”, August 2016.

mentation. Each of these stages could be accompanied by suggested appropriate indicators.

- *The methodology and criteria* for using a case study approach in results reporting; and
- *Standard output indicators*⁶¹ to ensure that all CSOs collect information to consistent standards and definitions. These may already exist in the case of humanitarian programmes.

Recommendation: Danida to issues guidance to Danish CSOs on reporting to the M&E matrix; methodology and criteria for using a case study approach in results reporting; and on standard output indicators, to ensure that all CSOs collect information to consistent standards and definitions.

A Civil Society Communications Portal

In addition to an annual report, the evaluation recommends that Danida collaborate with Danish CSOs' strategic partners to develop a 'marketing window' to promote their work with civil society through an online tool that would be used to show graphically the changes arising out of Danida support to civil society. This could play an important role in raising public awareness and retaining or growing public support for an independent, vocal, diverse civil society in developing countries. An online facility could comprise all support modalities for Danish CSOs including programme support and umbrella organisations. CSOs would upload case studies, pictures, videos, stories of change, results and analysis that would be tagged against themes, countries, SDGs and/or pathways of change. Although this would require some initial investment there would be little cost to maintaining the system. Alternatively, it should review its Open Aid website to see if it is possible to include a more effective filter for projects related to civil society.

Recommendation: Danida to consider developing an online facility, or adapting its Open Aid website, to 'showcase' its support to civil society through stories of change, videos, results and analysis.

3.5 An M&E framework

An M&E framework for civil society support

The evaluation continues to recognise that it is not possible to assess Danida's support to Southern civil society development without examining other support modalities including in-country support. In principle, the theory of change and M&E matrix are applicable to other support modalities for Southern civil society. The evaluation recommends, therefore, that the revised theory of change and M&E matrix are shared more broadly – for example, with Danish CSO umbrella organisations and with relevant reviews and evaluations of, for example, governance and human rights and democracy programmes supported bi- or multi-laterally by Danida at country level. This would enable Danida to assemble a more consistent analysis of the outcomes of its support to Southern civil society across support modalities.

61 As in Table 4, p. 44.

Data systems

The first phase of the evaluation noted, when reviewing Danida M&E systems, that ‘it is currently difficult to track Danida support to civil society outside of direct funding of Danish NGOs’⁶². In particular, current systems do not enable Danida to track what elements of civil society it is indirectly supporting through different modalities. It will remain very difficult for Danida to monitor effectively its commitment to supporting either new or more rooted expressions of civil society without this basic data on end partners or recipients. Better data on the final recipients of Danida funding in Southern civil society would require all Danish supported modalities, including Danish CSOs and in-country modalities such as pooled funds, to provide basic information on their end partners in their reports – for example, type of organisation; location of office; and scope of implementation. Danida should also review its data and financial management systems with a view to tagging funds allocated in support of civil society more clearly to facilitate the aggregation of civil society support across all modalities. More accurate data, for example, on the volume of support provided directly or indirectly to Southern CSOs would help to offset a growing critique of the imbalance of support to Northern and Southern civil society⁶³.

Recommendation: Danida to review its data management systems with a view to tagging funds allocated in support of civil society more clearly.

Resource implications

The effective use of any M&E Framework or system requires human resources. Some of the work required with the proposed M&E framework will not require additional resources but can be achieved by Danida and CSOs doing things differently – for example, adopting a systematic approach to developing case studies and using evaluations more strategically. However, if Danida does not wish to impose a common reporting system or M&E methodology on its CSO strategic partners it will need to ensure that it has the resources to do the following in order to summarise portfolio performance:

- Carry out an annual analysis of case study evidence;
- Commission evaluations or small pieces of research on key areas of the theory of change;
- Conduct verification exercises on CSO ‘claims’ using methodologies such as contribution analysis or process tracing;
- Develop an online tool that could be used to collect and summarise changes from the CSOs; and
- Facilitate workshops and sense-making opportunities to discuss findings in relation to different areas of the M&E matrix and theory of change.

Finally, the evaluation found many framework CSOs have developed and improved their M&E frameworks in recent years; improved the quality of monitoring and reporting;

62 “Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society”. April 2013. p. 37.

63 See, for example, [//www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/09/five-reasons-donors-give-for-not-funding-local-ngos-directly](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/09/five-reasons-donors-give-for-not-funding-local-ngos-directly).

and engaged positively and constructively in the real-time learning of the second phase of the evaluation. The application of the M&E framework and delivery of first class portfolio reporting and communications will be more effective as a collaborative effort with Danish CSOs. Danida can draw upon the learning of the evaluation to consult further with CSO strategic partners on how they can, within resource constraints, jointly demonstrate and communicate the effectiveness of Danish support to civil society as an integral part of Danish development cooperation. The learning dimension must be a central element of this new strategic partnership that involves Danida and its CSO partners in dialogue and discussion on results and learning, and a willingness to embrace the opportunities for learning that both success and failure offer.

Annex A: Adjusted Terms of Reference (edited)

Objective

The objective of the follow-up evaluation would be through a “real-time” approach to facilitate, document (accountability aspect) and share, in a timely manner, learning (through short-term evaluation inputs) on innovation and change in taking forward the new Civil Society Policy, in order to assist in more effective Danish support to civil society.

Outputs

The following outputs have been identified for the follow-up evaluation process:

Learning syntheses: A short learning synthesis will be produced after each follow-up evaluation exercise. These cannot be precisely identified in advance in a demand-led process but might include, for example:

- Danish CSOs – demonstrating value-added,
- Northern/Southern CSO partnerships – experiments with innovation,
- Measuring civil society support with respect to partnership, capacity development and advocacy – quality and quantity,
- Monitoring the results chains (outcomes and impacts) in global NGO con/federations: challenges and opportunities,
- Civil society support – lessons from different situations, e.g. stability, fragility and growth situations.

Each synthesis will document lessons learned to date; suggested ways forward by those involved; and, where relevant, summary insight and learning from other, relevant documented sources or case studies. These learning syntheses would be made available to relevant stakeholders, i.e. framework CSOs and relevant embassies, and they may also be communicated through other media to a broader range of stakeholders. It is anticipated that by providing such syntheses in a timely manner they will facilitate the early adoption of relevant learning and contribute to improved performance in key areas. This may be particularly relevant and useful, for example, for the number of Danish NGOs that are ‘new entrants’ in the new round of Framework Agreements and that have a different level of organisational capacity in some of the key areas.

Follow-up evaluation learning workshops: In relation to the above, it will be appropriate at key points to bring together relevant stakeholders to share their learning. This could be based on some initial learning so that broader learning e.g. among framework CSOs could be incorporated into the learning synthesis.

Final synthesis report: A final synthesis report as a Danida evaluation study. The aim will be to document and evaluate – with a particular focus on innovation and learning – how Danida support to civil society has changed in the light of the reform processes introduced in association with The Right to a Better Life and the recommendations of

the Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society. This will include a synthesis of learning from the follow-up evaluations on the civil society processes supported; an assessment of the utility of the follow-up evaluation approach by the stakeholders concerned; summary of lessons learned; and summary learning about how Danida has operationalised key aspects of the Civil Society Policy.

Annex B: Learning Outputs of the Evaluation

Evaluation Report 1: Ghana Inception Report, January 2015.

Evaluation Report 2: Tanzania Inception Report, January 2015.

Evaluation Report 3: South Sudan Inception Report, January 2015.

Evaluation Report 4: Survey of Partner Perceptions in Tanzania, Ghana and South Sudan, January 2017.

Learning Synthesis 1: Danish CSOs and the Pathways to Change, September 2015.

Learning Synthesis 2: Summarising Organisational Results, January 2016.

Learning Synthesis 3: Tracking Capacity Change, March 2016.

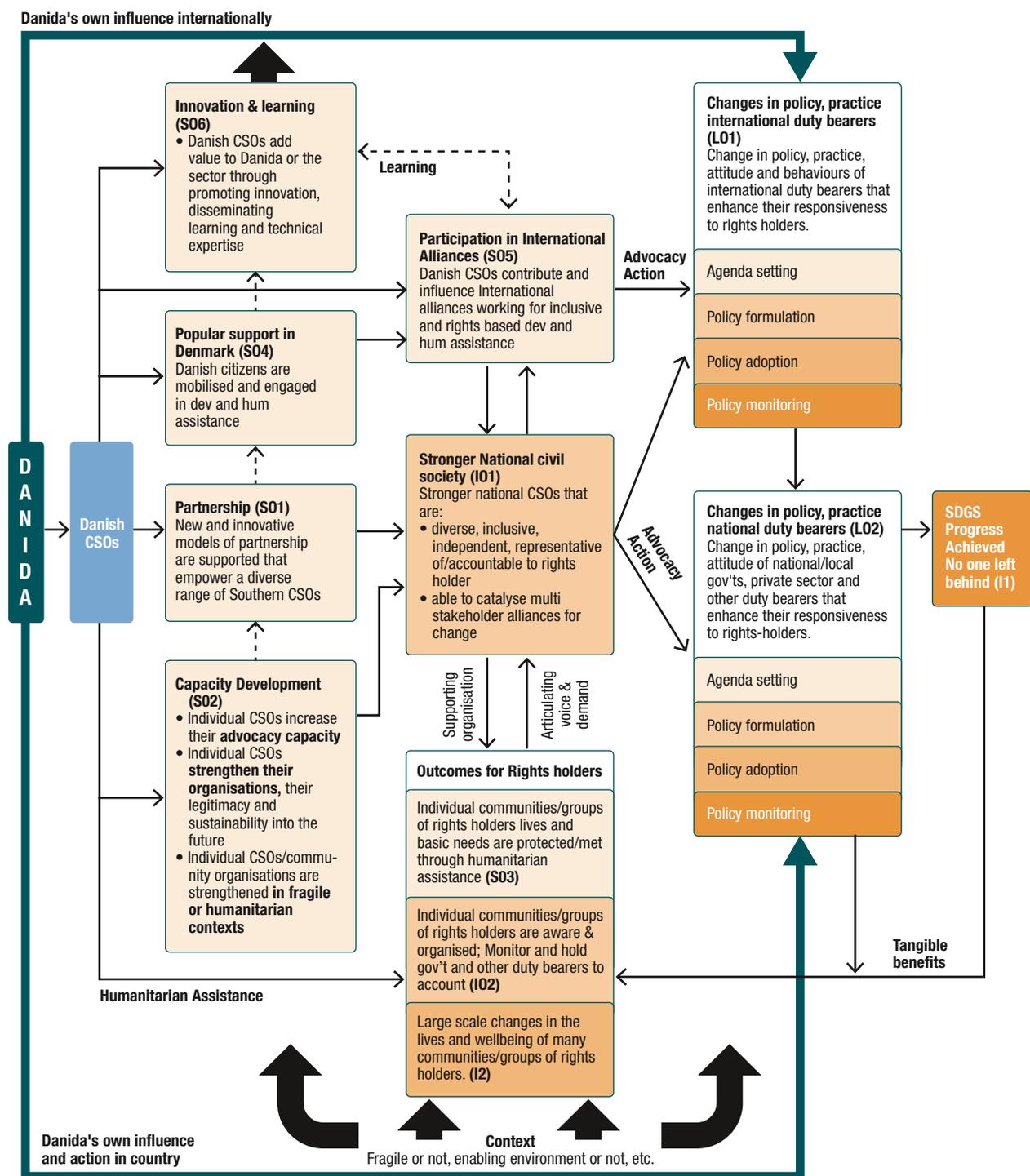
Learning Synthesis 4: Global CSOs and their Options for Results Reporting, August 2016.

Learning Synthesis 5: The Civil Society Policy and Fragility: Documenting Results. September 2016.

Learning Synthesis 6: Danida Fund for Innovation in Civil Society Partnerships.

Learning Synthesis 7: Innovation Case Studies, January 2017.

Annex C: A Revised Theory of Change



Annex D: An M&E Matrix

Change area	Portfolio indicators	Learning questions
SHORT TERM OUTCOMES		
Support to National CSOs (SO)		
<p><i>SO1 - Partnership</i> New and innovative models of partnership are supported that empower a diverse range of Southern CSOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £ passed on directly to civil society partners, disaggregated by type of CSO • # of end partner CSOs supported, disaggregated by type of CSOs • # and description of innovative partnerships developed • # and description of south-south partnerships supported • # and % of Southern partners that believe that there is a re-balancing of power in their partnership with Danish CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which different types of partners are being supported, e.g. traditional structures, newer forms of civil society? What challenges does this present, and how are the associated risks managed? • Is there evidence of re-balancing' the partnership i.e. making it responsive and accountable to the partner and including the gradual transfer of financial and decision-making responsibility? • Does the partnership involve multi-sectoral collaborations e.g. academic, private enterprises?
<p><i>SO2 - Capacity Development</i> Individual southern CSOs have strengthened their organisations, their legitimacy, and their sustainability into the future through Danida supported capacity development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and description of cases where capacity of Southern CSOs has been enhanced • # (and type) of Southern CSOs provided with capacity support • # and % of Southern partners that believe Danish CSOs have provided effective capacity development support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree is there evidence that capacity development is responsive to the priorities and needs of partners? • What areas of capacity does support focus on? e.g. technical, financial, leadership? • What methods are being used to support capacity development (e.g. accompaniment, training, mentoring, peer exchange etc.) and which are proving most or least effect? • How is capacity building being delivered (e.g. directly or through a third party, through international or national providers)? What difference does this make? • Does the capacity development contribute to organisational legitimacy, internal democracy and accountability? (e.g. participation and feedback mechanisms from rights holders as a part of programming.) • How is capacity building contributing to partners' long term organisational and financial sustainability?

Change area	Portfolio indicators	Learning questions
Individual Southern CSOs have increased their capacity to engage in advocacy/influencing work in support of rights holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of cases where capacity of Southern CSOs to engage in advocacy work has been enhanced # and type of Southern CSOs supported to enhance advocacy work # and % of Southern partners that believe Danish CSOs have been 'very effective' or 'effective' at providing advocacy support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other than capacity building, in what other ways have Danish CSOs added value to the advocacy efforts of Southern CSOs? Which means of support have been most (or least effective)? Is there evidence that Danish CSOs have helped Southern CSOs have enhanced access to national, regional or international fora? Have partners adopted HRBA approaches as a result of capacity development by Danish CSOs?
National CSOs/community organisations are strengthened in fragile or humanitarian contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # (and type) of Southern CSOs supported in fragile or humanitarian contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is support building the capacity of national actors within the emergency response? To what extent is Danish CSO support contributing to the agenda of localisation of humanitarian aid? How are Danish CSOs connecting relief and development? How do interventions help build/rebuild community structures? How is the voice of affected populations being supported within the response?
Changes for Rights holders (fragile/humanitarian only)		
SO3 - Individual communities/groups of rights holders lives and basic needs are protected and met through humanitarian assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of people receiving direct assistance via humanitarian programme disaggregated by age and gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did humanitarian assistance provided by Danish CSOs meet the different needs of men and women and the needs of the most vulnerable amongst affected population? To what extent was the response timely and flexible enough to respond to the needs of different groups and the changing context
Work in Denmark and internationally		
SO4 - Popular Support in Denmark Mobilisation of popular support and engagement in development and humanitarian assistance in Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of cases where Danish CSOs have engaged in popular support within Denmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there evidence that engaging in popular support increased support for Danida (or aid budgets)? Is there evidence that engaging in popular support helps the work of Danish CSOs overall, or leads to more pressure to change international policies?

Change area	Portfolio indicators	Learning questions
<p>SO5 - International Alliances Danish CSOs engage in international alliances to support inclusive and rights based development and humanitarian assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of international alliances that Danish CSOs are involved in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the specific contribution of Danish CSOs to international alliances, and what effect have they had?
<p>SO6 - Innovation/Learning Danish CSOs provide added-value to Danida or the sector (innovation, learning, unique positioning)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of cases where Danish CSOs have integrated learning into improved programming # and description of cases where other agencies, such as government or international organisations, have used Danish CSO learning in altered policy and practice # and description of cases where innovative projects / programmes have been scaled up or replicated by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What added value do Danish CSOs bring Danida or the sector in areas such as innovation and learning? To what degree does the mixture of CSOs supported enable Danida to be strategically relevant? To what extent does the work of CSOs complement or add value to Danida's own advocacy/influencing efforts? What influence do Danish CSOs have on global confederations and in promoting a Danish approach? What added reach or influence do Danish CSOs give through their global confederations and networks?
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (IO)		
IO1 - National Civil Society		
<p>Stronger national CSOs that are: diverse, inclusive, representative of/accountable to rights holders, independent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of change in capacity of CSOs where Danida/Danish CSOs have some evidenced contribution # and analysis of type of end partner of Danida/Danish CSOs Civil Society Index/studies on civil society in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is support to civil society based on a careful situational analysis – political economy, gender, power, drivers of change conflict analysis and systematic risk assessment? Which type of Southern CSO (e.g. informal, social movements, traditional CSOs, national NGOs, rural/urban CSOs) are encouraged and supported? How viable are Southern CSOs into the future within different countries? To what extent are Southern CSOs organisations of poor and excluded groups themselves, or in what way are they accountable to them in their work? To what extent is there evidence that less dependent, more representative CSOs have stronger legitimacy to speak out and influence change, and are better able to support rights holders?

Change area	Portfolio indicators	Learning questions
CSOs form alliances between themselves and other actors to push for more inclusive and rights based development and humanitarian assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of alliances that CSOs have formed or are engaged in.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are CSOs catalysing new alliances across different sectors and actors to achieve change? To what extent do these alliances include rights holders themselves or support their voice? What has the contribution of Danish CSOs been to the promoting the implementation of better coordination of international humanitarian responses
IO2 - Changes for Rights holders		
Individual communities/ groups of rights holders are: aware and organised; able to monitor and hold government and service providers to account; see tangible improvements in their lives and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and description of cases where communities/groups of right holders have increased awareness; are better organised; are better able to hold government and service providers to account; with a verifiable contribution from Danida-supported CSOs # of people reached # of women and girls supported directly through gender-based initiatives # of people receiving direct assistance via humanitarian programmes # of people with improved access to health, education, water or youth based initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What particular changes in the situation of communities / groups of rights holders are being achieved, and how are Danida-supported CSOs contributing? Does information, awareness and organisation lead to action? If not what does prompt communities/groups to take action? How do these changes contribute to SDG goals or the agenda of “no one left behind”?
LONG-TERM OUTCOMES (LO)		
LO1 - International Duty Bearers Changes in policy, practice, attitude and behaviours of international actors that enhance their responsiveness to rights holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> #, type and description of policy changes with a verifiable contribution from Danida-supported civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have changes in international actors been influenced by different actors such as International Alliances, Danish CSOs and Danida-supported Southern CSOs? To what extent is it possible for international actors to influence national actors? To what extent are Danida/Danish CSOs influencing better functioning of the humanitarian system?

Change area	Portfolio indicators	Learning questions
<p>LO2 - National duty bearers Changes in policy, practice, attitude and behaviours of national or local governments, private sector organisations and/or other actors that enhance their responsiveness to rights holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> #, type and description of changes with a verifiable contribution from Danida-supported civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have changes been influenced by civil society alliances? To what extent is strengthened civil society leading to greater accountability of government and other actors? Do individual specific changes lead to changes in the wider system? If so, under which circumstances? To what extent have changes in national actors been influenced by changes in international actors? Which modalities (e.g. lobbying, campaigning, direct action, technical assistance, and mobilisation) were most/least effective in bringing about change in each context? Is there evidence that citizen pressure is leading to wider change? If so, what, and under which circumstances?
<p>IMPACT (I)</p>		
<p>I1 - Achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) with no one left behind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDGs in priority Danida countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there evidence that Southern CSOs supported by Danish CSOs are focusing more on equitable development? Which SDGs are being most influenced in specific countries by Danish CSOs, working through Southern CSOs?
<p>I2 - Large scale changes in the lives and well being of many communities/groups of rights holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases showing improved lives of poor and vulnerable people with a plausible contribution from Danish CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any clear evidence of changes in national/international policy translating into improved lives of rights holders? If so, what was the contribution of Danish CSOs? How can change be scaled up?

Annex E: A specimen of portfolio results for Danish Framework CSOs, 2015

Background

This annex presents two example briefings to illustrate how a ‘late-coding’ approach to monitoring and evaluating Danish framework CSOs’ results might look in practice. These briefings are intended as a ‘mock-up’ and do not constitute a rigorous analysis of individual CSOs results nor the portfolio.

The briefings were compiled by reviewing Danish framework CSOs’ 2015 annual reports, and coding the activities and achievements reported in them. As they are based on CSOs’ existing reports, which were not written with this purpose in mind, the information is partial and heavily reliant on the judgement of the evaluation team. If a ‘late-coding’ approach were adopted, Danish CSOs would have the opportunity to tailor the information collected and reported, resulting in more detailed, rigorous and informative analysis than was possible using existing data.

The results, messages, and directions for future learning should not be taken as representative, as they may be biased by the limited available information.

The briefings focus on two thematic areas:

- Danish CSOs’ contribution to influencing policy, a longer briefing reflecting a key element of the theory of change.
- Danish CSOs’ engagement with the private sector, a shorter briefing reflecting a more emergent area of work.

Example briefing 1: influencing policy

Summary

Influencing policy is a strong focus for many framework CSOs. They are building capacity of southern partners, brokering dialogue with duty bearers, facilitating coalitions and influencing policy directly. Danish CSOs are influencing agendas at national and global levels. While they play a lesser role in formulating policies, they are also to document tangible results in terms of policies adopted at national levels and below. Results particularly centre on tax justice, natural resource governance and inclusion of youth. However, evidence of the contribution of Danish CSOs to specific policy changes is weak and could be improved through more targeted case studies. There are also opportunities to track policy-influencing over a longer timeframe through different stages of the policy cycle, as well as understand whether influencing on an issue at one level complements work at other levels.

How Danish framework CSOs support policy influencing

Capacity building of partners

Sub-national and local level policy-influencing tends to be led by Danish CSO's southern partners, who receive capacity development support from Danish CSOs. The focus is mainly on 'soft' advocacy: supporting/forming coalitions, policy research, workshops/forums, using media, and engaging in dialogue with government. Some 'harder' advocacy strategies are also supported, such as direct lobbying, legal action, and encouraging international pressure for change. The most common types of capacity development support linked to policy influencing results are: facilitation of dialogue or 'brokering' between civil society and governments, and support to partners on advocacy planning or strategic planning. While advocacy trainings are mentioned in a number of results, there was little or no evidence linking training to capacity change or specific policy influencing results.

Supporting coalitions and influencing the terms of engagement

Danish CSOs also support policy influencing by facilitating networking between national CSOs, as well as building or contributing to coalitions in support of specific advocacy objectives. Danish CSOs have a strong focus on improving excluded or marginalised groups' access to policy processes, especially at sub-national and local levels.

Direct advocacy

Many Danish CSOs undertake direct advocacy in support of policy change. This tends to be at national and supra-national levels. It also tends to be focussed at earlier stages of the policy cycle (agenda setting), although some Danish CSOs working in international federations with national offices have a stronger direct role at other stages. At supra-national levels, tax justice and inequality (ActionAid Denmark and Oxfam Ibis) are significant areas of focus for direct advocacy.

Results through the policy cycle

53 advocacy examples from six of the framework CSO annual reports for 2015 were reviewed. Of these, 28 examples of policy-influencing results were analysed in more depth. Each example was rated in terms of where in the policy cycle results were reported, the approximate scale of the result (from local to global levels), and the evidence of Danish CSOs' contribution to the results. Due to weaknesses in the evidencing of contribution of Danish CSOs to results, contribution itself could not be rated; instead, the level of evidence relating to contribution is indicated on a scale of 1-4. The challenges of assessing contribution are discussed in more detail later in this briefing.

Figure 1: Visualising Danish CSOs support to policy influencing through the policy cycle



Danish CSOs are influencing policy agendas at national and international levels

Danish CSOs are influencing agendas at national and international levels, by supporting southern partners and through their own advocacy (particularly at international levels and in Denmark). Tax justice and inequality are a particular focus for international advocacy, and Danish CSOs have been active in international coalitions and supported a number of influential policy-research outputs. However, most organisations struggle to provide strong evidence of their contribution to shifting the terms of debates.

Table 1: Summary of policy influencing work: Agenda Setting

#	CSO	Country	Example
2	ActionAid Denmark	Tanzania	Tanzania Tax Justice Coalition, supported by an AADK Tax Advisor, sent two open letters to the Minister of Finance regarding harmful tax incentives and restrictive tax treaties.... The Minister for Finance called the Tax Justice Coalition to a meeting, where the government acknowledged the role of the coalition and agreed on future policy priorities.
9	ActionAid Denmark	Denmark/ Global	Since the report “Milking the Poor” was launched in 2011, AADK has been pushing for Arla Foods to act responsibly when entering markets in the Global South. Arla Foods cited AADK’s constructive dialogue as important for the company’s efforts to move forward on responsible business.
17	ADRA DK	Malawi	ADRA facilitated eight community groups to use national radio and television shows as advocacy platforms for their concerns. “Zatonse” radio programme worked with a range of civil society stakeholders to address challenges faced in the education system in Malawi.
20	CARE DK	Laos	CARE DK supported the Land issue working group to develop an advocacy strategy and produce better evidence. After lengthy informal negotiation, the national assembly has accepted the working group’s proposal to organise three regional workshops on the development of the National Land Policy.
22	CARE DK	Niger	Care DK partner DEMI-E was supported to take its advocacy efforts on agriculture policies to a more strategic level, including the UPR process, COP 21, COP 12 on desertification. DEMI was able to communicate messages around the need for climate adaptation at the French National Assembly and appeared in French media during the COP 21.

Danish CSOs are engaging less directly in policy formulation

There are fewer cases where Danish CSOs report involvement in formulating specific policies, either directly or through partners. This may simply reflect the complexity and non-linearity of the policy process in developing country contexts, where duty bearers may remain intransigent on agendas for a long time and then move quickly to adopt policies at particular moments. It may also reflect the informal nature of policy processes: while only a few cases mention drafts of policies, many report meetings with ministers, government departments etc., where informal influencing can take place. Danish CSOs and their partners are also working to include marginalised groups in policy processes, without necessarily putting forward specific agendas of their own. This highlights a strategic choice for Danish CSOs in shaping national and local policies: to use their expertise and access to work within informal and opaque policy processes to try to achieve concrete policy changes, or to attempt to change policy processes so that they are more inclusive and transparent towards rights holders themselves. It could be useful to explore further how, and under what circumstances, this choice is made.

Table 2: Summary of policy influencing work: policy formulation

#	CSO	Country	Example
6	AADK	Tanzania	Activista, ActionAid's youth network, significantly supported by AADK, lobbied for a youth council to be included in a draft of the new constitution. If the proposed constitution is voted through, young people would hold constitutional power to engage in all development decision making processes.
16	ADRA	Zimbabwe	ADRA Zimbabwe was approached by the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development (MAMID) to initiate joint country-wide Stakeholder Forums to develop a national horticulture policy. This was an outcome of a big stakeholder forum organised by ADRA Zimbabwe in Harare in April 2015.
27	Save DK	Sri Lanka	SCD supported the government in Sri Lanka to develop the groundbreaking National Agenda on Child Rights Governance (NACRG) through government and civil society collaboration.

Local and national policies adopted in line with Danish CSOs strategic priorities

Danish CSOs are reporting the adoption of policies at local and national levels in line with their strategic priorities in specific sectors. Despite weaknesses in documenting the contribution of Danish CSOs to specific results, it is encouraging that the profile of policy changes reflects the strategic priorities of Danish CSOs. While some policy changes, such as those around rights for children/youth, might be regarded as 'softer' agendas to make progress on, the policy changes in relation to tax justice and natural resource governance involve tackling vested interests more directly.

Table 3: Summary of policy influencing work: policy adoption

#	CSO	Country	
1	AADK	Tanzania	The Tax Justice Coalition, supported by an AADK tax advisor, successfully pushed for the Government to put an end to the extensive powers of the Ministers in issuing tax exemptions as the Parliament is now mandated to fully play its overseeing role. A concrete result is that tax exemptions to mining companies have been reduced from 17.6 % to 9%.
8	AADK	Bangladesh	Youth groups, supported by AADK, successfully campaigned for schools in one district to adopt anti-end corporal punishment policies.
24	CARE DK	Uganda	CARE DK supported partners successfully lobbied the Ministry of Water and Environment to adopt three undertakings proposed by CSO in Joint Sector Reviews around sustainable forest management.
25	CARE DK	Vietnam	CARE DK supported partner CIRUM successfully influenced policy makers to change land policies to increase the access of ethnic minorities to forestland. Another partner, CEMA has influenced the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs to include regulations against ethnic minority discrimination in legal documents.
26	Save DK	South Sudan	In South Sudan, SCD supported the Parliamentary Forum for Children at the national level, contributing to the government of South Sudan ratifying the UNCRC.

Policy monitoring blurs with social accountability

Danish CSOs and their partners invest energy in policy monitoring and social accountability. We have classified cases as ‘policy monitoring’ when duty bearers are being held to account over specific policies ‘on paper’, which represents only a handful of cases. Social accountability (which is not represented in Figure 1) encompasses a wider range of cases, where accountability is being sought, where the focus is less on monitoring policies ‘on paper’ but on influencing the practice of duty bearers, whether or not policies are formally encoded.

Table 4: Summary of policy influencing work: policy monitoring

#	CSO	Country	Example
5	AADK	Tanzania	Worked with a partner in one district to achieve the abolition of illegal hospital fees and implementation of 5% youth development budget allocation as required by law.
10	Oxfam Ibis	Ghana	Oxfam Ibis worked with a national think-tank to put pressure on the government to allocate revenue from state oil companies towards public services. Through policy monitoring the partner achieved an enhanced budget allocation for national education.
12	Oxfam Ibis	Guatemala	Oxfam Ibis worked with a partner representing indigenous peoples to ensure the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ midwifery practices in the public health systems, in line with the law.
15	Ghana Friends	Ghana	Ghana Friends’ partners conducted research into whether municipal, metropolitan and district assembly meetings were in compliance with the legal standing orders that regulate such assemblies. The survey found low awareness and compliance with these provisions among duty bearers and results have been shared with relevant stakeholders.

Learning*More needs to be done to evidence contribution*

From the cases analysed, the evaluations was not able to construct a consistent rating of Danish CSOs’ contribution to policy-influencing results. While there are inherent challenges with demonstrating contribution in what are often opaque policy processes, there is also considerable variation in Danish CSOs’ documentation of their own contribution to the activities that underpin these results. Some can clearly demonstrate that they have enhanced the capacity of national CSOs. There is also evidence that national CSOs have achieved concrete policy goals, although the evidence for their contribution is less clear. However, at present, there is little evidence linking the two: there are no compelling examples where Danish CSOs have demonstrated that their advocacy support to national CSOs has been instrumental in supporting them to bring about concrete policy goals. One way of doing this would be to develop a tracer study to track a small number of national CSOs that are not currently engaging with government but wish to do so through the next three years. In addition, a random sample of the claims made by CSOs could be checked in more detail using contribution analysis.

Making sense of policy-influencing work over longer timescales

Documentation of ground-level impacts for rights holders is very limited in the cases reviewed. At the same time, the blurring between policy monitoring and social accountability reflects the fact that, in the contexts in which Danish CSOs are working, there are often large gaps between policies ‘on paper’ and duty bearers’ willingness and capacity to implement them. Hence a large amount of work is focussed on pushing for change after policies have been adopted ‘on paper’. There is an opportunity to map and track this process in more detail. Some of these cases of policy adoption could be selected for a longer-term study to understand whether and how policy change translates into impacts.

Understanding how policy influencing at different levels complement each other

There is a significant cluster of policy influencing work on the same issue (e.g. around tax justice, agriculture/rural livelihoods and natural resource governance) at different scales/levels. The reports indicate some linkages between policy-influencing work at different levels, for example influencing agendas on global tax justice at national and supra-national levels, and tackling specific injustices in natural resource governance and extractive industries at national and local levels. In at least one of the cases, influencing tax justice agendas in the run-up to the Financing for Development Summit, may have tipped the balance in favour of progressive national-level policy reform of the fiscal regime for extractive industries. It could be useful to follow-up one sector in more detail to unpick how influencing at different levels complement each other (or not).

Building the evidence-base on policy-influencing

This analysis provides only an early indication of potential lessons about what works in policy influencing and under what circumstances. Some already well documented lessons were reflected in the examples analysed. For example, policy-influencing results appear stronger where:

- Danish CSOs are facilitating networking and coalitions of national CSOs, which amplifies their leverage on specific agendas.
- Danish CSOs are working closely with a smaller number of established partners – this is likely to reflect more focused and tailored support.
- Danish CSOs working directly through INGO federations appear more vulnerable to shrinking space for civil society than those working through national partners. A number of instances were identified where promising activities were abandoned to avoid direct confrontation with governments. However, the full impact on Danish support to INGO federations is difficult to capture and this is an areas that would benefit from deeper exploration.

Some potential areas for further exploration, which may be useful to incorporate into future learning questions, include:

- Where Danish CSOs use their standing to ‘broker power’ between local rights groups and governments/companies, results appear stronger. The position as an ‘outsider’ may be beneficial in playing this role.
- Danish CSOs and their partners’ working in fragile/sensitive contexts, struggle to gain traction as state-society relations are already fragile. The cuts to framework funds in 2015 led to withdrawal of advocacy programmes from some of the more

fragile contexts such as Burundi. Nevertheless, some appear able to achieve more in these contexts than others.

Example briefing 2: engaging with the private sector

Summary

Engagement with the private sector is a small but emerging area of work for most Danish framework CSOs. There were more reported examples of collaboration with the private sector than confrontation, yet the latter is more frequently associated with well documented results on the ground. Many collaborations have not yet progressed beyond the initial dialogue phase. This briefing finds few concrete results, but highlights some potential areas for further monitoring or exploration.

Results

Annual reports of 13 Danish CSOs receiving framework funds were reviewed to identify specific examples where they are engaging with the private sector as part of their work. The analysis focussed only on more active cooperation or confrontation, so financial support for existing activities was not within scope. 30 examples were identified, although the information available in relation to most of these was very limited. Each was classified according to the modality of engagement (from collaboration to confrontation) and the scale at which results were expected or reported.

Private sector engagement is a small but emerging area of work

The primary work of Danish CSOs remains with individuals, communities, civil society partners in the global south and governments. Work with (or against) the private sector is a small fraction of the total. Much of this work, particularly in collaborating with businesses on corporate social responsibility, is still in its infancy.

Three main forms of engagement were identified, of which the first was the most common:

- Advocacy and accountability work with/against private sector, including cooperation around corporate social responsibility (CSR) (25 examples)
- Collaboration on service-provision (five examples)
- Research/innovation partnerships (five examples, overlapping with service provision)

Many, but not all, Danish framework CSOs see private sector partnerships as an emerging priority. This is likely to relate to diversifying funding streams, particularly in the context of cuts to framework funding. One CSO is working with Danish companies to mobilise support within Denmark.

Advocacy with the private sector: collaboration and confrontation

The 25 examples where Danish CSOs are engaging the private sector in advocacy cover a variety of approaches, from collaboration to confrontation. The more collaborative approaches make up the bulk of cases, with fewer examples of confrontation with specific companies. Danish CSOs wider advocacy with governments and duty bearers may also impact on the private sector, and policy frameworks that affect them through these general cases are not considered in this briefing.

Figure 2: visualising examples of Danish CSOs collaboration and confrontation with the private sector

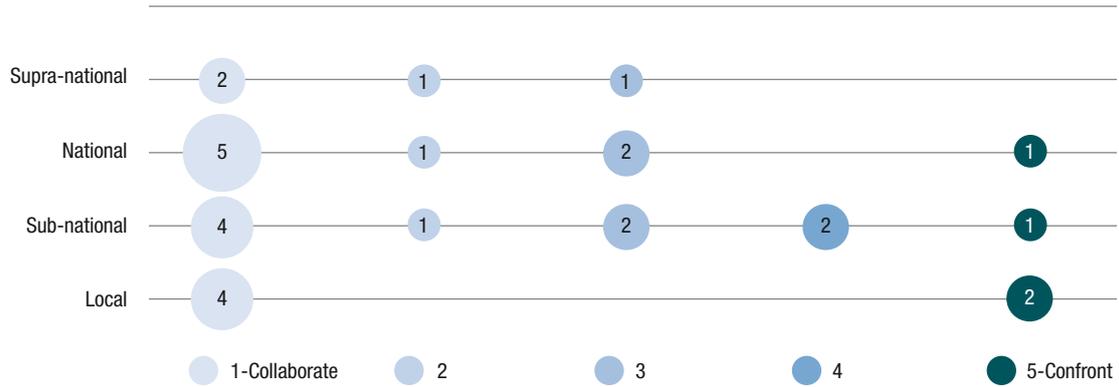


Table 5: Examples of Danish CSOs collaboration and confrontation with the private sector

	Examples of engagement	Results
Collaboration	Oxfam Ibis worked with TOMS Confectionary Group in Ghana to support education and campaigning against child labour. The project used a business model which paid a higher price for Cocoa that had been verified as being child-free production.	When the projects started, 9.8% of children in 30 communities participated in child labour. After implementation, this had reduced to 1.5%
Confrontation	3F supported partners in Zimbabwe to advocate for Collective Bargaining Agreements with Sino Hydro, a Chinese infrastructure company. They first approached the company without success, but then changed tactic to lobby the responsible government department. The tactic was subsequently taken up in Zambia.	Collective Bargaining Agreements were achieved.

Collaboration with Danish companies around CSR is yielding few concrete results

With a few exceptions, Danish CSOs are not able to report concrete results from collaborations with Danish companies around Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It seems that many of these engagements are still very new and have not progressed beyond initial dialogue phases. Even where Danish CSOs have developed specific initiatives or policies for collaborating with the private sector (for example in ‘innovation partnerships’), there are few concrete results associated with them.

There is therefore a case for monitoring these private sector collaborations as they develop; the risk is that low-level collaboration benefits the companies involved (i.e. being seen to be corporately responsible) without contributing to the missions or objectives of Danish CSOs. This is less of an issue for work with the private sector in the global south, where the focus is more on confronting poor corporate behaviour or collaborating on specific issues.

Confrontation around particular issues is more frequently cited in relation to advocacy achievements

Approaches that involve a degree of confrontation appear to be yielding more concrete results. Where Danish CSOs have challenged the private sector on particular issues, this is more likely to be associated with policies adopted or visible impacts on the ground.

It is not necessarily the case that confrontation precludes other forms of engagement. ActionAid Denmark report constructive engagement with Arla Foods, after confronting them publicly via a policy research report “*Milking the Poor*” exploring their activities in Nigeria. ActionAid Denmark were able to build a longer-term constructive partnership with the company despite confrontational approach:

“AADK has throughout the process challenged us in a highly competent manner. It has clearly meant that our analysis of the human rights aspects in Nigeria and our work with the UN guiding principles on Business and Human Rights has received a qualified boost” – Arla Foods

There are small-scale collaborations with the private sector on R&D and innovation

Some Danish CSOs have explicitly sought engagement with the private sector to support innovation. Examples include the development of higher yield quinoa strains (DanChurchAid/Ethiopia), a project providing shelter for refugees (DanChurchAid and Rockwool/Kenya) and piloting of a mini solar grid (WWF and Energinord/Uganda). These examples are relatively small-scale, but highlight a potential way in which private sector collaboration can move beyond CSR dialogue.

Areas for future learning

Developing the rationale for, and monitoring of, CSR work in Denmark

This briefing finds that a substantial number of collaborations on corporate social responsibility with companies in Denmark lack a clear rationale underpinning the engagement. This is expected, given that many of these partnerships are still in their infancy, but there are potential risks as well as opportunities for Danish CSOs in such collaborations. Given the growing interest in supporting CSR, it may be useful to facilitate some joint learning around approaches to collaborating with the private sector. Documenting the impacts of CSR work with Danish companies may also pose a monitoring challenge, and this may be another area for joint learning.

Learning from constructive confrontation

Although only a small number of cases were reviewed, it seems that approaches which include elements of confrontation may provide CSOs and their partners with more leverage to work constructively with the private sector. 3F report that lobbying governments about corporate behaviour yielded results, where engaging with the company itself had not. ActionAid Denmark also reported building a constructive relationship with Arla foods, after advocacy against their activities in Nigeria. It may be useful to collect and explore a larger set of cases where confrontation has been used alongside or within more collaborative partnerships with the private sector.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

2 Asiatisk Plads
DK-1448 Copenhagen K
Denmark

Tel +45 33 92 00 00
Fax +45 32 54 05 33
um@um.dk
www.um.dk

EVALUATION OF DANISH SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY: PHASE II
