



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF DENMARK**

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH  
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK  
2027-2031**

**PREQUALIFICATION - INFORMATION NOTE**

October 2025

## Content

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Aim and nature of SPA 2027-2031 .....	3
3. Indicative priorities for SPA 2027-2031 .....	4
4. Application for prequalification .....	5
5. Assessment procedures and scoring .....	6
6. Timeline for the prequalification process .....	7
7. Annexes .....	8

## **1. Introduction**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA) hereby launches the open application process for the third generation of Strategic Partnerships (SPA3) for the period 2027-2031 within civil society development and humanitarian action.

Following the launch of Denmark's strategy for development cooperation, 'A Changing World – Partnerships in Development', in June 2025, the first phase of the application process, i.e., this *prequalification phase* can be launched. Prequalified candidates will subsequently be invited to submit a *full proposal* for entering into a Strategic Partnership in a second, separate phase.

This information note outlines the expected characteristics and indicative priorities of SPA3 as well as key elements of the prequalification process. The final SPA3 framework and strategic priorities will be described in an information note to be published once the full proposal process has been launched.

Eligible applicants are civil society organisations who fulfil the eligibility requirements and match the capacity criteria of this prequalification. Applicants may be individual organisations or consortia. Applicants can only receive funding through one Strategic Partnership with the MFA, hence organisations will have to either apply individually or as part of one consortium.

## **2. Aim and nature of SPA 2027-2031**

The MFA wishes to engage in Strategic Partnerships with Danish civil society organisations (CSOs) that have strong capacity and strategic alignment with the Danish strategy for development. The partnerships will furthermore be based on the CSOs' own vision, goals, strategies, and specific core competencies, also reflecting the fundamental respect for the independent nature of CSOs and their roles and mandates.

### **Predictability**

The strategic partners will enter into 5-year partnerships (2027-2031) with the MFA with annual commitments (subject to annual parliamentary approval), allowing for predictable, long-term funding for the strategic partners as well as their local and national partners.

### **Flexibility**

Strategic Partnerships integrate civil society engagement, long-term development interventions, and humanitarian action and enable flexible programming and response, e.g., in fragile contexts and protracted humanitarian crises. This is also reflected in the financial framework, with the possibility to include a part of the budget as unallocated funds and/or receive top-up funds during the partnership period to be able to respond swiftly to new or changing needs. The modality furthermore supports a multi-stakeholder approach that can

facilitate partnerships and joint interventions between civil society and other relevant actors including business associations, private foundations, companies, public authorities, etc.

### **Results and collaboration**

Strategic Partnerships have a focus on delivering outcome level results. The MFA and the strategic partners can be mutually supportive in programme interventions and in relation to international policy agendas. Strategic partners are expected to engage in and strengthen coordination and collaboration with the MFA and Danish missions in partner countries to mutually support and benefit from the Danish presence, including through their local partners.

### **Own-financing**

Strategic partners will be expected to document own-financing of activities similar to those funded by MFA under a Strategic Partnership 2027-2031. The own-financing should be sourced from other channels of funding beyond the SPA main grant, corresponding to at least 25 per cent of the entire SPA budget. In-kind contributions are not valid.

## **3. Indicative priorities for SPA 2027-2031**

A brief summary of indicative priorities derived from the development cooperation strategy is presented below. This will be further elaborated in the information note to be launched with the full proposal phase. The below descriptions are not exhaustive and merely illustrative of possible actions to be financed under SPA3.

### **Indicative thematic focus areas**

- 1) **Job creation, economic growth, trade and investment**, including decent jobs, livelihoods for young people, labour rights, and labour market framework conditions.
- 2) **Response to conflict, forced displacement and irregular migration**, including humanitarian response and the integration of humanitarian action with long-term development to strengthen resilience and secure a sustainable reduction in vulnerability, and addressing root causes of irregular migration.
- 3) **A just, sustainable, and green transition**, including climate adaptation, green solutions, restoration of ecosystems, and forest conservation.
- 4) **Democracy and human rights**, including strong and independent civil society, youth engagement, prevention of mis- and disinformation, gender equality and protection of rights of marginalised groups, e.g., LGBT+, people with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples.
- 5) **Education and health**, including access to quality education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as well as access to basic health services, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and mental health.

### **Indicative overarching approaches**

- 1) **Equal partnerships and local leadership**, including a strategic partnership approach, financial transfers to local partners, capacity strengthening and -sharing, representation and leadership of local partners.
- 2) **Public engagement**, including active engagement of the Danish public in the development agenda, and exploring new ways of communicating and engaging around strategic priorities.
- 3) **Cooperation** with business association, private foundations, companies, public authorities etc.
- 4) **Gearing of resources**, including mobilising additional resources to the strategic priorities.

### **Geographical focus**

The geographical weight of SPA3 is expected to be on Africa, Ukraine and the European eastern neighbourhood, and the Middle East. Beyond that, engagements can be in all OECD DAC eligible countries, incl. Asia, the Pacific region, and Latin America.

## **4. Application for prequalification**

Applicants will have to submit an application for prequalification using the standard format enclosed in Annex 1, including submission of requested documentation. The requested documentation will serve to determine whether the organisation/consortium meets the eligibility requirements and capacity criteria for applying for a Strategic Partnership. Supporting documentation should preferably be provided in English, but will be accepted in Danish where the relevant documentation only exists in Danish.

### **The eligibility requirements**

The eligibility requirements (Annex 1, part B) pertain to governance and overall organisational capacity. Compliance with the requirements must be confirmed or rejected by a simple yes or no. Applicants who do not meet all requirements will not be considered further. The specific eligibility requirements are described in Annex B.

### **The capacity criteria**

The capacity criteria (Annex 1, part C) concern the applicants' capacity within key areas. Applicants are expected to demonstrate sufficient capacity within five criteria as outlined below on a 1 – 5 scale, where all criteria need a minimum score of 2. The capacity assessment will determine if applicants have the necessary capacity to become strategic partners of the MFA. Any application with a score below 2 will be rejected.

The score will furthermore be included and weighted in the final scoring together with the full proposal if the applicant is successful in the prequalification. The capacity assessment will be based on the application itself as well as supporting documentation in terms of cases, recent reviews/capacity assessments, inspections, evaluations, etc. If the applicant has no

prior direct funding engagement with the MFA, the assessment will be informed by similar documentation carried out under the auspices of other donors or systems (e.g., certification), including Danish pooled funds (e.g., CISU).

The five capacity criteria are outlined as follows (see Annex 1 and Annex B for further elaboration):

1. *Strategic Capacity*: applicants will be assessed on their capacity to deliver results at outcome level and ability to leverage or scale results through federations, alliances or networks. Furthermore, the ability to gear resources and attract funds from other donors or alternative financing sources will be assessed. Finally, the strategic approach to public engagement in Denmark and ability to build synergies with international programme activities will be assessed.
2. *Programmatic and Operational Capacity*: applicants will be assessed on their programming approaches, including involvement of stakeholders and target groups, as well as the level of institutionalised project cycle management and application of results-based management. The assessment also includes operational capacity and ability to respond and adjust to new or changing needs.
3. *Partnership Capacity*: applicants will be assessed on their partnership approach, clarity on roles and organisational value added, as well as systems for identification and selection of partners and ongoing partnership evaluation and feedback. The applicant will also be assessed on their local leadership approach and progress.
4. *Organisational and Administrative Capacity*: applicants will be assessed on their organizational setup as well as professional competency and technical capacity. The assessment also includes effectiveness and accountability of the organisation in relation to anti-corruption and safeguarding. Finally, the applicants will be assessed on their procedures for managing their environmental footprint.
5. *Financial Capacity*: applicants will be assessed on their internal level of financial management and capacity, covering both internal financial and administrative control systems as well as approach to and systems in place for financial management and oversight of partners. Additionally, the applicants' approach to value-for-money considerations to ensure reasonable balance between goal and actual costs will be assessed.

## **5. Assessment procedures and scoring**

Applications will be assessed by a designated assessment team in the MFA and external consultants. Assessments will be based on the criteria listed above and detailed in Annex B. The MFA may also request supplementary documentation or clarification from the applicant, as well as from relevant departments and missions in the MFA, and (if relevant) from other donors with a recent, substantial funding engagement with the applicant.

The assessment of the application will be shared with the applicant in the form of a draft assessment note, to which the applicant has 5 working days to respond in writing allowing the applicant an opportunity to comment on the assessment if relevant. The MFA will follow up and may adjust the assessment and score(s) on this basis if relevant. If the applicant does not submit a written response within 5 working days, the MFA will consider the draft assessment note final.

The MFA will assess the submitted documentation, and if eligibility requirements are met and capacity criteria are scored at a satisfactory level, the organisation/consortium will be shortlisted and subsequently invited to submit a full proposal with an indication of a budget ceiling within which funding can be applied for. The rationale behind the defined budget ceilings will be communicated as well. Allocations to strategic partners are expected to have a lower limit of DKK 15 million per year.

The established ceilings represent a maximum level for applicants to apply that in no way commits the MFA.

## **6. Timeline for the prequalification process**

The invitation for prequalification applications is launched on the MFA website 3 October 2025.

A Q&A session about the prequalification will be held on 10 October 2025 at 1pm (CET) at the MFA. Questions to be answered at this Q&A session must be submitted to the MFA (humciv@um.dk with copy to humcivspa3@um.dk) beforehand and no later than 8 October 2025 at 12pm (CET). Only questions submitted in writing within the deadline can be expected to be answered at the Q&A session. Additional to the submission of questions to be answered at the Q&A meeting, it will be possible to submit questions until 10 October 2025 COB. All questions and answers will afterwards be made public on the MFA website.

Deadline for submission of the prequalification application is 7 November 2025 at 12pm (CET). The application should be submitted by e-mail to humciv@um.dk with copy to humcivspa3@um.dk. The MFA expects to announce the list of prequalified applicants by December 2025.

Organisations that have qualified for submitting a full proposal for a Strategic Partnership will be invited to do so when the second phase of the open application process for SPA 2027-2031 is launched. The invitation to submit a full proposal for a Strategic Partnership, and submission of such an application, does not in itself guarantee that the applicant will be selected for a Strategic Partnership.

The full proposal phase will expectedly be launched in the first part of Q1 2026, with deadline for submission by mid Q2 2026 and with announcement of new Strategic Partnerships 2027-2031 by Q3 2026.

## **7. Annexes**

Annex 1 – Application Form *(to be filled out)*

Annex A – Instructions for Preparation of Cases *(guidance only)*

Annex B – Assessment and Scoring *(guidance only)*

Annex C – Transfers to Local Partners *(to be filled out)*