Information note

for thematic NGO call for proposals

***Reducing vulnerabilities for refugees and Lebanese host communities and strengthening Lebanese civil society***

OCTOBEr 2020

1. Background

On August 4th, explosions destroyed the port of Beirut and left over 200 dead, thousands injured and many homeless. The explosions caused widespread destruction of homes, businesses and infrastructure within a 5-kilometre radius.

The explosions came at a time when Lebanon is already facing a multi-faceted crisis. An economic crisis, including increasing poverty and triple-digit inflation rates, has compounded needs among Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities, including the large refugee populations residing in Lebanon. Increasing COVID-19 transmission is straining the country’s health systems. Social tensions continue to grow in many parts of the country and have been increasing following the explosions, leading to widespread demonstrations and fuelling a political crisis, including the resignation of the government.

**Humanitarian needs in Lebanon**

Lebanon hosts the largest refugee per capita population in the world. With approximately 1,5 million Syrian refugees, as well as almost 300.000 Palestinian refugees[[1]](#footnote-1), refugees make up approximately 30% of the population, putting a strain on the economy, infrastructure and social services. Residency and employment restrictions force many refugees into an uncertain legal status. This adversely affects access to services and to livelihoods and increases the risk of refugees adopting negative coping strategies.

With soaring unemployment rates and salary cuts, one million people in Lebanon are currently estimated to be living below the poverty line, while 45 % of the Lebanese population is at risk of sliding into poverty.[[2]](#footnote-2) The risk for refugees, migrants and other non-Lebanese is even higher. The price of a monthly food basket has more than doubled over the past six months. Due to the impact of the economic crisis, as well as he COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown measures, food has become a major source of concern, with 50% of Lebanese reporting feeling worried they will not have enough food to eat. Furthermore, the number of Syrian refugees who are severely or moderately food insecure stands at 1.2 million, with only 800,000 receiving assistance.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The most vulnerable communities were already struggling to cope with existing challenges before the explosions. Many now have little-to-no capacity to respond to the destruction of their homes, new medical needs, increased food insecurity or lost livelihoods. Initial reports indicate that protection for the vulnerable is a major concern, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). The current crisis will likely exacerbate pre-existing risks and result in emergency needs that require specialised support for women and girls, while at the same time access to essential health services for women, including those related to sexual and reproductive health, and to gender-based violence prevention and response services, risk decreasing.

Young people in particular are affected by the crisis and the persistent lack of opportunities. Disadvantaged Lebanese and non-Lebanese youth experience high levels of exclusion from formal education and informal learning. Among Syrian refugees, six out of ten aged 15 to 24 are not employed, under education or in training[[4]](#footnote-4). As a result, both Lebanese and non-Lebanese vulnerable youth are poorly skilled and do not acquire the adequate educational and professional readiness to navigate the critical transition to sustainable livelihoods successfully. This is creating risks of an entire generation being marginalised.

**Political crisis and civil society engagement**

The August explosions magnified the deep political crisis in Lebanon, and protesters took to the streets demanding a break with many years of a corrupt and dysfunctional political system, resulting in the resignation of the government.

Lebanese civil society is diverse and continues to articulate the growing dissatisfaction with the political system. Enhancing civic space in Lebanon and strengthening civil society’s role in facilitating a positive dialogue for a more just and equal Lebanese society is crucial for sustainable development, and especially for addressing sectarian and communal divides, and the risks of conflict relapse. Civil society plays a key role in building a political culture with a shared sense of citizenship and social cohesion. However, civil society actors in Lebanon have traditionally had limited success in making their voices count, let alone entering the formal political arena. In the current environment, it has generally been challenging for civil society to participate in national and local policymaking, social dialogue and dialogue on the distribu­tion of resources. The youth especially feel disempowered by the political system due to lack of representation and decision-making power. Civil society is challenged in its ability to engage with duty bearers, the private sector and institutions of democratic control.

The proposed Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF)[[5]](#footnote-5) developed by the World Bank Group, EU and the UN in late August 2020 also includes a strong focus on inclusion of civil society organizations.

1. Purpose, Objectives and priority issues

The **purpose** of this Call for Proposals (CfP) is to engage relevant civil society partners in addressing the vulnerabilities of Lebanese host communities and refugees residing in Lebanon, as well as strengthening Lebanese civil society’s voice and role in promoting social cohesion and democratisation for a sustainable development of Lebanon.

The call is divided into two windows with distinct, but interrelated objectives.

**1. Well-being and resilience for vulnerable communities in Lebanon:** The specific objective of this call is improved well-being and resilience for vulnerable communities in Lebanon, including refugees and host communities.

**2. Social cohesion and civic space:** The specific objective of this call is enhanced space and capacity for civil society in Lebanon to participate in and monitor the political reform process in Lebanon in an accountable, inclusive and transparent manner with a view to strengthen social cohesion and peaceful co-existence among different groups in society, including refugees and host communities.

Project proposals received in response to this CfP will be evaluated based on their relevance in relation to the following **priorities**:

*Covering both windows*

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| * A response that seeks to change or mitigate inequalities and vulnerabilities for the people targeted, with a special view to addressing gender-specific challenges, including gender-based violence. * Engagements by and with youth, who have been particularly affected by the crises in Lebanon, while also being key for the creation of a better future in Lebanon. * Ensure that projects are implemented in partnership with one or more local organisations in order to promote ownership and local leadership and include elements of capacity development. * A response that identifies and analyses the needs of rights holders, and the obligations of duty bearers, to ensure respect, protection and fulfillment of these rights. |

*Covering exclusively window 1) well-being and resilience for vulnerable communities in Lebanon*

* Address critical needs among particularly vulnerable people, including people in need of strengthened protection because of specific age-, gender- and/or disability-related issues.

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| * Strike a balance between emergency response and more long-term initiatives, including considerations regarding exit strategies and the sustainability of proposed activities. |

*Covering exclusively window 2) social cohesion and civic space*

* Empower civil society’s voice in and ability to monitor the political reform process, based on a diverse and broad participation.
* Promote peaceful co-existence among different groups in society, including refugees and host communities.

Proposals under window 1 demonstrating considerations of and include elements of support to Lebanese civil society as outlined under window 2 will be given priority.

**Location:** all projects must be implemented in Lebanon.

1. eligibility criteria

The eligibility of the application/Lead Applicant will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Proposals must be submitted by a single Lead Applicant or by the Lead Applicant representing a consortium. In order to be eligible for a grant, the Lead Applicant must be a non-governmental organisation.
2. The Lead Applicant is a **recipient of humanitarian or development funds from Danida**, including through pools such as CISU, at the time of application. This is to ensure that the applicant is continuously monitored in accordance with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ financial monitoring obligation.
3. The Lead Applicant has successfully undergone a formal **capacity assessment[[6]](#footnote-6)** (appraisal, review, financial monitoring visit or similar) within the **last five years** to demonstrate its capacity to manage financial contributions from Danida.
4. The Lead Applicant is **partnering with one or more local organisations** for the implementation of the proposed activities. The proposal shall clearly describe the defined roles and responsibilities for each of the partners in the proposal. The local partner(s) shall be identified at the time of submission of the proposal and a Local Partner Assessment is a mandatory annex to the proposal.
5. The Lead Applicant and partners have documented **experience and sufficient capacity in the context.**
6. The Lead Applicant has **conducted communication and information activities in Denmark** within the **last five years**. This is to support efforts to strengthen Danish public commitment to development assistance.
7. For window 1, the Lead Applicant must be able to document certification against Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS).
8. For window 2, local partners must be able to demonstrate broad representation and legitimacy in Lebanon, including representing poor and excluded groups of society.
9. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation of the proposal will be based on the following criteria:

1. **Relevance and Coherence**

* How well is the proposal aligned with the purpose, objectives and priority issues described in the CfP?
* Does the proposal address the needs of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in Lebanon, including people in need of strengthened protection?
* How well is the proposal harmonized with other relevant initiatives, including, for window 1, humanitarian response plans, and engagements in Lebanon in order to reap synergy benefits and avoid duplication?

1. **Project Design**

* Does the proposal present a clear, articulated and logical link from a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of context, needs and relevant stakeholders to the specification and outline of objectives, expected outcomes and planned activities?
* The ToC of the proposal will be assessed on it being simple and logic and on how well its causalities and assumptions are aligned with the results path as laid out in the Results Framework.
* Degree to which the proposal includes takes into account exit strategies and the sustainability of proposed activities?

1. **Selection of beneficiaries**

* Degree to which the proposal presents due considerations/a methodology for the selection of beneficiaries?

1. **Analysis of risks**

* How well does the proposal present and analyse risk and risk mitigation?

1. **Cost efficiency**

* How are activities and expected results balanced with the costs incurred and the total budget?

1. **Local Partnerships**

* How well is the choice of local partner(s) aligned with the purpose, objectives and priorities described in the CfP?
* How is the local partner involved in the implementation of the engagement, including considerations of distribution of roles and responsibilities in the proposed project as well as the proportion of the budget transferred to partners and used locally?

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| * How will the proposal address capacity development of the local partner(s)? |

1. **Capacity (Operational and Financial)**

* How strong is the lead applicant’s capacity in relation to compliance with the Aid Management Guidelines (AMG) of Danida/the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs?
* How obvious is the comparative advantage of the lead applicant and local partner(s) in relation to the project and geographical area, including previous experience with the proposed type of activities as well as documented relevant experience, capacity and expertise? If the proposal builds on already existing engagements, it must be clear how the proposal adds value.
* How clear is the role and responsibility of the lead applicant in the engagement?

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1. Duration, grant size and number of proposals to be selected

Subject to parliamentary approval, the overall amount available for this call for proposals is DKK 80 mio., with DKK 60 million allocated to window 1, and DKK 20 million allocated to window 2.

**Window 1. Well-being and resilience for vulnerable communities in Lebanon.**

* The planned duration of the proposal must not be less than 12 months and must not exceed 36 months.
* The minimum grant amount to be requested under window 1 is DKK 6 million. The maximum grant amount to be requested is DKK 15 million. For window 1, a maximum of 5 proposals will be selected.

**Window 2. Social cohesion and civic space**

* The planned duration of the proposal must not be less than 24 months and must not exceed 36 months for window 2.
* The minimum grant amount to be requested under window 2 is DKK 3 million. The maximum grant amount to be requested is DKK 6 million. For window 2, a maximum of 4 proposals will be selected.

1. Application and selection process

The CfP application and selection process entails only one-step in which the full proposal is submitted right away.

Proposals must be submitted by a single Lead Applicant or by the Lead Applicant representing a consortium. In order to be eligible for a grant, the Lead Applicant and partners must be a non-governmental organization.

The Lead Applicant is invited to submit an elaborated proposal in the form of a fully-fledged and final project document using the **Project Proposal template**, including the following annexes:

1. An output-based Budget.
2. A Results Framework, detailing outputs, outcomes and impact and their corresponding targets (yearly and end-of-project), indicators and means of verification (maximum three outcomes with maximum three outputs each). The results Framework should be simple, yet comprehensive with few and simple but SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) indicators.
3. A Risk Management Matrix.
4. A Partner Description.
5. Documentation clearly confirming that the Lead Applicant has undergone a formal Danida partner capacity assessment within the last five years and thus live up to the Danida Aid Management Guidelines.
6. Documentation demonstrating selected relevant examples of communication and information activities undertaken by the Lead Applicant within the last five years.
7. In addition to the above annexes, proposals submitted under window 1 must include certification against Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS).

**Applications are solely selected on basis of the project document and annexes**. It is of utmost importance that the documents contain all the relevant information needed for the selection process. Applicants are not allowed to submit additional annexes in support of the proposal.

The deadline for the submission of the proposal is **23 November 2020 at 10.00 Danish Time**.

The proposal should be addressed to CfP Secretariat at [**hcestud@um.dk**](mailto:hcestud@um.dk)**.**

**Each applicant can submit only one proposal. That accounts for both Lead Applicant and sub applicants.** Proposals must be submitted under either window 1 or window 2. If the proposal is addressing overlapping objectives between window 1 and 2, the applicant should choose the window where response is most relevant.

Questions in relation to the CfP from potential applicants may be submitted in writing only to the CfP Secretariat at [**hcestud@um.dk**](mailto:hcestud@um.dk) no later than **10 November 2020** **at** **16.00** CET. For the sake of transparency, all answers to questions received in writing from potential applicants will be published on the CfP MFA website by **13 November 2020**.

A Danida Assessment Team will be established to assess the proposals received.

Firstly, the Assessment Team will ascertain whether the application is within the Eligibility Criteria listed above in Section 3. If the application/Lead Applicant is unable to meet the necessary criteria, the proposal will be considered ineligible and the application will be disqualified.

Secondly, the Assessment Team will assess the proposal based on the Evaluation Criteria listed in Section 4. The proposal will receive an overall score based on the weighted score of the Evaluation Criteria as follows:

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| **No.** | **Criteria** | **Weight** |
| 1 | Relevance and coherence | 0-25 points |
| 2 | Project design | 0-25 points |
| 3 | Selection of beneficiaries | 0-10 points |
| 4 | Analysis of risks | 0-10 points |
| 5 | Cost efficiency | 0-5 points |
| 6 | Local partnerships | 0-15 points |
| 7 | Capacity – operational and financial | 0-10 points |
| **Total** |  | **100 points** |

The proposals with the best scores will be selected. In the final selection of projects, the Assessment Team will place specific emphasis on the overall alignment of project proposals with priority issues as well as the diversity of the overall portfolio of the selected proposals.

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will make the final selection and approval of applications based on the assessment of the Assessment Team. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reserves the right to reject a project if it assessed as ineligible.

The indicative timetable for when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the result of the assessment to the Lead Applicant is **10 December 2020**. Lead Applicants with approved applications will also be informed about the level of funding.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects to enter into agreements with the successful Lead Applicants before the end of 2020. Expected project start will be in the first month of 2021.

All instructions regarding the project proposal and annexes **must** be adhered to. **Otherwise the applications will not be accepted for review and assessment and will hence be regarded as rejected on technical grounds.**

1. Administration and dialogue with MFA

The CfP and the subsequent project/grant will be managed by HCE. The grant will be administered according to guidelines for single projects: [Administrative retningslinjer for tilskudsforvaltning gennem private danske organisationer.](https://um.dk/da/danida/samarbejspartnere/civ-org/adm-ret/tilskudsforvaltning/enkeltprojekter/)

The successful Lead Applicants will engage in annual consultations with HCE on project progress, learnings, results, synergies etc. The annual consultations may vary in format, and be linked to consultations already taking place between the organisation and the HCE, in case the organisation has an existing partnership with HCE. They may involve the Lead Applicant (and consortium) only or they may be held jointly with other successful Lead Applicants (and consortia) under this CfP. HCE will share information about scope and format each year.

1. <https://m.reliefweb.int/report/2974238> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Bank: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-beirut-port-explosions-situation-report-no-12-23-september-2020-enar> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. WFP: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/lebanon> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. VASyR 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. RDNA: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/650091598854062180/pdf/Beirut-Rapid-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Capacity assessment documentation can be in the form of a Danida review report, a Danida monitoring visit report, a Danida approval of support under other funding modalities/mechanisms etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)