Information note

for thematic NGO call for proposals

***Responding to humanitarian needs in a long-term perspective in the Central Sahel***

November 2020

1. Background

The Central Sahel is facing one of the most complex and fastest growing humanitarian crises worldwide with unprecedented levels of armed violence, terrorist attacks, insecurity and displacement. Women and girls experience some of the highest rates of recorded sexual and gender-based violence in the world. Food insecurity and human rights violations are on a sharp rise.

Between 2018 and 2020, the number of internally displaced people increased more than twentyfold, from 70,000 to almost 1.6 million. In addition, there are currently 297,000 refugees in the region. The rapid increase is especially staggering in Burkina Faso, where armed conflict, including terrorist attacks and conflicts between communities has forced more than 1 million people to flee their homes since the crisis escalated two years ago. This includes 450,000 people who have been displaced this year alone.

The surge in displacement and violence is straining scarce natural resources, destroying the social fabric of communities, and disrupting livelihoods and access to basic social services in a self-reinforcing downward spiral. Public institutions like health centers and schools are frequently targeted by armed groups, which has led to the closure of some 3,500 schools. This is depriving hundreds of thousands of children and young people of education – and simultaneously leaving young girls much more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, early, child and forced marriages, and other harmful practices. The future of an entire generation is at risk. Nearly 60 pct. of all girls in the Central Sahel are married before the age of 18, with the highest prevalence in the world in Niger at 76 pct. Early and sustained action to prevent, mitigate and protect both women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence is key.

The crisis in the Central Sahel affects communities that were already highly fragile. Across the Sahel, severe vulnerabilities are exacerbated. This is due to the convergence of poverty, social exclusion, erosion of social trust, rapid population growth, lack of education and other basic social services, weak governance, and a lack of state legitimacy in conflict-affected areas, where state services are often completely absent.

In addition, climate change and extreme weather are severely impacting communities and exacerbating conflict dynamics, placing a further strain on historical tensions between farmers and herders. The region is warming one and a half times faster than the global average, with unpredictable rain patterns, temperature spikes, and frequent floods. This adversely affects agricultural production and resource availability, leading to a rise in food insecurity. Across the region, 7.4 million people are now acutely food insecure – three times higher than last year.

Having already had a negative impact on the economies of the Central Sahel, the COVID-19 pandemic may exacerbate the ongoing crises even further and stretch already weak state systems and structures. The decrease in GDP growth risks reducing domestic resource mobilization, which will likely lead to a reduction of public spending on social services. This, in turn, risks creating additional divisions among communities and further fuel the drivers of conflict. Inflation is also expected to increase significantly, which poses a threat to household food security, especially during the lean season.

The compounded impact of escalating conflict and insecurity, displacement, lack of basic social services, food insecurity, weather extremes, and COVID-19 is driving needs to unprecedented levels. A record high of 13.4 million people in the three countries are in need of urgent assistance and protection. Assistance to alleviate immediate humanitarian needs must be balanced with investments that give displaced people and host communities access to more sustainable livelihoods and to basic services and address other longer-term development needs.

1. Purpose and core elements of the call for proposals

The **purpose** of this Call for Proposals (CfP) is to solicit project proposals from relevant civil society partners that seek to promote long-term inclusive solutions for displaced populations and host communities in the Central Sahel across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Project proposals should address the following core elements:

1. The project proposal shall aim to promote inclusive approaches to engaging displaced people and host communities in activities that promote food security, livelihoods and self-reliance (such as professional skills development and other income-generating activities, including climate resilient agriculture) and/or strengthen their access to basic services such as healthcare, education, durable shelters, energy, or water supply, to the extent possible within national systems.
2. The project proposal shall address capacities and critical needs among particularly vulnerable people, including people in need of strengthened protection because of specific age-, gender- and/or disability-related issues. Efforts to address the rights, potentials, and specific vulnerabilities of youth, women, and girls in a sustainable manner, including with respect to prevention, mitigation, and protection from sexual and gender-based violence, will be prioritised.
3. While the focus must be on longer-term inclusive approaches, the project proposal shall retain the ability to respond to urgent humanitarian needs among vulnerable people when relevant.
4. The project proposal shall be based on a rights-based context and stakeholder analysis and propose a strategy that to the extent relevant include measures to promote involvement of local communities along with accountability, involvement and capacity of local and/or national government agencies. As a part of this, the project proposal shall promote conflict prevention, peaceful co-existence, and social cohesion among different groups in society, including internally displaced people, refugees, and host communities.
5. The project proposal shall to be aligned and coordinated with other relevant humanitarian and development activities, including Danish humanitarian and development engagements, in the country/ies of intervention.
6. Eligibility criteria

The proposal must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Proposals must address the core elements of the CfP, amount to at least 20 million DKK, and be submitted by a single Applicant or by a Lead Applicant representing a consortium (hereafter “the Applicant”). The Applicant must be a non-governmental organisation. All partners (national as well as international) must be non-governmental organisations or other types of not-for-profit organisations (such as think tanks, research institutions, or human rights institutions).
2. The Applicant must be a recipient of funds from the [Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs](https://um.dk/), **including** through Danish pooled funds such as [CISU](https://cisu.dk/) *(Civilsamfund i Udvikling)*, at the time of application. In line with this, the Applicant must have undergone a successful **capacity assessment** (appraisal, review or similar) within the **last five years** to demonstrate its capacity to manage such financial contributions.
3. The Applicant must partner with one or more local organisations for the implementation of the proposed activities. The local partner(s) shall be identified at the time of submission of the proposal, and a Partner Description must be annexed to the proposal.
4. The Applicant must have conducted communication and information activities in Denmark within the last five years, therebycontributing to strengthen Danish public commitment to development assistance.
5. The engagement must be implemented in one or more of the Central Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.
6. 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 **each** of the five core elements described in the CfP (section 2)?
2. **Project logic**
	* Does the proposal present a clear, articulated and logical Theory of Change with a strong link from the analysis of context, needs, and relevant stakeholders to the specification and outline of objectives, expected outcomes, and planned activities?
	* Does the proposal consider exit strategies and the sustainability of proposed activities?
3. **Selection of beneficiaries**
	* Does the proposal present clear criteria and methodologies for the selection of beneficiaries?
4. **Analysis of risks**
	* Does the proposal identify and analyse risks and access constraints along with relevant mitigation measures in a satisfactory manner?
5. **Cost efficiency**
	* Is there a reasonable balance between activities and expected results on the one hand and costs incurred on the other?
6. **Applicant and partners**
	* Do the Applicant and partners have sufficient and documented experience and capacity to carry out the proposed activity? If activities are foreseen in situations where the protection, well-being and dignity of vulnerable and marginalized groups is not ensured by duty-bearers, the applicant must document an ability to live up to established international standards for such interventions. Preferably, this may include an independent verification or certification against the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).
	* If the proposal builds upon past or ongoing project activities, are links to these properly reflected, including with respect to lessons learned?
	* Are the roles and responsibilities of each partner clearly described?
	* Is the choice and involvement of local partner(s) aligned with the purpose and priority elements described in the CfP – and reflected in a reasonable proportion of the budget being transferred to such local partners?
	* Does the local partner(s) have the required capacity, expertise, and presence to fulfil intended roles and responsibilities, and does the proposal address relevant capacity development?
7. 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 150 million.

The planned duration of the proposal must not be less than 24 months or exceed 48 months.

The minimum grant amount is DKK 20 million. The maximum grant amount which can be awarded is DKK 39 million.

A maximum of six 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. Hence, the Applicant is invited to submit an elaborated proposal in the form of a full-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 (one for each partner). For local partners, this must include an assessment of capacity and expertise, including with respect to financial management.
5. Documentation to the effect that the Applicant has successfully undergone a formal **capacity assessment** (appraisal, review or similar) within the **last five years** to demonstrate its capacity to manage financial contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the manager of a Danish pooled fund such as CISU.
6. Documentation demonstrating selected relevant examples of communication and information activities undertaken by the Applicant within the last five years.
7. If relevant, documentation of certification or verification against the Core Humanitarian Standard (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 cannot submit additional annexes in support of the proposal.

The deadline for the submission of the proposal is **1 December 2020 at 10:00 CET**.

The proposal should be addressed to CfP Secretariat at **hcestud@um.dk****.**

**Applicants and partners, be they local or international, can only be involved in one proposal.**

Questions in relation to the CfP from potential applicants may be submitted in writing only to the CfP Secretariat at **hcestud@um.dk** no later than **22 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 **26 November 2020**.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will assess the proposals received as follows:

Firstly, it will ascertain whether the proposal meets the Eligibility Criteria listed above in Section 3. If the proposal does not fulfil these requirements, it will be considered ineligible and the application will be disqualified.

Secondly, the proposal will be scored 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 | 0-30 points |
| 2 | Project design | 0-20 points |
| 3 | Selection of beneficiaries | 0-10 points |
| 4 | Analysis of risks | 0-10 points |
| 5 | Cost efficiency | 0-5 points |
| 6 | Partnerships | 0-25 points |
| **Total** |  | **100 points** |

In the final selection of projects, specific emphasis will be placed on the overall alignment of project proposals with core elements as well as the diversity of the overall portfolio of the selected proposals.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may adjust the final grant amount to reflect the score of the application and available funding.

The indicative timetable for when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the result of the assessment to the Lead Applicant is **18 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 the Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society, and Engagement (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 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.