

**Information note
for thematic NGO call for proposals**

***Reducing vulnerabilities for refugees and internally displaced persons in
Syria and/or Afghanistan and affected neighbouring countries***

October 2021

1. Background

This Call for Proposals (CfP) relates to two separate crises: the Syria crisis and the Afghanistan crisis. Each is described briefly below.

The Syrian crisis (Syria and neighbouring countries of Lebanon and Jordan)

Syria remains one of the world's most complex humanitarian emergencies, characterized by ongoing hostilities and triggered one of the worst displacement crisis in our time. It is estimated that 350,000 Syrians have lost their lives since March 2011, as the conflict has become militarized and regionalized with oppression and human right violations by the Syrian authorities as one of the primary drivers. Security and political challenges are coupled with ongoing economic collapse.

The dire situation has forced an estimated 6.7 million people to leave their homes and seek protection in other parts of the country. The conflict has also resulted in over 5,6 million refugees, fleeing mostly to neighbouring countries, where the consequences of the conflict are also intensely felt. According to UNHCR, only a very small percentage (2.4%) of Syrian refugees have any interest in returning to Syria within the next 12 months, however 70% do have intentions to return to their homeland one day. Safety, security in particular, but also livelihoods, housing and basic services are the main deciding factors that Syrian refugees take into consideration when evaluating the possibility of return.

Syria's crisis has severely affected Lebanon. An influx of – according to Lebanese government estimates – of up to 1.5 million Syrian refugees. With 855,000 of them registered with UNHCR, Lebanon has the highest proportion of displaced people per capita in the world. A paralysed government combined with sharp depreciation of the national currency, hyperinflation, increased unemployment and rising food prices are Lebanon in one of the most severe crisis in the world. 89% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are below the extreme poverty line, and the UN is estimating that a majority of Lebanese would now count as impoverished and extreme poverty is rising.

In August 2021, there were 669,497 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Jordan, and 80% of whom are living outside of refugee camps. The Government of Jordan, in collaboration with UN and NGO's have developed the Jordan Response Plan. The 2020-2022 JRP reflects a highly inclusive approach to hosting refugees by – in contrary to Lebanon – allowing them to work in selected sectors and have access to health care and education services. However, Jordan's economy, which already showed high unemployment and debt levels, was badly hit by the covid pandemic. Youth unemployment stands at 40%, and among Syrian youth, unemployment is as high as 84%.

The Afghanistan crisis (Afghanistan and neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran)

Following the Taliban takeover of Kabul on 15 August 2021, Afghanistan and its people face a number of imminent and difficult challenges. Most immediately, the country is in a state of *humanitarian crisis*, with a potential *humanitarian disaster* looming on the horizon. The crisis comes on the back of a number of interlinking challenges, including the intensified armed conflict throughout 2021, the significant internal displacement and disruption of livelihoods stemming from the conflict, a widespread drought that has worn down coping capacities to the breaking point, the still ongoing covid-19 pandemic, the onset of a harsh winter – and now a gradually developing economic and financial crisis.

The *humanitarian needs* are significant and widespread. The humanitarian community has released an inter-agency flash appeal in September asking for USD 606 million (currently 35 percent funded) to the end of 2021 for the most prioritised needs of 11 million people. Food security is particularly alarming, with one in three households facing acute levels of food insecurity and every second child under five facing acute malnutrition. Livelihoods and resilience has been worn down. Access to life-saving essential health care services remains particularly dire, and new covid-19 variants add strain to an already fragile health care system. More than 3.5 million people remain internally displaced from conflict, 635,000 of which were displaced in 2021. Protection risks, particularly for women, children and minorities, increase across the country. Needs will be magnified during the upcoming winter season, which is projected to be harsh.

The situation is further exacerbated by the developing *economic and financial crisis* in the country following the drawdown of development assistance, loans and credits. In a worst case scenario, Afghanistan faces a *collapse of critical sectors*, including health and education. The weakened banking sector is one of several *operational challenges* facing humanitarian actors in scaling up the response. In terms of *humanitarian access*, the end of active fighting, for now at least, seems to have opened access to formerly inaccessible parts of the country. Access negotiations with Taliban and local authorities, which are not always aligned, are still ongoing, and particularly access of female workers is a challenge in many areas.

In parallel, Afghanistan faces a renewed *rights crisis*. Despite public Taliban statements declaring support for the rights of women, minorities and freedom of expression and media, actions to date indicate a move in the opposite direction. Rights of women and girls are under acute pressure, e.g. with recent violent crackdowns on peaceful protest, women and girls having been barred from secondary education and university, and lack of female representation in the declared interim government. There is also risk of persecution of ethnic minorities, human rights defenders and others perceived to have supported the international presence. Media and expression is equally under intense pressure, with journalists threatened, beaten and apprehended, and female journalists discouraged from continuing work. There is an acute risk that past development gains in human rights and freedom of expression may be lost.

Finally, the situation has ramifications in *neighbouring countries* as well. A total of 2.2 million registered refugees from previous waves of violence and a further 3 million Afghans of varying status are hosted in Pakistan and Iran. Both countries have expressed strong reluctance to accept further inflows, and more than 805.000 Afghans have or were returned to Afghanistan in 2021. Following the Taliban takeover, there has been no massive influx yet. UNHCR predicts up to 515.000 additional arrivals by end of 2021, although this is likely to depend on how the situation inside Afghanistan develops.

2. Purpose and priorities of the call for proposals

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark is launching a Call for Proposals focused on reducing humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities for affected populations in Syria, Afghanistan and neighbouring countries. The call has two windows with distinct objectives:

- *Window 1: Syria crisis* – The objective of this call is to save lives, promote wellbeing and build resilience for crisis-affected populations, including refugees, internally displaced, host communities and other highly vulnerable or at-risk groups. The total amount available for the call is DKK 130 million.
- *Window 2: Afghanistan crisis* – The objective of this call is to save lives, promote wellbeing and build resilience for crisis-affected populations, including refugees, returnees, internally displaced, host communities and other highly vulnerable or at-risk groups related to the current crisis. The call also aims to promote human rights and rights-based approaches in Afghanistan in a humanitarian context, particularly related to the rights of women & girls, minorities, human rights defenders, journalists, etc, as well as to promote protection of people or communities at risk of persecution. The total amount available for the call is DKK 85 million.

Project proposals received in response to this CfP may address one or both windows. If addressing both windows, two separate proposals are required.

Proposals will be evaluated based on their relevance (see all evaluation criteria in section 4 below) in relation to the following crisis-specific priorities:

Priorities related to the Syria crisis (window 1):

- Addressing needs prioritised and aligned with recent international appeals, including the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 and the Regional Refugee Resilience Plan 2021 (3RP);
- Addressing acute, emergency needs related to lives and wellbeing of crisis-affected populations in especially Syria, and particularly in northern Syria, including internally displaced, host communities and other highly vulnerable and at-risk groups in need of strengthened protection.
- Addressing longer-term humanitarian needs related to building resilience for crisis-affected populations, including refugees, internally displaced, host communities and other highly vulnerable populations or at-risk groups.
- All projects must be implemented in Syria, Lebanon and/or Jordan.

Priorities related to the Afghanistan crisis (window 2):

- Addressing needs prioritised and aligned with recent, international appeals, including the recent Humanitarian Appeal for Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan (RPRP);
- Addressing acute, emergency needs related to lives and wellbeing and/or longer-term humanitarian needs related to building resilience of crisis-affected populations, including

refugees, returnees, internally displaced, host communities and other highly vulnerable or at-risk groups related to the current crisis.

- Addressing human rights related challenges in a humanitarian context, including upholding rights of women and girls, minorities, journalists, as well as freedom of expression;
- Addressing protection challenges related to risk of persecution of people or communities due to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, perceived political or other affiliation.
- All projects must be relevant to the Afghanistan crisis, and may be implemented in Afghanistan, neighbouring countries or other relevant settings.

3. Eligibility criteria

For both windows the eligibility of the application/Lead Applicant will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1. Proposals must be submitted by a single Lead Applicant **or** by a Lead Applicant representing a consortium. For each window, an applicant can only apply once – i.e. either as a Lead applicant **or** as a consortium member.
2. The Lead Applicant must be a **recipient of humanitarian or development funds from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. 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** (appraisal, review, financial monitoring visit or similar) by Danida within the **last five years** to demonstrate its capacity to manage financial contributions from Danida. 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.
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 **presence, experience and sufficient capacity in the specific 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. The Lead Applicant must be able to document certification against Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), or document that such certification is in process.

4. 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, including people in need of strengthened protection?
- How well is the proposal harmonized with other relevant initiatives, including humanitarian response plans, existing work and coordination frameworks in order to reap synergy benefits and avoid duplication?

2. *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?

3. *Selection of beneficiaries*

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

4. *Analysis of risks*

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

5. *Cost efficiency*

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

6. *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?
- How will the proposal address capacity development of the local partner(s)?

7. *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?

5. 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 130 million to window 1 (Syria crisis) and DKK 85 million allocated to window 2 (Afghanistan crisis).

Window 1: Syria crisis

- The planned duration of the proposal must not be less than 12 months and must not exceed 36 months.
- The maximum grant amount to be requested is DKK 35 million.

Window 2: Afghanistan crisis

- The planned duration of the proposal must not be less than 12 months and must not exceed 24 months.
- The maximum grant amount to be requested is DKK 35 million.

6. Application and selection process

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

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 lives 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, certification against Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) or proof that certification is in process to be obtained, must be submitted.

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.

Proposals can be submitted under either window 1 or window 2, or both windows. In case the Lead Applicant wishes to apply for both windows, two separate proposals must be submitted.

The deadline for the submission of the proposal is **Friday 5 November 2021 at 16.00 Danish Time**.

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

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 October 2021 at 16.00** Danish time. For the sake of transparency, all answers to questions received in writing from potential applicants will be published on the CFP MFA website by **29 October 2021**.

An Assessment Team (MFA and external consultant) will be established to assess the proposals received.

First, 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.

Second, 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:

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	0-10 points
7	Capacity – operational and financial	0-15 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 **26 November 2021**. 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 2021. Expected project start will be in the first month of 2022.

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.**

7. 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.](#)

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.