Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Programme Document

Syria – Iraq Regional Stabilisation Programme (2016-2018)

Supporting ISIL-liberated areas in Iraq and opposition-controlled areas in Syria

Version: 30 August 2016

**Programme overview**

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| Programme details | |
| Department | MENA |
| File number | **2015-46352** |
| Country | Syria and Iraq |
| Date | 30 August 2016 |
| Implementation period | 01 October 2016 – 31 December 2018 |

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| Strategic objective |
| *To promote an inclusive political resolution to the conflict in Syria and a more stable and inclusive Iraq through countering Da’esh, contributing to meeting immediate stabilisation needs in both countries and offering support to moderate actors that provide an alternative to extremism, in order to build more stable, democratic and inclusive societies*. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Budget | Million DKK |
| Thematic Programme 1: Political Dialogue and Peacebuilding |  |
| Thematic Programme 2: Resilience and Recovery |  |
| Thematic Programme 3: Community Security and Governance |  |
| Stabilisation Advisors |  |
| TA, review |  |
| Total |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source of funding | Million DKK |
| Peace and Stabilisation Fund (DAC) | 302,5 |
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Contents

1 Introduction 1

2 Context analysis 3

2.1 Syria – Stabilisation amid on-going conflict 3

2.2 Iraq – Stabilising a disintegrating State 4

2.3 Scenarios 7

3 Previous Danish support, experience and lessons 10

3.1 Policy Context 10

3.2 Previous Danish Stabilisation Support 11

3.3 Guiding principles used in programme design 12

4 Presentation of the Programme 14

4.1 Overview 14

4.2 Theory of Change 14

Programme Summary 15

4.3 15

4.4 Continuity with previous programmes 17

4.5 Justification for continued support 18

5 Summary of Thematic Programmes 20

5.1 TP1: Political Dialogue and Peacebuilding 20

5.2 TP2: Resilience and Rapid Response 23

5.3 TP3: Community Security and Governance 28

6 Overview of management set up 32

6.1 Programme oversight 32

6.2 Implementation arrangements 33

6.3 Monitoring mechanisms 34

7 Budget 35

8 Risks and risk mitigation 36

8.1 Risk management methodology 36

8.2 Programme sustainability, adaptability, and exit 36

Annex A – Denmark’s contribution to Syria and Iraq 40

**Abbreviations**

ACU Assistance Coordination Unit

AJACS Access to Justice and Community Security

ASI Adam Smith International

CSO Civil Society Organisation

DAC Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)

DAPP Danish Arab Partnership Programme

FFIS Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation

FSA Free Syrian Army

FSP Free Syria Police

GIZ Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

SIG Syrian Interim Government

ISIL Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant[[1]](#footnote-1)

JAN Jabhat al-Nusra

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

MTR Mid-Term Review

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PSF Peace and Stabilisation Fund

SfCG Search for Common Ground

SOC Syrian Opposition Coalition[[2]](#footnote-2)

SRTF Syria Recovery Trust Fund

SSR Security Sector Reform

TDA The Day After

UN United Nations

# Introduction

This Programme Document describes arrangements for a new three-year regional programme of civilian stabilisation support to Syria and Iraq with an overall funding envelope of approximately DKK 330 million between 2016 and 2018 provided through Denmark’s Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF). The programme complements and builds upon Denmark’s on-going diplomatic, military, stabilisation and humanitarian support to the region, and underscores Denmark’s long-term commitment to countering the threat from Da’esh and promoting stability and human rights in the Middle East. The programme’s design reflects the inputs made during the formulation process by the PSF Steering Committee and by Danida’s Programme Committee.

The programme takes as its departing point the current context in Syria and Iraq, which is volatile and unpredictable, and is focused on meeting immediate civil stabilisation needs.

* The Syrian conflict is now in its sixth year and although gains continue to be made against Da’esh, the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) agreement negotiated in February 2016 stands on precarious ground making a political resolution less likely in the short term. This has most recently been underlined by the ongoing fighting around Aleppo and the regime’s attempts to besiege the city. . Non-military stabilisation priorities in Syria include supporting the moderate opposition and civil society to deliver basic services and governance to contest Da’esh and other extremist narratives, strengthen community resilience to Da’esh and other extremist groups, and prepare for support in future liberated areas.
* In Iraq, the campaign to degrade Da’esh and stabilise liberated areas remains the focus of Danish and the Global Coalition policy as Iraqi forces push towards Mosul. At the same time, Iraq’s leaders need to address the shortcomings in the current political settlement which favours Iraq’s Shi’a and marginalises its Sunni community to strengthen the country’s weak institutions, address sectarian tensions and ensure that a third Sunni insurgency does not manifest itself. Immediate stabilisation priorities in Iraq therefore focus on areas liberated from Da’esh and preparation for the liberation of Mosul with a view to enabling and ensuring that basic systems are in place to support returning populations.

The programme’s objective is: *To counter Da’esh and other extremist elements in Syria and Iraq, and to promote an inclusive political resolution to the conflict in Syria and a more stable and inclusive Iraq through meeting immediate stabilisation needs in both countries and offering support to moderate actors that provide an alternative to extremism in order to build more stable, democratic and inclusive societies.* This complements Denmark’s existing military activities against Da’esh and supports the policy goals set out in relevant UN Security Council resolutions and track two (stabilisation) of the Global Coalition’s strategy to counter Da’esh.

This programme will contribute to the above goal through a streamlined portfolio across three mutually reinforcing thematic programmes (TPs):

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| --- |
| TP1: Political Dialogue & Peacebuilding |
| The coherence and quality of peace initiatives in Syria and reconciliation in Iraq are reinforced, thereby countering Da’esh and other extremist groups and promoting the role of moderate actors. |
| TP2: Resilience and Rapid Response |
| Community resilience and return enhanced through improved access and provision of priority services in former Da’esh-held areas of Iraq and areas under moderate opposition control in Syria. |
| TP3: Community Security and Governance |
| Community security strengthened and inclusive governance promoted by moderate actors in Syria and the GoI in Iraq. |

Nine engagements will contribute to these thematic programmes, the majority of which continue Denmark’s existing cooperation and close coordination with Coalition partners. This continuity holds significant advantages in terms of familiarity with context, thematic input and personalities, tried-and-tested approaches to the joint management, and to applying practical lessons learnt from implementing projects in the present conflict context that inevitably involves higher than normal risks. The engagements selected have demonstrated good results so far and comply with the programme’s strategic focus on immediate stabilisation.

The programme’s regional character responds to the common features, causes and challenges of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq – such as the need to counter Da’esh and strengthen resilience to extremism – but it also reflects the distinct challenges and stabilisation needs of both countries. The latter limit the degree to which this can be a truly interlinked programme. The regional approach to programme management nonetheless offers positive dividends in terms of efficiency and flexibility of effort. Thought has also been given to supporting efforts to stabilise and strengthen moderate actors in the northern Kurdish areas of Syria. This is made difficult by the lack of recognised international stabilisation actors operating in Syria’s Northern provinces and compounded by the Turkish government’s restrictive stance on providing support to areas controlled by the PYD and other Kurdish groups in Syria. Nevertheless, the programme’s first pillar supports a broad range of civil society activities, which will also seek to encompass Syria’s Kurdish populations in the North.

Programme design has taken into account inputs from the PSF Steering Committee and Danida’s Programme Committee. This is reflected, for example, in its active approach to risk management (evident in its scenario-based approach in Sections 2 and 4.5, and in the use of stabilisation advisers able to provide an additional layer of risk monitoring and management). Programme design has built upon existing multi-donor arrangements, with most engagements being jointly implemented or channelled through multilateral agencies. The programme includes two well-placed civil society organisations operating in Syria (The Day After and Baytna), both of which participate in Track II processes, employ a capacity development approach and actively disseminate information and exchange experience. In Iraq, civil society will be involved in UNDP’s stabilisation activities supported through the programme where this is feasible. Key aspects of the international stabilisation response in both countries are described in Section 2 and in the overview of engagements in Section 5.

This programme document is intended to be used as a tool to enable flexible programme management during its lifecycle. Programme design has, to date, drawn upon a number of scenarios: it is rooted in the scenario judged to be most likely and is optimised to ensure thematic relevance and sustainability should scenarios shift. This context is expected to change during the three-year life of the programme, necessitating a degree of adaptation by the programme and its management. This document offers a range of options to respond to ensure flexible programme management and risk mitigation. Adjustments will be facilitated by the combination of experienced on-the-ground partners in both countries, key donors, including the United Kingdom, with whom close links have been established, and regionally-located stabilisation advisors coupled with the head office in the Danish MFA.

# Context analysis

## Syria – Stabilisation amid on-going conflict

The Syrian revolution, which began in 2011 with peaceful protests against the Assad-led regime, is in its sixth year and shows no sign of abating. The conflict has developed in nature and complexity: protests triggered a violent and disproportionate regime response which led to the emergence of an armed revolution calling for a democratic transition. At that point, a fragmented opposition funded by several states became increasingly Salafist in its ideological outlook: Al Qaeda soon established a presence in the country under the banner of Jabhat al Nusra (which changed its name to Jabhat Fatah a-Sham in July 2016) , and an extremist organisation with roots in Iraq, Da’esh, took power in north-east Iraq, first through alliances with local Salafist opposition groups and then by force. In 2014, Da’esh announced a Caliphate across Iraq and Syria.

*De facto,* Syria is now split into four distinct zones of control: the regime West, Da’esh East, Kurdish North, and the opposition, comprising moderate and Salafist armed groups, in North-Central Syria. With over 250,000 dead and over 10.8 million displaced, the crisis has proved impervious to efforts to produce a negotiated settlement led by UN Special Envoy Steffan de Mistura. This dialogue is based on the 2012 Geneva Communiqué and UNSCR 2254 (2015) which outline a path for Syrian-owned political transition and include parallel processes for a ceasefire. In February 2016, negotiations resulted in a Cessation of Hostilities (CoH), but the agreement’s future is precarious and its terms are increasingly violated by all parties. The most recent fighting around Aleppo during the summer of 2016 has put the CoH agreement under even greater strain.

Despite receiving extensive political, military and other material support from regional and international actors, three factors will influence the ability of the moderate opposition (i.e. groups that reject Salafist ideologies and are working towards a democratic transition and are backed militarily and otherwise by Western governments) to hold and expand territory:

**The opposition has been divided** along ideological lines between and within political and military factions. The political opposition in Turkey, led by the Syrian Opposition Government (SOG/SOC or Etilaf, remains the internationally recognised opposition group, which is also recognised by Denmark as *the* legitimate representative of the Syrian people. Progress towards greater intra-opposition unity has recently been made in the formation of the Higher Negotiating Committee (HNC), established in connection with the 2015 Riyadh Conference, which unites 116 political and military groups under Riad Hijab’s leadership.

**Jabhat al-Nusra (JAN)/Jabhat Fatah a-Sham’s (JFS) dominant role on the battlefield and in local politics** has fuelled donor aversion to the risk that resources aimed at moderates may fall under JaN control. The patchwork nature of the conflict complicates attempts to delineate zones of JaN control, a difficulty compounded by the fact that JaN can at times control access to services, but not the territory itself. This risk is particularly acute in Idlib where JaN dominates the Jeish al-Fatih coalition of armed groups, and in the southern Aleppo countrysideThe recent rebranding of JAN may make it easier for some more moderate groups to ally themselves with Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, which could present new difficulties for donors working with those groups but who have been prohibited from working with JAN/JFS.. An additional challenge will be that moderate armed groups and civil society (CSOs) may often be left vulnerable to pressure and harassment by Da’esh and other Salafist groups.

Finally, political and military **support from** **the** **Russian military, Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, Lebanon’s Hizb’Allah and Shi’a militia from Iraq** has enabled the Syrian regime to maintain control of the state despite losing meaningful control and legitimacy over large parts of the country. Conversely, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Turkey continue to provide support to various parts of the opposition, including Ahrar a-Sham (another Salafist-affiliated armed group with strong presence in opposition-held areas of Syria.) The dominance of these armed groups on the battlefield and in local politics has further restricted the potential reach of moderate opposition groups.

### International Stabilisation Response in Syria

Donor states have pursued a variety of approaches to civilian stabilisation in response to the scale of the challenge in Syria in line with the broader policy framework set by the Coalition, the UN and EU (see Section 3).. Projects span **low and medium risk** Track I and II peace processes, support to improving resilience, service delivery, good governance, civil society, and to security and justice in liberated areas, and the **high-risk** provision of non-lethal aid to select moderate armed opposition groups (judged to be high risk in view of its cost and its uncertain impact).

The UK, for example, funds 25 programmes across five broad stabilisation pillars including governance(*Tamkeen*[[3]](#footnote-3)) and strategic communications France is focused upon building Syrian CSO capacity, and the Netherland provides non-lethal aid and provides material alternatives to JaN and Da’esh through employment. Notwithstanding these differences, key donors are aligned in their support to a number of core programmes, such as the Track I peace process, *Access to Justice and Community Security – AJACS* (Security & Justice[[4]](#footnote-4)), *Syrian Civil Defence* (Resilience[[5]](#footnote-5)) and the *Syria Recovery Trust Fund – SRTF* (Stabilisation[[6]](#footnote-6)), all of which are also supported under this Programme.

Implementation of stabilisation interventions has been challenged by a number of factors inherent to the context. Shifting conflict-lines alter the space within which projects can operate based on access and environment (e.g. whether JaN or another DTO is in control). Assistance (and monitoring) needs to be managed remotely from Istanbul, Gaziantep, northern Jordan or Beirut adding to cost, complexity and risk. Turkey-based implementers continue to raise concerns about the challenging legal and political environment in which they operate. Finally, competing national priorities and policy differences can at times render joint implementation challenging. These challenges have given rise to a number of specific lessons (see Section 3).

## Iraq – Stabilising a disintegrating State

Iraq has since 2003 received extensive stabilisation and military support from international partners (including finance, equipment and training) targeted at its security and justice sectors. Nevertheless, the past five years have seen the gradual erosion of Iraq’s political integrity. The Government (GoI) led by Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi (Abadi) is battling Da’esh in the central Sunni provinces, managing a secessionist Kurdish current in the North, and attempting to extend control over Iran-backed Shi’a militia operating within the state.

The GoI’s fight against Da’esh intensified in 2014 following the fall of Fallujah, Mosul, as well as large parts of north-central Iraq and Da’esh’s declaration of a Caliphate. This has so far resulted in the displacement of 2.5 million Iraqis and a large-scale stabilisation and demining challenge. Progress has been made against Da’esh in Anbar, Ramadi, Salah-e-Din and pockets of Central Iraq by Coalition forces and Iraqi armed groups (including the Iraqi Security Forces, ISF, Kurdish Peshmerga, Sunni militiamen and the Popular Mobilisation Units, PMUs), but as the push towards Mosul continues, Iraq’s political fabric remains weak and its territorial integrity threatened. The following dynamics erode the GoI’s legitimacy and set the conditions for the present political and security crisis:

The **absence of a political settlement** and disinterest in reconciliation has weakened the strength of the state’s institutions. Memories of human rights atrocities experienced at the hands of the Ba’ath party by the Kurds in the 1980s and Shi’a until Saddam Hussein’s downfall in 2003 have been left unaddressed and the sectarian basis upon which the state was constructed post-2003 has entrenched sectarian divisions. Inter and Intra-sectarian rivalry is rife. The abuses of Sunni men at the hand of PMU forces are widely reported; fears abound in Sunni Mosul that Mosulawis will be ‘liberated’ by hostile forces intent on retribution.

The **political marginalisation of Sunni communities** following the 2003 invasion of Iraq and wholescale de-Sunnification of Iraq’s public sector which peaked under former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki triggered several Sunni insurrections. Sunni elite and tribal elements associated with Al Qaeda until the so-called ‘Anbar Awakening’ in 2006–2007; more recently, high-ranking former military and intelligence Ba’athists established Da’esh which grew through alliances with Sunni tribes and was further bolstered by the inflow of foreign fighters.

**Government institutions** are politically fractured, poorly led, and have limited capacity to deal with the Da’esh threat. Iraq’s parliamentary democracy is young and its legislative and oversight abilities are still developing; accountability is weak and civilian oversight of the security apparatus remains limited. The Iraqi economy contracted by 2.2% in 2014 and its modest growth of approx. 0.3% in 2015 led to a reduction in public sector salaries and has increased popular dissatisfaction. The GoI is also buckling under the weight of protests calling for reform towards a technocratic cabinet, high levels of corruption and deflated oil revenues.

Finally, the **competition for regaining control over Mosul** is likely to increase tension between the ISF and Iranian-led militia (PMUs). The ability to lay claim to being the force that removed Da’esh would enhance the political legitimacy and entrench the role of PMUs in the Iraqi state. As such, there are concerns that conflict between PMU and GoI forces will increase following the city’s eventual fall.

### International Stabilisation Response in Iraq

International actors understand that Iraq can only survive as a homogenous state and succeed against Da’esh if the GoI implements a well-coordinated, full spectrum approach to countering terrorism, insurgency and stabilisation. Coalition members are therefore providing stabilisation, humanitarian, military and civil support to the GoI. Civilian stabilisation interventions in Iraq fall broadly into **service delivery**, **rapid response**, **state reform**, and **CVE**, with the UN leading on the first three.

UN’s support to **service delivery** aims to strengthen governorate-level capacity in line with Law 21 (2011) to devolve federal powers to governorates with a view to bringing central government closer to the people. **Local stabilisation** initiatives under the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation (FFIS) support the recovery of communities previously held by Da’esh and the self-return of IDPs through light infrastructure rehabilitation, small-scale reconciliation, support to local administration, microcredit and cash-for-work schemes. Elements of these large programmes and some smaller UNHCR programmes also support **civil society** and **reconciliation**.

The UNDP has also led **governance** support to address structural weaknesses in central government and enhance the viability of the State. Projects have focused on strengthening participatory and accountable governance, rule of law and security sector reform. Other contributions include the EU’s support to **Rule of Law** **reform** and **counter terrorism** **strategy**, and **police training** by the Italian Carabinieri. The UK, US and Denmark provide **CVE** support in Iraq to **counter the Da’esh narrative** at a grass-roots level and bolster the Iraqi Government’s ability to credibly narrate its successes.

Despite the efforts of UNDP and others supporting stabilisation in Iraq, instability and political in-fighting has limited their impact. The efficacy of CVE programming, for example, has been limited by the GoI’s weak state institutions and pro-Shi’a biases which create discord between the narrative propagated and GoI behaviour. Meanwhile, the scope for a rigorous security sector process is limited due to the diverse political interests of the many institutions that comprise the sector and the on-going efforts to counter Da’esh

## Scenarios

The dynamic nature of the Syria and Iraq conflicts underlines the importance of planning to ensure programming sustainability, flexibility and resilience. The scenarios below outline possible conflict developments and their attendant impact on the thematic relevance of stabilisation activities over the programme’s timeframe. To enhance sustainability, the programme has been formulated against the scenario judged to be most likely and thematic areas that remain relevant across scenarios. That said, these scenarios are based on an assessment in mid-2016 and must therefore be regularly monitored and adjusted; the programme activities will need to be modified in response to developments outlined in Section 4.5.

### Syria

Scenario analysis for Syria takes as its baseline the disintegrating Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) agreement which aimed to facilitate humanitarian access to regime-besieged areas and ensure a reduction in fighting. The CoH’s unravelling will depend upon several factors, including (1) whether the regime wishes to continue its military campaign beyond imposing a full siege of Aleppo City before then turning to Idlib, (2) whether the regime can draw on future Russian support to achieve expansionist objectives, and (3) whether Turkey and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council are willing to reduce support to the armed opposition.

The analysis undertaken during the formulation process points to three potential scenarios in order of likelihood, with Scenario 1 being most likely:

These scenarios have the following overall features:

1. **Scenario 1 (Static):** The regime de facto accepts an opposition-held ‘buffer zone’ with Da’esh territory. The humanitarian and displacement crisis continues as regime forces push for Aleppo and Idlib under cover of targeting DTOs (currently excluded from the CoH). Syria breaks into three elements: Kurdish, regime and opposition, with moderate opposition ground increasingly squeezed and potentially becoming increasingly radical. The conflict develops an asymmetric character. At the same time, the struggle against Da’esh begins to show slow progress with the gradual liberation of territory from Da’esh control.
2. **Scenario 2 (Regressive):** The regime aggressively pursues control beyond Idlib triggering a commensurate acceleration in Turkey and GCC support to proxies. The humanitarian crisis escalates as regional stability deteriorates. Turkey continues targeting YPG positions in Syria as the SDF continues to advance on Da’esh positions backed by Coalition members. Syria is embroiled in a lengthy civil war involving regional actors and breaks into three elements: Kurdish north, regime west and an increasingly radicalised opposition-held east. Pressure on the moderate opposition increases, limiting the feasibility of stabilisation activities in opposition-held areas.
3. **Scenario 3 (Progressive):** Areasof opposition territory are gradually reintegrated under a transitional governing body as groups strike deals with the new political order. Da’esh is pushed back by airstrikes, the front line becomes temporarily static, and the UN begins to assume an increased coordination role in stabilisation. Political reform may result in some regional devolution of power,, but civil dissent continues. Political agreement under the military context (which favours the regime) undermines the opposition’s long-term viability.

**Implications for Danish programming:** Analysisindicates that support to civil society, peace processes, stabilisation and reconstruction will be most relevant and sustainable across the scenarios during the programme’s timeframe. As DTOs remain prominent, Da’esh is pushed back and elements go underground in opposition areas, ***civil society*** plays a vital role in challenging Da’esh and extremist ideologies, pressuring the regime into concessions and advocating for democratic values in transition processes. Flexible and effective provision of ***stabilisation support*** to moderate opposition actors to preserve civil space and support the recovery of local communities, including in areas that may be liberated from Da’esh and other extremist groups, remains relevant. Conversely, ***reconstruction*** and ***governance*** programmes are more relevant under the progressive scenario, 3. In the medium term, scenarios 1 and 3 both posit the prospect of a regime-led transitional governing body, which is likely to be opposed by large parts of the opposition particularly if it lacks the support of regional actors. Asymmetric methods are likely to be increasingly applied against the regime and ‘defectors’. At this point, Danish support to the UN’s transitional arrangements will be critical, and Denmark will need to review the programme’s Syria-related activities.

### Iraq

Iraq’s ability to survive as a homogenous entity rests on the GoI’s ability to address conditions which enabled Da’esh to emerge. Scenarios take as a starting point the continued advance by Iraq’s military, Kurdish, PMUs and Sunni tribal forces against Da’esh, and assume an intention by PM Abadi to reform institutions. Analysis points to three potential scenarios, with Scenario 1 being most likely:

These scenarios have the following overall features:

1. **Scenario 1 (Static)**: Protests against Abadi undermine the government and may lead to its collapse; Shi’a – Kurdish and/or intra-Kurdish fighting commences. Large-scale destruction in Mosul and neighbouring regions exacerbates the stabilisation challenge; fighting between ISF and some PMUs and resultant civil unrest further undermine Abadi’s government. The Kurdish region moves to vote for self-determination and may act on the outcome of this vote.
2. **Scenario 2 (Regressive)**: ISF’s assault on Mosul results in its destruction on a large-scale and/or parts remaining under Da’esh control, undermining the GoI and reinforcing the role of PMUs. Kurds vote for self-determination and look set to act on the outcome of the vote, triggering intra-Kurdish fighting; mass protests trigger the downfall of the government and intra-Shi’a fighting. In Sunni areas, inter-tribal fighting will increase. The disintegration of the Iraqi state is likely.
3. **Scenario 3 (Progressive)**: Coalition and ISF forces push Da’esh out of all central population centres, including Mosul. Stabilisation measures keep pace with military progress and IDPs begin to return. Popular reforms increase GoI stability and legitimacy: Abadi oversees a transition towards federalism; low-level insurgency continues resulting in some intra-Sunni fighting. Increased inclusion of Sunni and Kurd in central government reduces the likelihood of mid-term instability. The Kurdish region may vote for self-determination but does not act on the outcome of this vote.

**Implications for Danish programming:** Support to stabilisation, governance, and civil society will, with some variation, be most sustainable across the three scenarios. ***Stabilisation*** mitigates the impact of the destruction caused by airstrikes, helps meet the Counter-IED challenge and enables return of IDPs. This needs to be delivered through a reformed Iraqi state with improved ***governance*** in order to bolster theviability of the Iraqi state. ***Political dialogue***, ***reconciliation***, and an active ***civil society*** are necessary to address causes of instability. In the longer term, ***reconstruction*** will need to address historical imbalances caused by Saddam. This, however, is least relevant under a regressive scenario where instability is widespread. In the mid-term ***community security*** will be relevant to encourage the return of IDPs once areas are cleared from IEDs and immediate stabilisation needs are catered for.

# Previous Danish support, experience and lessons

This section provides an overview of the policy context and summarises the experiences from recent stabilisation support to both countries that have influenced the design of the new programme.

## Policy Context

International efforts against Da’esh in Syria and Iraq are in part based UNSCR 2249 (2015) and has resulted in the creation of a Global Coalition of 66 countries and organisations working to achieve the “core vision” of degrading and defeating Da’esh.[[7]](#footnote-7) The Coalition’s activities centre upon five lines of effort: 1) military efforts; 2) stabilisation efforts; 3) stopping the flow of foreign terrorist fighters; 4) cutting of ISIL’s financing sources; 5) delegitimizing ISIL’s brand and narrative.

Cognisant of the need to connect counter-Da’esh efforts with activities to address the causes of conflict, the UN Security Council, European Union (EU) and national policy instruments have called upon States to support measures that create conditions for lasting stability and inclusive political settlements in Iraq and Syria. Inter alia, the Coalition’s Working Group on Stabilisation has underscored the need for a framework that can coordinate stabilisation activities in newly-liberated areas, including service delivery, mine action, policing, infrastructure regeneration, IDP return, accountability and reconciliation.[[8]](#footnote-8) In relation to Syria, UNSCR 2254(2015) has called for the implementation of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué working towards a political resolution of the Syrian conflict, and the EU’s regional strategy for Syria and Iraq (March 2015) is focused on measures to create conditions for lasting stability in the region, reaffirmed in the EU Foreign Affairs Council’s Conclusions in May 2016.

**Danish policy** in Syria and Iraq is closely aligned with the policy frameworks set out by the UNSC, the EU Foreign Affairs Council and the Global Coalition against Da’esh. Denmark has supported the rebuilding of the Iraqi state since 2003 and has actively supported the Coalition’s military campaign against Da’esh since 2014, including with a building partner capacity contingent and mobile air control radar, both located at Al-Asad Air Base. In April 2016, the Danish Parliament also approved Parliamentary Decision B 108 which authorized the re-deployment of F-16 fighter and C-130J transportation aircrafts with the mandate to operate in Syria and Iraq. The Danish Government has also authorised the deployment of a Special Forces contingent to train, advise and assist selected Iraqi forces and with a mandate to potentially operate in Syria at a later stage.

In Syria, Denmark has consistently supported UN-led efforts to promote a political solution to the conflict based on the 2012 Geneva Communiqué. Most recently Denmark has supported UN talks within the framework of UNSCR 2254; Denmark recognised the SOC as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people in Marrakesh in 2012 and has since been providing non-humanitarian support to help moderate political opposition actors in Syria. In 2014, this included the establishment of a programme to help advance democratic transition with a clear principle being the provision of support to the SIG and SOC. In 2013 Denmark assigned a special envoy to the opposition whose role remains relevant given continued efforts to develop a negotiated settlement and a transition that is Syrian-led and owned. With the continuation of the conflict, Danish priorities have shifted to focus on the stabilisation of opposition-held territory and the need to provide basic protection to local populations.

Denmark’s support has been particularly aligned to the Coalition’s five lines of effort and has complemented its military effort with non-military stabilisation interventions, as well as humanitarian support. Danish policy is anchored in the Danish Government’s new development strategy (2016), which maintains the previous priority attached to promoting peace and security and aligns this with the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions is particularly relevant to the programme. The programme is also fully aligned with *‘Denmark’s stabilisation engagement in fragile and conflict-affected areas of the world’* (2013), which highlights the importance of ensuring that interventions comply with the principles of integrated approach, regional focus, risk, flexibility, programmatic approach and complementarity. They are in line with the OECD/DAC principles for “*Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*” and the “*New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States”*. Finally, the programme is aligned with the *Danish Action Plan on UNSCR 1325*.

## Previous Danish Stabilisation Support

To date, Denmark’s support to Syria and Iraq has been channelled through two separate programmes. Since 2014, **Syria** programmes have supported, amongst others, activities relating to the peace process, civil society, transitional justice, early recovery, civil defence, and the Free Syrian Police, drawing DKK 213 million from the PSF and Danish Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP). Denmark’s contribution has supported UN Syria Special Envoys on an ongoing basis. Track II initiatives have supported the political process by gathering key stakeholders around specific issues that are critical to Syria’s eventual political transition. Denmark has also supported significant Syrian civil society initiatives including The Day After (TDA) which focuses on transitional justice, and Baytna which has matured into a hub for Syrian civil society actors since its set up with Danish funding in 2013.

The police and justice support delivered through AJACS has supported 2,974 Free Syrian Police (FSP) officers in 81 stations in Idlib and Aleppo prevent a security vacuum in opposition areas by providing non-contentious community security and finance minor infrastructure works, such as air raid shelters and sniper curtains. This project has also supported efforts to preserve civil records through the Gaziantep-based National Documentation Office, paving the way for a post-transition justice and complementing Denmark’s support to The Day After. At the same time, Denmark, in partnership with the UK, has supported Syrian civil defence through Mayday Rescue to respond to urgent civil needs such as rescue, fire-fighting, utility restoration and ambulance services in key urban centres, including Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia, Homs and Damascus. Finally, the Syria Reconstruction Trust Fund continues to invest in the reconstruction of critical infrastructure across opposition-held areas.

Danish civilian stabilisation support to **Iraq** has to date been channelled through the 2015 start-up stabilisation programme with a budget of DKK 32.5 million. This support has included fast-track stabilisation for newly liberated areas (under UNDP’s FFIS programme); support to security sector reform (UNDP’s SSR programme), participatory and accountability governance (UNDP’s SPAG programme), and support to independent media (through International Media Support, IMS). These contributions run until mid-2017 and are thus already funded for half of the current programme period. In addition, since April 2016, the Danish National Police have assigned a Danish police adviser to the UNDP SSR programme and Denmark’s 2015-2016 core contribution to UNMAS has been earmarked (by UNMAS) to costs associated with start-up mine action activities in Iraq (and Syria).

Important results have been achieved through the UNDP’s immediate stabilisation (FFIS) programme which, after some start-up problems, is now fully engaged with Iraqi counterparts and is delivering urgent support to areas now liberated from Da’esh, including Sinjar and Ramadi, and is taking steps to improve response times (e.g. through pre-positioning of equipment). Useful results have also been achieved in relation to security sector reform, where the UNDP programme is closely linked to the key Office of the National Security Advisor and has succeeded in engaging and generating consensus amongst major government and non-government stakeholders regarding overall security goals as outlined in the new national security strategy. Utilising part of the Danish contribution to UNMAS core funds, UNMAS in Iraq is in the process of establishing its operations in Baghdad and Erbil.

### Lessons Learnt

Denmark’s contributions have yielded a variety of useful lessons that have been applied in the design of the new regional programme. Thematically, immediate stabilisation efforts that promote **community safety** and help to secure **priority services** are particularly relevant: they contribute to local resilience, enabling citizens to stay in situ or return. When undertaken in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner, these help counter extremist narratives by tangibly demonstrating the value of alternatives. Approaches that demonstrate **accountability and participation** through moderate CSO engagement reinforce demand-driven governance and contribute to the long-term stability of both countries.

Our experience supporting partners working inside Syria has demonstrated the need to **be prepared to take risks**. Support to civil defence and the FSP has helped save lives, strengthen local resilience and keep hope alive, but implementation can be imperfect due to lack of access, insecurity and spoilers. Donors therefore need to**be realistic** about what is achievable within a relatively short timeframe. Experience in Idlib reinforces the need for partners to be empowered to **adapt and respond** to changes in the local environment, particularly a shrinking geographical space. This reality has led to innovations in risk management, agile management, the use of field officers and of technologies for monitoring and training. Again, support to civil defence and the FSP has highlighted the challenge to support civil space while managing competing power brokers including, at times, DTOs. Advanced conflict sensitivity and human terrain awareness is necessary, and projects in Syria now heavily invest in their knowledge platforms to understand and manage risks. Previous cooperation with civil society has found that CSOs are often weak and lack the capacity to achieve the results they desire. While several of those supported by previous programmes, notably Baytna and TDA, have become more self-reliant, a degree of **mentoring** continues to be relevant. The 2015 MTR of Danish support to Syria also highlighted the importance of actors involved in implementation of major stabilisation activities (such as AJACS) having an adequate understanding of development processes. In Iraq, a key lesson learnt is the need to declare areas safe before service delivery related stabilisation activities can begin (i.e. through FFIS); **this requires complementary inputs** relating to mine action and C-IED efforts: this forms a core component of this programme.

A significant lesson relating to programming is that short **funding cycles** of three, six or even 12 months do not provide sufficient continuity to produce meaningful results in the current contexts. A multi-year funding framework is therefore advantageous provided that it is sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes in context. In relation to support modalities, recent programmes have benefited from a mix of **joint and delegated partnerships** that have increased the overall volume of funds available, reduced transaction costs, provided dedicated and local supervision and monitoring, and reduced risks. This programme utilises these arrangements whilst acknowledging limitation particularly relevant to in delegated arrangements, that Denmark will enjoy less visibility and control.

This risk, however, will be mitigated through the deployment of **senior Danish representatives**. The 2015 MTR highlighted the benefits to be gained from the deployment of representatives able to follow project progress and participate in management meetings for projects such as AJACS and the SRTF, although this would require an increase in the human resources available. Local presence mitigates the risks of reduced visibility into projects and help build Denmark’s understanding of different donors’ political and legal “red lines” to be taken into account during design and implementation.

## Guiding principles used in programme design

The programme provides a coherent framework through which immediate civilian stabilisation will be used to achieve Danish policy objectives in Syria and Iraq. This includes enabling communities to recover post-Da’esh, supporting community resilience to Da’esh and other extremist elements in Syria, and meeting short-term needs relating to protection and community safety, rule of law, mine clearance and basic service delivery. The programme design has been informed by lessons learnt and guided by the PSF guidelines:

* **Use of an integrated approach** through which the programme is aligned with Denmark’s other civil and military interventions in the region, particularly support to the Global Coalition, in the CVE area, and to humanitarian support (contributions are described at annex A).
* **A regional focus** enabling a common narrative on strategic issues (e.g. countering Da’esh), flexibility to move between engagements and between countries should circumstances require, and more effective communication on lessons learnt and commonalities between the two contexts. That said, the programme acknowledges the need to reflect the factors that also distinguish the two conflicts, involving different actors and being rooted in local grievances. Danish stabilisation advisers will help knit the regional approach together and facilitate the broader, regional perspective.
* **Risk willingness**,accompanied by a systematic approach to risk management and mitigation through sharing programme risks with other donors and regular internal and external monitoring.
* **Flexibility** enabling the programme to be adjusted to suit changing circumstances. The programme uses an interlinked scenario and risk mechanism (see Section 4.5) that identifies possible choices. However, this will be accompanied by the active approach to programme management provided through the two regionally-based stabilisation advisers and regular interaction with partners.
* **A programmatic approach** draws to a large extent on engagements and modalities that have demonstrated their utility in the previous programmes, allowing the programme to leverage existing knowledge and contacts. Where uncertainty exists, options are identified and will be examined before commitments are made; a MTR will provide an opportunity for strategic review.

In addition, a number of other relevant factors have been applied, including:

* **Immediate stabilisation** provides the programme with a distinct focus on urgent issues, such as demining, and means that longer-term stabilisation and recovery activities are not necessarily the first priority.
* With the programme funding coming mainly from ODA sources, it is necessary to ensure that programme activities **are DAC-able** and lie within the current guidelines concerning ODA.
* **A common theory of change** at programme level and a results framework that is coherent across the two contexts, notwithstanding the challenges of adopting a regional approach. Each thematic programme also includes its own theory of change. Engagements are spread between the thematic programmes as appropriate.
* **Alignment and local ownership**, in line with New Deal principles, is promoted. In Iraq, this means that engagements will target GoI priorities and that, in both countries, engagements use methodologies that are participatory and strengthen local ownership. The programme also adopts a Human Rights Based Approach and thereby promotes participation, accountability, non-discrimination and transparency through the selected engagements.
* **Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity** are prioritised in all the engagements and are aspects that Denmark will monitor and highlight in dialogue. They are particularly relevant and difficult considerations in areas that are disputed (grey areas) and where external aid can be treated as a political commodity.
* **Programme management efficiency** is optimised through reducing the number but increasing the size of engagements and, where possible, utilising delegated cooperation agreements. This reduces the overall burden on the MFA and increases value for money. Technical assistance may also assist programme partners and the MFA in meeting results.

# Presentation of the Programme

This Section provides an overview of the programme framework, including its justification, overall objective, theory of change, and an outline of each engagement area to be supported. For detailed aspects of the latter, the individual PSEDs and project documents should be consulted. A summary of the main results expected is to be found in Annex C and an overview of the inter-linkages between the contextual scenarios, theory of change, expected results, risks and response options is included at Annex B.

## Overview

The overall programme design is illustrated in the diagram below.

|  |
| --- |
| Strategic Objective |
| To counter Da’esh and other extremist elements in Syria and Iraq and to promote an inclusive political resolution to the conflict in Syria and a more stable and inclusive Iraq, through meeting immediate stabilisation needs in both countries and offering support to moderate actors that provide an alternative to extremism in order to build more stable, democratic and inclusive societies.  *The programme complements Denmark’s existing military activities, enabling Denmark to contribute to the policy aims set out in UN Security Council resolutions and particularly track two (Stabilisation) of the Global Coalition’s strategy to counter Da’esh.* |

|  |
| --- |
| TP1: Political Dialogue & Peacebuilding |
| The coherence and quality of peace initiatives in Syria and reconciliation in Iraq are reinforced, thereby countering Da’esh and other extremist groups and promoting the role of moderate actors. |
|  |
| TP2: Resilience and Rapid Response |
| Community resilience and return enhanced through improved access and provision of priority services in former Da’esh-held areas of Iraq and areas under moderate opposition control in Syria. |
|  |
| TP3: Community Security and Governance |
| Community security strengthened and inclusive governance promoted by moderate actors in Syria and the GoI in Iraq. |

## Theory of Change

The programme draws from the volatile, most likely scenario as the basis for the overall theory of change expressed below:

***If*** Denmark and its partners support processes that work towards sustainable political settlements and transition in Syria and Iraq and bolster moderate opposition voices within Track I and Track II dialogue in Syria (input 1);

***and if*** Denmark and its partners support resilience and early recovery in Syria and Iraq by moderate actors in Syria and the Government in Iraq (input 2);

***and if*** Denmarkand its partners support the improved provision of community security by the moderate opposition in Syria and by the GoI and provincial governments in Iraq (input 3),

***then:***

* Moderate Syrian actors will more tangibly contribute to stability, security and service provision in their communities, enhancing community resilience to Da’esh and other extremist elements, and form a more credible player in peace and transition processes;
* The Iraqi Government will be supported in demonstrating a tangible contribution to early recovery in areas liberated from Da’esh and this will enhance its legitimacy, undermining the Da’esh narrative of being able to provide better security and services;
* And, in both countries, tangible alternatives to extremism and to the extremist narratives of Da’esh will be demonstrated (short-term changes),

***leading to*** greater resilience to shocks, the enhanced legitimacy of moderate Syrian actors and the Government of Iraq, and bolstering local authorities’ ability to deliver tangible positive results and concrete alternatives to extremism, thereby also undermining Da’esh and other extremist narratives in Syria and Iraq (mid-term changes);

***and eventually contributing to*** the return of IDPs and refugees, the resolution of conflicts in both countries and the promotion of more inclusive and resilient societies (long-term changes).

### Assumptions

This theory is premised upon a number of **assumptions** which, if flawed, would necessitate a reassessment of parts of the programme (discussed in Section 4.5, Risks). These assumptions include that the international community will continue to **work towards a political resolution** of the Syrian conflict through the UN and the ISSG; that this process will not be derailed by a complete breakdown of the CoH or actions of spoilers; that civil society’s contribution will be welcomed and that civil society can contribute constructively to these tracks by building bridges amongst the opposition.

It is also assumed that the global Coalition will continue to **focus on military and civilian efforts** to counter Da’esh and on stabilisation; that the UN will strengthen its programme implementation in Iraq (and focus on accelerating its speed of delivery), and is able to secure sufficient levels of donor funding; that progress towards better donor coordination in Syria and Iraq continues to be made. In Iraq, it is assumed that there will be continued progress by Iraqi and Coalition forces against Da’esh leading to further liberated areas (including Mosul). Iraqi stakeholders will continue to engage with international actors to enable a rapid and increasingly coherent civil stabilisation response.

The programme also assumes that **ways and means to channel support to moderate opposition** actors and non-partisan civil society inside Syria are available, and that moderate opposition areas will continue to exist (scenarios 1 & 2). Armed groups in Syria will not interfere in projects in a way that compromises activities. In Iraq, it is assumed that the GoI will be able control sectarian violence, including in relation to Shia militias and that it will continue to implement reform programmes, although progress will be modest and high-level interventions will be necessary to break any deadlocks.

Stakeholders in this programme should remain realistic about what can be achieved in these difficult environments and embrace the need for flexibility over the three-year timeframe. Attaining the overall strategic and individual TP objectives is contingent upon the continued coordinated contribution of like-minded governments and a number of broader contextual factors upon which the programme has limited control. Such factors include regime stability, regional involvement in Syria and Iraq, and developments associated with extremist groups active in the region.

## Programme Summary

The rationale behind each engagement’s inclusion in the programme is described below under each thematic programme (TP) description.[[9]](#footnote-9)

*Table 1: Programme summary*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Syria – Iraq Stabilisation Programme (2016 – 2018)** | | | | |
| Engagement | Engagement outcome | TP Outcome | Programme Impact |
| TP1, Political Dialogue and Peacebuilding | | | *To counter Da’esh and other extremist elements in Syria and Iraq and to promote an inclusive political resolution to the conflict in Syria and a more stable and inclusive Iraq, through meeting immediate stabilisation needs in both countries and offering support to moderate actors that provide an alternative to extremism in order to build more stable, democratic and inclusive societies.* |
| Track I (UNDPA), Syria | The UN-brokered efforts to establish a credible process of negotiation of a peaceful political settlement to the Syria crisis are maintained. | The coherence and quality of peace initiatives in Syria and reconciliation in Iraq are reinforced, thereby countering Da’esh and other extremist groups and promoting the role of moderate actors. |
| The Day After, Syria | Civil society actors are more representative, better coordinated, and able to bring to discussions cohesive, evidence based, widely supported recommendations, with an eye on a future transition. |
| Baytna Civil Society Centre, Syria | Civil society supported by Baytna acts as a force for democratic change, inclusive peace and security, supporting and transitional justice and promoting respect for human rights and civil liberties. |
| TP2, Resilience and Rapid Response | | |
| Syria Reconstruction Trust Fund (SRTF) | Critical infrastructure rehabilitation provided in opposition-held areas of Syria. | Community resilience and return enhanced through improved access and provision of priority services in former Da’esh-held areas of Iraq and areas under moderate opposition control in Syria. |
| Mine Action implemented by UNMAS, Iraq | A nationally led response to threat of explosive hazards operates efficiently and effectively. |
| Demining implemented by US State Dept., Iraq | Response to the threat of unexploded ordnance, including from improvised explosive devices, in Iraq strengthened thereby enhancing community safety and helping to facilitate the return of displaced people to their homes. |
| UNDP Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization, Iraq | Conditions improved for the safe return of internally displaced persons in newly liberated areas. |
| TP3, Community Security and Governance | | |
| Syrian Civil Defence (Mayday) | Communities in Syria are better prepared and able to protect themselves amidst the on-going conflict. | Community security strengthened and inclusive governance promoted by moderate actors in Syria and the GoI in Iraq  NB. Thise Thematic Programme can also contribute to building the demand side (and the supply side where feasible) of governance. |
| Access to Justice and Community Security, Syria | Moderate civilian actors in Syria are supported to provide security and serve communities in opposition-held areas and newly Da’esh-liberated areas as viable alternatives to the regime, Da’esh and other extremist groups, challenging their narratives and preparing Syrians for transition by setting the conditions for inclusive, locally accountable security and governance. To support moderate civilian actors in Syria’s opposition-held areas to serve their communities as viable alternatives to the regime and extremist groups, representing a challenge to their narratives and preparing Syrians for transition by setting the conditions for inclusive, locally accountable governance. |
| [UNDP Security Sector Reform, Iraq] | [To address the short, medium and long term priorities needed to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the Iraqi security sector.] **Nb. A continuation of support to SSR beyond the already committed phase will be determined by the Mid Term Review and will require agreement on a revised scope and a revised project document.** |

## Continuity with previous programmes

The current programme provides a leaner and more streamlined package of support than the two country-based programmes it replaces. The overall number of engagements has been reduced from 12 to 9, while the three-year funding window provides opportunities to enhance funding predictability while maintaining the flexibility to adjust engagements should circumstances demand. In the majority of cases, Danish funding to existing partners will continue seamlessly, with draw-down occurring as further funds are required (although in other cases, disbursements may be front-loaded in order to provide an even disbursement profile (see Section 6, Budget). This continuity is illustrated in the table below that summarises the relationship between the current programme and its two predecessors:

*Table 2: Continuity with existing programmes*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Syria and Iraq Programmes** | **Support in 2015 and 2016** | **Status under this programme** | **Rationale** |
| Track 1 peace negotiations (Syria) | Yes | Continued | Remains a political priority |
| Track 2 peace support (Syria) | Yes | Continued – scaled down | Numerous alternatives, no obvious Danish value added. That said, Denmark continues to support Track 2 work through The Day After. |
| The Day After (Syria) | Yes | Continued | Remains relevant channel for civil society engagement. |
| Syria Civil Defence | Yes | Continued | Remains a priority |
| Syria Recovery Trust Fund | Yes | Continued | Remains relevant but with a further contribution in 2018 |
| Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation (Iraq) | Yes | Continued | Remains a priority |
| UNMAS (Iraq) | Yes | Continued | Remains a priority. Previous seed funding needs enhancing. |
| Baytna (Syria) | Yes | Continued | Danish flagship project now demonstrating results |
| AJACS (Syria) | Yes | Continued | Remains a priority. |
| Strengthening Participatory & Accountable Governance (Iraq) | Yes | Discontinued | Not an immediate stabilisation priority. Existing funding continues to 2017. |
| Security Sector Reform (Iraq) | Yes | Under Consideration | Not an immediate stabilisation priority. Existing funding continues to 2017. Possible extension will be considered by Mid Term Review. |
| International Media Support (Iraq) | Yes | Discontinued | Not an immediate stabilisation priority. Existing funding continues to 2017. DK contributing to Strategic Communications through CVE programme. |
| Sterling, Mine Action (Iraq) | No | Started | Priority area |
| Stabilisation Response Mechanism for Syria | No | Under Consideration | Potentially offers means to meet immediate stabilisation needs. Effectiveness not yet demonstrated. Review during MTR. |

## Justification for continued support

The rationale for continued stabilisation support in Syria and Iraq is anchored in Denmark’s international commitments to the Global Coalition against Da’esh and UNSC resolutions, commitment to international norms such as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), Danish national interest and concerns over regional and international instability caused by migration and conflict spill-over.

Civilian stabilisation support is **relevant and complements** the Coalition’s military actions, helps those displaced to return home and addresses the underlying causes of extremism. Through helping to stabilise areas and enabling access, the programme will also help facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid. The programme’s relevance will be further enhanced by being aligned to local priorities and by being locally owned. In Iraq, short-term (immediate) stabilisation programmes must involve the Iraqi authorities at national and local level and be preceded by clearance activities to ensure that areas are free of mines and other explosives. In Syria, **the peace process requires international as well as local engagement** through mutually supporting Track I and Track II processes and by expanding moderate opposition involvement in peace and transition dialogue. Danish support represents a tangible political signal of continued support to both tracks and for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and to mitigate regional conflict spill-over.

Albeit necessary to be realistic regarding longer-term **impact**, without immediate stabilisation inputs, neither country will achieve **results** by addressing **short-term needs**(including helping to generate humanitarian access) or lay foundations for recovery and positive down-stream effects: establishing the conditions for peace building, reconciliation, human rights, and provision of basic services (including security). In both countries, civil stabilisation efforts are necessary to**protect civilians and contribute to countering extremism**by supporting **credible alternatives**. In Syria, moderate CSOs are one of few actors capable of representing and protecting the Syrian population from Salafist groups and Da’esh elements, while providing a sound ideological counterweight to the regime. A power vacuum in newly-liberated areas of Iraq is likely to be exploited by sectarian factions unless concerted efforts are made to establish the conditions for sustainable security, including governance, rule of law and return.

Programme **effectiveness** will be promoted by involving local actors in programing and listening to the needs and political realities on the ground and capitalising on the considerable body of knowledge pertaining to how best to support local capacities to promote community resilience in Syria and to help pave the way for sustainable return in newly liberated areas of Iraq. Engagements in Iraq are all closely aligned with Iraqi priorities and Iraqi authorities are involved in programme decision-making.

Programme **efficiency** will be optimised through the use of joint partnership arrangements, including trust funds and delegated cooperation. However, lessons learnt suggest that a strong local Danish presence through a mixture of MFA visits and of the deployment of suitably qualified stabilisation advisors in the region is necessary to ensure that Denmark contributes capacity as well as financing to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall programme. This will contribute to a strong monitoring set-up able to draw from partner monitoring and Third Party Monitoring arrangements.

While the **sustainability** of immediate stabilisation activities may not always be top priority (speed of delivery may be equally critical, the programme will utilise opportunities to build in longer-lasting effects; for example, through promoting inclusive, transparent and accountable governance arrangements, including through capacity development. Most of the programme’s engagements provide opportunities for this; in Syria particularly AJACS, SCD, Baytna and TDA and, in Iraq, FFIS and mine action.

The two stabilisation advisers will work with project partners to implement a **Human Rights-Based Approach** (HRBA) and prioritise **Responsibility to Protect** (R2P) objectives. In Iraq, programme partners are already engaged in a dialogue with the GoI on issues that relate to the protection of citizen’s rights, including justice reform and the devolution of power. UNDP’s FFIS programme integrates an HRBA approach in its design, which also prioritises gender sensitivity (this includes involvement of local authorities and local communities, the latter particularly in relation to window 4 – reconciliation). In Syria, the scope for working on R2P with the regime is precluded, although a number of the engagements explicitely prioritise protection issues (notably AJACS and SCD). In relation to HRBA, the Community Safety Working Groups (CSWGs) set up under the AJACS programme, the CSO grant mechanism under Baytna, and the dialogue fora established through TDA all prioritise participation and non-discrimination.

The engagements are also vehicles through which the programme will contribute to **gender equality** and women’s empowerment and the *Danish Action Plan on UNSCR 1325*. For example, in Iraq, women’s participation is a focus area of the FFIS (particularly windows 2 – livelihoods and 4 - reconciliation); UNMAS activities will follow the 2010 UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action and pay special attention to gender aspects of mine risk education, victim assistance, and advocacy; in Syria, women’s rights and gender development will be one of the thematic clusters pursued by Baytna; TDA will have a focus on the role of women as mediators (as one of its four outputs), which is also relevant to UNSCR 1325; SCD Women Points will be established to provide first line emergency medical services and community awareness raising from women to women; and AJACS support the FSP’s women’s police units and its capacity to deal with crimes relating to or involving women. The inclusion of women in CSWGs is also an AJACS priority.

# Summary of Thematic Programmes

This section provides an overview of the logic, rationale and basic content of the three thematic programmes (TPs) and their peace and stabilisation engagements (PSEs). Further details are provided in the accompanying PSEDs and project documentation.

## TP1: Political Dialogue and Peacebuilding

### Thematic objectives

The thematic objective of the support to political dialogue and peace building is: *The coherence and quality of peace initiatives in Syria and reconciliation in Iraq are reinforced, thereby countering Da’esh and other extremist groups and promoting the role of moderate actors.*

TP1 addresses two fundamental enablers of progress towards sustainable peace in Syria and Iraq: the need to gain and maintain traction in the Syrian peace process through political dialogue, and the need to support civil society to promote a counterweight to Da’esh ideology and achieve broader peace building and reconciliation goals in both countries.

Danish policy is that only negotiated settlements can effectively end the conflict in Syria and ensure a sustainable political settlement in Iraq. Though efforts towards a political resolution to the Syrian crisis have yet to achieve tangible results, it remains essential that the international community continues to push for a peaceful political solution to both conflicts.

In line with the scenario assessment presented earlier, continued Danish support to political dialogue, peace building and civil society will help to achieve the overall policy objectives of degrading Da’esh and supporting moderate actors.

### Theory of change

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TP 1 Theory of Change  Political Dialogue and Peacebuilding** | | |
| IF | Results | Engagement |
| Denmark and its partners support political processes and dialogue for peace in Syria and Iraq | Intermediate outcome 1.1  (short and medium term) | Support to Track-I peace negotiations (UNDPA) |
| And |  |  |
| We improve coordination and information sharing between track I and track II stakeholders about their respective initiatives and achievements | Intermediate outcome 1.2  (short and medium term) | Support to The Day After |
| And |  |  |
| Strengthen the role of moderate civil society actors in Syria and Iraq to develop and represent the views and interests of Syrian people across Track I and Track II processes. | Intermediate outcome 1.3 (short and medium term) | Support to Baytna  Support to FFIS |
| THEN |  |  |
| Conditions for an inclusive political resolution to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq will be maintained with moderate narratives and views better represented within Track 1 processes. | OUTCOME 1  (Long-term) |  |

### Overview of TP1 Engagements

Denmark will continue its support to the United Nations and its efforts to find a political solution to the conflict by providing DKK 4 million in funding to the office of the Special Envoy to Syria via the UNDPA, at the same time as supporting TDA and Baytna (with DKK 10 M and DKK 10 M respectively) to continue their work in creating synergies between Syrian stakeholders on key issues of transition, and amplifying the voice of moderate civil society and other Track II actors within the Track I process. UNDPA support will be reviewed in the 2017 MTD to ensure continued relevance with future contextual and political developments.

In Iraq, support will be provided to the UNDP’s Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation (FFIS), which has a window for community reconciliation that is intended to help local leaders and communities to promote social cohesion and dialogue, reconciliation and restorative justice. This engagement is placed within Thematic Programme 2 due to its emphasis on stabilisation (see below).

Should other possibilities in Iraq emerge that warrant Danish support within the scope of this thematic programme (including, for example, UNAMI’s or other relevant actors’ role on political reconciliation), they could be considered at a later date. A vehicle for this would be to include such an assessment in the remit of the 2017 MTR.

#### Support to the UN-led Syrian peace process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | United Nations Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) |
| Danish contribution | DKK 4 million (planned for 2017) |
| Budget | - |
| Project period | 2017-2018 |
| Other donors | Several other donors provide funding to the UNDPA relevant to Syria and to the office of the Special Envoy. |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| The office of the UN Special Envoy to Syria is enabled to continue UN-brokered efforts to establish a credible process of negotiation of a peaceful political settlement to the Syria crisis. | |
| Engagement description | |
| Denmark will continue its multi-year support for the UNDPA and office of the Special Envoy to Syria, and the UN-brokered efforts to find a political solution to the Syria conflict. This is particularly relevant in view of the recent progress made in reaching the now precarious CoH agreement.  The UNDPA is currently leading post-agreement planning for Syria through a Working Group (WG) set up under the auspices of the Syria Inter-Agency Task Force. The WG will be co-Chaired by the UNDPA and will be responsible for identifying and preparing a coordinated engagement by the UN system to support stabilisation, recovery and peacebuilding upon the signing of a peace agreement.  UNDPA’s support to peace process and work to lay the foundations necessary to ensure it is well placed to support and implement such a process, its work remains relevant under the panoply of scenarios that may emerge as the Syrian conflict evolves. Given the nature of this intervention as highly subject to the vicissitudes of conflict dynamics, support to UNDPA will be revisited in the 2017 MTR based on finalised partner documentation and an assessment of the political context, | |
| Previous support | |
| Denmark has already supported the missions of the special envoys to the United Nations and the Arab League in 2012 and 2013 with a total of DKK 4.5 million, provided a further DKK 6 million in 2014 and then DKK 6 million from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016. The support included core funding as well as financing for strategic planning of a possible post-conflict transition process. | |

#### Funding for Track II initiatives through The Day After

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | The Day After (TDA) |
| Danish contribution | 10 M DKK |
| Budget | USD 3.39 million until Sept 2018. |
| Project period | 2016-2018 |
| Other donors | Sweden (tbc) |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Civil society actors are more representative, better coordinated and amplified, and able bring to discussions cohesive, evidence-based, widely supported recommendations, with an eye on a future transition | |
| Project description | |
| Founded in 2012, TDA aims to amplify the voice of CSOs amongst international actors on issues of transition. The organisation’s four main outputs are: (1) community mobilisation on rule of law and transitional justice; (2) surveys providing insight to decision makers into developments and sentiment on the ground; (3) safeguarding of documents; and (4) Transitional justice.  In 2016, TDA’s focus will be on carrying out Track II consultation meetings with Syrian stakeholders around key themes, including SSR, transitional justice, the constitutional process (including electoral reform and the drafting of the constitution) and Rule of Law (looking at the shape and the content of certain laws). These aim to build consensus amongst Syrian actions on a blueprint of action and to make recommendations to Track I actors on these issues. TDA will also expand activities on these areas to increase the focus on peacebuilding (including boosting the participation of women, the role of media, reinforcing local security initiatives, and expanding networks across dividing lines).  TDA has a strong, well-respected leadership connected inside Syria and able to contribute to dialogue on a future transition. Its documentation work is a critical conflict mitigation measure and feeds into the database operated by AJACS. That said, the 2015 assessment that TDA needed greater focus around a forward-looking institutional strategy remains relevant: TDA should be encouraged to seek external support to form such a strategy and ensure that its products (particularly surveys) are more professional and carry more weight with international partners. | |
| Previous support | |
| Denmark provided TDA with DKK 1.5 million in funding between 2012-13; DKK 6.5 million between 2014-15 and DKK 4 million between 2015-16. | |

#### Baytna’s Support to Civil Society

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | Baytna |
| Danish contribution | 10 M DKK |
| Budget | EUR 5.3 m to 2018. |
| Project period | 2016-2018 |
| Other donors | The Asfari Foundation. Baytna also has grants pending from the French and Swedish governments and has been approached by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Capacity of civil society to act as a force for democratic change, inclusive peace and stability, to support transitional justice, and to promote respect for human rights and civil liberties using different tools and approaches including advocacy, lobbying and policy making is strengthened. | |
| Project description | |
| Set up with Danish funding in 2013, Baytna’s aims to ‘strengthen the capacity of civil society to act as a force for democratic change’ through three core services: **capacity building,** small-scale **grants to Syrian CSOs,[[10]](#footnote-10)** and a **hub[[11]](#footnote-11)** to enable opposition CSOs, refugees, diaspora and others meet and coordinate. In view of its success as a CSO hub Baytna is expanding into international **advocacy**.  Baytna’s external review in 2015 raised a range of issues relating to the strength of the organisation’s management and its ability to deliver results. Since then, Baytna has grown in strength, become less externally driven, and is increasingly capable of operating independently. Baytna is now fully managed by Syrian staff responsible for its finance and administration, allowing the external support provided by the implementers Transtec / Aktis to become purely advisory (although still needed).  Danish funding will strengthen Baytna’s work with moderate Syrian CSOs in and outside Syria. Baytna should be further encouraged to develop its institutional capacity, its medium term strategy and diversify its funding base. Baytna’s set-up remains relevant under scenarios 1 and 2, but may require substantial adjustment for scenario 3. Finally, Baytna is seeking to diversify revenue streams and attract funding from other donors. | |
| Previous support | |
| DKK 7.5 million for 2015-16 building on an earlier Danish funding allocation of DKK 5 million in 2013-14 and DKK 10 million in 2014-15. | |

## TP2: Resilience and Rapid Response

### Thematic objectives

The thematic objective of the support to resilience and rapid response is: *Community resilience and return enhanced through improved access and provision of priority services in former Da’esh-held areas of Iraq and areas under moderate opposition control in Syria.*

Denmark seeks to alleviate the impact of instability in both countries through contributing towards the stabilisation and early recovery of areas previously held by Da’esh in Iraq and Syria, and supporting community-level resilience in opposition-held areas of Syria currently under regime bombardment. These areas demonstrate a variety of urgent needs, including safe access, basic services (such as electricity, health, water and education) and municipal administration.

TP2 will contribute towards improving access to priority services in opposition-held areas of Syria and recently-liberated areas in Iraq, thereby enhancing the safety and resilience of local communities. Support to communities in such areas that helps meet their basic needs will contribute to building their resilience, provide a tangible signal of international support, and thus help counter extremist narratives.

That said, TP2 recognises the challenge in *accessing* target areas in Syria and Iraq; such access is often impeded by the presence of armed actors, on-going fighting, and the presence of mines, booby-traps and IEDs. In view of these challenges, engagements under TP 2 will be closely monitored and a regular dialogue maintained with the implementing agencies, including through the visits to Baghdad by the (Iraq) stabilisation advisor. As necessary, and together with other donors, technical reviews and/or capacity assessments will be initiated to support the implementing agencies.

### Theory of change

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| **TP 2 Theory of Change  Resilience and Rapid Response** | | | |
| IF | Results | Engagement |
| We support the provision of basic services to Syrian populations in moderate opposition controlled areas and through moderate civil society organisations and local level structures | Intermediate outcome 2.1  (short and medium term) | Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF) |
| and |  |  |
| We support demining (in Iraq) to create a safe environment enabling access and allowing basic services to be delivered to areas formerly held by Da’esh. | Intermediate outcome 2.2  (short term) | UNMAS  Sterling Mine Action |
| and |  |  |
| We support the delivery of basic services to areas of Iraq formerly held by Da’esh. | Intermediate outcome 2.3  (short term) | FFIS |
| THEN |  |  |
| Moderate Syrian actors and the GoI will more tangibly contribute to service provision in their communities, enhancing communities’ resilience to shocks, enabling the return of IDPs, and providing an alternative to Da’esh and other extremist actors. | OUTCOME 2 |  |

### Overview of TP2 Engagements

In Syria, TP2 addresses the immediate stabilisation needs of those in opposition areas that have recently been subjected to heavy aerial bombardment resulting in large-scale destruction. This will be achieved through continued support to the multi-donor **Syria Recovery Trust Fund** (SRTF) of DKK 20 million. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that an option exists to extend Danish support to the **Stabilisation Response Mechanism** (SRM), which is a UK funded initiative, currently managed by Adam Smith International that aims to meet selected immediate civilian stabilisation needs in newly liberated areas. The initiative has yet to fully demonstrate itself as disbursements have been relatively few and the possibility is therefore raised as an option and its validity will be reviewed during the Mid Term Review in 2017.

In Iraq, the programme supports the stabilisation of liberated areas formerly occupied by Da’esh through its contribution to UNDP’s **Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation** (FFIS) of DKK 94 million. This new funding recognises the major reconstruction challenges due to the massive destruction of infrastructure, wholesale displacement of the population, and individual and community trauma, and the expected increase in demand for the FFIS’s services. The FFIS is now progressing well and is the main entry point for donors wishing to support immediate stabilisation projects where there is close alignment with the Iraqi authorities. Given the current programme’s focus on immediate needs, Danish support is not currently earmarked to the FFIS’s new sister programme – the Funding Facility for Extended Stabilisations (which takes support beyond 90 days). However, this can be re-considered during the Mid-Term Review in 2017.

In both, Syria and Iraq, Denmark will further build upon its core funding of **UNMAS** to encourage UNMAS to take a leading role in developing a cohesive and comprehensive approach to mine action. While UNMAS is building up its role in both countries, the challenges differ between the two – although it is clear that both will require major inputs in the short, medium and longer term.

In Iraq, coordinated mine action is key to stabilising areas, facilitating the return of IDPs and enabling the provision of basic services. The expected demands for mine action in liberated areas are such that a multi-actor engagement will be necessary that includes NGO and commercial operators as well as training up of Iraqi civilian capacity. UNMAS is seeking funding for this through its Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), although there are currently substantial gaps, particularly in 2017 and 2018. The consequences of insufficient funding will be that the emergency survey and clearance response will not fully meet the scale of the task. Current indications from Sinjar and Ramadi are that a thorough mine action response is needed to pave the way for immediate stabilisation, such as that provided through FFIS. Without timely and adequate clearance, other stabilisation efforts will be delayed, which would be potentially destabilising as well as leading to protection concerns due to the extent of the contamination. Connected to this, there is an urgent need to enable civilian operators to destroy deactivated devices (currently, this requires Iraqi military approval). Denmark will include this as part of its political dialogue with the Iraqi authorities as well as with UNMAS.

In view of the current gap in capacity, Denmark will also support a commercial operator (the U.S-based company **Sterling**) through a delegated cooperation arrangement with the U.S. State Department. This is expected to be a one-off arrangement that will be completed by the end of 2016. Sterling is currently one of the few operators working to secure prioritised sites from IEDs and other unexploded ordnance. Possible inputs in this area also need to take account of military-related mine action. Upon request of the Iraqi Government, NATO is also developing a Defence Capacity Building (DCB) package that includes a mine action component. Denmark has decided to actively support the implementation of the DCB package through an ear-marked financial contribution of EUR 600.000 to NATO’s Iraq Trust Fund, where support to the mine action component has been highlighted as a special Danish priority. Additionally, the Danish building partner capacity contingent at Al-Asad also provides C-IED training of Iraqi Forces, though for military purposes.

For political reasons, UNMAS Syria will not be supported directly initially due to the difficulty to distinguish between regime and opposition held areas and because humanitarian support is not within the scope of this programme. As UNMAS Syria’s strategy for Syria develops, this position will be reconsidered.

#### Support to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF)

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| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | KfW (trustee) and the SRTF’s Management Committee and Management Unit. |
| Danish contribution | 20 M DKK |
| Total budget | EUR 48.5 million |
| Project period | 1 September 2017 – 2018 |
| Other donors | GER, UAE, US, FIN, SWE, NOR, UK, JAP and FRA. |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Critical infrastructure rehabilitation is provided in opposition-held areas of Syria. | |
| Engagement description | |
| SRTF was founded in September 2013 as a multi-donor trust fund with the capability of channelling grant funding into technically complex reconstruction projects in Syria. It aims to boost the legitimacy of the opposition with whom it works through supporting essential services, including food security, primary health centres, water and electricity. To date, SRTF has approved 26 projects with a US$51m budget, 17 of which are currently being implemented, of which nine are over 90% delivered. The project is supported by 32 staff in Gaziantep and 13 permanent field officers in Syria.  SRTF’s focus has shifted from infrastructure recovery towards stabilisation in response to conflict developments in Syria and to bridge the gap between disaster response and recovery. Project approval processes have been streamlined, assets pre-positioned in warehouses on the Turkey-Syria border, and its Management Committee has increased meeting frequency. Nevertheless, approval process can be lengthy (taking up to six months), thereby restricting SRTF’s agility. Nevertheless, its management await Jordanian exemptions to deliver projects to Southern Syria.  SRTF’s current relevance is in question due to the difficulty inherent to delivering large-scale projects in areas such as Aleppo and Der’a. While it coordinates activities with SOC to the extent feasible, there appears to be a breakdown in communication between SRTF and SIG: the latter expects to receive SRTF funding, but the former is legally precluded from contracting directly with the SIG . | |
| Previous support | |
| DKK 25.8 million in 2015-16, adding to the previous contribution of DKK 25 million since 2013. | |

#### Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation

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| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | United Nations Development Programme |
| Danish contribution | 40 M DKK in 2016 + 20 M DKK in 2017 + 34 M DKK in 2018. |
| Total budget | Currently USD 202 mill, including pledges (August 2016) |
| Project period | 2016-2018 |
| Other donors | Japan, USAID, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK, Italy, Korea, Australia, Canada, France, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Conditions improved for the safe return of internally displaced persons in newly liberated areas | |
| Engagement description | |
| Since its establishment in mid-2015, the FFIS has become the preferred point of entry for donors seeking a harmonised means of contributing to a range of immediate stabilisation needs. It is well anchored within the UN Country Team and with Iraqi authorities at national and governorate levels.  The FFIS implements projects in line with four ‘windows’: (1) Public works and light infrastructure, (2) Livelihoods, including micro-credit and cash-for-work to jump-start local economies and generate income for women and at house-hold level, (3) Capacity building to local authorities and (4) Community reconciliation, by way of support to efforts that promote cohesion and dialogue.  In 2016, FFIS has progressively increased its delivery and this is being matched by the increase in returns. Key lessons being learnt include the impact of the huge IED/UXO contamination of areas such as Ramadi and Sinjar and the lack of national capacity to deal with it beyond military objectives. The effect is that FFIS activities are effectively stalled until areas are declared safe. It is also apparent that civil stabilisation is not yet fully harmonised with other elements of the post-liberation strategy, including recovery, transitional justice, reconciliation, reconstruction and reform. A comprehensive approach is thus required to tie these elements together, including mine action. Progress is now being made on these aspects and they will be further addressed in the Danish dialogue with GoI, UNDP and other donors, including through the FFIS Steering Committee in which Denmark has a seat. | |
| Previous support | |
| DKK 7 mill in 2015 | |

#### Support to UNMAS in Iraq

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| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | United Nations Mine Action Service |
| Danish contribution | 22 M DKK in 2016, 19 M DKK in 2017 and 25 M DKK in 2018 |
| Total budget | USD 26.5 m (2016), USD 112 m (2017), USD 168 m (2018) |
| Project period | 2016-2018 |
| Other donors | EU, UK, Netherlands, Japan, Canada |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Response to the threat of unexploded ordnance, including from improvised explosive devices, is strengthened thereby enhancing community safety and helping to facilitate IDP return. | |
| Engagement description | |
| This engagement, provided through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (UN VTF) for Assistance in Mine Action, deepens Denmark’s contribution to UNMAS’ activities in Iraq. In view of the immediate and foreseeable demands in Iraq and UNMAS’s ability to work closely with Iraqi authorities, Danish support will be earmarked as core support for UNMAS Iraq. The possibility of extending support to Syria will be assessed in the 2017 MTR as UNMAS’s strategy for Syria becomes more developed.  This support addresses a critical impediment to effective stabilisation: namely the large amount of unexploded ordnance, in particular, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) left behind by retreating Da’esh forces. Whilst the full extent of demining the challenge remains unknown, inter alia, there is a widespread concern that ISF advances in Fallujah and Mosul could require substantially more national and international civilian explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) capacity than is currently available.  Without concerted efforts to identify and clear ordnance from residential and administrative areas, critical stabilisation efforts cannot deliver and IDPs will not be able to return to their homes without significant risks to their well-being. Evidence from Iraq and Syria demonstrates that, in the absence of qualified mine clearance operators, citizens attempt to remove devices themselves, often with serious consequences. In such a context, the current inability of Iraqi authorities to declare areas safe from contamination will effectively act as a brake on stabilisation efforts through the FFIS.  UNMAS Iraq is currently building its capacity to implement a multi-year comprehensive programme response with aims to (a) reduce the risk of explosive hazards to support of stabilisation planning and delivery and (b) increase Iraqi capacity to manage the threat of explosive hazards. UNMAS will apply “blended” solutions utilising contracted commercial and NGO capacities alongside developing Iraqi capacity. UNMAS’ project documentation will develop further over the coming months and this engagement will be updated accordingly. | |
| Previous support | |
| DKK 30 mill in 2015-2016 as core funding to UNMAS (utilised by UNMAS largely in Iraq and Syria) | |

#### Conventional Weapons Destruction Services in Ramadi (Sterling)

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| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | Sterling International, through U.S. Department of State |
| Danish contribution | 6.5 M DKK |
| Total budget | USD 20 million |
| Project period | 2016 |
| Other donors | United States |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Response to the threat of unexploded ordnance, including from improvised explosive devices, in Iraq is strengthened thereby enhancing community safety and helping to facilitate the return of displaced people to their homes | |
| Engagement description | |
| This engagement will provide a one-off Danish contribution to joint donor funding under a delegated cooperation agreement with the US Department of State (DoS) to help meet immediate mine clearance needs in Ramadi. Da’esh withdrew from Ramadi in January 2016 after placing a substantial numbers of IEDs in strategic and residential areas; these now delay the restoration of critical infrastructure and return of citizens.  In view of limited civilian capacity for search and clearance US DoS has contracted Sterling International to provide IED destruction (IEDD) experts to survey and clear critical infrastructure and habitable sections of Ramadi. This aims to enable the timely inspection, repair of facilities and safe return of those displaced. Search and clearance operations will take place over 44 weeks in 2016 using two 20-person teams. It is expected that around 20 residential buildings per day can be cleared, depending upon degree of contamination (assuming an AXO/IED in 10-20% of buildings surveyed). Sterling’s will also train Iraqi teams to address complex IEDs.  Work will be carried out in accordance with IMAS standards (and NATO STANAGS in the case of IEDs), will meet host nation requirements and conform to international best practice. This includes coordination with other mine action agencies, including UNMAS, the GoI, UNDP’s FFIS and the Iraqi NOC to identify critical infrastructure priorities. The use of commercial contractors is in line with UNMAS’ current strategy for “blended solutions” to the twin demands of clearance and capacity development in Iraq. Sterling is one of two main contractors that are present in Iraq and able to provide services within a short timeframe.  This will be a one-off contribution provided through a delegated cooperation arrangement with the U.S. Department of State on the basis of the project documentation provided by Sterling and a task Order from the Department of State. This provides a general overview of the project but needs strengthening in terms of its results framework and budget clarity. These aspects will be pursued further in dialogue with the U.S.. The engagement is expected to be complete by the end of 2016. | |
| Previous support | |
| None | |

## TP3: Community Security and Governance

### Thematic objectives

The thematic objective relating to community security and governance is: *Community security strengthened and inclusive governance promoted by moderate actors in Syria and the GoI in Iraq.*

Weak rule of law in Iraq and the complete breakdown of order in Syria renders support for community security and governance initiatives necessary. In the current context, these are considered high priorities, as without basic safety in place, people may be displaced from their communities. Equally, security and access to justice are central to ensuring the return of those displaced to their communities.

Through this Programme, Denmark will reinforce security and justice mechanisms that challenge those advanced by Salafist armed groups such as JaN in Syria, bolster local communities’ abilities to respond to crises and, support reform processes and good governance in Iraq’s security sector thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of the Iraqi state. Ensuring a minimum degree of community safety is thus directly linked to the resilience of people and communities, to preventing further displacement, and providing a counterweight to extremist rhetoric.

### Theory of change

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| **TP 3 Theory of Change  Community Security and Governance** | | |
| IF | Results | Engagement |
| We improve the opportunity for Syrians in opposition-controlled areas to experience increasingly effective security services and initiatives that improve communities’ access to justice and civilian policing through non-extremist institutions. | **Intermediate outcome 3.1** (short and medium term) | Access to Justice and Community Security (AJACS) [Possibly SSR in Iraq] |
| And |  |  |
| We support local resilience mechanisms enabling communities to effectively organise, respond to, and recover from crises. | Intermediate outcome 3.2  (short and medium term) | Syria Civil Defence |
| THEN |  |  |
| We will empower moderate actors and foster community resilience to extremism. | OUTCOME 3 |  |

### Overview of TP3 Engagements

This thematic programme provides a framework for Danish support to community security initiatives in Syria and may support broader SSR process in Iraq should an extension to the previous programme’s support in this area be extended following the programme’s 2017 MTR. The engagements promote democratic governance including accountability, transparency and participatory decision-making.

In Syria, delegated cooperation arrangements with the UK to Syria Civil Defence (through the NGO Mayday Rescue) and to the Free Syrian Police (through the AJACS programme) will be continued at DKK 60 million and DKK 45 million respectively. **AJACS** supports policing and transitional justice actors in moderate opposition areas, and continues to deliver results despite significant constraints to their operations. Ensuring civilian access to basic security through governance and justice through the preservation of civil and land documentation are critical components of community resilience, and offer a credible alternative to extremist ideologies inside Syria. Syrian **Civil Defence** also operates in moderate opposition controlled areas inside Syria and plays a critical immediate stabilisation. Its early service delivery recovery function reinforces Danish policy priorities, and both programmes may play a positive role in mobilising efforts and supporting activities in newly liberated areas from Da'esh.

Although the present scenario analysis suggests that governance projects in Syria (such as Tamkeen) should not be a priority, this programme creates the space for such projects to be supported should the landscape become more permissive.

In Iraq, the previous programme provided funding to UNDP’s **Security Sector Reform** (SSR) and Strengthening Participatory and Accountable Governance (SPAG) programmes and will run until mid-2017. In view of the current this programme’s focus on immediate stabilisation objectives and the present political climate in Iraq, it has been decided not to extend the support to SPAG beyond 2017 and to consider the scope for (re)focusing the SSR programme. This decision will be guided by three principles: firstly, whether the UNDP strengthens its project management through filling current staffing gaps (this appears to be in hand); secondly, whether the results achieved so far are consolidated (particularly building upon the recently approved National Security Strategy); and thirdly, whether possible support beyond 2017 includes a focus on SSR in relation to immediate stabilisation needs (for example, such as in relation to local level policing). These points will be pursued further in dialogue with UNDP, and with the Netherlands and Canada, should the latter decide to join the project. Such a shift in focus would also seek to capitalise upon synergies possible through the Danish police advisor to the SSR programme. This dialogue would take place later in 2016/early 2017 and could be further considered by the mid-term review in 2017. A PSED for SSR will be added in due course, if needed.

#### Contribution of funding and advisory input to the Access to Justice and Community Security (AJACS) programme

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| --- | --- |
| **Overview** | |
| Implementing partner | Adam Smith International (ASI) and Creative Associates (CA) (the project is due to be retendered.) |
| Danish contribution | 19 M DKK in 2016, 15 M DKK in 2017 and 15 M DKK in 2018 |
| Total budget | Approx. EUR 41 million funded across two complementary contracts, one UK government contracted and one US government contracted |
| Project period | Currently funded until 31 August 2016, next phase to be retendered |
| Other donors | US, UK, the Netherlands and Germany |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Moderate civilian actors in Syria are supported to provide security and serve communities in opposition-held areas and newly Da’esh-liberated areas as viable alternatives to the regime, Da’esh and other extremist groups, challenging their narratives and preparing Syrians for transition by setting the conditions for inclusive, locally accountable security and governance. | |
| Engagement description | |
| AJACS was founded in 2013 to support improve access to civilian security and justice services in opposition-held areas, providing governance through security. The project is supported by Denmark through a delegated cooperation agreement with the UK, and comprises three key elements: community engagement, police development and civil administration.  Recent changes to AJACS’s management has resulted in a broadening of the project’s focus from the capacity development and payment of stipends to Free Syrian Police (FSP), and towards justice and community security.[[12]](#footnote-12) AJACS supports the maintenance of records and civil registries through its National Documentation Office (NDO. This is closely coordinated with TDA’s work on document preservation. AJACS has also set up 41 Community Security Working Groups (CSWGs) charged with identifying local security priorities, creating action plans, and implementing activities against the plan. 30 such activities with a total value of US$588,595 currently being implemented.  The FSP’s presence as an important psychological symbol of support to the moderate opposition and its ability to exist unarmed and through community consent enables the FSP to be used as a vehicle to provide security to newly liberated areas. Despite recent progress, however, the FSP’s performance is highly variable with around 50% of its cadre having no background in policing, and whilst its support to Civil Defence is to be welcomed, this, coupled with the FSP inability to carry out a traditional policing role risks undermining the FSP in the long-term as a credible justice actor.  Finally, donor red-lines have affected the justice aspects of the project, and the extent to which the FSP is openly used as a political tool to contest the security and justice methods propagated by Salafist groups. The re-tender provides a good opportunity to maximise on areas of demonstrable success (such as the FSP and documentation centres), whilst rethinking other aspects of the project (such as CSWGs). | |
| Previous support | |
| DKK 9 million in 2015-16, adding to the previous contribution of DKK 50 million since 2013. | |

#### Support to Syria Civil Defence (through Mayday Rescue)

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| --- | --- |
| Overview | |
| Implementing partner | Syria Civil Defence (through Mayday Rescue) |
| Danish contribution | 20 M DKK in 2016, 20 M DKK in 2017 and 20 M DKK in 2018 |
| Total budget | GBP 15.8 million |
| Project period | 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017 (expected to be renewed on annual basis) |
| Other donors | UK, Netherlands, Japan, Germany |
| Objective (output to overall programme results framework) | |
| Immediate stabilisation and early service delivery recovery is supported in moderate opposition held and newly Da’esh-liberated areas of Syria through moderate civilian actors. | |
| Engagement description | |
| This engagement will continue the Danish contribution to Syria Civil Defence (SCD, the While Helmets) through the NGO Mayday Rescue and via a delegated cooperation arrangement with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.  SCD formed as a grassroots reaction to the aerial and ground bombardment of civilian communities in Syria in 2013. As at March 2016, 2,900 active volunteers work in 114 civil defence teams, serve a population of over 6 million and have saved over 14,840 lives. Teams respond daily to urgent civilian needs by delivering essential services such as rescue, fire-fighting, utility restoration and ambulance services. In March 2016, SCD started deploying unexploded ordnance (UXO) teams and, with previous Danish funds, it developed a Chemical Survey capability. At the operational level, increased challenges during 2015 with crossing the border into Syria from Turkey led Mayday and SCD to adopt a Training of Trainers approach through which SCD personnel are now trained through five training centres inside Syria, contributing to SCD sustainability.  The rationale for supporting SCD is to strengthen moderate Syrian institutions that are recognised as credible, effective, and legitimate so that they are able to deliver services that increase the resilience of Syrian communities resisting regime and Da’esh abuses and demonstrate alternative modalities than those advocated by Da’esh and the regime.  The new Danish contribution will join other donor support channelled through Mayday Rescue, a not for profit organisation based in Istanbul with teams in Adana (Southern Turkey) and Amman (Jordan). Mayday has been instrumental in developing SCD from its beginnings as a single local rescue team of 25 volunteers in March 2013 to the nationwide organisation that it is today. The approach taken is one of building the capacity of local communities, providing training and monitoring, partnering, and organising and channelling external support (including equipment and stipends) from international donors. | |
| Previous support | |
| DKK 30 million in 2015-16, DKK 15 million 2014-15 | |

# Overview of management set up

Programme design takes account of the need to minimise overall transaction costs to the MFA. As a result, almost all proposed engagements utilise either joint (pooled) and / or delegated cooperation arrangements with well-established partners (mostly the UK and UN agencies). These arrangements have worked well under previous programmes and have permitted a certain degree of choice relating where to prioritise the management effort. Engagement modalities are set out below:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Engagement | Modality to be used | Role of engagement partner & donor interface |
| UNDPA-led peace process | UN Pooled funding (non-earmarked) | UN direct implementation (Track 1). |
| Baytna | Bilateral. Possibilities for pooled funding will be explored. | Direct implementation and through CSO grants. Management Board. |
| The Day After | Joint | CSO direct implementation. Management Board. |
| SRTF | Pooled funding (non-earmarked) | SRTF direct implementation via letting of contracts. Management Committee (key donors only – currently not DK). |
| FFIS | UN Pooled funding (non-earmarked) | UNDP direct implementation, coordination role, supply contracts. Steering Committee with donor reps (incl. Denmark). |
| UNMAS | UN Pooled (UN VTF for Mine Action) | UNMAS direct implementation, coordination, supply contracts |
| Sterling | Delegated Cooperation (with US) | Direct implementation (contractor) |
| Mayday/SCD | Delegated Cooperation (with UK) | NGO coordination/management role. Management Board |
| AJACS | Delegated Cooperation (with UK) | Contracted coordination/management role. Management Board. |
| SSR | UN Pooled funding (earmarked) | UNDP direct implementation. Steering Committee with donor reps. |

## Programme oversight

The programme will be managed by a combination of the MENA department in Copenhagen and regional advisory team, where the former sets overall policy direction (including interaction with the PSF Steering Committee) and the latter provides a closer and more continuous monitoring and interaction with regional stakeholders. This local set-up is particularly relevant as there is no Danish representation in either country with thematic or programmatic capacity in the areas supported by this programme.

At the regional level, the programme will utilise an advisory team consisting of two Stabilisation Advisors and one local staff member co-located in Istanbul. The advisory team will operate in accordance with the Danida guidelines for technical assistance. One of the Stabilisation Advisors will mainly cover programmes located in Iraq, including regular travel to Iraq (chiefly Baghdad and Erbil) to participate in donor coordination mechanisms and follow up on programme implementation. The other Advisor (carried over from the previous Syria stabilisation programme) will focus on Syria related issues. Both Advisors will have technical backgrounds in one or more of the thematic areas covered by the programme and will thus be able to interact with stakeholders on issues of substance relating to this. This is expected to particularly be relevant in relation to UNMAS and UNDP SSR (in Iraq) and AJACS, TDA and Baytna in Syria. A local staff member will add to this set up through their regional knowledge and (Arabic) language abilities.

The MENA Department of the MFA will be responsible for setting overall policy direction and form the primary point of contact, through which other ministries and departments, such as the MoD and MoJ, will plug into the programme. The Danish Ambassador to Iraq, based in Copenhagen, will ensure participation in steering committees of the UNDP programmes. This will be done to the extent possible as part of his regular visits to Baghdad. Where this is not possible, participation will be via video-link or through the Iraq stabilisation adviser. The programme will also benefit from the activities of the Danish Special Envoy to the Syrian Opposition (funded separately) who is expected to maintain regular contact with the Syria Stabilisation Advisor and the Danish MFA.

The advisory team will be located in Istanbul and office accommodation will take account of security and transport issues (with an option being co-location at the Danish Consulate). The team’s daily safety and security profile will be governed by a new security plan that will be developed in partnership with SIK. In Baghdad, the Advisor will draw upon existing arrangements with the UK Embassy. Although the financial costs involved are relatively high, the UK compound is highly secure and offers contacts with other co-located and nearby missions within the International Zone. Mobility beyond Baghdad and the International Zone will be extremely limited. However, travel to Erbil, in the Kurdish region, is possible, with due consideration of basic security precautions. The MENA department as well as the Advisors will continue to dialogue with the MFA Security department to ensure that SoPs are updated and reflect the developing security environment in Turkey, Iraq and beyond.

## Implementation arrangements

The programme will commence in September 2016 and is due to run until December 2018 (approximately 28 months). The programme is based on a range of documentation, including:

* + This overall programme document, providing its rationale, budget, management framework etc.
  + A number of Peace and Stabilisation Engagement Documents (PSEDs), one for each engagement. Each PSED will have only one partner; in most cases this will be the implementing partner (e.g. UNDP) but in cases where delegated cooperation is being used (e.g. AJACS), the partner will be the donor that will be managing the engagement on behalf of Denmark. In each case, the PSED will set out the main purpose, expected results, monitoring and reporting arrangements, and financial commitment expected.
  + A funding agreement (or MOU or Delegated Cooperation Agreement) with the implementing partner concerned.
  + Project documentation, being the project document and any other material that relates to actual implementation from the implementing partner.

Given that the majority of the engagements are extensions of previous support, the effect should be one of a seamless Danish contribution through which the new resources made available come on-stream when there is a need for further contributions to the relevant budgets. Disbursement patterns take into account the relative size and disbursement of the most recent Danish contributions.

At the time of programme finalisation (August 2016), a number of the engagements are in a state of flux; AJACS is currently being reformulated and retendered, UNMAS’s Iraq engagement is are still being developed, and TDA and Mayday/SCD’s engagements are being re-developed and extended. In some other cases (such as UNDP SSR in Iraq and the Stabilisation Response Mechanism, SRM, in Syria), a decision on whether to engage will be made following the 2017 Mid-term Review. In addition, all the engagements draw on project documentation that is reviewed and renewed annually to ensure relevance with developments on the ground. The programme is therefore expected to adjust accordingly.

To accommodate the above factors, the programme will have an internal mechanism to monitor and review possible developments and provide feedback to the MFA/PSF Steering Committee. This mechanism will revolve around the following elements:

* + The regional stabilisation advisors are in touch with partners and other donors, regularly review progress and keep the MFA (MENA) informed. This is supplemented by regular reporting from partners, the third party monitoring mechanisms that exist, and by discussion/decisions taken in the various management boards.
  + The MENA Department (consulting the MoD and MoJ) as necessary provide policy guidance and keep the PSF Steering Committee informed. Decisions are taken in the PSF as required.
  + External advice/input is sought as necessary (short-term consultancy).
  + The MTR is utilised as a mechanism for a strategic review of the programme at the approximate mid-point.
  + Technical reviews at engagement level (bilaterally or together with other donors) will be utilised where necessary to ensure that engagements remain on track.

## Monitoring mechanisms

All implementing partners will provide constant monitoring of the programme implementation and will be in regular contact with actors on the ground in the two countries. The partners will provide Denmark (either directly or via the delegated cooperation partners) with written narrative and financial reporting, normally on a quarterly basis. Narrative reporting will include reporting against the results frameworks set out in the PSEDs and their project documents. These results frameworks seek to disaggregate data by gender and age to the extent possible.

Several Syria engagements, such as AJACS and Mayday/SCD, draw on **Third Party Monitoring** arrangements supported by donors individually or collectively, to which Denmark has and is expected to continue having access. Denmark has also provided external mentoring to Baytna and has sponsored reviews of both Baytna and TDA. In the case of Baytna and TDA, a new mentoring contract will be let under this programme covering both organisations. Provision for this is included in the budget under the budget line for Technical Assistance and Review.

The programme will utilise the **new PSE reporting formats** and procedures. These provide management information for the PSF Steering Group on overall programme progress, progress at outcome level for individual engagements, and facilitate a regular assessment of the validity of assumptions and monitoring of risks. This reporting will be led by the two stabilisation advisors drawing from the results frameworks developed by partners, ensuring a streamlined reporting system and reducing overall transaction costs. The inputs available from such reporting will also be augmented from other sources, including participation in coordination fora in which MFA and / or the stabilisation advisors participate.

Denmark will also recommend to its donor partners working on Syria that joint research, joint M&E and joint coordination mechanisms such as CSO and intervention mapping is conducted and shared across projects funded by separate donors as well as multi-donor initiatives wherever there is the potential for overlap or duplication. Given the costs of support arrangements, possibilities will be explored to undertaking value for money organisational assessments to help ensure that costs do not escalate.

Finally, the programme will be subject to a **2017 Mid-Term Review**. This is regarded as strategic and as a risk reduction exercise. Amongst the tasks of the MTR will be to review overall progress being made; assess changes in the context and any changes that need to be made to the programme’s planning assumptions, including scenarios and risks; assess the usefulness of existing third party monitoring and mentoring arrangements; assess the utility of the programme management set up; review and recommend a way ahead on security sector reform (Iraq); assess the need for further support to UNDPA in Syria based on the contextual and political situation at the time; assess the needs and scope for further support to mine action in Syria through UNMAS; assess the performance of the SRTF and consider whether joining the SRM would be appropriate; assess the continued relevance of support to UNDPA, and recommend adjustments to the budget.

# Budget

*Overall programme budget (DKK M)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Funding in 2016** | **Funding in 2017** | **Funding in 2018** | **Funding Source** |
| **Thematic programme 1: Political dialogue and peace building** |  |  |  |  |
| 1.1 Track-I: support to United Nations (UNDPA) | 0 | 4 | 0 | PSF |
| 1.2 Baytna | 10 | 0 | 0 | DAI |
| 1.3 The Day After | 10 | 0 | 0 | DAI |
| Subtotal | 20 | 4 | 0 |  |
| **Thematic programme 2: resilience and rapid response** |  |  |  |  |
| 2.1 SRTF | 0 | 20 | 0 | PSF |
| 2.2 UNDP FFIS | 40 | 20 | 34 | PSF |
| 2.3 UNMAS | 22 | 19 | 25 | PSF |
| 2.4 Sterling | 6.5 | 0 | 0 | PSF |
| Subtotal | 68.5 | 59 | 59 |  |
| **Thematic programme 3: Community security and governance** |  |  |  |  |
| 3.1 AJACS | 19 | 15 | 15 | PSF |
| 3.2 Mayday/Syria Civil Defence | 20 | 20 | 20 | PSF |
| Subtotal | 39 | 35 | 35 |  |
| Other activities |  |  |  |  |
| 4.1 Stabilisation advisors | 0 | 5 | 5 | PSF |
| 4.2 Technical assistance, M&E, review | 1 | 1 | 1 | PSF |
| Subtotal | 1 | 6 | 6 |  |
| Total | 128.5 | 104 | 100 | 332.5 |

This budget rests upon a number of assumptions regarding anticipated future funding and takes into account recent disbursements that in a number of cases already include funding for 2016 (SRTF, UNDPA) from the previous programmes. Provision has been made separately for the stabilisation advisors for 2016 but is included in the budget for 2017 and 2018.

A minor amount is included for short term technical assistance in relation to the residual issues from the current programming (possible assistance in relation to the future of the UNDP SSR programme is an example).

The budget has also been constructed following the Programme Committee’s recommendation to avoid unallocated funds. Thus all funds are allocated and possible re-allocation within the thematic programmes or inclusion of possible additional engagements will take place on the basis of the Mid Term Review findings (or earlier if necessary). Decisions on possible reallocations/new engagements will be taken in accordance with the PSF Guidelines and in consultation with the PSF Steering Committee.

# Risks and risk mitigation

The broad nature of the engagements being implemented through the programme brings a variety of attendant risks. Many of these risks are inherent to the complex and rapidly-evolving environments in Syria and Iraq, and can be offset by joint-project implementation, careful implementation and monitoring, and flexible programming. It is clear that the programme’s duration, while enabling Denmark to commit resources strategically, poses significant delivery risks and there is the possibility that individual activities or entire thematic objectives of the programme may not be achieved or may need to be redesigned over the course of the programme.

This Section provides an overview of the main contextual, programmatic, and institutional risks facing the programme together with possible mitigation measures. It should be read in conjunction with the programme risk matrix in the Annex and with the risks analysis that is included as part of the individual engagement documentation.

## Risk management methodology

The programme has been designed on the assumption that Scenario 1 (set out in Section 2 above) describes the most-likely prevailing context in Syria and Iraq for at least the first half of the programme’s duration. The programme has, however, also been designed to offer relevant programming options should scenario 2 or 3 occur. In these scenarios, the engagements will need to change in response to changes in the context; in broad terms, these being either to a *regressive* or to a *progressive* scenario. Risks are assessed and set out at Annex E according to the three scenarios and using Danida’s categorisation of contextual, programmatic and institutional risk.

## Programme sustainability, adaptability, and exit

The following assessment highlights the impact of scenario developments on Denmark’s risk exposure, and sets out possible options for managing this risk. It also includes observation relating to programme sustainability and exit. It is anticipated that the two Stabilisation Advisors attached to the programme will take the lead in monitoring programmatic risks, together with implementing partners and other donors. The Advisors will also work closely with the MFA in Copenhagen in order to ensure that risks are highlighted and responses fully considered. As noted previously, while the focus is on immediate stabilisation, the engagements have been selected to provide a reasonable degree of sustainability across the various scenarios and the implementation modalities used in most cases will develop local capacities and thereby strengthen the scope for outcomes following the eventual withdrawal of external support. In most cases, the engagements are also highly context dependent and, as noted in the assessment below, certain scenarios will entail either major redesign or closure. AJACS and SCD are examples in Syria. In Iraq, FFIS and C-IED mine action are intended as short-term interventions whose exit or closure will be linked to longer-term recovery and development interventions (for example, the FFES, which has a recovery focus). Finally, in the event of a unilateral withdrawal of funds by Denmark, the effects will be mitigated in most cases by the multi-donor funding modalities used.

### Response to scenario risks in Syria

In relation to Syria, three eventualities with significant bearing on programme implementation are:

#### Scenarios 1, 2 & 3 – risk of reduced space for moderate actors

*In Syria, the scenario assessed to be most likely (Scenario 1) assumes that continued violations of the CoH will reduce the ground held by the moderate opposition, who will be increasingly squeezed between regime forces and extremist groups. This same risk also applies to the other two scenarios, although for different reasons. In Scenario 2 (regressive), their space will be squeezed due to the escalation of the conflict. In Scenario 3 (progressive), space may contract if the political settlement allows the regime to re-exert its control over moderate actors. In all scenarios, as Da’esh and other extremist elements are pushed back, it is assumed that they will attempt to integrate into, and subvert, opposition communities.*

**Impact:** On the one hand, the continued aerial and ground bombardment will maintain demand for community safety contributions (AJACS and SCD will continue to be relevant) and, where feasible, also stabilisation and resilience support (such as SRTF). On the other, the ability to deliver services safely will decrease. Competition over space with extremist groups, such as JAN, risks that moderate groups being squeezed out, infiltrated or are inadvertently used to make precarious gains (which are subsequently taken by extremists or retaken by regime forces). Da’esh infiltration of communities will further strain CSOs.

**Response:** Monitor developments on the ground carefully and take steps to respond where threats start to manifest (e.g. by removing equipment and personnel). Depending upon the speed of developments, it may be possible, at an early stage, to relocate/consolidate resources in non-affected areas. Consideration will need to be given to the possible negative effects of withdrawal or relocation given that extremist actors may be seeking to occupy the space that is contested. This will particularly affect AJACS, SCD and SRTF, all of which will require careful targeting and agreement (taking into account possible “red lines”). Support to CSOs (particularly Baytna’s Hub mechanism) will be particularly relevant to ensure their ability to coordinate and act as a bulwark against Salafist social currents.

#### Scenario 2 – risk of escalated conflict involving regional actors

*Scenario 2 posits a regressive outlook where regional actors react to the Assad regime’s accelerating gains by supporting the opposition with more material, funds and potentially, with special forces or other military assets.*

**Impact:** In this instance, the conflict in Syria would escalate as regime forces continue to draw upon foreign recruits and other support to counter the armed opposition. Such a development would further restrict the moderate opposition’s ability to operate, but would increase the urgency for a political resolution, making support to the CSOs TDA and Baytna relevant. Support to emergency response (i.e. Mayday) would also remain relevant so long they have space to operate. Support to the FSP (through AJACS), however, may become less relevant as their operating space will reduce.

**Response:** As the situation worsens, it will be necessary to review the Syria part of the programme to ensure its relevance.

#### Scenario 1 and 3- risk of a flawed political settlement

*In the mid- to long-term, the most likely and progressive scenarios (1 and 3) would both result in a loss of much opposition-held territory and in an essentially regime-led transitional governing body, which will be opposed by much of the armed Syrian opposition. As part of this deal, the regime will have regained control over much opposition-held territory enhancing its leverage and may accept opposition-held ‘buffer zones’ between territories held by Da’esh.*

**Impact:** A settlement, even flawed, could open up opportunities for stabilisation and resilience activities (SRTF) due to the likelihood that improved access will be part of the deal. Civil society (TDA and Baytna) may also remain relevant, at least initially. But it would also pose a challenge for other initiatives that are predicated on the current conflict pattern (AJACS and SCD) and form parallel state structures. These may be forced to adapt and/or be integrated into the governing body’s arrangements. In all cases, the risk of regime abuse against opposition is high if a settlement permits the regime to continue with limited changes to governance. Parts of the armed position are therefore likely to continue their struggle against the regime with increasingly asymmetric methods.

**Response:** Depending on the parameters of a political settlement, a review of the Syria part of the programme would be necessary. Under this development, Danish activities need to place primacy on supporting the UN (that has begun planning transitional arrangements), whilst supporting moderate voices (in civil society) across Syria to put pressure on the regime to make concessions, and supporting longer-term recovery and reconstruction. With the last forming a small component of this programme, a review of Syria-related activities would be needed to ensure continued relevance.

### Response to scenario risks in Iraq

In relation to Iraq, four eventualities with significant bearing on programme implementation are outlined:

#### Scenario 1 & 2 - risk of continued political instability

*Under Scenarios 1 and 2, the impasse relating to the imposition of a technocratic cabinet will be accompanied by a period of intense political instability. This will reduce further the GoI’s ability to take the measures necessary to reform and resolve structural causes of conflict. Political instability would be exacerbated if PMU forces are able to advance more quickly to retake Mosul and / or can lay claim to having done so. In a regressive scenario, the political instability will worsen, potentially resulting in the collapse of the state or the capture of key governance institutions by sectarian forces.*

**Impact:** Urgent operational priorities will remain relevant (FFIS, mine action) in Scenario 1 (most likely case). Government appetite to move forward on major reforms and the prospects for ambitious projects such as SSR may be limited beyond an initial stage. The Government’s focus will be on making gains against Da’esh at the expense of reforming to remedy the structural causes of conflict. In Scenario 2 (regressive), the Government’s ability to act as a worthwhile partner may diminish significantly. This would have major repercussions, including for the Coalition effort.

**Response:** In Scenario 1, focus on areas where sufficient traction is being demonstrated, probably linked to immediate stabilisation needs (FFIS, mine action). In Scenario 2, there would need to be an assessment of what remains viable given the actual governance situation and taking into account acute needs of local populations. These decisions would be taken in concert with the Coalition and other donors. Provided a minimum of operational space exists, urgent immediate stabilisation tasks should continue.

#### Scenario 1, 2 & 3 – risk of limited counterpart resources

*Across all scenarios, the conflict in Iraq will escalate as forces draw close to Mosul. This, coupled with the possibility that offensives against Da’esh take longer than expected, would cause significant setbacks to the GoI: a protracted conflict with will drain its capacity and resources. Low oil prices mean that the GoI is unable to lift its share of the financial burden. Short-termism reduces the sustainability and potential impact of inputs made.*

**Impact:** In the short term, Iraqi capacity to partner with the international community remains severely constrained; inter alia, that the GoI is unable to provide effective follow-on stabilisation support in liberated areas. This will increase pressure on the relatively scarce international resources (e.g. mine action and in the FFIS and FFES, the latter reflecting the difficulty that Iraq already has in meeting medium term stabilisation needs). In the mid-term, political, economic and sectarian factors may trigger the GoI’s collapse, and its replacement with a more rigid sectarian regime, prompting a decay into scenario 2, where the GoI’s resources and political will reduce further, making it an unreliable counterpart. In Scenario 3, the lack of resources may be temporary and will be matched by stronger political drive. This could make deeper reform efforts (e.g. SSR) relevant.

**Response:** The short term programmatic response will be to maintain Iraqi counterparts (such as the NOC) as close partners so that opportunities for Iraqi ownership and contributions are maintained. FFIS and mine action will remain relevant. Depending upon emerging needs, support to FFES or direct support governorates could be considered to cement progress made on immediate stabilisation. Long-term implications depend upon the nature of the GoI: a hostile government would have potentially deleterious consequences for support. Scenario 2 would require a review of this programme’s Iraq component, as would (partly) the progressive Scenario 3.

#### Scenario 1 & 2 –risk of contested control over liberated territory

*In liberated areas, particularly so-called “grey areas”, sectarian disputes over control of territory will arise if the GoI is unable to quickly assert its control. This will increase the risk of inadvertently doing harm. Whether this happens depends on whether Iraqi forces are able to reach and retake Mosul before PMU forces, the intention of Kurdish forces and the speed at which areas are declared free from UXOs and IEDs. There is a concern that the pace of military operations will outrun the capacity of civil stabilisation efforts to follow on – the extent of this depends upon the ability of UN and Iraqi stabilisation preparedness, the extent of damage, and the degree of UXO/IED contamination. Under scenario 2, control over contested areas will be progressively lost and/or further areas will be contested, especially Mosul.*

**Impact:** In the event that PMU forces reach Mosul first, the risks of reprisals against local communities will remain high. Separately, spontaneous returns to areas still regarded as hazardous risk harming populations. Without adequate capacity to provide services, returnees will lack livelihoods and basic services, both of which may lead to renewed cycles of instability. In Scenario 1, the government will be more or less able to manage these pressures (with international support – e.g. from FFIS). In Scenario 2, contested territory will exacerbate the existing political instability potentially having major down-stream negative effects (increased sectarianism).

**Response:** In Scenario 1, prioritise immediate stabilisation activities, in particular mine action, essential infrastructure (and the other FFIS windows) and community security. Ensure that engagements are carefully screened for conflict sensitivity on the basis of well-developed knowledge of the human terrain. In Scenario 2, review programme engagements in Iraq with other donors. It may be necessary to halt or suspend activities depending upon the extent of the security and political risks associated with diminishing control over territory.

#### Scenario 3 – Government makes gains against Da’esh and reforms

*In the progressive scenario 3, Da’esh is further pushed back and the Government stabilises and makes reforms. While not a risk, this development requires concrete responses by the programme.*

**Impact:** The effect of this on the programme will be to open up opportunities for greater Iraqi buy-in and faster progress on improving governance and immediate stabilisation issues.

**Response:** Capitalise on appetite to reform by supporting governance programmes (such as SSR) as well as FFIS and mine action, which will remain relevant in view of the extent of the needs. Ensure that there is full GoI buy-in and leadership, thereby increasing its de facto legitimacy.

# Annex A – Denmark’s contribution to Syria and Iraq

**International policy fora**

Denmark participates actively in the international policy fora that have been established in relation to the fight against Da’esh and other forms of support to Syria and Iraq. This includes the Global Coalition (see Annex B). Denmark participates in Coalition working groups at the political and technical level, including the Working Group on Stabilisation (WGS). Danish representatives also participate in coordination meetings amongst donors in Baghdad whenever possible.

With regard to Syria, Denmark follows closely the UN-led peace process under Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura as well as the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). Denmark belongs to a core group of countries engaged in stabilization in Syria, which include the UK, the USA and the Netherlands, who informally coordinate their efforts. In addition, Denmark is engaged with the activities of the Syria Recovery Trust Fund that seeks to pool and coordinate relief and recovery efforts among a broad group of donors committed to supporting opposition-held areas. Denmark is also involved in the on-going efforts - as a part of the London Conference follow-up - to strengthen coordination among international donor countries and UN agencies working on Syria.

**Military contribution**

Denmark’s current and past **military** contributions to the Coalition have included F-16 fighter aircraft (for use against ISIL/Da’esh over Iraq), staff contributions, training and capacity development, a C-130J transport aircraft and support staff, a radar unit and support staff, and support from the Danish Emergency Management Agency. The Building Partner Capacity (BCP) contribution is stationed at Al Asad airbase in Iraq and has so far trained over 4600 Iraqi soldiers in basic infantry tactics, counter-IED and international humanitarian law. Danish military personnel have previously also contributed to training around 600 Kurdish Pershmerga forces in northern Iraq.

In early March 2016, the Danish Government announced its intention to redeploy F-16 fighter aircraft for offensive as well as surveillance missions against Da’esh over both Syria and Iraq from mid-2016. The deployment will be accompanied by support personnel. In addition, Denmark will deploy a contingent comprising special operations forces for operations in both countries according to the situation, consent and Coalition specific requirements. Initial tasks will include to train, advise and assist selected Iraqi Forces. Denmark will also contribute a C130J transport aircraft for special operation air transport tasks in Iraq and Syria.

**Stabilisation and other civilian programmes**

Denmark has provided non-humanitarian support to help opposition actors in Syria since 2012. In 2014, it launched a transition programme for Syria to help advance democratic transition with a clear principle being the provision of support to the Syrian Interim Government and Syrian Opposition Coalition. With further changes in Syria, Danish priorities subsequently shifted to focus on the stabilization needs in opposition-held territory and the need to provide basic protection to local populations. This was reflected in the development of the Syria stabilization programme in 2015. This channels DDK 100M to support basic living necessities in local, opposition controlled areas, which will increase the communities ability to resist extremist influence.

In late 2015, a parallel one-year stabilization programme for Iraq was also launched through which DKK 32.5M will contribute to stabilizing Iraqi areas liberated from ISIL, to security sector reform, to strengthening participatory governance, and to independent media.

Other Danish support is provided to de-mining, to counter extremism, and to police training and advice:

* Denmark is the single largest contributor to the UN demining agency - UNMAS. Denmark has given a total of 30 M DKK to support UNMAS in 2015-2016 focussing on activities in Syria and Iraq.
* In February 2016, it was further decided to allocate DKK 28.5 million to the Coalition’s work on combating the inflow of foreign fighters, preventing extremism, stemming Da’esh’s money flow (where high level Danish expertise will be provided) and counteracting its propaganda, including a specific allocation to countering on-line propaganda.

Denmark is looking into deploying police capabilities to Iraq to support police leadership training programmes, where Denmark has specific experience and expertise from other similar missions. In addition, Denmark will deploy a senior strategic police advisor to Baghdad to strengthen training of Iraqi police and the long-term strategic efforts to reform the Iraqi police- and security sector. The latter offers synergies with Danish support to SSR provided through the 2015 stabilisation programme.

**Humanitarian contribution**

Denmark makes a substantial contribution to the humanitarian crisis caused by Da’esh and the other conflicts in Syria and Iraq. The humanitarian assistance is provided separately in addition to the contribution to countering Da’esh and to the stabilisation support. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, this has amounted to DKK 1,4 BN. The support is provided through a range of strategic partnerships with Danish NGOs and UN agencies and in relation to support to countries in the region to assist them to receive refugees, including Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey. In relation to the international humanitarian cooperation, Denmark is lead nation for the three year European Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP), 2014-2017 that seeks to promote protection and strengthen livelihoods for refugees and host communities in Lebanon, Jordan and northern Iraq – and is fully in line with the London Conference’s goal regarding linkages between humanitarian assistance and more long-term development. The Danish contribution is DKK 175M and includes participation from the EC, UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the Czech Republic. Also within a regional framework, Denmark has contributed DKK 75M to the EU’s regional trust fund for the Syria crisis (the Madad fund), which provides Syria’s neighbours with support in the areas of education, child protection, health, water, and livelihoods. Finally, since 2014 Denmark has been one of the co-chairs for the global “Solutions Alliance” that seeks solutions to the refugee crisis through linkages between development actors, the private sector, host governments and other actors.

1. Please note that in this document, Da’esh is used throughout to refer to the Islamic State also known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) and *ISIL*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Other terms for the SOC include the National Coalition (NC) and Etilaf. In this document the term SOC is used throughout. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Focused on the introduction and promotion of good governance in Syria by providing project grants to local communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Supporting the unarmed Free Syrian Police and civil registries to enhance local resilience and promote an alternative model of security provision to that provided by JaN / regime forces. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Enabling local communities to organise and respond to airstrikes and other emergencies. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Providing essential infrastructure and other support that helps build the resilience of communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Other instruments include UNSCR 2199(2015) concerning the need to stem the financing of Da’esh and other designated terrorist organisations (DTOs) in Syria and Iraq, and the UN General Assembly’s 2015 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. July 2015 Action Plan. The EU’s regional strategy for Syria and Iraq (of March 2015) emphasises the importance of stabilisation measures geared towards lasting stability in Syria and Iraq, and the importance of synergy between EU member states at the political and operational levels within the overall framework provided by recent UNSCRs. On 29 February 2016, the Stabilisation Working Group reinforced the Coalition’s supporting role to the Iraqi Government. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. UNDP’s SSR programme in Iraq is included here for the sake of completeness. Currently funded under the Iraq stabilisation programme until August 2017, a possible extension will be considered during the 2017 MTR, as per para 5.3.3 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Baytna’s thematic priorities include women’s empowerment, community engagement, media, rights, governance and youth. Grants provision is improving and field officers provide links with Syrian organisations and help strengthen proposals (main recipients are in Northern Syria). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Baytna’s Hub will continue to be based in Southern Turkey (Gaziantep) until such time as security conditions would enable its relocation into Syria. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The programme pulled out from Latakia following the virtual takeover of the governorate by SAA forces. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)