

Minutes from the meeting in the Council for Development Policy
on 14 September 2023

- Members: Professor Anne Mette Kjær, University of Aarhus (Chair)
Deputy CEO and International Director Jarl Krausing, CONCITO (Deputy Chair)
Director for Global Development and Sustainability Marie Gad Hansen, Confederation of Danish Industries (DI) (agenda items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
Political Consultant and Project Officer of DAPP Lucas Højbjerg, The Danish Chamber of Commerce
Senior Researcher Adam Moe Fejerskov, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)
Secretary General Charlotte Slente, Danish Refugee Council (DFC)
Director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, Danish Foreign Policy Society
Chief Advisor Mattias Söderberg, DanChurchAid
- MFA: Under-Secretary for Development Policy Ole Thonke
Head of Department Ketil Karlsen, Department for Africa, Policy and Development, APD (agenda items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
Deputy Head of Department Henrik Larsen, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
Chief Advisor Anette Aarestrup, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
Head of Section Caroline Busk Ullerup, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK
- Agenda item 2: Head of Mission Steen Sonne Andersen (Online)
Deputy Head of Mission Gertrud Birk, Embassy in Somalia (Online)
Chief Advisor Mathias Daniel Hassing Kjær, Embassy in Somalia (Online)
Team leader Josefine Jesta Lilja Jensen, Embassy in Somalia (Online)
Special Advisor Marianne Vestergaard, Embassy in Somalia (Online)
- Agenda item 3: Head of Department Karin Poulsen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Head of Department Anne Hougaard Jensen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Chief Advisor and Team leader Merete Villum Pedersen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Chief Advisor Charlotte Laursen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Head of Section Lone Bøge Jensen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
- Agenda item 4: Head of Department Karin Poulsen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Chief Advisor Charlotte Laursen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Head of Department Hanne Findsen, Ministry of the Interior and Health

Chief Advisor Trine Bargsteen, Ministry of the Interior and Health

Agenda item 5: Head of Department Anne Hougaard Jensen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Chief Advisor and Team leader Merete Villum Pedersen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Head of Section Lone Bøge Jensen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Head of Department Ole Emmik Sørensen, Danish Energy Agency

Agenda item 6: Head of Department Karin Poulsen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Chief Advisor and Team leader Merete Villum Pedersen, Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK
Director of Communication and Sales Carsten Ulrik Zangenberg, Statistics Denmark
Head of Division Mikael Skovbo, DST Consulting, Statistics Denmark
Team leader and Senior Advisor Linnea Lue Kessing, Consulting Abroad, Statistics Denmark

Agenda item 7: Head of Department Marie-Louise Koch Wegter, Department for Multilateral Cooperation
Chief Advisor Rikke Enggaard Olsen, Department for Multilateral Cooperation
Chief Advisor Eva Brandt Broegaard, Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK

Agenda Item No. 1: Announcements

The Chair of the Council welcomed Under-Secretary for Development Policy Ole Thonke to his first Council meeting in his new capacity.

The Under-Secretary gave an introduction to his own background and briefed the Council on the recent visits to Kenya of first the Minister for Foreign Affairs and secondly the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy in connection with the Africa Climate Summit.

Furthermore, the Under-Secretary informed the Council about the planned restructuring of the development cooperation with Niger. The bilateral development programme had been suspended after the coup on 26 July, but it was the intention to continue a Danish engagement to support the population of Niger, but without the involvement of central government agencies. How exactly the programme would be adjusted still depended on gaining more clarity on the political developments in the country but there would be a focus on being able to continue important and needed activities in the water sector.

The Under-Secretary then briefed the Council on the status of the Finance Bill for 2024, which was now undergoing political negotiations. The Bill reserved DKK 23 billion for development cooperation in 2024 with four main tracks, namely climate/green priorities, Africa, Ukraine/Eastern neighbourhood, and irregular migration. The next meeting of the Council would include a more in-depth presentation and discussion of the Finance Bill.

The Head of Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate briefly introduced a list of GDK-led projects below DKK 39 million which accompanied an earlier list of projects above DKK 39 million. The list represented projects totalling DKK 9.5 billion. Some of the instruments, such as the Danida Market Development Programme (DMDP) were being phased out. 28 of the projects on the list were in a process of being closed while the last section of the list consisted of consultancy contracts. It was agreed to have a discussion regarding the two lists at one of the coming meetings of the Council, not least with a view to discussing the reflections arising out of the effort of drafting this very useful overview.

With reference to the Rules of Procedure for the Council for Development Policy, the Chair of the Council asked if members had any conflicts of interest related to the agenda items. There were no conflicts of interest.

Agenda Item No. 2: Somalia Strategic Framework 2024-2028

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 1.1 billion (exact amount to be confirmed)

The Embassy in Mogadishu

Summary:

The Strategic Framework for Somalia 2024-2028 covers the full extent of political priorities for the Danish engagement with Somalia and is a result of a consultation process with relevant MFA units, Somali government counterparts, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs). Somalia remains a volatile and unpredictable context characterised by instability, political crises, lack of resilience and with reoccurring humanitarian crises related to climate change and conflict. The bilateral country program will be rooted in three strategic objectives: (1) adaptation to climate change through increased and equitable access to resources and enabling inclusive and green growth, (2) promoting peace-building, state-building and human rights, and (3) strengthening resilience and addressing displacement and migration.

<i>The Council for Development Policy recommended the Strategic Framework for Somalia 2024-2028 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.</i>

The Council commended the Embassy for a well-written and comprehensive draft framework document. The Council further acknowledged the high level of ambition expressed in the framework, but also strongly encouraged the Embassy to be more clear and focused on priorities, not least given the restrictions present on the ground. While recognising the relevance of the strategic objectives, the Council questioned whether the framework was overly ambitious, and whether it might be more feasible to focus on fewer objectives. Members of the Council also enquired whether all strategic objectives were to be implemented in all parts of the country or if some parts of the programme would be reserved for Somaliland, where conditions were more stable.

Members of the Council raised questions regarding the approach to engagement in a fragile context like Somalia and wanted to know how partners and modalities would be chosen and how risks would be mitigated. There was a general recognition that working through multilateral partners in many cases was the most viable option in Somalia, but the Council recommended the embassy to have a clear strategy for when to engage with different types of partners, taking into consideration both partner capabilities in combination with the unpredictable context. Council members encouraged the Embassy to take into consideration the soon-to-be published ‘multi-bi evaluation’, which among other things concluded that working through multilateral organisations, while this is often the best option in very fragile contexts, also brings with it the risk of implementing standard solutions and often requires more administrative capacity on the Embassy side than anticipated.

Council members wanted to know if and how consultations had been part of the process of drafting the strategic framework.

Focusing on green growth and nature-based solutions in an effort to support climate adaptation was welcomed by members of the Council, but it was also recommended to remain vigilant to the risk of failure to adjust these ambitions adequately to the context and to recognise the risk for maladaptation. Involvement in renewables such as offshore wind was regarded as risky in a fragile context, but was welcomed as an innovative approach, also in terms of stimulating private sector development. Members of the Council also underscored the importance of working with the private sector and focus on job creation, and wanted to know whether this was to be done together with other development partners. The importance of working with legitimate representatives of the private sector was emphasised.

Members of the Council stressed the relevance of the third strategic objective prioritising resilience and the HDP-nexus, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and urbanisation as well as gender equality and women’s rights. In this regard it was emphasised that it would be useful to gain a greater understanding of specific humanitarian engagements where the HDP-nexus could be applied.

Members of the Council also enquired about the political dialogue with Somalia, how the Danish-Somali foreign policy priorities aligned, and whether Danish support could help the Somali government fulfil the population’s needs, i.e. governance gaps in areas won over from Al-Shabaab, and thereby help diminish this space for Al-Shabaab. The strengthened focus on support to civil society was well noted.

Finally, members of the Council pointed out that the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation “The World We Share” was not referenced in the document.

The Ambassador to Somalia thanked the Council for constructive comments.

On political dialogue with Somalia, the Ambassador informed that this had improved over the last year, since the new President Hassan Sheikh had been elected, and would continue to play a key role in terms of delivering on the ambitions of the strategic framework, both on the stabilisation side as well as the development side. The strategic framework encompassed both the bilateral development programme and engagements in Somalia under the new Peace and

Stabilisation Programme for the Horn of Africa which had been approved in May 2023. It was emphasised that political power was not centralised in Somalia, and it was therefore important to also invest in the federal levels of government. Following the government's success in regaining control over areas previously controlled by Al-Shabaab, there was now also a need to ensure basic security and services in these areas.

The Ambassador informed about the extensive consultation process that had taken place both in Somalia and in Denmark regarding the strategic framework. Embarking on the formulation process of the bilateral programme, there would be additional close engagement with partners and the Somali Government.

The Ambassador agreed that the level of ambition in the strategy was relatively high, and there would be a need to ensure flexibility to be able to adapt the programme to adjust to unforeseen development and different risk scenarios, for instance by replacing partners and instruments. From the scenarios presented in the strategy, maintaining the current fragile status quo was considered to be the most positive one.

With regard to the choice of partners, the Ambassador emphasised that a mix of partners and implementation modalities would likely be chosen, also to ensure robustness of the overall programme in case of negative developments. The Embassy had good experience working with multilateral partners, but joint mechanisms such as the Joint UN Programme on Local Governance (JPLG) and some other joint funds had proven less effective in a Somali context. Given the fragility of Somalia, it was essential to secure suitable implementing partners, especially in the south of Somalia, where conflict restricted access. In Puntland and Somaliland, where there were more security and easier access, Denmark could have a stronger presence on the ground and would be able to engage in other project modalities. Findings and recommendations from the soon-to-be published multi-bi evaluation would also be taken into consideration in the programming.

With regard to the focus on climate, the Ambassador underlined that in Somalia this was purely an adaptation and resilience agenda. The most important priority was to enable Somalia to exit the vicious cycle of only addressing short-term humanitarian needs. Developing engagements in the Humanitarian Development Peace nexus was of crucial importance. The immediate plan included a significant focus on water and on greening existing partnerships.

Finally, the Ambassador pointed out that the lack of reference to the Danish strategy for development cooperation "The World We Share" was a mistake that would be corrected.

The Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended the Strategic Framework for Somalia 2024-2028 for approval by the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

Agenda Item No. 3: General discussion of Strategic Sector Cooperation

For discussion

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Introduction:

The Council had requested a general discussion on Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC). The Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) had circulated a slide deck to all Council members to inform and stimulate the discussion prior to the meeting. This provided a basic introduction to SSC, including its history, its political and strategic framework, its structure and guidelines, objectives and outcomes, past evaluation etc. Furthermore, it zoomed in on the Council's key areas of interest, judging from past discussions, namely poverty orientation, country selection, and involvement of the Danish private sector and solutions.

The Head of GDK welcomed the opportunity to have a general discussion of the SSC instrument. She introduced the discussion by underlining the relatively young age of the SSC instrument, its demand driven nature, the continued development of the instrument including the recent introduction of framework agreements, emphasising that the individual SSC projects under the framework agreements were still small. The SSC evaluation in 2020 had been positive. In order to continue learning, the Head of GDK welcomed the future launch of thematic reviews. A revision of the SSC guidelines was scheduled in the coming months. The Head of GDK emphasised the strong political buy-in to the instrument and explained that the Government was planning an increased use of the instrument, bringing in more countries and more authorities, but also deepening the cooperation. The SSC instrument's unique characteristic of equality between partners through peer-to-peer cooperation was considered a valuable feature in a challenging geopolitical context. With respect to country selection, the Government had from the onset primarily targeted the SSC-instrument to countries in the higher end of the OECD-DAC list. The instrument was less suitable for fragile contexts due to the capacity required to enter into peer-to-peer cooperation with Danish authorities. More African countries would be offered strategic sector cooperation in the future. However, the Government also expected an increased use in, for example, Latin America. In response to concerns raised earlier by the Council, the Head of GDK explained that the first of the SSC instrument's three objectives - *capacity development* - remains the primary objective, while the two other objectives followed from this. She also explained that the SSCs applied a multi-dimensional poverty concept in line with MFA guidelines and adhered to do-no-harm principles.

The Council appreciated the presentation. Members of the Council encouraged an even more honest narrative and discussion of the strategic use of the SSC instrument vis-à-vis other instruments. Political and strategic honesty was important when considering an instrument like this, which was also part of the broader foreign policy toolbox. With the changing geopolitical situation and changing expectations from partner countries, it was timely to have such a discussion. While members of the Council acknowledged that the instrument did contain a poverty element and that it was effective in delivering results given the relatively small size of the SSC projects, the Council pondered whether the instrument as constructed was a diplomatic instrument or a development instrument.

Members of the Council highlighted that the aim of the SSC had to be systemic transformative change, both in emerging growth countries and in Africa. Doing Development Differently (DDD) was an important principle for achieving this. The posted sector counsellors at the

embassies were crucial for results. Members of the Council found that the current focus on framework conditions was good but could still be refined. It was advised to have even more attention on transformation of markets, value chains, and societal competences and qualifications, while underlining that the SSC instrument was not an export promotion programme. Council members also stressed the importance of framework conditions for private sector driven growth and poverty reduction and argued that current activities in relation to private sector engagement could be strengthened substantially through more dialogue with the private sector. There was also room for more involvement of the local business environment and stakeholders.

Members of the Council pointed to the fact that geopolitical competition had shifted its focus from poor countries to middle-income countries (MICs) at the expense of the poorest. The current global context, including in Africa, was one of competition for resources, including scarce development cooperation budgets. With an instrument targeting more wealthy countries in Africa, the risk was to add to this distortion. In this context members of the Council questioned the funding of an instrument as SSC from the development cooperation budget and asked for alternative financing options.

The Council asked for confirmation of the actual partner-country demand for the sector cooperation, and the actual impact and change in a broader context. Members of the Council questioned the ability of the SSC to create maximum impact as attending to three objectives risked blurring the programme design. They also stressed that designs should reflect the multidimensional poverty concept.

The Council agreed to capacity development as the primary objective, but expressed concerns about whether capacity development could be achieved in the timeframe of a SSC and with the relatively limited number of person-months involved in each SSC (on average 18 months). Members expressed doubts about the overall volume of the SSC instrument and questioned the number of sectors/authorities it would be conducive to bring in going forward. They also asked about the synergy with other development cooperation instruments at country level, including in countries with country programmes.

Reflecting on the many-faceted discussion, members of the council termed the SSC a curious instrument because of its multiple purposes. They emphasised that genuine ownership and partnership required more than merely a request for cooperation and that capacity development takes time and understanding of the local context, referring to past sector cooperation and Danida long-term advisors. They referenced the International Development Cooperation Act and emphasised that as long as funding of the SSC instrument came from the development cooperation budget, poverty should be reflected in analyses and programme design.

The Head of GDK emphasised that the SSC instrument aimed to change framework conditions. It was not an export promotion instrument and the reason why the instrument was a prominent part of the Foreign and Security Strategy was due to its characteristic of equality between partners. She considered it a strength that the same instrument could add value to more purposes but stressed that the SSC was a development cooperation instrument. A total timeframe of 10 years for a SSC-project was in her opinion suitable for a capacity development effort. She then used Kenya as an example of good cooperation between the SSC and other development instruments.

The Head of GDK suggested a thematic review some years from now to look into impact. Finally, she explained that the demand-driven approach to SSC should be two-sided, both from the country and from a Danish Authority. It was a matter of matchmaking. Prior to entering into SSC, the Danish Authorities were requested to prepare a strategy for international cooperation and identify their international strengths.

The Under-Secretary for Development Policy emphasised that poverty was a must when using development cooperation funds. It was also part of quality assurance to confirm this. He then outlined his personal experience with SSC in Kenya which was very positive, while not being a relevant instrument for Somalia due to the lack of basic institutional absorption capacity. He provided examples of the synergies between country programmes and SSC. The Under-Secretary invited the Council to visit SSCs in Kenya during their upcoming trip. He clarified that all of the SSCs were DAC'able, which also meant that when a country graduated out of the DAC-list, no more funding could be provided from the development cooperation budget.

The Chair of the Council found the discussion very useful and concluded that the presentation and discussion had been covering a wide range of angles and issues of SSC. While there were strengths to SSC, there were also concerns, primarily with regard to poverty orientation, the reflection of poverty in results frameworks and the selection of countries. Capacity development had been a particular strength in Danish development cooperation and it was important to draw lessons from this long experience, not least the lesson that capacity development demanded an abundance of time and resources. The discussion had moved the issue forward in terms of future presentations to the Council of SSC Framework Programmes. Finally, the Chairman looked forward to a future thematic review, hopefully within the coming year or two.

Agenda Item No. 4: Framework Programme for the Strategic Sector Cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and Health (2023-2027)

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 60 million

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Summary:

The Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) Framework Programme with the Ministry of the Interior and Health (ISM) was presented to the Council for Development Policy at its meeting on 22 June 2023. At that time, the Council for Development Policy requested adjustments to the Framework Programme Document and resubmission of the Framework for renewed consideration and recommendation. In accordance, the Council had received a revised Framework Programme Document prior to this meeting.

The Framework Programme adhered to the concept of the Strategic Sector Cooperation 2.0. The health sector cooperation with the five countries (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and Vietnam) aimed to enable partner countries to increasingly ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all in three thematic areas: i) Coherent, efficient and quality healthcare services for non-communicable diseases, ii) regulation of pharmaceuticals and medical devices, and iii) combatting health threats from infectious diseases and AMR.

The Council recommended the Framework Programme on Health for approval by the Minister of Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

The Chair of the Council welcomed the opportunity for a discussion of the revised Framework Programme Document. She reminded Council members that the Council specifically had requested further detailing within three areas: 1) poverty and reflection of poverty in the results framework, 2) criteria for selection of new countries, and 3) better explanation of the focus on non-communicable diseases (NCD).

Council members recognised the adjustments made to the Framework Programme Document since the Council's meeting in June. Members referred to the three areas of concern as well as concerns with respect to the Theory of Change and enquired to what extent the rewording in the document within the areas of concern would be reflected in a similar revision of the activities in the programme design as well as how the Strategic Sector Cooperations (SSCs) would create poverty reduction related results at country level. They questioned the burden of NCDs in developing countries and in this context asked for clarification of the criteria for country selection. Members of the Council also enquired if a specific African country had been identified for future cooperation. Finally, a member of the Council expressed hope for more dialogue with Danish business organisations.

Members of the Council recognised that NCD could become more relevant as developing countries graduated to higher income levels, but nevertheless stressed that in poorer countries, waterborne diseases and maternal and child health were serious health issues. They also reflected on the criteria for country selection, suggesting the term 'low-income countries' to replace the term developing countries, as the latter was much broader and could allow for middle income countries to be selected. Council members stressed that the multidimensional poverty concept should be reflected in the results framework.

The Head of GDK emphasised that the Council's three areas of concern were addressed in the revised document. She also explained that the content of the programme was based on the health sector expertise of the Ministry of Interior and Health (ISM) and was the result of a match between Danish core strengths and the need and demand in the selected partner countries.

The Head of Department, ISM underlined that the starting point for any cooperation would be the health challenges in the partner country matched with Danish experience and strengths. Referring to the Council's request for a stronger focus on poverty reduction and with reference to the multidimensional approach to poverty she explained that going forward, the Ministry would increase its focus on equal access to health. It would be the overall principle within the framework's different focus areas and in the SSCs at country level. Emphasis would be on primary health. She explained that SSC projects under the framework were ongoing. Looking ahead, a poverty analysis would be part of formulating new phases.

To the question of country selection, the Head of Department from ISM informed that no new countries had been selected. She also confirmed that Africa was a priority for future projects. Selection of a new country would require thorough analysis and matchmaking.

With respect to NCDs, the Head of Department, ISM referred to WHO, which had concluded that NCDs were already a heavy health burden for many developing countries. A focus on development of primary health care matched Danish knowledge and experience. As an example, she highlighted the SSC in China and specifically its focus on mental health and prevention of

stigma with special attention on telehealth and access to treatment in underserved areas. The Head of Department, ISM also stressed that inclusion of commercial activities was not the primary purpose of the Framework Programme. However, she hoped the SSCs would lead to increased commercial cooperation as a derivative effect.

Finally, Members of the Council enquired on the possibility for the Council to follow how the principle of equal access would be translated into programme activities, also referring back to the earlier general discussion of the SSC instrument and its poverty orientation. The relevance of a thematic review was reiterated.

In reply, the Head of GDK stressed the balance in terms of how close the Council should get involved in programme implementation. Instead, a thematic review of the SSC envelope at large would be useful.

The Chair of the Council recapped the Council's recommendation for a thematic review of the SSC instrument. She emphasised that the Council would maintain a specific focus on how poverty orientation would be reflected in SSC designs and in the practical implementation of the SSCs. The Council's recommendation of the Framework Programme for approval by the minister was provided with its poverty focus as a point of observation.

The Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended the Framework Programme on Health for approval by the Minister of Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

Agenda Item No. 5: Orientation about the Framework Programme on the Strategic Sector Cooperation with the Ministry for Climate, Energy and Utilities 2023-2027

For information and discussion

(The Council recommended the grant for approval on 1 June 2023)

Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate, GDK

Summary: The Council for Development Policy recommended the Framework Programme of the Ministry of Climate, Energy, and Utilities (MCEU) for the Minister's approval on 1 June 2023 under the condition that changes would be made to the result framework in order to reflect the broader development objective of the programme in the form of indicators on poverty orientation and specific development results. The council requested to see the programme again within six months. Following the meeting of the Council, the result framework was changed and the Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy approved the programme on 21 July 2023.

The Framework Programme for strategic sector cooperation with MCEU presently covered Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSCs) in seven countries: Egypt, Turkey, China, Kenya, Brazil, Colombia and Ghana. The aim of the Framework Programme was to strengthen framework conditions and institutional capacity of partner countries to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation and resilience through green transition of the energy sector and use of advanced meteorological modelling and early warning systems.

The Council appreciated the changes made to the result framework, which had made the poverty and development focus more clear. Members of the Council, however, found the term 'just and inclusive' vague. Hence, the operationalisation of this term in the design of the individual SSCs should clarify how poverty and, for example access to energy, improved because of the programme. The Council welcomed the ambition to cooperate more with other MFA

development instruments going forward, but found the presentation short of details with respect to where and how this cooperation would take place and what kind of other development instruments were envisaged for coordination at country level. The logic of the results framework needed to be consolidated in order to justify the expected impact on poverty. The Council recommended strengthening the relation between immediate and long-term objectives, also stressing that the cause and effect chain should be coherent. The theory of change could not rely on the efforts of external partners to the programme for creating impact. Members of the Council finally emphasised that demonstration of impact should be part of a future thematic review.

Members of the Council asked if DEA pursued linking the SSCs to the development of investable projects within the energy sector in the countries where they operated.

The Head of GDK explained that the results framework would account for the accumulated results from the individual country SSCs and that it would be at the output level in the individual SSCs, that the actual activities in support of poverty reduction would be formulated and monitored. Resources would be set aside for analyses that could strengthen the poverty focus of the SSCs. In collaboration with the Danish embassies, efforts to reach out and coordinate with other development actors would be intensified. Going forward, more emphasis would be provided towards direct poverty reduction, the rights based approach, and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The Head of Department from the Danish Energy Agency (DEA) expressed his appreciation that the Council found poverty better explained in the results framework and referenced a short DEA approach paper to poverty prepared with support from the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK). He explained that DEA's expertise was to integrate solar and wind power on the grid. In a situation with no power or limited power supply, the poor population suffered the most. More and cheaper (green) power benefitted the poor people's access to energy. The Head of Department, DEA gave as an example the need to work with indigenous populations in Colombia, as a transmission line from an offshore windfarm would pass through the rainforest. Finally, he mentioned that Denmark was not specialised in small, decentralised solar installations. Others were in a better position to work on this.

On linking SSCs to investable projects the Head of Department, DEA and the Chief Advisor from GDK clarified that DEA was focusing on its peer-to-peer authority cooperation and referred to the investment advisors at some Danish embassies. However, DEA did support tender processes for energy investments as part of the peer-to-peer cooperation.

The Chair of the Council thanked DEA for following-up on the Council's recommendations and expressed the Council's interest in following the projects in the future.

Agenda Item No. 6: Framework Programme for the Strategic Sector Cooperation with Statistics Denmark

For discussion and recommendation to the Minister

DKK 46.9 million

The Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK)

Summary:

The Framework Programme under Statistics Denmark covers the period 2024-2027. It encompasses Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) projects in Ghana, Morocco and Vietnam, and a new still to be selected fourth country. The programme generally aligns with Danish development policy and complies with the SSC, Mynsam 2.0, and Aid Management Guidelines. While fully grounded in international UN frameworks on statistics, it supports partner countries' statistical systems and national statistical office (NSO) capacity development, enabling an evidence based, just, and green transition.

The Council for Development Policy recommended the Framework Programme with Statistics Denmark for approval by the Minister of Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy

Members of the Council found the Framework Programme highly relevant and important for several purposes, including SDG implementation and monitoring, EU taxonomy and due diligence regulation, evidence-based policy making, and for general provision of data in the selected countries. The Council acknowledged that indirectly the programme could benefit the poor, but asked for a clearer presentation of the programme's poverty orientation. Members of the Council requested more information about the choice of countries and sectors, and asked for more information about the capacity and commitment of partner institutions to sustain results.

Members of the Council also emphasised the political risk of data collection and enquired about data protection and data minimalism especially with a view to possible human rights issues. Members requested information on how to ensure that improved data and statistics would actually be used for policy making. Reflecting on the fact that statistical offices may not have a prominent position in government structures, Members of the Council questioned if building technical capacity was necessarily sufficient to bring about change in the use of data and statistics for policy making or whether political and institutional changes were also required. The question being if the programme was based on the assumption that improved data and statistics in itself would make the statistical offices more trusted and influential, and if so whether this was a realistic assumption. Members also enquired whether the somewhat modest number of person-months allocated to the programme could bring about the expected changes or whether the level of ambition was too high.

Council members asked about the current experience of Statistics Denmark with regard to obtaining data in general and administrative data in particular, not least in challenging developing country contexts where data was often not computer based, nor digitalised. Members further asked for an elaboration of considerations on the use of data surveys via-a-vis registers. A clarification of the Rio marker indicating 100% green was also requested.

Finally, members of the Council raised concerns about the inclusion of a fourth country in the programme given the capacity needed to deliver on the ambitions for the currently selected three

countries. If a fourth country was included, concerns were raised with regard to countries with challenging human rights situations and with a negative record in terms of a lack of protecting person-sensitive data.

The Head of Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) thanked the Council for the questions and comments and gave the floor to Statistics Denmark (DST). The Director of Communication and Sales, DST explained that the programme operated with a multidimensional approach to poverty, highlighting that data could encompass all types of sectoral information. The Head of Division, DST Consulting shared an example from Ghana where the launch of a digital and open access statistical databank provided decisions makers, NGO's and the public at large with statistics. The Director of Communication and Sales, DST shared the concern about the state of and access to data in developing countries and explained that the programme would work with both survey-based data and administrative data and the combination of the two. Thus, the Director of Communication and Sales, DST assured the Council that data security was essential to the programme and that data security was an embedded element of all capacity development efforts. The approval of an IT strategy in Morocco was given as an example of a concrete result in this regard, where the partner country had delayed the approval of the strategy to integrate new approaches to data security. DST explained that the purpose of a statistical institution was not in itself to have political influence, but rather to ensure a common ground where policies and development projects were based on statistical facts, thus an "enabling of the enabler" approach. Director of Communication and Sales, DST emphasised that sensitivity of data in different country contexts would also be an important consideration when selecting a fourth country.

Chief Advisor and Team leader from The Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) explained the reasons behind the selection of the existing partner countries. The budget and resources set aside by DST to the projects/countries were carefully calibrated, also in a reflection of the modest absorption capacity of the national statistical institutions. DST had made a strategic prioritisation to expand its SSC work, building on extensive experience from EU-Twinning projects, and it was argued that DST had the capacity to engage with a fourth partner country. DST had not yet progressed on the selection of a fourth country and would, in collaboration with the MFA, take note of the Council's observation. Finally, it was informed that the programme was deemed 100% green, due to its green national accounting "principal" objective.

With the comments in mind, the Chair of the Council concluded that the Council recommended the Framework Programme of Statistics Denmark for approval by the Minister of Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

Agenda Item No. 7: Orientation about the Evaluation of Danida multi-bi interventions (2013-2019)

For information and discussion

The Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality, ELK, and the Department for Multilateral Cooperation, MUS

Summary:

Upon request from the Council for Development Policy, the forthcoming evaluation of Danida multi-bi interventions at country level was presented by the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK).

Emphasis was on key evaluation findings regarding the rationale behind and experience with the use of multi-bi support, including the assessment that effectiveness varies, and that a good match between the multilateral partner and Danida is crucial, to render hard earmarking unnecessary and limit the resources required for management and follow-up for staff at the Danish embassies. Further, the Department for Multilateral Cooperation (MUS) presented planned follow up to the recommendations of the evaluation. The council discussed the implications of the evaluation findings and recommendations, and expressed an interest in following any subsequent related evaluation work, including the coming joint Nordic evaluation on support to trust funds.

Chief Advisor from the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) presented key findings and conclusions from the evaluation of Danida multi-bi interventions. While the evaluation concluded that Danish multi-bi support overall was seen as relevant at the strategic level, a range of trade-offs and challenges needed to be considered. The Head of Department for Multilateral Cooperation (MUS) informed that the MFA had accepted all of the evaluation's recommendations and presented the concrete responses to these recommendations, including plans to formulate a two-year action plan to guide follow-up efforts.

Members of the Council noted that the evaluation's findings pointed to a need to programme a significant share of the Danish development aid portfolio differently, and emphasised that issues such as varying degrees of effectiveness on the ground, transaction costs and overheads were important to consider. The need for monitoring and evaluation of these programmes was emphasised. On the evaluation's recommendation to avoid small Danida-only and hard-output and activity level earmarking, Members of the Council emphasised that in addition to rarely producing desired results, this modality also had institutional consequences for UN-partners, whose mandate-delivery was challenged by decreasing levels of core funding. Thus, the incentive structures and layers of overheads given in multi-bi should be kept in mind when considering this type of support. It was further remarked that multi-bi can be an impactful aid modality if due consideration was given to issues such as operational costs, strategic alignment and local ownership. In closing, it was found that aid modality choices should be thoroughly discussed and informed by assessment of own and partner capacities as well as the value added in the given context.

The Head of MUS responded that the evaluation and its recommendations would inform Denmark's integrated approach to development partnerships with multilateral organisations both at central and at embassy level. The Under-Secretary for Development Policy underlined the importance of learning and follow-up on the evaluation's recommendations.

Agenda Item No. 8: Any Other Business

No issues were raised under this agenda item.