

Annex J The policy context

To assess relevance, effectiveness and efficiency the evaluation used the policy context of Denmark (Danida) as well as Afghanistan as a baseline. This annex outlines the different elements of Danish, international, and Afghan policies and strategies that served as a basis for the evaluation.

J.1 Danish policy context relevant to ROI in Afghanistan

The Danish policy context relevant to ROI in Afghanistan can be divided into four sets of documents:

- International commitments by the Government of Denmark
- Overall Danida policies related to development and Afghanistan
- The ROI Strategic Framework
- Programme management guidelines

J.2 International commitments

The Danish policies are aligned to UN and OECD/DAC conventions, policies and principles, which the ROI activities should relate to. Most relevant to this evaluation are:

The **UN Convention Plus** coordinated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The convention is a policy initiative, one aspect of which was the development of a Framework for Durable Solutions. This framework was an inspiration for the ROI. Of particular relevance is Denmark's engagement as a facilitating state in promoting self-reliance of refugees and returnees and the facilitation of local integration in areas of return. The UN Declarations and Conventions aimed at protecting women as well as vulnerable groups and ensuring human rights including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW). Equally important to this context is UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the resolutions following up to this such as 1261 and 1265, which emphasise women's participation in decision-making in development and reconstruction efforts as well as respecting the needs of women and girls in refugee camps and humanitarian emergencies.

The OECD/DAC Aid Effectiveness principles as expressed in the **Paris Declaration** and the **Accra Agenda for Action** emphasising ownership of recipients, alignment with policies as well as systems and procedures of recipient governments (thus the Government of Afghanistan) and institutions as well as harmonisation, mutual accountability (including predictability of funding) and managing for results. The humanitarian counterpart to the Paris Declaration is the **Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship**. These principles reaffirm commitment to the UN human rights instruments and reemphasise involvement of beneficiaries in design and implementation of interventions **and the need to focus on interventions supportive of long-term development. It furthermore introduces the principle of neutrality of humanitarian interventions. The evaluation team** will also give equal weight to the **OECD/DAC Principles for Engagement in Fragile States**.

Common to all of these policies and norms is the emphasis on local ownership and involvement of beneficiaries in decision-making as well as the protection and rights of recipients.

J.3 Overall Danida development policies and policies related to Afghanistan

The ROI will first be assessed against the ROI strategic framework, and then against the relevant Danish Development Policies. At the time of the formulation of the ROI Afghanistan Phase 2 programme, the Danish support was guided by the Danida Partnership 2000 strategy. The emphasis of the strategy was on poverty reduction and sustainable development. A key element in the policy is the emphasis on designing assistance based on partner policies and priorities. The strategy was developed prior to the ROI policy. The evaluation will assess relevance of the ROI intervention in accordance with this policy, but will work on lessons learned and recommendations for the future based on the new policy: 'Freedom from Poverty – Freedom to Change'. This strategy replaced the Partnership 2000 strategy in July 2010 and was thus published after the current ROI phase in Afghanistan was formulated.

The new strategy has five priority areas, including:

- Growth and employment
- Freedom, democracy and human rights
- Gender equality
- Stability and fragility (ROI is part of this priority area)
- Environment and climate

In terms of modalities, the strategy emphasises:

- Development engagement on partnerships with actors who can and wish to create change
- Strengthening international cooperation on global challenges and the international division of labour
- Strengthening the EU's role as an actor in development cooperation
- Ensuring better results through more focused and effective development cooperation
- Strengthening the coherence between policy areas and instruments for the benefit of development

The ROI is also linked to the Danish Strategy for Humanitarian Action 2010-15. The strategy is focused on the principles of humanitarian action, including humanity with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population, as well as neutrality, impartiality and independence. With the Humanitarian Strategy Denmark is committed to assist, protect and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable during crisis by addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability through building better links between relief and development (such as ROI) and prioritising women's empowerment and risk reduction as key instruments for vulnerability reduction.

Unlike the current Danida Development Strategy, the current Danish strategy for Afghanistan (Denmark's Engagement in Afghanistan 2008-12) was formulated well in advance of the current ROI Afghanistan programme. The overall objective outlined in the policy focuses on enhanced security as well state-building aimed at democratic development and respect for human rights. In addition to governance, key sectors of intervention include education and growth, and employment for women and men aligned with the overall Danida Development Strategy. For assistance to returning refugees the strategy identifies the need for shelter as well as the need for addressing potential conflicts over access to resources in areas of return.

J.4 The ROI Strategic Framework

The Regions of Origin Initiative has been developed based on the UNHCR Framework for Durable Solutions with enhanced emphasis on protection of refugees as well as IDPs. While refugees and IDPs are the main beneficiary group, support is also provided to host communities to mitigate conflict and provide opportunities for safe temporary shelter and/or return of refugees and IDPs.

Durability is a key element in the support, which is provided in the grey area between humanitarian and development assistance (the strategic framework expresses the need to move towards ‘a participative development approach’). Types of support include interventions with a longer-term perspective such as education and vocational training for refugees to enable them to become agents of change when they return to their place of origin (enabling a dignified return); agricultural support to enable returnees to sustain their livelihoods over time (self-reliance); or support to veterinary or health services to host communities and IDPs or returnees (integration). There is great emphasis on the issue of protection. Human rights and protection are cross-thematic elements throughout the framework.

The support is supposed to be provided with a Whole of Government perspective with complementarity between the ROI assistance as well as related instruments used by the Government of Denmark, including humanitarian assistance, development assistance, assistance under the Global Frame, as well as military and diplomatic efforts.

The support is aimed at a safe return for the refugees and IDPs to their region of origin. It is supposed to be a flexible mechanism used to link humanitarian and development assistance.

The strategic framework is aligned with Danish, UN and OECD/DAC policies emphasising context-specific interventions with a high degree of local ownership.

J.5 Guidelines for programme management

The ROI Afghanistan Phase 2 programme was formulated based on the 2008 ROI Initiative Programme Management note. The note was built on the Danida Aid Management Guidelines, but included a number of exceptions to enable a greater degree of flexibility in the application of the ROI. These, among others, included a predefinition of organisations that could receive ROI funding without a Danida appraisal.

With the launch the current (2009) Danida Guidelines for Programme Management, ROI was included in the overall Danida Guidelines for Programme Management. These reemphasised the need for alignment with recipient governments and institutions (policy and systems and procedures). It is the evaluation team’s understanding that the programmes are still formulated based on a mixed application of the 2008 ROI programme management note and the Danida overall Guidelines of Programme Management. New Guidelines for Programme Management are expected to be launched in September 2011.

The evaluation used past guidelines to assess relevance and efficiency at the time of formulation, and new guidelines to provide lessons learned for future ROI support to Afghanistan.

The draft technical note on programming in fragile states has been made available to the evaluation team. The note provides flexibility for working with a programme framework outlining objectives and immediate objectives, but with the feasibility of adapting outputs and activities in a flexible manner by altering the interventions in accordance with the changing needs in a fragile environment. The note however also explains how such interventions should be theory-based and build on conflict analysis.

J.6 Denmark's Afghan policy context

Afghanistan is a complex environment. The current phase of its history began with the overthrow of the Taliban government by a US-led coalition in 2001. This has led to the creation of a new government and large-scale refugee returns and large flows of donor assistance. However, weak governance, poor donor coordination, and mixed donor objectives (political and developmental) have reduced the potential impact of donor assistance.

Continuing conflict in Afghanistan has led to renewed IDP flows. Foreign military forces have announced their intention to withdraw and to hand responsibility for security, development, and governance, over to the Afghan Government. It is unclear what impact the transition to national control will have on IDPs and returnees, and on the level of donor support for Afghanistan.

The overall policy framework for development in Afghanistan is outlined in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), which is aimed at developing an Islamic democratic Afghanistan with a focus on security, governance and human rights, as well as economic and social development. The strategy outlines challenges in all key sectors, including areas where ROI is providing assistance. Examples include challenges with parallel governance structures; the need for enhanced partnerships with and strengthening of civil society for social protection; and the need for urban poverty reduction.

The strategy has a specific section on refugees, returnees and IDPs. The ANDS emphasises voluntary return and focuses on ways of facilitating this, including protection for vulnerable IDPs, children and women; management of cross-border movement; sustainable reintegration including access to land; and finally it emphasises the building of the Government's capacity to plan, manage and assist return and reintegration.

The ANDS describes the intention of providing support to returnees through the provision of housing, public services with emphasis on health, education and income generating activities.

The goals outlined in the ANDS are further specified in the sectors' policies. For the Refugees, Returnees & IDP's Sector (under the ANDS social pillar) a logframe clearly defines the proposed actions within the sector. These include establishment of coordination mechanisms; improved legislation; data collection and analysis of the IDP situation; and capacity development of the Ministry of Refugees and Returnees (it should be noted that UNHCR and NRC are mentioned as key partners in the strategy).

The ROI interventions will also have to relate to Presidential Decree 104, which requires all provinces to establish returnee settlements. Some of the sites created under this decree have major problems, including having no nearby drinking water and being far away from any livelihood opportunities. This has led to sites with large numbers of houses being abandoned or inhabited by only a few families.

J.7 Policy assessment matrix

Based on the above assessment the topics presented in the matrix have been used for evaluating relevance, effectiveness and efficiency vis-à-vis Danish and Afghan policies. The matrix is used in the following way: If a major part of the project (two-thirds of project outputs and/or budget) falls within one of the priority areas listed above the degree of alignment with the specific policy will be assessed as "High". The partners are thus assessed against their stated objectives and outputs and not the actual performance.

Table 24: Policy assessment matrix

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Topics (degree of alignment with these principles)</i>	<i>Assessment of ROI partners and overall programme</i>
<i>Global</i>	Promotion of self-reliance of refugees	DACAAR: High. But limited attention to gender in programme document
	Local reintegration of returnees	NRC: High. But limited involvement of beneficiaries in design
	Inclusion of women in decision-making processes and protection of women	NSP: High. But limited focus on returnees in programme design
	Involvement of beneficiaries in design and implementation	UNHCR: High. But limited involvement of beneficiaries in design
	Harmonisation, coordination, and alignment	ROI: High in terms of thematic focus, however low when it comes to harmonisation, coordination and alignment with other donors
<i>Danida</i>		DACAAR: High
		NRC: High
	Danida priority areas (past for relevance, present for lessons learned vis-a-vis the future)	NSP: High UNHCR: High
	Building on partnerships locally as well as international cooperation	ROI: High, but weak on building on potential partnerships locally and few attempts only to cooperate internationally
	Coherence between policy and instruments (ROI)	(all high due to stated emphasis on livelihoods, poverty alleviation, community development and vulnerability. Though weaknesses on gender and environment. NSP and DACAAR interventions are fully complementary with (and funded by) other Danida interventions in Afghanistan)

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Topics (degree of alignment with these principles)</i>	<i>Assessment of ROI partners and overall programme</i>
<i>ROI</i>	Protection and durable solutions	DACAAR: High in terms of living conditions, ownership and self-reliance. Less outreach to landless IDPs/returnees in programme design NRC: High in terms protection and durable solutions and ensuring a dignified return
	Improve living conditions, dignified return and reintegration, self-reliance and local integration, strengthen capacities of migration authorities, and international cooperation	NSP: High in terms of living conditions, ownership and self-reliance. Focus on returnees by default and not explicit in programme design UNHCR: High in terms of living conditions, ownership and self-reliance. Less outreach to landless and promotion of ownership less evident in programme design
	Ensure national ownership	ROI: High in terms of thematic focus, but need to work in a more focused way to encourage increased national ownership of the programme (notable exception is NSP)
<i>Management guidelines</i>	Alignment and harmonisation (past for relevance, present for lessons learned vis-a-vis the future)	DACAAR: Alignment with MRRD guidelines and NSP. NRC: Alignment with MoRR and harmonisation with UNHCR. NSP: Full alignment with MRRD and joint donor funding.
	Results-based implementation	UNHCR: Alignment with MoRR. ROI: Very few attempts made to seek greater coherence between the various program elements.
<i>Afghan policies</i>	Sector priorities (social development, governance, agriculture, water and urban development)	DACAAR: High in terms of focus on social development and water, and previous capacity development of MRRD (now taken over by other donors) NRC: High in terms of focus on protection, access to land and urban development
	Voluntary return and protection	NSP: High in terms of social development. Less focus on specific returnee related issues
	Access to land	UNHCR: High on all parameters (though initially no focus on urban areas)
	Capacity development of Government to plan, coordinate and manage return and reintegration	ROI: High as aligned with major priority areas