



EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DANISH HUMANITARIAN ACTION 2010-2015

Afghanistan Desk Study Report

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
Danida

EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR DANISH HUMANITARIAN ACTION: 2010-2015

December 2014

Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-2015

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Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
CDC	Community Development Council
DAC	Danish Afghanistan Committee
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EAF	Evidence Assessment Framework
EQ	Evaluation Question
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HCP	Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Personnel Advisers
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODSG	OCHA Donor Support Group
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSF	Peace and Stabilisation Fund
ROI	Regions of Origin Initiative
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
ToR	Terms of Reference
UFT	Technical Advisory Services
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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The case study team leader, David Fleming, is the principal author of this report.

Executive Summary

Danida has commissioned an evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-2015 in order to inform the revision of the strategy. This report presents findings from a desk study conducted of Danida's humanitarian support to Afghanistan. In addition, two case studies with field visits were carried out of Danida's humanitarian funding to the response to the crises in Syria and South Sudan. Danida selected Afghanistan as a case study due to the fact that it has been the largest recipient of Danida humanitarian funding between 2010 and 2013. Also, as Denmark has engaged in Afghanistan through a range of funding instruments, it was considered that the study would draw out useful learning on linking relief and development, one of the core areas of focus under evaluation.

Objectives

The desk study has two purposes. One is to verify the extent to which partners have capacity to deliver on the strategic priority areas reflected in the evaluation questions. The evaluation team has consulted with Danida partners about their systems and capacity for delivering on strategic priority areas, and the desk study, through a limited number of interviews and a review of partner documentation, has enabled a limited assessment of the extent to which these are operationalised at field level. The second is to identify the results achieved by the implementation of the strategy. The findings have been analysed together with those from the other two case studies to inform the overall synthesis report. The findings of the overall evaluation should contribute to informing Danida's decision-making and strategic direction when it revises the current humanitarian strategy.

Methodology and approach

This report is based on two sources of data: a review of documents and a limited number of telephone interviews with key informants in Copenhagen and Kabul. The team used the overarching evaluation framework, which lists the overarching evaluation questions and sub-questions, to guide data collection.

The terms of reference had originally envisaged Afghanistan as a fully-fledged case study and the response to the Syria crisis as a desk review. However, during the inception phase, Danida felt that there would be greater lesson-learning potential in doing a case study with field visits for Syria due to the rapid growth in response, and to reduce the Afghanistan study to a desk review, due to the stabilisation in funding and the fact that the portfolio has already been reviewed to some extent. In addition, the high turnover of Danida staff in Afghanistan meant that there were a very limited number of people to speak with who would have sufficient knowledge of Danida's humanitarian portfolio in Afghanistan for the evaluation period.

Relevance and flexibility of the humanitarian strategy

There is a clear strategic focus for Danish engagement in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on vulnerability through a combination of longer-term support to refugees and internally displaced persons, and emergency assistance to those at risk of natural disasters and conflict. Danida's flexible and predictable approach to funding its humanitarian partners is widely appreciated.

The resources available have impacted on the extent to which Danida has been able to implement the strategy, particularly with respect to formal and informal follow-up with partners in Afghanistan and ensuring Danish representation at key donor discussions, although partners praised staff at the embassy and in Copenhagen for the level of dialogue that is maintained with partners in spite of these challenges.

There is a significant gender focus in Danida-funded humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, in spite of the difficult context of working for women's rights in a dominant patriarchal society that marginalises women. There is insufficient evidence to assess the extent to which systematic gender and vulnerability analyses underpin programming.

Relevance and effectiveness of Danida's engagement in humanitarian policy dialogue

The declining level of resources at embassy level to focus on the humanitarian portfolio has limited Denmark's role in influencing the broader political agenda on humanitarian issues in Afghanistan. Limited

resources make regular presence at donor meetings difficult and thus prevent Denmark from having a significant impact on the humanitarian agenda in Afghanistan. Given the recent shift of management of the humanitarian portfolio, there is renewed potential for connecting initiatives at both the local and global level and for Danida to use its global influence to add value to humanitarian debates at country level.

Partnership as a key implementing modality

Partners displayed an overwhelmingly positive view of Danida's approach to partnership, which is based on trust and a mix of formal and informal communication. In particular, the flexibility to decide where and how best to use funding, the opportunity to build longer-term relationships with local partners and communities, and the predictability to enable a longer-term approach to planning and programme design were highly valued. However, as a result of Danida's extremely limited ability to travel to the field for monitoring purposes, it is difficult for Danida to identify the results that partners are delivering and use this as a basis for funding decisions. Also, as Danida does not require partners to formally report on accountability to affected populations nor does it have the ability to monitor this at field level, it is difficult to ensure that partners have effective mechanisms in place, although limited interviews demonstrated that a number of partners do so on a more informal basis.

The ability for partner reports to enable Danida to identify results systematically is an area of comparative weakness, as is consistency between partners in having systems in place to conduct independent evaluations and identify lessons to feed back into the programme cycle. The extent to which the strategic priorities, such as gender, are mentioned in partner reports is variable and there is no reference to accountability to affected populations.

Follow-up, monitoring and reporting on performance

There is insufficient evidence to assess whether partners have employed systematic analytical and nuanced approaches to assess the underlying causes of vulnerability, however, the evaluation identified some examples of best practice. Partners highlighted the flexibility and predictability of funding as contributing to the added value of Danida as both a donor and a partner.

The inconsistency of partner reporting on outputs and outcomes makes it difficult for Danida to identify and follow up on results. This difficulty has been augmented by the extremely limited access that Danida staff have to field sites due to security. Informal communication is an important source of information for Danida on partner performance and so the embassy's continued role in following up with partners on an informal basis will be critical. The humanitarian department (HCP) plans to visit Kabul in early 2015, and this will be an important opportunity to discuss these communication, monitoring and follow-up challenges.

There is a need for Danida to be clearer with its partners on its expectations around results reporting and for more of a concerted push for systemic level results, and where there is insufficient capacity within Danida to follow up, joint efforts with other donors should be made to do so.

Linking emergency and development objectives and activities

Danida's humanitarian funding to partners in Afghanistan demonstrates clear linkages at the strategic level between emergency and development objectives and activities. Within the Regions of Origin programme, partners have been able to work across the humanitarian-development divide and address protection and livelihood challenges for refugees and IDPs that often fall within the grey zone between the two. Two key elements of the success of Danida's approach are the flexible and long-term nature of support provided to partners, enabling the linkage of humanitarian and development activities from an early stage and the ability to work towards longer-term goals and durable solutions; and Danida's historical relationship with its partners sowed the seeds early on for working across humanitarian and development objectives.

Good Humanitarian Donorship principles

Limited interviews for this study have shown that partners feel that Danida's support aligns clearly with the principles since its funding is timely, flexible, predictable, longer-term and has light reporting requirements.

Recommendations

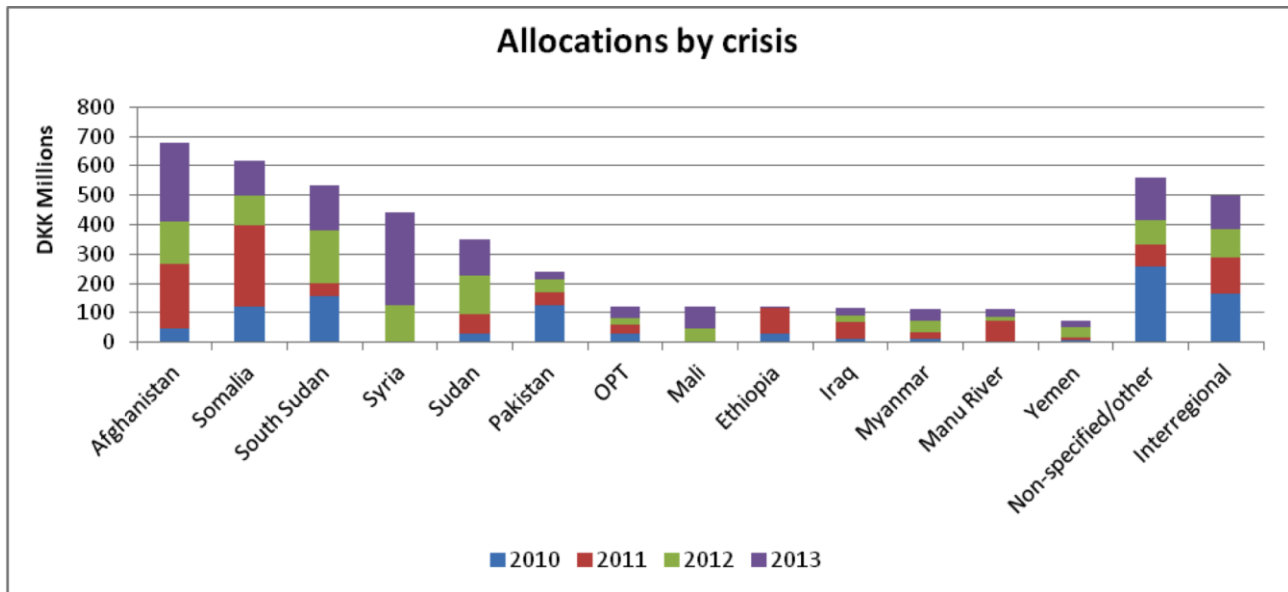
Due to the limited evidence base informing the findings and conclusions of this case study, the evaluation team has only been able to make a limited number of recommendations. The team makes the following recommendations to Danida:

- Provide support to partners in sharing best practice in the development and use of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, particularly given that a number of organisations have recently invested in new systems. This would not only help Danida to raise the bar in terms of the strength of partner MEL systems, but also could lead to closer cooperation between Danish partners at country level.
- HCP should conduct more regular visits to Afghanistan to support the embassy with engagement in policy dialogues on humanitarian issues and donor coordination at field level, and provide support to the embassy in following up with all of Danida's implementing partners.
- Clarify the nature of the results on which it expects its partners to report to enable the overall assessment of results achieved in Afghanistan.
- Given severe resource and access constraints on Danida's ability to monitor partner projects, ask partners to demonstrate the outcomes of their programmes through more systematic use of independent evaluations.
- Also to address constraints on exercising oversight of projects, identify joint efforts with other donors to follow up on partner reporting. Working on monitoring with donors who are far less restricted in their movement and access will increase Danida's reach considerably.

1. Introduction

This report presents findings from a desk study conducted of Danida’s humanitarian support to Afghanistan and forms part of an evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-2015. One of the main criteria for selecting Afghanistan as a case study is, as Figure 1 below demonstrates, that the Afghanistan crisis was the largest recipient of Danida humanitarian funding between 2010 and 2013. Also, as Denmark has engaged in Afghanistan through a range of funding instruments, it was considered that the study would draw out useful learning on linking relief and development, one of the core areas of focus under evaluation.

Figure 1: Danida funding allocations by crisis: 2010-2013



However, based on Danida’s advice during the inception phase, it was decided that the evaluation team would not conduct a full case study with field-level interviews but rather a reduced desk study based on document review and limited interviews. The reasons for this were threefold: first, due to the high staff turnover in Afghanistan it was decided that a field visit would not add significant value but rather it would be better to meet in Copenhagen with those involved in Danida’s programme in Afghanistan; second, due to the current phasing out of funding and recent evaluative pieces focusing on Danida’s engagement in Afghanistan,¹ it was felt that a full study would yield limited additional findings and lessons; and lastly, due to the increasing focus on the Syria crisis it was agreed that greater emphasis from the evaluation team there would be more appropriate.

This report is structured in five chapters. Chapter 1 sets out the evaluation objectives and the focus of the Afghanistan desk study. Chapter 2 provides a brief analysis of the context within which Danida’s support was provided. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed for the desk study as well as the critical constraints and limitations. This is followed by Chapter 4 detailing the main findings against each of the six overarching evaluation questions and then conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

1.1 Objectives of the evaluation and case study focus

The evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action has two objectives:

1. To inform Danida’s decision-making and strategic direction when it formulates its new strategy for humanitarian action after 2015; and
2. To document the results achieved through the implementation of the strategy.

This desk study has two purposes. One is to verify the extent to which partners have capacity to deliver on

¹ In particular, Cosgrave J, Bryld E and L Jacobsen (2012), Evaluation of the Danish Region of Origin Initiative in Afghanistan.

the strategic priority areas reflected in the evaluation questions. The evaluation team has consulted with Danida partners about their systems and capacity for delivering on strategic priority areas, and the desk study, through a limited number of interviews and a review of partner documentation, has enabled a limited assessment of the extent to which these are operationalised at field level. The second is to identify the results achieved by the implementation of the strategy. The findings have been analysed together with those from the other two case studies to inform the overall synthesis report. The findings of the overall evaluation should contribute to informing Danida's decision-making and strategic direction when it revises the current humanitarian strategy.

2. Case Study Context

2.1 Danish humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan

The Afghanistan crisis was the largest recipient of Danida humanitarian funding between 2010 and 2013, reaching a total of almost DKK 700 million. These figures include Region of Origin Initiative (ROI) support to Afghanistan and to refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries (Pakistan and Iran). Table 1 below sets out the annual allocations:

Table 1: Danish humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan (2010-2013)

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Amount (DKK millions)	45.15	221.675	142.857	267.429	677.111

In contrast to other crisis situations, Danish assistance to Afghanistan is unique in that it is not channelled through its usual strategic partners, but rather through specialist NGO agencies with a dedicated focus on Afghanistan (such as DACAAR, DAC, Mission East, NSP), as well as other Danish NGOs (Danish Red Cross and, more recently, DRC) and other international organisations (UNHCR, NRC and ICRC). It should be pointed out that the sharp rise in funds in 2013 from the previous year was due to a number of four-year grants that were provided to three ROI partners (DACAAR, NSP and NRC) in order to ensure continuity in their reintegration work.

2.2 Contextual background

Danish humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan provides both long-term support to the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as emergency assistance to respond to the effects of conflict and natural disasters (MFA, Ministry of Defence 2008).

In 2013, Afghanistan was ranked 169 out of 187 countries on the human development index (UNDP 2013) and continually faces challenges related to chronic poverty and the consequences of conflict and natural disasters. Over 30 years of conflict in Afghanistan have been one of the key drivers of displacement, creating substantial refugee populations both within Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries. In spite of large-scale return operations after the fall of the Taliban, around 2.7 million Afghans live in Pakistan and Iran, while within the country, 450,000 people remain displaced, 34% of them newly displaced in the first three-quarters of 2012 (IRIN 2013). Meanwhile, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that nearly 6 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan in the last decade, something that has put considerable pressure on the economy and services. The challenges to sustainable return and reintegration are numerous and complex, including increased conflict and insecurity, severe protection concerns, limited access to basic services, employment and livelihood opportunities, gender inequalities and frequent natural disasters (Danish Refugee Council 2013c: 32-33).

This continuation of protracted displacement has been exacerbated by the recent intensification of conflict and insecurity, given the departure of much of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2014 and the recent presidential election, and has led to a worsening humanitarian situation for refugees, IDPs and host communities, with continued poor indicators relating to health, education, food security, amongst others, and an increase in emergency needs. This intensification of conflict has also widely affected the

South and East of the country, as well as increasing instability in the North, regions where a number of Danida's partners are operational. In addition, given the widespread perception that urban centres provide better access to employment opportunities, recent years have seen an increase in urban displacement to big cities such as Kabul, Herat and Kandahar, thus shifting the geographical location of emergency needs.

Furthermore, Afghanistan is a country greatly prone to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, droughts and conflict. The continued degradation of the natural environment and the mismanagement and exploitation of natural resources, combined with the intensification of conflict, has increased the vulnerability of those affected by conflict, natural disasters and increasing food insecurity, and has led to the frequent recurrence of humanitarian crises.

The blurring of lines between civil/military cooperation has placed increased risk on the humanitarian community and has threatened the upholding of humanitarian principles. This heightened risk has impacted on the ability of humanitarian actors to access beneficiaries, particularly those most vulnerable.

3. Methodology

Data collection for this desk study was guided by an overarching evaluation framework for all case studies developed by the evaluation team in the inception phase (Annex 3). The framework sets out six core evaluation questions, against which the main findings are presented in Chapter 4, together with a number of sub-questions, indicators and data sources. The purpose of the evaluation framework is to ensure systematic data collection and analysis of the evidence across all case studies, leading to a synthesis of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations at the strategy level.

The evaluation methods employed by this desk study were limited to a review of partner documentation and a limited number of reviews and evaluations (Annex 2), combined with a small number of interviews and discussions with key individuals in Copenhagen as well as a couple of Danida's partners at HQ and country level (Annex 1).

Limitations

The terms of reference had originally envisaged Afghanistan as a fully-fledged case study and the response to the Syria crisis as a desk review. However, during the inception phase, Danida felt that there would be greater lesson-learning potential in doing a case study with field visits for Syria due to the rapid growth in response, and to reduce the Afghanistan study to a desk review due to the stabilisation in funding and the fact that the portfolio has already been reviewed to some extent. In addition, the high turnover of Danida staff in Afghanistan meant that there were a very limited number of people to speak with who would have sufficient knowledge of Danida's humanitarian portfolio in Afghanistan for the evaluation period.

Therefore, it must be emphasised that the extent to which sufficient evidence is available to support firm conclusions and recommendations is limited, and that as a result this case study is significantly shorter and less rich in findings and lessons learnt than the other two case studies. However, the study still provides the evaluation team with an additional lens and crisis context through which to assess the results of Danida's implementation of its humanitarian strategy.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the main findings from the desk review of Danida's support to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. These are organised against the six overarching evaluation questions from the evaluation matrix (Annex 3). The evaluation matrix contains a total of 19 sub-questions across the six questions. However, this report addresses only those that were relevant for the Afghanistan response case study.

4.1 Relevance and flexibility of humanitarian strategy

Evaluation question: How relevant and flexible is the Danish humanitarian strategy given the changing humanitarian context since 2010?

There is a clear strategic focus for Danish engagement in Afghanistan, with a particular focus on vulnerability through a combination of longer-term support to refugees and internally displaced persons, and emergency assistance to those at risk of natural disasters and conflict. Danida's flexible and predictable approach to funding its humanitarian partners is widely appreciated. The resources available have impacted on the extent to which Danida has been able to implement the strategy, particularly with respect to formal and informal follow-up with partners in Afghanistan and ensuring Danish representation at key donor discussions, although partners praised staff at the embassy and in Copenhagen for the level of dialogue that is maintained with partners in spite of these challenges. There is a significant gender focus in Danida-funded humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, in spite of the difficult context of working for women's rights in a dominant patriarchal society that marginalises women. There is insufficient evidence to assess the extent to which systematic gender and vulnerability analyses underpin programming.

The relevance of Denmark's humanitarian strategy to its engagement in Afghanistan is evidenced by a clear strategic focus in the Strategy for Danish Engagement in Afghanistan 2008-2012, which reflects some of the key priorities in the humanitarian strategy. These include a focus on vulnerability through a combination of longer-term support to the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), with emergency assistance to those at risk of natural disasters and conflict (MFA, Ministry of Defence 2008: 9). The 2013-2014 Afghanistan Plan continues the emphasis on contributing to the sustainable reintegration of returnees, with a particular focus on refugees in urban areas. It also continues the focus on improving the living conditions, job opportunities and basic services of refugees (MFA, Ministry of Defence 2013: 43, 63).

Lack of attention to urban areas was identified by the 2012 evaluation of the Danish Region of Origin Initiative (ROI) in Afghanistan as a serious issue for the programme (Cosgrave et al. 2012: 12). Whilst the programme was cognisant of these challenges at the planning stage, particularly with respect to the difficulty of working with the municipal authorities and government on this issue, it is nevertheless something that has been addressed in the last three years, particularly through the provision of funding to the Danish Refugee Council since 2011, whose programme in Afghanistan has always been largely urban focused. Given that the challenges of reintegrating returning refugees and IDPs are wide-ranging from livelihoods, basic services, protection and addressing gender inequality, Danida's support to ensuring protection of the most vulnerable and promoting durable solutions based on long-term safety and security fits well with its strategic priority of addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability through building better links between emergency and longer-term responses (MFA 2009: 13).

Limited interviews conducted for this desk study have shown unanimous support for and appreciation of Danida's flexible and predictable approach to funding its humanitarian partners. One partner noted that the predictability and stability of Danida's funding, particularly at the start-up stage of its activities in Afghanistan, has been a major benefit to the organisation. Another partner mentioned that the flexible nature of funding has allowed for adjustments to be made in its operational approach and has supported its ability to mainstream protection and gender issues across its activities. Moreover, the long-term nature of funding is seen to enable partners to undertake longer-term engagement with vulnerable and remote communities, as well as build close ties with key government ministries. In the case of DACAAR, this approach has supported the nationalisation of its organisational structure. In the case of Mission East, it has

enabled the organisation to build relationships with communities and empower them to work and advocate for the fulfilment of their basic needs and rights through longer-term engagement (Mission East 2013a: 2-3). This, in turn, has allowed partners to build greater ownership and sustainability within communities, adapt to the changing humanitarian context and security situation, and gain funding from other donors that might otherwise be difficult to access without the stability of longer-term financial commitments.

Danida's ability to implement the strategy in Afghanistan has been shaped by staffing capacity. Afghanistan is a unique case in that responsibility for humanitarian assistance has passed between different departments over the last five years. It was initially under the control of the Danish Stabilisation Unit from its creation in 2009. Upon its dissolution two years later, the humanitarian response in Afghanistan was transferred to the embassy in Kabul and the Asia Department in Copenhagen, with the majority, including responsibility for ROI, sitting with the former. However, since 2011 a gradual process to reduce the level of humanitarian expertise in Kabul has been implemented, with a shift away from the management of the full portfolio of livelihoods-based activities by specialist staff with relevant technical expertise. Furthermore, in October 2014, the decision was taken to transfer full responsibility for the humanitarian portfolio to the humanitarian country team (HCP) in Copenhagen.

Whilst in the intervening period the HCP was consulted on all aspects of humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, the overall reduction in staff, both at the embassy and in Copenhagen, combined with the high turnover of staff in Kabul, has impacted on engagement in policy dialogues on humanitarian issues in Afghanistan (see Section 4.2), the extent to which Denmark has been represented at key donor discussions, and the level of both formal and informal follow-up with partners in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, interviews in Copenhagen highlighted that the decision to prioritise resources away from field-level presence in Afghanistan was felt to be the right one given that all other assistance was managed in Copenhagen, which is in line with Danida's strategy of placing trust in a more hands-off approach to partnership. Moreover, partners consulted for this evaluation praised staff at the embassy and in Copenhagen for the level of dialogue that is maintained with partners in spite of these challenges. HCP's plan to make a trip to Kabul in the coming year to meet with the embassy and partners will be a good opportunity to strengthen relationships and dialogue between HCP, the embassy and Danida's partners.

Under the strategic direction of vulnerability, the humanitarian strategy prioritises gender-sensitive approaches and women's empowerment. There is a significant gender focus in Danida-funded humanitarian activities in Afghanistan, in spite of the difficult context of working for women's rights in a dominant patriarchal society that marginalises women (Cosgrave et al. 2012: 10). For example, DACAAR's main target beneficiary group consists of Afghanistan's most vulnerable rural and peri-urban communities, where the focus is mostly on female, disabled and youth-headed households. Moreover, DACAAR has a strong women's empowerment focus through specific interventions aimed at supporting community decision-making participation, access to services and resources and improving social and economic status, as well as targeting all of its interventions at women and men, ensuring disaggregation of those targeted (DACAAR 2013: 4, 8, 17-18). DAC has focused interventions on women's health; Mission East provides support to women's self-help groups; and Danish Red Cross, with the IFRC, provides support to the Afghan Red Cross Society for an international humanitarian law programme that contributes to the promotion of gender equality and women's participation in social life in Afghanistan (Danish Red Cross 2011: 12). Despite this evidence of a strong gender focus in humanitarian programmes, the ROI evaluation found that insufficient attention had been paid to the gender impacts of ROI projects (Cosgrave et al. 2012: 12).

Although partners are not required to report on gender-sensitive approaches, a review of the available reports and survey data showed that they are able to provide gender-disaggregated data on the beneficiaries targeted. There is also evidence that they have the tools and policies in place for mainstreaming gender across programming. For example, DACAAR's Age, Gender and Diversity policy, which was launched in 2013, continues to be mainstreamed across its programmes (DACAAR 2013: 4). There is insufficient evidence to assess the extent to which systematic gender and vulnerability analyses underpin

programming. However, limited data from the online survey shows that some of Danida's partners in Afghanistan do undertake age, gender and diversity analysis and surveys as part of programme design.

4.2 Relevance and effectiveness of Danida's engagement in humanitarian policy dialogue

Evaluation question: How relevant and effective has Danida's engagement been in international policy dialogue on humanitarian issues?

The declining level of resources at embassy level to focus on the humanitarian portfolio has limited Denmark's role in influencing the broader political agenda on humanitarian issues in Afghanistan. Limited resources make regular presence at donor meetings difficult and thus prevent Denmark from having a significant impact on the humanitarian agenda in Afghanistan. Given the recent shift of management of the humanitarian portfolio, there is renewed potential for connecting initiatives at both the local and global level and for Danida to use its global influence to add value to humanitarian debates at country level.

The absence of country-level interviews has limited the extent to which it has been possible to understand the effectiveness of Danida's engagement in humanitarian policy dialogue in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, limited interviews in Copenhagen have shown that the declining level of resources at embassy level to focus on the humanitarian portfolio has limited Denmark's role in influencing the broader political agenda on humanitarian issues in Afghanistan. Whilst embassy staff continue to engage in humanitarian issues on a political level, reduced resources make regular presence at donor meetings difficult, thus limiting the potential for Denmark to have significant impact on the humanitarian agenda in Afghanistan.

One major drawback, cited in interviews and by recent evaluations, is that Denmark has not succeeded in leveraging the ROI to help position Denmark as a leading actor in pushing for a solutions-focused approach to managing the return of Afghan refugees, nor in engaging with the Afghan government in support of such an approach. In spite of Denmark's engagement and dialogue with UNHCR on the return and reintegration of Afghan refugees and, in particular, the developmental (rather than humanitarian) nature of displacement – the experience of which HCP was then able to use as a foundation for the establishment of the Solutions Alliance – there has been a lack of emphasis on linking up Denmark's support to returning refugees with other aspects of development assistance, and advocating for the Afghan government and other donors to adopt such an approach. Given the recent shift of management of the humanitarian portfolio in Afghanistan to Copenhagen, there is renewed potential for connecting initiatives at both the local and global level and for Danida to use its global influence to add value to humanitarian debates at country level. However, the extent to which this will be successful will depend on the extent of engagement with and dialogue between HCP in Copenhagen and the embassy.

4.3 Partnership as the key implementing modality

Evaluation question: What lessons can be drawn from relying on partnerships as the key implementing modality?

Partners displayed an overwhelmingly positive view of Danida's approach to partnership, which is based on trust and a mix of formal and informal communication. In particular, the flexibility to decide where and how best to use funding, the opportunity to build longer-term relationships with local partners and communities, and the predictability to enable a longer-term approach to planning and programme design were highly valued. However, as a result of Danida's extremely limited ability to travel to the field for monitoring purposes, it is difficult for Danida to identify the results that partners are delivering and use this as a basis for funding decisions. Also, as Danida does not require partners to formally report on accountability to affected populations nor does it have the ability to monitor this at field level, it is difficult to ensure that partners have effective mechanisms in place, although limited interviews demonstrated that a number of partners do so on a more informal basis. The ability for partner reports to enable Danida to identify results systematically is an area of comparative weakness, as is consistency between partners in having systems in place to conduct independent evaluations and identify lessons to feed back into the programme cycle. The extent to which the

strategic priorities, such as gender, are mentioned in partner reports is variable and there is no reference to accountability to affected populations.

Limited interviews with Danida's partners operating in Afghanistan demonstrated the overwhelmingly positive view of Danida's approach to partnership, which is based on trust and a mix of formal and informal communication. The advantages of such an approach cited by partners are numerous, including, as discussed in Section 4.1 above, the flexibility to decide where and how best to use funding, the opportunity to build longer-term relationships with local implementing partners and communities, and the predictability to enable a longer-term approach to planning and programme design in a protracted crisis such as Afghanistan. Moreover, HCP has a close working relationship both with its Danish NGO partners as well as some of its international organisation partners, which was cited by some informants as being a significant benefit of Danida's approach, as is the trust-based approach to partnership, which allows partners to make programming decisions and choose implementing partners.

A number of NGO partners have been long-term recipients of Danish funding and have a proven track record for efficiency in terms of service delivery, as found by recent evaluations including that of the ROI (Cosgrave et al. 2012: 11). Nevertheless, Danida's extremely limited access to field sites in Afghanistan means that capacity assessments conducted of its partners operating in Afghanistan have not been able to assess delivery at field level. For example, the 2013 capacity assessment of Mission East assesses the organisation's strategic direction, operational capacity (including resourcing and day-to-day operational management), monitoring and learning systems and financial management, but was not able to assess the results of delivery at field level due to security reasons (RDC 2013).

Also, as Danida does not require partners to formally report on accountability to affected populations (AAP) and does not have the field-level capacity to monitor this, it is difficult to ensure that partners have effective mechanisms in place. In spite of the very scant reference to AAP mechanisms in both partner strategic documents and final reports, and the absence of field-level data to explore the use of such mechanisms on the ground, limited interviews demonstrated that a number of partners have informal mechanisms in place. In some cases, for example, Mission East, a more formal process for mainstreaming accountability issues in the organisation and across its Afghanistan programmes is underway to enable individuals to voice their grievances without prejudice. Moreover, a number of Danida's partners adopt a community-based programming approach, for example, NSP's work with community development councils or DACAAR's participatory approach to water supply and rural development programming. Given the high degree of transfer of decision-making to local communities inherent in some of these programmes, it must be borne in mind that although not formally recognised as AAP mechanisms, Danida's partners are providing a form of accountability to its beneficiaries.

Since Danida does not prescribe a set format for reporting, partner reports range from detailed output reports (as is the case for the Danish Refugee Council (Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group 2012)) and narrative reports on results that focus mostly on project outputs and the numbers of beneficiaries reached (Danish Red Cross 2013), to very general programme-level reports (UN agencies). As a result, there is inconsistency in the extent to which partners document and report results. In addition, many partners are currently grappling with the challenge of moving from a focus on outputs to reporting at outcome and results level. For example, the 2014 capacity assessment of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) found that it needs to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to better assess and report on outcomes and impact (Danida 2014: 5). Nevertheless, the evaluation found good evidence of strengthened M&E systems being developed. For example, DRC reported a significant recent investment in M&E capacity in the organisation. In addition, DACAAR recently contracted a consultant to support the strengthening of its M&E unit and the development of a planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning approach, with a strong accountability function included in this, with the aim of steering the organisation towards reporting more at the outcome level. The organisation commented that this shift resulted from both a strong push from Danida as well as a desire within the organisation to document longer-term change.

The evaluation also identified inconsistency between partners in having systems in place for independent evaluations and feeding the findings and learning from evaluations back into the programme cycle. This is partly a result of Danida's reliance on partners to decide for themselves whether to undertake independent evaluations. There has been more emphasis amongst partners in the last couple of years on establishing M&E systems and lesson-learning mechanisms, in particular, by DACAAR and Mission East. The latter established an evaluation and lesson-learning unit across its Afghanistan programmes in 2011. This led the organisation to carry out internal mid-term reviews and external end-of-project reviews for each project, as well as thematic reviews from time to time. These have been shown to feed back into changes in approach (RDC 2013: 18). However, the general lack of independent evaluations of Danida's partners' work in Afghanistan demonstrate the need for Danida to take the initiative in requiring partners to adhere at least to a common standard in the conduct of evaluations to support organisational and programme lesson learning.

4.4 Follow-up, monitoring and reporting on performance

Evaluation question: How well does Danida support and ensure follow-up, monitoring and reporting of performance by partners, including ensuring reporting on the effects on affected populations?

There is insufficient evidence to assess whether partners have employed systematic analytical and nuanced approaches to assess the underlying causes of vulnerability, however, the evaluation identified some examples of best practice. Partners highlighted the flexibility and predictability of funding as contributing to the added value of Danida as both a donor and a partner. The inconsistency of partner reporting on outputs and outcomes makes it difficult for Danida to identify and follow up on results. This difficulty has been augmented by the extremely limited access that Danida staff have to field sites due to security. Informal communication is an important source of information for Danida on partner performance and so the embassy's continued role in following up with partners on an informal basis will be critical. HCP plans to visit Kabul in early 2015, and this will be an important opportunity to discuss these communication, monitoring and follow-up challenges. There is a need for Danida to be clearer with its partners on its expectations around results reporting and for more of a concerted push for systemic level results, and where there is insufficient capacity within Danida to follow up, joint efforts with other donors should be made to do this.

An important aspect of assessing whether Danida's partners are able to meet the needs of affected populations is the extent to which gender and vulnerability analyses are undertaken, programme data is disaggregated by sex and gender, and partners are able to target vulnerable groups. Danida's flexibility in allowing partners to select programming priorities is an important driver in enabling partners to reach those in need more effectively, rather than limiting them to specific channels or locations. Moreover, the substantial focus of a number of Danida's partners in Afghanistan on support to refugees, returnees and the internally displaced, which as Chapter 2 highlights represent some of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in Afghanistan, ensures that Danish assistance targets some of the most affected.

For example, DACAAR has been operating in Afghanistan for 30 years and has benefitted from long-term support from Danida to establish strong connections with the ministries and communities in which it operates. Its community-based approach of building long-term engagement with local community structures seeks to build local capacity and ownership as well as sustainable benefits beyond the life of the programme for its beneficiaries, which include the most vulnerable rural and peri-urban communities (DACAAR 2013, 4). Mission East's strategy is to target the most remote, isolated and vulnerable communities, particularly those exposed to natural hazards. Its natural resource and disaster risk management strategy targets specific households through selected vulnerability criteria (female-headed households, households with family members with a disability or a large number of dependents, landless farmers and single-income households) (Mission East 2013a: 7). The organisation also undertakes vulnerability analyses, which take a nuanced approach to looking at the engagement of men and women in social and economic activity in the village, as well as household and village-level surveys to underpin its programming. DRC seeks to protect and promote durable solutions for refugee and displacement problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan and has targeted a combination of displaced and host populations in selected communities in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Its 2012 concept note describes how it will intervene in three informal urban settlements in Kabul city,

recognising the increasing levels of secondary displacement to urban areas and rapid urbanisation (Danish Refugee Council 2011a: 4). The organisation also employs an Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming approach to assess gender-specific risks, vulnerabilities and capacities. Nevertheless, given the absence of field-level data collection it has not been possible to assess the extent to which these approaches are operationalised in the field. Moreover, there is insufficient evidence to assess whether partners have employed systematic analytical and nuanced approaches to assess the underlying causes of vulnerability.

According to the recent ROI evaluation, one area of weakness is that conflict analyses do not form part of partner project proposals (Cosgrave et al. 2012: 12). This is despite the fact that the dynamic and increasingly unpredictable nature of conflict in Afghanistan, as described in Chapter 2, requires partners to undertake regular analyses of the drivers of conflict in areas where they are working in order to keep informed of the changing situation and understand the potential impact on project activities. This desk review found little evidence of formal conflict analysis approaches being undertaken, except in the case of one NGO partner, which feeds the findings from its conflict analyses back to Copenhagen in the form of informal and written updates. However, it must be emphasised that the desk review has drawn on limited sources so this is an issue that would need to be followed up in further detail at field level.

As discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.3, partners highlighted the flexibility and predictability of funding as contributing to the added value of Danida as both a donor and a partner. This has enabled partners to fill gaps and cover activities that other donors would not cover, determine for themselves programming priorities and locations, and build ownership and sustainability of programmes and trust within communities. In addition, one respondent, through the online survey working in Afghanistan, identified the ability to consult closely and ensure complementarity with another Danish framework partner as a strength of the Danish approach. The flexible approach has also enabled partners to operate within a geographical coverage that is appropriate for their targeting strategy. For example, one partner is operating across a wide range of locations to target the highest risk groups more effectively while another is building long-term relationships with communities in a limited geographical area rather than spreading itself too thinly.

Section 4.3 discussed the issue of documenting results through partner reports, reviews and evaluations. This presents challenges for Danida in that the inconsistency of partner reporting on outputs and outcomes makes it difficult for Danida to identify and follow up on results; the timing of report submission does not allow for HCP or the embassy in Kabul to input into course corrections; and the lack of partner-commissioned evaluations means that Danida has limited evidence for what works and why in its humanitarian programming in Afghanistan.

The difficulty in following up on results has been exacerbated in Afghanistan by the increasingly limited access for embassy staff and heightened security protocols for both international and national staff. As a result, there is less ability to maintain independent oversight of Danida's partners' programming. The DAC peer review in 2011 found that programme support in Afghanistan, as well as other countries, was strengthened by the presence of dedicated humanitarian advisors in the field (Development Assistance Committee 2011: 73). The loss of dedicated humanitarian advisors from the Kabul embassy two years ago brought about a change in the way the embassy engaged with partners on programming issues. This correlates with the finding of the recent evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF), which found that subsequent to the closure of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in 2014, Denmark has relied mainly on implementing partners to conduct remote monitoring of activities (Coffey 2014: 31). However, limited interviews with Danida partners in Afghanistan showed that there is evidence of good dialogue and close ties between the embassy and a number of its humanitarian partners, as well as between partners and Danida staff in Copenhagen when it comes to addressing technical challenges. HCP also hopes to have continued dialogue and consultations with the embassy on humanitarian issues, given its proximity to Danida's partners working on the ground.

Due to the nature of the partnership approach and its engagement with a limited number of organisations, informal communication is an important source of information on partner performance. Therefore, the embassy's continued role in following up with partners on an informal basis will be an important source of

information for Copenhagen, although the lack of humanitarian expertise at country level and the fact that the embassy is becoming increasingly thinly staffed present a barrier to the level of technical engagement that is possible. In this regard, HCP's planned visit to Kabul in early 2015 will be an important opportunity to discuss these communication, monitoring and follow-up challenges. It will also be an opportunity to strengthen ties between partners, the embassy and HCP in Copenhagen, particularly in the case of a new framework partner, such as Mission East, which has to date had limited engagement with the embassy.

The nature of the partnership approach also means that capacity assessments are an important source of information on partner performance. However, as discussed in Section 4.3, these assessments are limited in that field level assessments in Afghanistan are extremely difficult to carry out. There is, thus, a need to place a high level of trust in what partners are reporting and, therefore, a heavy reliance on partners having their own monitoring systems in place. Given this context it is important that Danida be clearer with its partners on its expectations around results reporting and make more of a concerted push for systemic level results. Where there is insufficient capacity within Danida to follow up, joint efforts with other donors should be made to do this.

4.5 Linking emergency and development objectives and activities

Evaluation question: What are the lessons learned of linking emergency relief and development, i.e., reconciling humanitarian and development objectives in specific contexts and settings?

Danida's humanitarian funding to partners in Afghanistan demonstrates clear linkages at the strategic level between emergency and development objectives and activities. Within the ROI programme, partners have been able to work across the humanitarian-development divide and address protection and livelihood challenges for refugees and IDPs that often fall within the grey zone between the two. Two key elements of the success of Danida's approach are the flexible and long-term nature of support provided to partners, enabling the linkage of humanitarian and development activities from an early stage and the ability to work towards longer-term goals and durable solutions; and Danida's historical relationship with its partners which sowed the seeds early on for working across humanitarian and development objectives.

At the strategic level, Danida's humanitarian funding to partners in Afghanistan demonstrates clear intentions to build linkages between emergency and development objectives and activities. For example, the ROI programme has focused on helping to "secure access to protection and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons as close to their home as possible" (MFA 2008: 4). Durable solutions for refugees and IDPs receive frequent mention in the humanitarian strategy where it is seen as the ultimate protection goal (MFA 2009: 22, 25, 27). It is within this focus area that Danida's partners have been able to work across the humanitarian-development divide and address protection and livelihood challenges for refugees and IDPs that often fall within the grey zone between the two.

In addition, outside of the ROI, partners such as Mission East have also been working across this divide through its work to reduce vulnerability of rural households to both chronic and transient livelihood and food insecurity (RDC 2013: ii). Danida's funding approach has enabled it to make those linkages easily, whereas it is much harder for some donors, like ECHO, because its funding is limited to addressing immediate needs and excludes early recovery. Moreover, through Danida's flexibility and predictability, Mission East has been able to go beyond project-based thinking and integrate its sector projects under a programmatic frame, thus enabling it to combine relief, early recovery and development work (RDC 2013: 14). Also, the Danish Red Cross is supporting the Afghan Red Cross Society, with the support of ICRC and IFRC, on disaster management, building community resilience and involving communities in identifying and adequately preparing for disaster risk reduction activities locally (IFRC 2011: 3).

Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which this strategic approach has been successfully operationalised, two key elements of the success of Danida's approach in linking emergency and development work in Afghanistan have emerged through interviews: one is the nature of the partnership approach; the second is Danida's historical relationship with its partners. The flexible and long-term nature of support provided to partners has enabled the linkage of humanitarian and development activities from an

early stage and the ability to work towards longer-term goals and durable solutions. One respondent described these linkages as “uncomplicated.” This is also due to the fact that the seeds for these linkages were sown many years ago when Danida made the strategic decision to identify focal areas for development assistance, such as longer-term support to livelihoods, which built on the experiences from long-term assistance provided through the humanitarian budget. This historically early linkage – Danida has been supporting, for instance, DAC and DACAAR for more than 20 years – combined with the long-term and predictable nature of the funding has enabled organisations themselves to identify those linkages and where Denmark would have a comparative advantage.

Danida’s development cooperation strategy emphasises the importance of coherence between its different policy instruments and linking emergency aid and development assistance to address the underlying causes of vulnerability (Danish Government 2012: 16). It also underlines the need to establish clear linkages between crisis preparedness and response and sustainable development, as well as the integration of disaster risk reduction into developing country policies and plans (Danish Government 2012: 28, 32). Although the evaluation was not able to fully assess the extent to whether these linkages were successfully managed in practice, as discussed in Section 4.2, one drawback identified in interviews has been the lack of emphasis on linking up Denmark’s support to returning refugees with other aspects of development assistance, and advocating for the Afghan government and other donors to adopt a solutions-focused approach to managing the return of Afghan refugees. This can partly be explained by a lack of resources but also suggests, as the ROI evaluation found, that insufficient attempts were made to make the connections (Cosgrave et al. 2012: 12).

In spite of these challenges, respondents pointed out the complementarity between the humanitarian and development portfolios in Afghanistan in that the former has been able to work more from the grassroots up to district council level, whilst the latter has focused more on a top-down, whole-of-government approach. The question of reconciling these priorities is an important one, as highlighted by whole-of-government strategies within Denmark, which emphasise the need for linking security, development and humanitarian assistance, as well as the UN-led Strategic Response Plan for Afghanistan 2014, which, together with the preparation of a new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2015 to 2019, aims to strengthen how humanitarian and development objectives are aligned (UN OCHA 2013: 11). Although this points to concerns that the whole-of-government approach in Afghanistan might compromise humanitarian principles, the DAC review found no evidence of this and partners interviewed for this evaluation did not raise any concerns.

4.6 The Strategy and Good Humanitarian Donorship principles

Evaluation question: To what extent does the design, delivery and management of the humanitarian strategy align with the Principles and Practices of Good Humanitarian Donorship?

Limited interviews for this study have shown that partners feel that Danida’s support aligns clearly with the principles since its funding is timely, flexible, predictable, longer term and has light reporting requirements.

Limited interviews conducted with Danida’s partners have shown that Danida’s humanitarian support clearly aligns with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) since its funding is timely, flexible, predictable, longer term and has light reporting requirements. As described in Section 4.1, the value of Danida’s flexible approach to funding is widely appreciated by its partners in that it enables them to adapt to changing needs and context; allows them to use funding for operational support costs, costs which many other donors are reluctant to fund; and provides the predictability and stability to be able to build longer-term relationships with local partners and communities, thus building local ownership and sustainability.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the main conclusions from the case study before setting out recommendations.

5.1 Conclusions

Danida's humanitarian funding to partners in Afghanistan is highly valued for its flexibility, predictability and alignment with GHD principles. This has enabled partners to build trust, ownership and sustainability through longer-term engagement with vulnerable and remote communities, adapt to the changing humanitarian context and security situation, and gain funding from other donors. Danida's trust-based relationship with its partners is largely justified, although partner reporting does not fully capture the results achieved with Danida funding.

The Danish humanitarian strategy remains relevant to the Afghanistan response and partner planning documents reflect a number of Danida's strategic priorities, focusing on targeting the most vulnerable, protection, durable solutions, resilience, disaster risk reduction and working across the humanitarian-development divide.

Danida's strategic priority to better link emergency and development objectives and activities is highly relevant to the Afghan context, and the evaluation found evidence for these linkages operating in practice. Critical to this success has been Danida's flexible partnership approach, enabling linkages from an early stage, and the fact that Danida has been working with a number of its partners for many years. Concerns were raised, however, about the linkage of activities at embassy level and the missed opportunities in linking humanitarian and development strategy and objectives.

Reduced staffing levels at embassy level, as well as the loss of specific technical humanitarian expertise, has brought about limitations in the capacity for engagement in policy dialogues on humanitarian issues in Afghanistan, and the level of both formal and informal follow up with partners. As a result of this and the inconsistency in the quality of partner reporting, it is difficult for Danida to identify the results that partners are delivering and use this as a basis for funding decisions. Also, as Danida does not require partners to formally report on accountability to affected populations nor does it have the ability to carry out regular field-level monitoring due to the security situation, it is difficult to ensure that partners have effective mechanisms in place, although there were a number of examples of more informal mechanisms in place.

There is a significant gender focus in partner activities and programmes, in spite of the difficult context, but insufficient attention to the gender impact of some projects. Since Danida does not require partners to report on their use of gender-sensitive approaches and very few partners provide evidence of such approaches in their final reports, it was difficult to assess the extent to which it is prioritised in practice.

5.2 Recommendations

Due to the limited evidence base informing the findings and conclusions of this case study, the evaluation team has only been able to make a limited number of recommendations. The team makes the following recommendations to Danida:

- Provide support to partners in sharing best practice in the development and use of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, particularly given that a number of organisations have recently invested in new systems. This would not only help Danida to raise the bar in terms of the strength of partner MEL systems, but also could lead to closer cooperation between Danish partners at country level.
- HCP should conduct more regular visits to Afghanistan to support the embassy with engagement in policy dialogues on humanitarian issues and donor coordination at field level, and to provide support to the embassy in following up with all of Danida's implementing partners.

- Clarify the nature of the results on which it expects its partners to report to enable the overall assessment of results achieved in Afghanistan.
- Given severe resource and access constraints on Danida's ability to monitor partner projects, ask partners to demonstrate the outcomes of their programmes through more systematic use of independent evaluations.
- Also to address constraints on exercising oversight of projects, identify joint efforts with other donors to follow up on partner reporting. Working on monitoring with donors who are far less restricted in their movement and access will increase Danida's reach considerably.

Annex 2: List of documents reviewed

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- Cosgrave J., Bryld E. and L Jacobsen (2012) *Evaluation of the Danish Region of Origin Initiative in Afghanistan*. Available from: <http://um.dk/en/danida-en/results/eval/afgh/>
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- Danida (2012) *Evaluation of Danish Development Support to Afghanistan*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available from: <http://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/Afghanistan--Final-WEB.pdf>
- Danida (2014) *Capacity Assessment of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)*. Ref: 46.H.7-3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
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- Danish Refugee Council (2011b) *Afghan and Pakistani Displacement: Strategic Programme Document 2012-2014*.
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- Danish Refugee Council (2013b) *Humanitarian Partnership Agreement: Consolidated Proposal 2013*.
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- MFA (2008) *The Danish Regions of Origin Initiative, Part 1: Strategic Framework*.
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<http://amg.um.dk/en/~media/amg/Documents/Policies%20and%20Strategies/Stability%20and%20Fragility/Peaceandstabilisation.ashx>

MFA, Ministry of Defence (2008a) *Denmark's Engagement in Afghanistan 2008-2012*.

MFA, Ministry of Defence (2013) *The Afghanistan Plan 2013-2014: Towards full Afghan responsibility*.

MFA, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice (2013) *Denmark's Integrated Stabilisation Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas of the World*. Available from:

[mg.um.dk/en/~media/amg/Documents/Policies and Strategies/Stability and Fragility/Stabiliseringspolitik_UK_web.pdf](http://mg.um.dk/en/~media/amg/Documents/Policies%20and%20Strategies/Stability%20and%20Fragility/Stabiliseringspolitik_UK_web.pdf)

Mission East (2013a) *Humanitarian Partnership Agreement: Annual Consultation Proposal for 2014*.

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UN OCHA (2013) *2014 Strategic Response Plan: Afghanistan*. Available from:

www.unocha.org/cap/appeals/strategic-response-plan-afghanistan-2014

Annex 3: Evaluation matrix

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-questions	Indicators	Analytical methods	Data sources
1. How relevant and flexible is the Danish humanitarian strategy given the changing humanitarian context since 2010?			
1.1 Have the strategic priorities been relevant, given changing humanitarian challenges?	1.1a Number of strategic priorities covered by Danida-funded programmes 1.1b Match between the strategic priorities and what Danida and its partners regard as key humanitarian challenges 1.1c Partner anticipatory, adaptive and innovative capacities to deal with identifying and dealing with new types of threats and opportunities to mitigate them 1.1d Evidence that Danida's funding and country-level strategies are flexible enough to enable partners to adapt to changing contexts	Portfolio analysis, results tracking and comparative partner analysis to assess the coverage of the strategic priorities; context analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of partner programmes against strategic priorities • Danida funding database • Partner reports • Stakeholder workshop discussion of current humanitarian challenges • Document review on international humanitarian context • Interviews with HCP and partners
1.2 To what extent has Danida been able to implement the Strategy, given the resources available?	1.2a Number of strategic priorities implemented 1.2b Budget managed per humanitarian staff member compared to development staff member	Portfolio analysis, results tracking and comparative partner analysis to assess the coverage of the strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of partner programmes against strategic priorities • Danida funding database • Partner reports • Budget managed per Danida staff member • Interviews with HCP
1.3 To what extent has the Strategy guided allocation decisions of the humanitarian budget? Have the funded interventions been in line with the strategic priorities?	1.3a Number of strategic priorities covered by Danida-funded programmes 1.3b Evidence that Danida funding decisions based on strategic priorities vs. other criteria	Analysis of Danida's decision-making processes; portfolio analysis and comparative partner analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for allocating funding by crisis and by partner • Partner criteria for allocating funds to activities • Interviews with HCP and partners
1.4 Do the strategy and the interventions under it provide sufficient coverage, taking into consideration the strategic choice of focusing on a number of longer-term engagements in specific crises?	1.4a Evidence that Danida's choice of specific crises is based on strategic priorities 1.4b Evidence that Danida is taking a more planned approach to humanitarian response in the focused crises 1.4c Number of crises receiving Danida-funding interventions compared to number of crises for which there are international appeals and number of crises funded by top 10 DAC donors 1.4d Evidence that Danida has built in-depth knowledge of specific contexts	Analysis of Danida's decision-making processes; portfolio analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with MFA, partner staff and key stakeholders • Danida funding database • OECD-DAC funding data • UN, ICRC and IFRC appeals • Criteria for allocating funding by crisis • Danida annual reports • Interviews with HCP
1.5 Has the implementation of the Strategy prioritised gender-sensitive approaches and women's empowerment and has the implementation focused on protection issues, including the protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?	1.5a Evidence that partners have capacity to undertake gender analyses 1.5b Evidence that programmes incorporate gender-sensitive approaches and women's empowerment 1.5c Share of budget and number of programmes addressing GBV 1.5d Inclusion of gender considerations in the criteria for funding allocations	Analysis of Danida's decision-making processes; portfolio analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for allocating funding by crisis and by partner • Document review of framework agreement plans and partner reports • Danida funding database • Mapping of partner programmes against strategic priorities • Interviews with Danida and partner staff
2. How relevant and effective has Danida's engagement been in the international policy dialogue on humanitarian issues?			

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-questions	Indicators	Analytical methods	Data sources
2.1 What are the results of Denmark's role in international humanitarian policy dialogue?	2.1a Evidence of where and how Denmark has added value to the debate on humanitarian issues or influenced decisions 2.1b Evidence that Denmark's role in international humanitarian policy dialogue has influenced the funding or operations of other donors and aid agencies	Contribution analysis of the results of Denmark's role in humanitarian policy dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with HCP, Mission, embassy and partner staff, GHD representatives Stakeholder survey
2.2 What has been the Danish contribution to promoting the implementation of better coordination of international humanitarian response, including promoting the UN's central role and coordination between donors?	2.2a Evidence of how Denmark has promoted improved coordination between operational agencies 2.2b Evidence that Denmark has promoted the UN's central role in coordinating international humanitarian assistance 2.2c Evidence that Denmark has promoted coordination between donors	Contribution analysis of the results of Denmark's role in coordinating better international response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with HCP, Mission, embassy and partner staff, GHD representatives Stakeholder survey Danida funding allocations for coordination
3. What lessons can be drawn from relying on partnerships as the key implementing modality?			
3.1 How efficient has the chosen mode of delivery, through partnerships, been in achieving results and ensuring accountability to affected populations?	3.1a Evidence that partners have capacity to respond to humanitarian crises in the selected protracted crises and elsewhere 3.1b Evidence of partners' competency to deliver effective humanitarian responses 3.1c Evidence that partners have effective mechanisms in place to ensure accountability to affected populations 3.1d Evidence that Danida's funding to partners is based on efficiency and performance considerations 3.1e Evidence that Danida's choice of partners ensures coverage of strategic priorities and geographical coverage	Portfolio analysis; comparative partner analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for allocating funding by partner Danida funding database Danida capacity assessments Project site visits Document review of partner reports and reports on accountability mechanisms (e.g., HAP certification) Interviews with HCP, partners and local communities
3.2 What have been the implications of implementation through partnerships, including on the documentation and monitoring of results?	3.2a Evidence that reporting by partners is timely and accurate and identifies challenges/lessons learned 3.2b Evidence that reporting by partners enables Danida to identify results 3.2c Evidence that Danida has adequate time, resources, capacity and mechanisms to follow up on and verify partner reporting 3.2d Evidence that partners have mechanisms in place to base programming on lessons learned	Results tracking; synthesis of qualitative findings across the case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review of partner reports, review reports from TAS, Danida annual reports, meeting minutes, capacity assessment reports and background documents Interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries Project site visits
4. How well does Danida support and ensure follow-up, monitoring and reporting of performance by partners, including ensuring reporting on the effects on affected populations?			
4.1 To what extent did Danish humanitarian assistance meet the different needs of men and women and the needs of the most vulnerable amongst affected populations?	4.1a Evidence that partners have capacity to undertake gender, vulnerability and conflict analyses 4.1b Evidence that partners base programmes on age- and gender-disaggregated data 4.1c Evidence that the flexibility of Danida funding allows partners to target most vulnerable groups (including from reports) 4.1d Evidence that Danida funding supports a timely response to affected populations	Analysis of the content and foci of partners' projects against the priorities of affected populations, as reflected in needs assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis of capacity assessments, programme documents in case study countries Interviews with Danida and partner staff and local communities Stakeholder survey
4.2 Can Denmark's added value and	4.2a Evidence that Danida funding supports a timely response to	Results tracking; synthesis of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis of partner programme documents

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-questions	Indicators	Analytical methods	Data sources
comparative advantage within humanitarian assistance be inferred from the results of implementation?	affected populations 4.2b Evidence that the flexibility and predictability of Danida funding enables partners to programme it differently from funding from other donors 4.2c Evidence from partners of Denmark's added value and comparative advantage	qualitative findings across the case studies; contribution analysis	and reporting in case study countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project site visits • Interviews with partner staff and local communities
4.3 What mechanisms does Danida have in place to follow up on results and how effective are they?	4.3a Evidence that Danida has a systematic plan to follow up on results reported 4.3b Evidence that Danida has a range of mechanisms to follow up on, and verify, results reported 4.3c Evidence that the MFA has sufficient time, capacity and resources to follow up on results (including at embassy level) 4.3d Evidence of HCP engagement with embassy staff on humanitarian programmes	Analysis of Danida's internal reporting and follow-up mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of reviews by TAS and other follow-up by Danida, job descriptions of embassy staff, guidelines for embassy staff • Interviews with Danida and embassy staff
5. What are the lessons learned of linking emergency relief and development, i.e., reconciling humanitarian and development objectives in specific contexts and settings?			
5.1 What are the lessons learned from the Strategy's approach of integrating relief with disaster risk reduction, resilience-building and early recovery? How has Danida made decisions when needing to reconcile humanitarian and development priorities?	5.1a Evidence that Danida-funded programmes include DRR, resilience building and early recovery 5.1b Evidence that Danida is able to use its funding instruments flexibly to address DRR, build resilience and support early recovery 5.1c Evidence that multi-year funding enables partners to address DRR, resilience and early recovery in humanitarian programmes 5.1d Evidence that Danida is able to provide assistance on the basis of the humanitarian principles in contexts where it is providing both humanitarian and development aid	Analysis of the content and foci of partners' projects; analysis of Danida's decision-making processes; synthesis of qualitative findings across the case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Danida and partner staff • Document analysis of partner programme documents and reporting in case study countries and of Danida guidelines and other documents on DRR, resilience and early recovery
5.2 How well does Danida handle phasing-out of crises and how is this related to long-term development assistance taking over?	5.2a Evidence that Danida country strategies and plans include humanitarian and development activities 5.2b Number of countries where Danida's development activities have built on humanitarian programmes 5.2c Evidence that Danida humanitarian and development staff have time and capacity to work on joint plans and programmes 5.2d Evidence that partners can access both humanitarian and development funding instruments in chronic crises to enable the development of responses that link relief and development 5.2e Evidence that partners have capacity (e.g., skills, relationships, programme options, people, time) to undertake analyses and programmes to link relief and development	Resource analysis of Danida's staff resources and capacity to support LRRD responses; portfolio analysis of Danida funding to support LRRD; policy and strategy analysis to assess complementarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Danida and partner staff • Document analysis of country strategies, plans, guidelines, reviews by TAS and capacity assessments • Danida funding database • Data on staffing resources and capacity
5.3 How clear is the Strategy in terms of	5.3a Evidence of commonalities (including language and terminology)	Policy and strategy analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of Danida's policy and strategy

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-questions	Indicators	Analytical methods	Data sources
guiding humanitarian activities and ensuring coherence with other strategic priorities in Danish foreign and aid policy, such as a human rights-based approach?	across Danida policies and strategies 5.3b Evidence that Danida country strategies and plans include humanitarian and development activities 5.3c Extent to which Danida's humanitarian aid links to other strategic priorities in Danish foreign and aid policy		documents, country strategies, plans, guidelines and reviews by TAS • Interviews with Danida staff
5.4 How does the humanitarian assistance supported under the Strategy relate to other Danish funded engagements in conflict-affected and fragile states?	5.4a Evidence of the added value of using different instruments in conjunction in conflict-affected and fragile states 5.4b Number of countries where Danida's development activities have built on humanitarian programmes 5.4c Evidence that Danida humanitarian and development staff work on joint plans and programmes	Portfolio analysis of Danida funding in selected conflict-affected and fragile states	• Document analysis of country strategies, plans, guidelines and reviews by TAS • Danida funding database • Interviews with Danida staff
6. To what extent does the design, delivery and management of the humanitarian strategy align with the Principles and Practices of Good Humanitarian Donorship?			
6.1 How does Danida ensure adherence to the humanitarian principles and principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship?	6.1a Evidence that Danida's humanitarian assistance is based on analysis of needs and, where relevant, a conflict analysis to ensure that assistance is appropriate and avoids doing harm 6.1b Evidence that Danida's funding is timely, flexible and predictable 6.1c Evidence that Danida funding decisions reflect GHD principles	Analysis of Danida's decision-making processes; portfolio analysis	• Interviews with Danida and partner staff • Document analysis of partner programme documents and reporting in case study countries • Criteria for allocating funding by crisis and by partner
6.2 What has been Denmark's contribution to promoting the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles?	6.2a Evidence of Danida's participation in GHD meetings and processes 6.2b Number of references to GHD principles in Danida's advocacy and engagement in international policy dialogue	Contribution analysis of the results of Denmark's role in humanitarian policy dialogue	• Interviews with HCP and Geneva Mission staff, and GHD representatives • Document analysis of presentations, speaking notes and other documents prepared for international policy fora and Ministers
6.3 Is Danish humanitarian assistance allocated on the basis of thorough needs assessments and based on needs alone (i.e., regardless of nationality, age, ethnicity and gender)?	6.3a Evidence that Danida's humanitarian assistance is based on analysis of needs and, where relevant, the conflict context 6.3b Evidence that partners have the capacity to undertake thorough needs assessments 6.3c Danida's allocation of humanitarian funding is in line with ECHO's Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment Index	Analysis of Danida's decision-making processes; portfolio analysis	• Interviews with HCP and partner staff • Document analysis of partner programme documents and reporting in case study countries, capacity assessments, ECHO's Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment Index • Danida funding database

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