

**Feedback to Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department for Africa, Policy & Development
Sahel Future Generations Programme (SFGP) 2026–2029**

From International Media Support (IMS)

[Cf. consultation period from 01/12-2025 to 15/12-2025 on the Programme document.](#)

The feedback from IMS aims to strengthen the programme’s relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability in the Sahel region.

Overall comments

1. IMS appreciates Denmark’s continued and important focus on the Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger), the relevant objectives laid out, and the thorough and well-prepared context analysis and planning embedded in the SFGP document.
2. IMS fully encourages the attention given to the *Contested digital domain*, stating that *Urban youth, who are more digitally connected than their rural counterparts, [are] more engaged in public discourse and more exposed to manipulated or polarising content* incl. dis/misinformation. IMS agrees and iterates that to be efficient and effective, interventions should be locally tailored and co-designed with partners, e.g. youth-led media and CSOs, incl. also rural youth (women & men) increasingly connected (Annex 1/p. 9).
3. IMS appreciates the strategic target on [lack of] media literacy and how this, if strengthened, can positively impact necessary community-driven participatory approaches for local development. (Annex1/p.9).
4. IMS echoes that, *erosion of independent media has further constrained the availability of reliable information*, which calls for more support to independent media and media CSOs, incl. advocacy for freedom of expression & access to information, as vital aspects for transparency, accountability and trust in public institutions (p. 4, 5, Annex 1 p. 11, 12).
5. IMS agrees with the strong focus on gender-sensitivity through-out the document, incl. the strategic focus on women-led organisations and *strengthening of local actors to enhance their capacity to engage effectively within the prevailing context, also in the digital sphere.* (italic/Annex 3, p.1)
6. IMS fully supports the relevance of/focus on youth throughout the programme document, both as being critical given the region’s demographic profile, urgent needs for job-creation, and important “at-risk” beneficiaries (of recruitment by armed groups or human traffickers) and as decisive to the future of Sahel.
7. IMS welcomes and agrees with the focus on CSOs, human rights defenders and independent media as *actors [who] face a narrowing set of engagement options, with implications for international cooperation, inclusive development, and support for democratic transition.* (p. 4).
8. IMS welcomes the initiative to establish a Nordic Sahel Facility. IMS finds this potential pooling of Nordic funds and co-funding option, via a joint secretariat in Dakar, catering for experienced implementers, a good solution – to harmonise goals, increase collaboration with (local) partners, implement faster, coordinate, reduce duplication, harvest lessons learnt collectively, among more. (P. 7, 8, Annex 3).

Questions for clarification

1. IMS would appreciate clarification in the document on what is meant by “trusted partners”, in relation to e.g. the phrase “*implementation through trusted partners with proven regional experience under SO1 will be essential*”? (p. 8). How is a “trusted partner” defined?
2. “*AFRPOL [MFA/DK] will have the overall responsibility for supervising the implementing partners and maintaining an overview of the programme progress towards achieving the strategic objectives, as well as disbursements, [.] reallocations and use of unallocated funds*”. IMS would appreciate clarification on how the PRG (Programme Reference Group) based at MFA/DK will relate to the NSF (JS/joint secretariat) in Dakar (p. 11). Will NSF/JS select projects, that will subsequently be managed from MFA/DK?
3. IMS appreciates clarification to the following: “*[...] projects under the Nordic Sahel Facility [NSF] may in many cases contribute to more than one of the facility outcomes.*” Are we understanding correctly that projects under the NSF could contribute to SO2 or SO3, therefore decreasing overall funding for SO1? (Annex 3, p. 1).
4. Furthermore, the NSF will undertake “*support channelled through Nordic NGOs to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger*” (Annex 3 p.2), but formerly in the document, it is mentioned that there is “*preference for Danish, Nordic and European partnerships*” (p.5). Clarification on the nationality eligibility criteria for the NSF is needed.

Recommendations

1. IMS recommends revisiting the formulation of the overall objective “*to support democratic change agents in the region, prevent irregular migration and address root causes of instability and violent extremism*”, which could complicate relation with local authorities – e.g. in relation to partners’ obligations to report to Sahelian authorities on implemented programmes (p.1). IMS recommends harmonization of terms and more neutral language, taking into consideration the current Sahelian context (e.g. “armed violence” instead of “violent extremism” which may be considered a loaded term).
2. In relation to “*...the programme will aim to create positive visibility around Denmark and the EU*” and at the same time “*avoiding supporting the military regimes in power*”, IMS recommends more clarity on how engagement with authorities at different levels is foreseen and the possible limitations of such engagement.
3. Concerning ‘positive visibility’ (p.5), it is recommended to clarify this term. MFA/DK should be flexible on visibility requirements, as ‘branded communication’ (e.g. Western logos) can be counter-productive, put local partners at risk, and local actors could also possibly delegitimize projects and communication and/or media content as *biased*. Communication should follow principles of local ownership (e.g. as echoed in OECD-DAC guidelines).

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