



Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference (ToR)

Regarding Evaluation Study of Development Cooperation through Delegated Partnerships with the EU

Background and context

Delegated cooperation can cover a broad range of working arrangements; “when one donor (a “lead donor”) acts with authority on behalf of one or more other donors (the “delegating” donors or “silent partners”). The level and form of delegation vary, ranging from responsibility for one element of the project cycle for a specific project (e.g., a particular review) to a complete sector programme or even a country programme.” The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter MFA) engages in delegated cooperation both as lead donor and as delegating/silent donor, in cooperation with a range of different partners.

The present assignment concerns delegated cooperation with the EU. The primary focus will be on cooperation where EU has delegated the implementation of actions in indirect management to the MFA (whether it be embassies/representations or departments). Annex 1 provides a preliminary overview with examples from recent years. However, to illustrate other experiences with governing delegated cooperation, the study will also examine the policies, rules, and procedures that govern delegated cooperation where the MFA acts as delegator and the EU as the entrusted delegate.

It is a Danish priority that the EU is able to deliver where it is needed. This requires stronger coordination between the member states and increased cooperation between EU instruments, so that the EU’s strengths translate to influence on a scale commensurate with the EU’s total weight in the global community. Denmark will therefore contribute to concrete EU initiatives in African countries where Denmark is present.

A key aim of delegated cooperation is to enhance aid effectiveness and reduce transaction costs, benefitting both partner countries and donors. Potential benefits of the modality include increased outreach, visibility, leverage, and impact of projects and programmes, as well as greater donor coordination and decreased donor competition.

However, delegated cooperation also carries risks, such as potential conflicts of interests or priorities among involved donors. Differing financial and administrative requirements and decision-making processes can also pose challenges. If not properly managed, these challenges can result in significant administrative burdens and lead to repayment claims from the EU. Denmark has encountered this challenge in the past. By implication, it is seen as

important to consider a range of conditions, when deciding on whether to engage in delegated cooperation. This includes, for example:

- Does the unit have the required financial management and administrative capacity for the project/programme? Both during the preparation phase but also after closure.
- What is the added value of the programme/project and of Denmark's national contribution?
- Has the unit ensured or can the unit ensure Danish co-financing to the delegated cooperation?
- Would it be preferable for the implementing partner to have funds from a delegated cooperation rather than from a smaller or specifically funded/bilateral project?
- Do donor interests and priorities align?
- Do the donors' administrative demands and processes align (more or less), and if not, what can be done to handle this?
- Will the amount of additional funds outweigh the additional administrative costs for the MFA?
- Is the delegated cooperation likely to decrease or increase the political leverage from the programme/project vis-à-vis the donor?
- Should Denmark be the lead partner or is another donor more suited for this? For example, if another donor in the delegated cooperation has worked with the implementing partner for a long time already.

The experience with the modality of delegated cooperation has been mixed, offering both opportunities and challenges, particularly in navigating the interface between EU rules and regulations and those applied by the entrusted delegate. An earlier EU evaluation investigated experiences with the aid modality of delegated cooperation in the period 2004-2014, and recommendations pointed to issues related to, among others, systems alignment, ownership, and transaction costs.¹

To inform the further use of the modality by the MFA and like-minded donors, this study will establish an overview of its evolving use over the past 10 years and offer insights on lessons learned and recommendations for future programming and management. The study will have a central focus on the Danish practice and experience, but will also draw on experiences and insights from other likeminded donors that engage in delegated cooperation to enhance findings and recommendations, thereby broadening the relevance and impact of the study.

Objective

The objective of the study will be to provide lessons learned and to point to opportunities for improvements in the use of delegated cooperation with the EU by the MFA and like-minded donors. The study will explore the conditions necessary for leveraging the benefits of the modality while effectively managing associated risks.

¹ ECORYS for the EU Commission 2016: [Strategic evaluation of the EU aid delivery mechanism of delegated cooperation \(2007-2014\)](#). No recent evaluation has carried out an assessment of the Danish practice and experience.

Scope of work

The main focus of the study will be delegated cooperation between the EU and the MFA (central MFA or embassies) over the ten-year period from 2014 to 2023, where the MFA is entrusted by the EU with the implementation of actions in indirect management. The study will focus on the benefits, challenges, and overall relevance of the modality of delegated cooperation from the MFA's perspective.

Due to the limited number of delegated cooperations between the MFA and the EU, where the MFA is the delegate, the study is expected to cover the entire portfolio (see approach and methodology). Additionally, in-depth remote case studies for 3-5 delegated cooperations are required. These case studies will encompass examples of delegated cooperation from both Africa and Asia. Further details on the different levels of analysis—portfolio-wide and case study-based—are provided in the Study Questions and the Approach and Methodology section below.

To enhance the overall findings and recommendations, it is envisaged that the study will further incorporate insights from three like-minded donors. This will be based on interviews with HQs of these donors and a comparison of guidelines and procedures for involvement. Sweden, the Netherlands, and GIZ are preliminary suggested for this comparison, but the final selection will be made in the inception phase based on, for example, the experience with and extent of the use of delegated cooperation as a modality by these donors. Furthermore, the study will incorporate experience and insights from the Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation, currently led by Expertise France, based on document review and interviews.

Finally, to illustrate other experiences with governing delegated cooperation, the study will also examine the policies, rules and procedures that govern delegated cooperation where the MFA acts as delegator and the EU as the entrusted delegate.

The study team will need to visit MFA HQ in Copenhagen for data collection and dissemination of findings. Additionally, the study team expectedly visit HQ of three selected like-minded donors. Interviews and dialogue with country representatives of Denmark, other donors, and other stakeholders can be undertaken remotely.

Study Questions

At a minimum, the study will address the following four questions, while acknowledging that the sub-questions are not necessarily exhaustive.

SQ1: What are the overall trends and experiences of the MFA in its use of delegated cooperation with the EU since 2014, where the MFA is the delegate? (Portfolio level)

- What are the trends in the amount of funding channelled through this aid modality, where Denmark is the delegate (e.g., in terms of total programme budgets, the EU share and co-funding from the delegate and other countries; which sectors and geographical distribution)?
- What are the requirements, procedures and guidelines from the EU for this kind of delegated cooperation? How have they been adjusted based on insights from 2016 evaluation and other experiences?

- What requirements, procedures and guidelines do Denmark and the three selected likeminded donors have in place for engaging in this kind of delegated cooperation, how do they compare, and how and why have they evolved over the period?
- What were the rationales for choosing this modality and what processes and consultations led to the final decisions and approvals?
- Which major challenges have arisen during the delegated cooperation partnerships, including those ending in requests for repayment by the EU, and what have been the implications?
- Which direct and indirect administrative costs result from delegated cooperation? How are costs distributed between units and how is overhead distributed and used?
- What experiences do relevant MFA staff and management from Denmark and like-minded countries have in terms of benefits and challenges of using this modality (e.g., in terms of outreach, financial management, administrative costs, flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, avoiding building parallel reporting structures, etc.), and what are the influencing factors?

SQ2: What factors do case studies suggest promote and impede successful partnerships in delegated cooperation with the EU, where Denmark is delegate?

To address this question, the study team will need to thoroughly identify the benefits and challenges encountered in the selected case studies (with a focus on aspects of management, including financial management), and characterise the set-up and contexts of these cooperations. When drawing conclusions, the Consultant will need to carefully consider issues of generalisability. The case studies will address some of the same questions, as the portfolio analysis (e.g., last four bullets under SQ1), but at greater depth. Additional issues, that may be relevant to consider in the in-depth case studies include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- What other options were considered, if any, before a decision was made to engage in a delegated cooperation?
- Did the MFA unit have the required financial management and administrative capacity for the project/programmes?
- Which management modality was chosen (was a management unit established?) and what were the strength and weaknesses?
- What was the nature of coordination and communication with EU and with other partners (DPs, country partners or other relevant actors)?
- What was the quality of the monitoring framework?
- Was a partner assessment of the implementing partner undertaken to assess its capacity to ensure compliance with EU requirements?
- Did EU apply EU requirements on the lead donor, even when the donor agency had been pillar assessed?
- Was there room for adaptation to e.g., evolving circumstances and for ensuring local ownerships within the delegated cooperation?

SQ3: What are the overall rules and procedures governing delegated cooperation with the EU since 2014, where the MFA is the delegator?

- What requirements, procedures and guidelines do Denmark and the three selected likeminded donors have in place for engaging in this kind of delegated cooperation and how do they compare?

- To what extent do the requirements and conditions for the delegated cooperation (from both the EU and the MFA) differ depending on whether the MFA (or like-minded donors) or the EU is the delegator, particularly regarding agreement requirements, rights, and access?
- What experiences do relevant MFA staff and management in Denmark and like-minded countries have in terms of benefits and challenges of the rules and procedures governing this kind of engagement?

SQ4: What lessons can be learned and what recommendations can be made for future use of the modality of delegated cooperation with the EU?

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the modality of delegated cooperation with the EU?
- How does the Danish experience compare to the experience of like-minded donors, and what additional insights can be learned from them?
- What factors should be taken into account when deciding whether to engage in a delegated cooperation with the EU as the delegate? What makes it more or less likely to successful arrangement?
- What have been the experience of the MFA and likeminded donors regarding the extent to which there is room for negotiating terms of cooperation with the EU, in general and for specific projects?
- Are the current Danish guidelines, procedures, and organizational setup for engaging in delegated cooperation (both as delegate and delegator) adequate in light of the study findings? If not, what changes should be considered, including i.a. potential minimum requirements to ensure a balance between expected benefits and administrative costs?

Methodology

The study will adopt a mixed methods approach, where questions are explored using quantitative and qualitative data and analysis as well as a combination thereof. Findings and conclusions must be consistently backed by a clear, documented evidence trail, with rigorous validation and triangulation applied throughout to ensure transparency and reliability. The risk of bias should be considered in selection of interviewees, and in the use of interview information, triangulation of data sources etc. The strength of conclusions must be carefully weighed against the robustness of the evidence to provide a balanced and credible assessment.

In terms of data collection instruments, the study will rely on portfolio analysis (e.g., using MFA financial data and EU data), literature and document reviews, web-based questionnaires and interviews with representatives from both the MFA in Copenhagen, embassies, EU administrators, and other donors (HQ and embassies).

The portfolio analysis, document reviews, interviews, and web-based questionnaires will cover all delegated cooperation between the EU and Denmark, where Denmark is the delegate, over the period from 2014 to 2023.

The study will further include in-depth case studies of 3-5 delegated cooperations. This will include data collection through a broader range of interviews (though still remote), more detailed document review etc. The criteria for selecting these cases will be defined during the

inception phase of the study. This choice of criteria must reflect careful and explicit consideration of how these cases will be used and analysed to ensure meaningful contributions to the study conclusions. The selection should aim to express a diversity of setups, varying levels of management challenges and differences in country contexts.

Regarding the analysis of the policies and rules that govern delegated cooperation where the MFA is the delegator and the EU is the delegate, this will be based on document review and interviews with representatives from both the MFA, embassies, EU administrators, and other donors (central and embassies) as relevant.

It is envisaged that the identification and review of relevant documents and the final selection of interviewees will be made as part of the inception phase. This also applies for interview protocols and web-questionnaires.

The Client shall describe the fulfilment of the following minimum requirements and wishes for the methodology in Appendix 3C, methodology section.

Minimum requirements

- The proposal must outline the proposed methodological approach, including the approach to collection of evidence and data, and the analytical methods to be applied.
- The proposal must include a work plan for the assignment, which may be included as an annex.
- The tender must include a Key Staff Assignment Chart with the exact input of working days included, which may be included as an annex.

Wishes

- The proposal explains and justifies the main assessment principles and methods to be applied in the study, including of delegated cooperation as a modality and the benefits and challenges from the delegates perspective.
- The proposal explains how the case studies will be approached and assessed in the study.
- The proposal explains how insights from other donors will be identified and incorporated to enhance overall findings and recommendations.
- The proposal explains how lessons learned will be identified and documented.
- The proposal includes a detailed work plan and elaborates on activities, implementation, and quality assurance approach.
- The organisation of the study teams work, including division of responsibilities and distribution of workdays between Key Staff, is justified based on the proposed methodology and work plan.

Qualifications and Competence of Staff

The study will be conducted by a small team of core consultants (Key Staff) with combined experience from analyses of various modalities and instruments of development cooperation, preferably including analyses of the modality of delegated cooperation, including with the EU, as well as from evaluation of management of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, including financial management. The team may optionally be supported by additional resource persons (these should be included as Key Staff in the Key Staff Assignment Chart). Resource persons will be evaluated as part of methodology, not as part of the team.

One person on the team must be designated as the team leader. The wishes and requirements outlined below can be fulfilled collectively by the team, except where reference is made to the Team Leader or to all team members. The assessment by the tender committee of the degree to which listed competencies are present on the proposed team, will depend on the role, including suggested share of hours, team members with the listed skills are allocated to the project.

General Qualifications

Minimum requirements

- All team members have higher academic degrees (master's degree or above).
- All team members have at least 5 years of post-master's experience with emphasis on conducting evaluations and/or analyses of development cooperation.
- The Team Leader has at least 10 years of working experience with evaluation of international development cooperation.
- The Team Leader must have experience as team leader of at least three large, independent evaluations of international development cooperation from within the last 10 years.

Wishes

- The team have documented research experience relevant to the evaluation, demonstrated through contributions to published, peer-reviewed work, a Ph.D., or other equivalent qualifications in their area of expertise.

Adequacy for the assignment

Wishes

- The Team Leader has significant documented experience as team leader from independent evaluations of both multilateral and bilateral development cooperation, from within the last 5 years.
- The team has documented experience from analyses of the management of both bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.
- The team has documented experience from analyses of EU development cooperation.
- Team has documented familiarity with Denmark's development cooperation.

- The team has documented experience from analyses performed for clients comparable to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.
- The team has documented experience from analyses of various modalities and instruments of development cooperation.
- The team has document experience from analyses of the modality of delegated cooperation.
- The team has documented experience from analyses of financial management of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.
- Team has documented expertise with both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Experience in the region and language

Minimum requirements

- All team members have the ability to understand, speak and write English at level C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages scale.
- At least one team member has the ability to understand, speak and write Danish at level C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages scale.

Deliverables (output)

The following outputs are envisaged:

- An Inception Report, including a brief literature review, systematically summarizing lessons and recommendations from previous evaluations and studies that cover experiences with delegated cooperation (to be identified by the study team); a brief overview over the relevant portfolio, a review of the study questions (SQs) in a study matrix, and a detailed outline of the study methodology and work programme (not exceeding 20 pages plus annexes).
- Short briefs (maximum five pages) for each case study to be shared for comments with LEARNING and the relevant embassy.
- A draft Study Report(s) including Executive Summary (not exceeding 40 pages plus annexes).
- A final Study Report including Executive Summary (not exceeding 40 pages plus annexes).
- Presentation at meeting or conference in Copenhagen

Timing

A tentative schedule for the study is as follows:

Activity	Date/period	Responsible
Contract signed	March 2025	Study Team (ST), LEARNING
Inception phase	March-April 2025	ST
Draft Inception Report for discussion with LEARNING	May 2025	ST, LEARNING
Final Inception Report	May 2025	ST
Main study phase	June-July 2025	ST
Draft Study Report submitted for discussion with LEARNING	August 2025	ST, LEARNING
Final Study Report and presentation of report in Copenhagen	August/September 2025	ST

Estimated budget and level of effort

The total budget for the evaluation study is a maximum of 1,000,000 DKK net of VAT. This includes all fees and reimbursables required for the implementation of the contract, including travel.

It is the responsibility of the Consultant to ensure that the outputs specified above and all other tasks specified in these terms of reference are performed within the frame of the Consultant's financial proposal and the specified ceiling amount. If relevant, the tenderer can suggest a different level of effort within the overall ceiling amount.

In addition to this contract, LEARNING will cover the expenditures for graphic lay-out services in relation to preparing the final evaluation study report for web publishing.

Management

The Client is responsible for delivery of the outputs required and for internal management of the study team.

The contact person in LEARNING shall be Ninja Ritter Klejnstrup, who will also facilitate coordination with other relevant staff.

Background documents

- Annex 1: Preliminary overview of examples of delegated cooperations between the MFA and EU

- [Evaluation of Dutch involvement in EU development cooperation – The Netherlands and the European Development Fund. 2013.](#)

Other relevant documents can be found at the [website of LEARNING](#).