



Response provided by the Danish Refugee Council to the Public Consultation by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the planned Afghanistan Programme 2026/2027.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is grateful for the opportunity to provide input to the draft Afghanistan Programme 2026/2027. We have the following comments:

Addressing basic human needs

- DRC welcomes the programme's focus on food systems under strategic objective 1. However, despite observing the reduced government investment in infrastructure and the stagnating contributions towards agriculture and livelihoods despite growing needs, the programme doesn't engage with the need to build or invest in agricultural infrastructure as a prerequisite for enhancing sustainable food systems. **DRC encourages** a widened scope in the programme to promote investment in agricultural infrastructure.
- Climate change, water scarcity, overreliance on existing services and facilities and growing population flows (e.g. returnees and repatriated Afghans) are exacerbating food insecurity. A worsening economy is forcing the exploitation of existing scarce resources. **DRC recommends** that investments more explicitly target climate-smart agricultural business and water management infrastructure in support of food systems and self-reliance.

Addressing women's rights and human rights entitlements

- DRC applauds Denmark's continued focus on this critical protection area in Afghanistan and welcomes the intervention. Due to the known severe restrictions on organisations employing female staff, as reflected in the risk assessment p. 14, **DRC recommends** engaging with a broader set of partners including national and international partners who have demonstrated capacity to navigate these restrictions and secure safe employment and movement of female staff to offices or operational spaces. This would be more conducive to practically fulfilling the commitment to deliver aid 'for women by women' to the most vulnerable people and locations. This applies to both strategic objective 1 and 2.
- DRC fully supports the principles behind UN Women's continued engagement with women-led CSOs. Considering the lack of de facto authority recognition of such

structures and the associated potential for harm to those engaging with them, **DRC recommends** ensuring a Do No Harm approach to such engagement, possibly by elevating it as a risk to the specific project document risk analysis (not available in the hearing package).

- **DRC further recommends** a sustained and complementary focus on registered women-led national NGOs and the private sector and supporting the registration of women-led businesses and to capitalise on the opportunity for women-led businesses to operate (as noted on p. 3). This would mitigate the risk inherent in working with women-led CSOs in terms of achievement of programme objectives.