



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**



**Ministry of Environment
of Denmark**

Template 17 – August 2026

FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME



**Strategic Sector Cooperation
Ministry of Environment and its Agencies**

From January 2027 to December 2030

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Framework programme title	Framework Programme on Strategic Sector Cooperation with Ministry of Environment and its agencies (2027-2030)		MFA File number: 25/39818
Partner countries (list)	Current: Ukraine, Morocco, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, India, and China Future: possibly 2 extra and furthermore replacements for expired projects		
Framework programme duration	01.01.2027 - 31.12.2030		
Total budget (DKK)	Budget for ongoing project phases:	DKK 21,320,595	
	Budget for expected/planned projects/phases:	DKK 158,679,405	
	Total budget:	DKK 180,000,000	
Thematic/sector focus	Water, climate adaptation and Environment		
Summary of core competencies of the Danish public authority	The Danish Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DEPA) bring extensive experience in environmental governance, regulation and policy implementation, with particular strengths in sustainable water management, climate adaptation and pollution control. DEPA combines regulatory and administrative expertise with technical knowledge and practical implementation experience across areas such as integrated surface and groundwater management, drinking water services, wastewater management, environmental regulation and nature-based solutions. A key strength is DEPA’s ability to translate policy and regulatory objectives into practical approaches, tools and implementation, drawing where relevant on expertise from across the wider Danish public, research, utility and private sectors.		

What is Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC)?

- SSC is cooperation between Danish public authorities and partner authorities in developing countries, sharing expertise within policy development, planning, implementation etc.
- The objective of the SSC instrument is to help strengthen the capacity of the partner authorities to improve framework conditions and the related product or service delivery to enhance their countries' inclusive and sustainable social and economic development and green transition, and through this, to strengthen Denmark's bilateral diplomatic relations, including green diplomacy, and pave the way for further engagement of the Danish private sector and use of Danish technology and knowledge on a commercial basis in the countries in the longer term.
- Each SSC project contributes to the instrument's objective through a tailored support to the partner authority based on local demand, capacity and context and with its own theory of change.
- Each SSC project is prepared, quality assured, approved and implemented with its own project cycle and in accordance with the distribution of tasks and responsibilities specified in the SSC Guidelines available at: <https://amg.um.dk/bilateral-cooperation/strategic-sector-cooperation>
- SSC projects have 3 phases of 3–4-year and a maximum total budget of DKK 15 million pr phase.
- Danish authorities with three or more SSC projects will create a four-year framework programme with the MFA, which will set overall strategic direction for all of the authority's SSC projects during the specified time period and constitute the basis for a total framework grant appropriation and agreement between the parties.
- The design and implementation of the framework programme follow the SSC Guidelines.
- The Secretariat for Government-to-Government Cooperation (MYNSEK) is responsible for the strategic direction and further development of the SSC instrument and its guidelines, and for the overall quality and delivery on the three objectives. MYNSEK provides quality assurance and approval of project documents, technical backstopping on development issues, and overall financial administration.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this framework programme is to provide strategic direction for the design and implementation of the SSC programme with projects of the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and to demonstrate the capacity of the MoE and the Danish Agency for Environmental Protection (DEPA) to implement and manage the programme and each SSC project in accordance with the SSC Guidelines in order to achieve the outcomes as presented in each of the approved SSC project documents. The framework programme constitutes the basis for the grant appropriation and agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE).

The 2027-2030 Framework Programme builds on the achievements, learnings and partnerships established under the Framework Programme on Strategic Sector Cooperation (2023–2026). It provides the overarching framework for the continued implementation of the portfolio of Strategic Sector Cooperation projects in China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia,

Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, Thailand and Ukraine. Following changes in the division of responsibilities between Danish ministries in 2026, three circular economy and waste management projects were transferred to the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities and will not be continued as part of the Framework Programme (2027-2030), leaving seven ongoing SSC projects under DEPA.

Experience from the first Framework Programme has demonstrated the value of managing the SSC projects as a portfolio rather than as separate engagements. The new Framework Programme builds on this experience by strengthening strategic portfolio management, cross-project learning and the effective use of DEPA and wider Danish expertise, while individual SSC projects remain demand-driven and responsive to partner needs and country contexts.

PART 1: FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

1.1 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP

Internal organisational setup, systems and procedures

DEPA's SSC projects are organised as one programme under a common management structure. Each project is led by a dedicated Project Manager, while a Programme Manager is responsible for coordination across the portfolio. MoE is partner for the Framework Programme, supported by Head of Division for EU and International affairs. The programme is anchored in DEPA's Division for International Cooperation & Sustainable Development and implemented in close cooperation with DEPA's technical divisions and other Danish partners providing relevant expertise.

The programme is institutionally supported by Heads of Divisions and Programme Manager ensuring alignment with ministerial and agency priorities and access to strategic leadership when required. The programme structure creates a shared platform for planning and coordination while allowing each project to respond to the specific needs of its partner authorities and sector context. By organising the projects as one programme rather than separate projects, DEPA aims to strengthen synergies, make better use of internal resources, and create a stronger basis for learning across projects. Common systems for programme and project planning, financial management, quality assurance, documentation and reporting support timely delivery, transparency and efficient use of resources. It also promotes cross-cutting knowledge sharing, shared ownership and thereby supports resource and competence flexibility.

The organisational setup ensures clear accountability and effective coordination across the Framework Programme and in relation to MoE's policies and priorities. Programme management and project implementation are anchored within the Division for International Cooperation & Sustainable Development, while technical specialists remain embedded in the relevant technical divisions and continue to contribute to DEPA's core tasks alongside their SSC responsibilities. This ensures close links between Danish environmental policy, programme management, sector expertise and current Danish practice, supporting the peer-to-peer approach central to SSC.

Roles and responsibilities

Danish Ministry of Environment as Framework Programme partner holds the overall responsibility towards MFA for the management and implementation of the programme, including its strategic direction, progress and coherence with relevant Danish policies. In MoE, Deputy Permanent Secretary and head of Division for International Affairs show the strategic direction for the SSC collaboration and Senior management from MoE and DEPA meets one to two times annually to discuss strategic issues and overall developments. In accordance with standard intra-ministerial practice, issues of political, strategic or public interest are coordinated continuously between MoE and DEPA and in relation to major decisions about e.g. a new framework programme, selection of new countries, etc. the Danish Minister of the Environment is involved. This also include relevant issues related to the implementation of the FP and projects, such as new phase, ministerial travels to the partner countries, and regular status updates.

Danish Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for implementation, development and administration of the individual projects, as well as for the programme budget and progress reporting. In DEPA, the Deputy Director General for International Cooperation and the Head of Division for International Cooperation & Sustainable Development, provide the strategic anchoring of the programme, ensure alignment with agency priorities, allocates resources, and support long-term institutional commitment to the cooperation. In the day-to-day management of the programme, the Programme Manager for International Cooperation and individual Project Managers act on behalf of senior management where relevant.

DEPA assigns high priority to SSC cooperation, and maintaining or recruiting the relevant resources to perform tasks on projects are important to DEPA management. It is an ongoing dialogue between the head of divisions, Programme manager and project managers, to identify capacity development needs of the agency to deliver and innovate on these projects. Cooperation with other Danish government agencies is also used when relevant, i.e. drawing on the expertise of the Danish Energy Agency on economic regulation of waste and

water utilities, and contributions to the Danish Maritime Authorities on shipping pollution control.

The **Programme Manager** is responsible for the overall coordination of the framework programme and supports coherence across the SSC projects. This includes framework programme governance, facilitating cross-project planning, monitoring overall progress and resource needs, supporting knowledge sharing, and ensuring that experiences and lessons are captured across the portfolio. Previous experience has shown that there is a need to focus more on the programme approach, and to enhance learning across individual SSC projects both in terms of strategic focus and implementation modalities and experiences. The Deputy Director has been assigned as Programme Manager to capitalize on the value of separating programme coordination from project management, enhance and improve programme-wide coordination, internal and external knowledge sharing, and strategic development across projects within DEPA. Under the framework programme, a dedicated Programme Manager function has therefore been established to strengthen these aspects of programme management.

Project Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of their respective projects. They coordinate activities with partner authorities, plan technical exchanges and missions, manage monitoring, reporting and documentation, and ensure that relevant expertise is mobilised throughout implementation. They are responsible for following progress against agreed work plans and results frameworks and for identifying the need for adjustments in dialogue with partners and the Programme Manager. In close dialogue with the technical divisions in DEPA, and their technical specialists, the Project Manager identify the competencies required for planned activities and coordinate the involvement of technical specialists from technical divisions in DEPA and from other external partners, i.e. utilities, associations, universities, private companies, consultants or other actors involved in the project.

Technical specialists from DEPA's technical divisions contribute with sector-specific knowledge and practical experience throughout project design and implementation in collaboration with the Project Manager. Their role is not only to share Danish experience and expertise, but also to engage in joint problem solving and mutual learning with partner organisations. Technical specialists are selected based on the competencies required for each project/activity, allowing the programme to draw on expertise from across divisions and projects while balancing project needs with day-to-day operations. Depending on the thematic focus of each project, technical specialists may also serve as **track leads**, providing professional leadership for specific thematic workstreams. Track leads are responsible for maintaining the technical overview, coordinating inputs across activities, and

ensuring continuity within their area of expertise. Where relevant, this role is undertaken by specialists from DEPA's technical divisions, reflecting DEPA's internal complementary responsibilities and expertise. For example, DEPA's Groundwater Division also coordinates internally in terms of lessons learned across countries and projects, and in planning optimal use of manpower and technical resources, within groundwater work in order to deliver the most efficient and effective inputs on the SSC projects.

Sector counsellors, located at embassies in partner countries, play a key role in maintaining the day-to-day dialogue with partner authorities and provide valuable insight into the local institutional and political context. The sector counsellor assigned to the cooperation dedicates the majority of their working time to the SSC projects and serves as an important link between the partner authorities, the Danish implementing partners, and the embassy. At the same time, the sector counsellor helps connect the technical cooperation with the embassy's wider agenda, including trade, sector diplomacy and other relevant initiatives. This supports coherence between the SSC projects and Denmark's broader strategic engagement and helps identify opportunities for follow-up collaboration where relevant. At the time of the transition to the new framework programme, some turnover among sector advisors will take place. To ensure continuity, structured handover processes will be applied whenever changes occur and DEPA will make time available as part of on-boarding of sector counsellors. In addition to the transfer of key documentation and coordination between outgoing and incoming advisers where possible, the regular weekly coordination meetings between the project manager, sector adviser and, where relevant, the project officer will provide a structured forum for knowledge transfer, follow-up on implementation and continuity during staff transitions. Weekly meetings with Embassies are held for each of the SSC projects. MoE also hold quarterly coordination meetings with participation of sector counsellors, programme manager and project managers. The sector counsellor are employed in a collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassy in the partner country, MoE and DEPA.

Partner authorities identify priorities and needs, contribute actively to project design and implementation, and are responsible for embedding results within their own organisations. Their ownership and commitment are essential for creating sustainable institutional change. Throughout design, implementation and management of the individual SSC projects efforts are made to apply participatory, inclusive and involving work processes

SSC Administration in DEPA

SSC is a priority for DEPA, and ensuring adequate capacity and access to relevant expertise is an ongoing management responsibility. Resource and capacity needs are regularly

discussed between Heads of Division, the Programme Manager and Project Managers to ensure that DEPA can respond to project developments and partner demand.

Technical expertise is primarily drawn from DEPA's technical divisions, ensuring that the cooperation remains closely connected to DEPA's core tasks and current Danish regulatory and technical practice. Where relevant expertise or additional capacity is required, DEPA may draw on other Danish public authorities, utilities, universities, associations, private companies and consultants. DEPA is responsible for assembling the appropriate teams and ensuring the quality and relevance of technical inputs.

DEPA's internal quality assurance systems support sound financial and programme management, transparency and compliance with relevant public-sector requirements, including KODEKS VII. Capacity development within DEPA also addresses development-related aspects of SSC cooperation, such as context and risk analysis and approaches to institutional capacity development.

Approximately 40 DEPA employees are currently involved in SSC, providing a broad base of technical and programme expertise across the organisation.

Lessons learned and continuous improvement

Experience from the 2023–2026 Framework Programme has informed the organisational set-up for the new period. In particular, the Programme Manager function strengthens coordination and the programme-level perspective, while systematic resource planning supports early identification of capacity needs. Close cooperation between Project Managers, sector counsellors and technical specialists further enables DEPA to adapt implementation to changing partner priorities, institutional contexts and resource availability. Building on these experiences, a number of areas have been identified for further improvement during the 2027–2030 Framework Programme.

First, cooperation and knowledge sharing across projects and between DEPA's international team and the Danish Embassies shall be strengthened. Considerable knowledge is already exchanged through the close cooperation between Project Managers and sector counsellors, but relevant project outputs and experiences, such as mission reports and selected technical deliverables, shall be shared more systematically where relevant across the portfolio.

Second, the Programme Management Group (PMG) shall be further developed as a forum for programme-level dialogue. The existing focus on status, progress, budgets and implementation challenges remains important, while new overviews for programme

progress will provide greater insight into project development, selected results and cross-cutting opportunities and challenges.

Third, experience has highlighted the importance of stable and sufficiently resourced financial support to the SSC programme. Organisational changes and competing demands have at times constrained the capacity available for programme-specific financial follow-up. DEPA will therefore explore options for strengthening the financial support function, including whether programme resources can contribute more directly to ensuring consistent and timely financial management.

Finally, the continued development of the SSC portfolio creates a need for a clearer process for initiating new projects while maintaining full implementation of ongoing projects. DEPA therefore intends to develop a structured process defining key steps, responsibilities and timing for the preparation and start-up of new SSC projects. This will support realistic resource planning and a clear division of responsibilities across the programme.

1.2 FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE

The governance structure of the Framework Programme follows the Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) Guidelines and builds on the governance arrangements and experience from the 2023–2026 Framework Programme. It is designed to provide a clear link between strategic oversight, programme management and project implementation, while maintaining a coherent and flexible governance structure. Terms of Reference for the Strategic Management Group (SMG) and Programme Management Group (PMG) are provided in Annexes 2 and 3, respectively.

Strategic and programme management

The Strategic Management Group (SMG) provides the overall strategic direction for the Framework Programme. It serves as the forum for discussing progress towards the strategic objectives, relevant sector developments, strategic risks and opportunities, and issues emerging in relation to the objectives of the Framework Programme. The SMG approves the use and reallocation of unallocated funds, new projects and project phases, the selection of new countries, and the continuation, closure or phasing out of projects. The SMG is comprised of members from high-level management of MFA, MoE and DEPA. The chair of SMG is circulated between MFA and DEPA, DEPA being the chair in 2027 and 2029 and MFA being chair in 2028 and 2030.

Decisions on new projects, countries and project phases are guided by the focus and considerations defined in the Framework Programme. This includes the specific needs and priorities of partner countries, the long-term objective and three overall outcomes of the

Framework Programme, opportunities for effective use of DEPA's competencies, and relevant Danish foreign policy considerations. The SMG meets once a year (April -June).

The Programme Management Group (PMG) translates the strategic direction into programme and project management. It follows progress across the portfolio with respect to results, budgets, compliance, risks and implementation challenges and makes recommendations to the SMG on proposed new projects and phases. The PMG also does the first screening of proposed new phases and projects and proposes their approval to the SMG. The PMG is composed of representatives from MoE/DEPA and MFA, with DEPA as chair, and meets twice annually.

Experience from the 2023–2026 Framework Programme has shown that the PMG provides an important structure for programme-level follow-up. In the new Framework Programme, DEPA would like to further develop the PMG as a forum that retains the necessary status and administrative follow-up while also providing greater insight into project development and selected results. New formats and tools could be introduced to support more substantive dialogue on progress, common challenges and emerging opportunities across the portfolio.

Overall, the governance structure has been workable under the first FP. As recommended by the Midterm Review, the governance structure of SMG and PMG can be simplified. This is due to some overlap between the two management groups, also in personnel.

Project governance, feedback mechanisms and partner ownership

Each SSC project is governed by a **Project Steering Committee (PSC)**, with high-level representation from the partner authority, DEPA and the Danish Embassy. The PSC is co-chaired by the Embassy and a high-level partner representative, while the Sector Counsellor serves as Secretary.

The Project Steering Committee PSC meets annually to review implementation and overall project status, approve relevant changes and provide strategic direction in line with national priorities. Supported by Project Management Teams or Technical Working Groups where relevant, the PSC is the key governance mechanism for ensuring equal partnership and alignment with partner demand and national priorities.

New project phases, changes to outcomes or other major changes to the cooperation are initiated through dialogue with partners in the PSC. Based on this, DEPA, assisted by the Embassy, prepares recommendations for consideration by the PMG before submission to the SMG.

This creates a two-way feedback mechanism between project and programme level, allowing partner priorities and implementation experience to inform programme-level management while relevant Framework Programme priorities are reflected in the individual projects.

The Framework Programme primarily serves as a strategic management, prioritisation and reporting instrument for MoE/DEPA and MFA. Partner authorities are therefore not expected to manage against the Framework Programme itself. DEPA is responsible for translating relevant Framework Programme priorities into project-level management while maintaining the demand-driven and equal partnership approach of SSC.

Experience from the current programme shows that partner ownership is generally strong, although high-level engagement may temporarily decrease due to changing national priorities or institutional circumstances. Such situations are addressed through dialogue at technical and management level and, where needed, through senior-level engagement. Danish Embassies may facilitate this dialogue, including through the Head of Mission/Ambassador, and high-level Danish participation missions may be used where relevant.

Integration with wider Danish strategic engagement

The Danish Embassies and DEPA work closely together to ensure that SSC projects form part of Denmark's wider engagement in partner countries and is a part of the partner country action plans. Sector counsellors are a key operational link between project implementation, partner institutions and the Embassies, while Embassy management and trade colleagues contribute broader political, diplomatic and commercial perspectives. Together, these functions help identify synergies with strategic partnerships and other relevant Danish initiatives.

Information and experience flow in both directions. Insights from project implementation can inform Embassy engagement and wider country-level priorities, while knowledge from the Embassies can support project implementation and identify new opportunities. More systematic sharing of relevant experiences and project outputs between DEPA and the Embassies is aimed to be strengthened during the new Framework Programme period. The mechanisms for cross-project and Embassy learning are described further in section 1.3.

The link between SSC and wider Danish private-sector engagement is also important, particularly as projects approach the end of development funding. At project level, DEPA and the Embassies have explored a more structured approach of bringing together relevant Danish stakeholders – including companies, the Trade Council, universities and

consultancies in cooperation with MoE and Danish Industry – based on the specific context and opportunities in individual partner countries. These meetings support knowledge sharing, identify opportunities for cooperation and help connect SSC activities with wider Danish engagement.

Building on this approach, DEPA and the Sector Counsellors will continue to cooperate with the Trade Council and other relevant actors to identify opportunities for maintaining and further developing relationships beyond the formal SSC project structure, while recognising the different roles of SSC and commercial engagement

Through the involvement of Embassy management, trade colleagues and Sector Counsellors, experience and opportunities identified at project level can also feed into wider Danish strategic engagement in the partner countries. Relevant lessons and approaches can be shared across Embassies and SSC projects, contributing to the development of the Framework Programme as a whole.

1.3 MONITORING, LEARNING AND REVIEW

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) is integrated into DEPA's management of both the Framework Programme and the individual SSC projects. A MEAL plan at Framework Programme level, provided in Annex 4, sets out key activities, responsibilities and reporting mechanisms and complements project-specific monitoring through results frameworks, budgets, work plans and annual reporting.

DEPA is responsible for monitoring progress of the individual projects in accordance with the SSC Guidelines. Annual substantive and financial reporting provide the formal basis for documenting progress against agreed results and expenditure. DEPA's internal quality assurance systems further support financial monitoring, staff planning, project formulation, mission reporting, transitions between project phases and quality assurance across the portfolio.

At Framework Programme level, monitoring and learning go beyond consolidating project reporting. Experience from the 2023–2026 Framework Programme has shown that considerable learning takes place within and across individual SSC projects, but that this learning is not always systematically captured at programme level. At the same time, formal results reporting does not necessarily capture broader institutional changes, relationships and longer-term effects of the cooperation.

The 2027–2030 Framework Programme will therefore strengthen systematic learning across the portfolio through portfolio-level learning activities, outcome harvesting with partners and more systematic sharing of transferable practices and experiences. Relevant

cross-cutting lessons could also be brought into programme-level management and PMG discussions to support implementation and strategic decision-making.

Cross-project and Embassy learning

Cross-project learning already takes place through several formal and informal mechanisms. Weekly Project Manager team meetings and monthly strategy meetings provide regular opportunities to discuss implementation issues and share experiences across projects. An annual DEPA SSC meeting brings together staff involved in SSC for joint learning, training and exchange on common topics and challenges, while technical specialists share experience within and across DEPA's technical divisions. Joint participation in conferences and each other's sessions also supports knowledge sharing and identification of synergies.

Learning also takes place continuously between DEPA and the Danish Embassies. Project Managers and Sector Counsellors typically meet weekly to coordinate implementation, discuss progress and exchange experiences, including relevant lessons and approaches from other SSC projects. Project Managers and Sector Counsellors also meet annually with DEPA management, while MFA convenes regular meetings for both groups.

Building on these mechanisms, DEPA will seek to strengthen knowledge sharing across projects and between DEPA and the Embassies. This may include more systematic sharing of relevant project outputs and experiences, such as mission reports and selected technical deliverables, where these can provide useful knowledge for other SSC projects.

Learning with partners and Danish sector actors

Learning is also generated through continuous dialogue with partner authorities. Project Steering Committees, Project Management Teams, Technical Working Groups and regular project activities provide opportunities to reflect on progress, identify challenges and emerging opportunities, and inform adjustments during implementation. Relevant feedback and experience can subsequently feed into programme-level learning.

Learning and knowledge sharing also extend to Danish sector and private-sector actors. Annual business dialogues on water provide a platform for exchange and coordination between SSC projects and Danish companies. Relevant Danish cleantech cases are used in capacity-development activities to demonstrate how regulatory frameworks can be translated into practice, while delegation visits to Denmark usually include company and site visits that allow partner authorities to see relevant solutions applied in practice.

Capturing outcomes and institutional change

DEPA does not currently have a systematic approach for capturing outcomes and qualitative changes beyond the formal results frameworks across the SSC portfolio. During the 2027–2030 Framework Programme, DEPA therefore intends to develop and introduce an approach to outcome harvesting at project level. The approach will help capture changes, results and lessons that may not be fully reflected through existing indicators and reporting.

The specific methodology and format will be developed during the Framework Programme period and may be adapted to different project and partner contexts. Relevant findings from individual projects will subsequently be consolidated at Framework Programme level to identify cross-cutting outcomes and lessons across the SSC portfolio. Resources for the development and implementation of the approach will be included in the Framework Programme budget.

Adaptive management

Flexibility and adaptive management are inherent to SSC implementation. Partner priorities, institutional contexts and opportunities may change during a project period, and monitoring, dialogue and learning therefore inform continuous adaptation where relevant.

Project results frameworks remain the basis for monitoring progress, while implementation experience and dialogue with partners may lead to adjustments to activities and, where appropriate, results frameworks, while maintaining the agreed objectives and strategic direction of the cooperation.

Review, reporting and communication

MFA will commission an external mid-term review of the Framework Programme, envisaged for early 2029, in accordance with the SSC and Aid Management Guidelines. The review will assess progress towards the objectives and results of the Framework Programme and provide an opportunity to identify adjustments for the remaining implementation period.

Lessons from the review, annual reporting, partner dialogue, project implementation and exchanges with Embassies will also in the future be considered at programme level and used to inform management decisions and future development of the SSC portfolio.

Framework Programme results and relevant lessons learned will be reported through the annual reporting process and communicated in accordance with the Framework Programme communication plan. Communication is already an integral part of SSC implementation and is systematically incorporated into both missions to partner countries and study visits to Denmark. DEPA and the Danish Embassies regularly communicate activities, results and

experiences from the SSC projects through websites, social media, videos and, where relevant, more extensive articles in professional journals and newspapers. This practice will continue under the 2027–2030 Framework Programme.

PART 2: FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 THEMATIC CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Global challenges, Danish strengths and partner demand

The Framework Programme takes its point of departure in increasing pressure on the environment and natural resources. Water scarcity, pollution, climate change and unsustainable use of resources pose growing challenges to ecosystems, human health and sustainable social and economic development. These challenges are particularly pronounced in low- and middle-income countries, where rapid urbanization, population growth and economic development place additional pressure on natural resources and environmental management systems.

Water is fundamental to ecosystems, human health and socio-economic development and is increasingly affected by climate change. Water scarcity, declining groundwater resources, pollution, inefficient water supply and increasing risks from floods and droughts require stronger governance, improved data and monitoring, and effective implementation of water regulation. Similarly, pollution and unsustainable resource use require effective regulatory frameworks and institutional capacity for implementation and enforcement.

Across these areas, partner countries face different combinations of regulatory, institutional, technical and financial challenges. The Framework Programme builds on Danish knowledge and expertise in governance, technical and economically feasible solutions, while its thematic direction is determined by the match between partner demand and DEPA's competencies and capacity. The cooperation may therefore develop over time as partner needs and relevant Danish competencies evolve.

A central feature of the SSC instrument is its long-term and equal partnership approach. DEPA's experience indicates that sustained cooperation can build the trust and mutual understanding needed not only to exchange technical knowledge, but also to address more complex regulatory and institutional challenges. The peer-to-peer approach combines technical expertise with practical experience in policy development, administration and implementation. This long-term partnership perspective is also central to the direction of DEPA's forthcoming SSC strategy.

Selection of new countries and projects will be based on verified demand from partner authorities and a strong match with DEPA's mandate, competencies and available capacity. Further considerations include Denmark's development and foreign-policy priorities, geopolitical considerations, bilateral relations, EU and multilateral agendas, potential for socio-economic development and opportunities for longer-term engagement of relevant Danish actors.

The portfolio will seek an appropriate balance between breadth and depth. DEPA's forthcoming SSC strategy points towards a degree of geographical concentration, where existing relationships and knowledge of countries and regions can be used to support deeper cooperation, more targeted use of DEPA expertise and increased learning between projects and partner countries. Regional activities can further support exchange and reuse of relevant experience.

Rationale for Danish support and contribution to global agendas

The Framework Programme contributes to Denmark's development-policy priorities by supporting long-term partnerships and capacity development in areas where partner-country needs match Danish environmental expertise. The programme is relevant to priorities set out in A Changing World – Partnerships in Development (2025), Africa's Century (2024) and Action Plan for Active and Effective Economic Diplomacy (2025), including strengthened partnerships and cooperation on green and sustainable development. It is also consistent with the direction of DEPA's forthcoming strategy for Strategic Sector Cooperation, which is currently under development.

Through authority-to-authority cooperation, the programme supports partner institutions in developing regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity and implementation practices within the environmental field. These areas are particularly relevant to SDGs 6, 12 and 13 and to wider international environmental agendas.

The Framework Programme also provides opportunities to develop long-term relationships with partner countries. Environmental cooperation can provide an entry point for dialogue on shared challenges and contribute to broader Danish green diplomacy, bilateral relations and engagement in international environmental cooperation.

Lessons learned, institutionalization and sustainability of results

Experience from previous Framework Programmes and SSC projects confirms the value of long-term, demand-driven peer-to-peer cooperation. The cooperation has produced results

ranging from individual capacity development to the introduction and adaptation of regulatory approaches, technical methods and tools. Examples include well-driller training in South Africa based on Danish regulatory experience, Transient Electromagnetic (TEM) technology capacity development in India, groundwater modelling methods and joint modelling guidance in China, and ongoing work on discharge regulation and regulatory inspection methods in Ukraine.

Experience also indicates that technical outputs and training do not in themselves ensure lasting institutional change. The 2025 Mid-Term Review highlighted the need to better demonstrate how SSC interventions contribute to broader organizational and institutional capacity development and to formulate clearer ambitions for changes in regulatory frameworks and implementation. The 2027–2030 Framework Programme will therefore place greater emphasis on the uptake, institutionalization and sustainability of results, including how knowledge, methods and tools are taken up by partner institutions and continue to be used beyond individual activities and project phases.

Experience from the current portfolio also shows that methods and competencies applied in one cooperation can be relevant to others. The Framework Programme will therefore seek to strengthen cross-project and cross-country learning. The mechanisms for systematic learning and documentation are further described in Section 1.3.

Bilateral relations, strategic alliances and international engagement

Long-term SSC cooperation has established institutional relationships with partner authorities that extend beyond individual technical activities. These relationships are also used in connection with broader bilateral engagement, including high-level visits and political dialogue. Examples include the Chinese Vice Minister of Water Resources' visit to Denmark, State visit in India, Indian President Modi and Prime Minister Frederiksen's meeting and Queen Mary's visit to an SSC project in Kenya. In several partner countries, SSC cooperation is also linked to broader bilateral frameworks, including MoUs and Green Transition Strategies.

The Danish Minister of the Environment meets with colleagues from partner countries in connection with delegation visits to Denmark, the Danish Minister's visits to partner countries or at international conferences such as the UN Water Conference in New York in 2023, at the Water Conference in the UAE in 2026 and the UN Environment Assembly, UNEA, which takes place every two years in Nairobi, Kenya.

SSC relationships have also been used for joint engagement in international fora. DEPA and partner authorities have participated jointly in conferences (even trilaterally), including World Water Congresses, through sessions, panel discussions and presentations of

experience from SSC cooperation. UN Water Conferences have provided opportunities for bilateral meetings between Danish and partner-country ministers responsible for water and environment. Dialogue with SSC partners have also led to an invitation for MoE/DEPA to explore engagement in water cooperation under UNESCO.

These experiences indicate that established SSC relationships can have relevance beyond individual projects, including for bilateral dialogue and cooperation on shared environmental agendas. The Framework Programme will seek to make use of such opportunities where they are relevant to both Denmark and the partner country.

As partnerships mature, attention is also given to how established relationships can continue beyond SSC funding. This is currently being addressed in the SSC partnerships with China and South Africa, where transition notes will be developed as roadmaps for cooperation beyond SSC. The transition process will consider existing fora and platforms through which relationships can continue, as well as the potential role of private-sector actors, universities and other relevant institutions.

Private-sector engagement, trade and longer-term economic opportunities

SSC is non-commercial and demand-driven. At the same time, cooperation on environmental regulation and institutional capacity can be relevant to the framework conditions within which environmental technologies and services are applied. DEPA's forthcoming SSC strategy also identifies the relationship between regulatory cooperation and wider economic diplomacy as an area of interest.

Danish companies and other sector actors are involved in SSC activities where this is relevant to the technical cooperation, including through business dialogues, technical exchanges, demonstrations, missions and study visits. This gives partner authorities insight into practical applications of Danish approaches and gives Danish actors greater knowledge of partner-country needs and conditions.

Danish-developed Transient Electromagnetic (TEM) technology for groundwater mapping provides a concrete example. TEM technology has been demonstrated through SSC activities in e.g. China, India and Morocco, enabling ministries and technical agencies to witness the technology applied to groundwater-management challenges in their own countries. The activities have provided visibility for Danish TEM expertise and technology. In China, demonstration of the technology through SSC activities has been accompanied by a concrete commercial result, with Danish TEM equipment subsequently being sold in the Chinese market.

SSC projects also draw on Danish knowledge institutions, technical organizations and consultancies, including GEUS, COWI, DTU, DHI, NIRAS, Rambøll etc. Through targeted assignments and technical deliveries, these actors gain visibility and develop professional relationships with key partner authorities while providing expertise required by the projects. Such relationships may provide a basis for cooperation beyond individual SSC activities.

The Framework Programme will seek to strengthen the link between SSC and wider Danish private-sector engagement, including through cooperation with the Trade Council, while recognizing the different roles and approaches of authority-to-authority cooperation and commercial engagement. Private-sector and knowledge-sector relationships may also become relevant when mature SSC partnerships transition towards other forms of cooperation.

Partnerships, scaling and cooperation across countries

Flexibility and adaptive management are inherent to SSC implementation. The relatively limited size of individual SSC projects makes cooperation with other actors relevant when seeking to extend the reach and sustainability of results. DEPA therefore draws on relevant Danish public authorities, universities, knowledge institutions, utilities, consultants and private-sector actors, as well as the Danida Fellowship Centre, where their competencies can complement those of DEPA.

SSC projects can also operate alongside larger international development and financing initiatives. In Ukraine, the SSC project participates in an international government- and donor-driven working group organizationally supported by UNICEF and involving the World Bank, where the SSC project contributes practical regulatory and implementation expertise. The Ukraine experience indicates that SSC may complement larger donor interventions by adding practical authority-to-authority expertise on how broader strategies and recommendations can be translated into regulatory and administrative practice.

DEPA's forthcoming SSC strategy also identifies a potential for regulatory cooperation and demonstration activities to support wider investment and financing opportunities and points to cooperation with the EU and other international actors as one possible avenue for increasing the reach of SSC activities. The Framework Programme will seek such synergies where they are relevant to the objectives and needs of the individual partnerships.

Scaling can also take place through learning between SSC partner countries. Similar environmental and institutional challenges can make methods, tools and experience from one partnership relevant to others. At the World Water Congress, for example, Denmark, China and Morocco brought experience from their respective SSC cooperation into a joint

session on groundwater management. The 2027–2030 Framework Programme will seek to make further use of cross-country opportunities through regional activities, joint workshops, conferences and other relevant platforms.

The 2027–2030 Framework Programme represents a scaling-up of DEPA's SSC engagement in both breadth and depth. The portfolio is expected to expand through new partnerships, while increased budgets for individual country projects will allow for more targeted and context-specific activities, stronger institutional anchoring and follow-up on results over time. The total budget of DKK 180 million reflects this ambition to expand the portfolio while enabling deeper engagement within individual partnerships.

2.2 COMPETENCIES

DEPA's core competencies relevant to the present SSC portfolio are primarily within groundwater and surface water management, drinking water supply, wastewater management, climate adaptation and international project management. DEPA has a long tradition of working with regulation, mapping, protection and management of water resources and has in recent years also become increasingly involved in climate adaptation planning and implementation in cooperation with a wide range of public and private actors.

These competencies are rooted in DEPA's national regulatory and administrative responsibilities and are continuously developed in response to political, regulatory and societal demands in Denmark. This close link to DEPA's core national tasks is important to the SSC peer-to-peer approach, as technical specialists involved in SSC continue to work within their respective technical areas in Denmark.

DEPA's current strategy states that:

"In an international context, we assist and inspire development initiatives and capacity building based on our professional knowledge and solid administrative practices. In this way, we support the export of green ideas and solutions in many different places in the world."

During recent years, DEPA has also developed substantial experience in international cooperation, project management and cross-cutting competencies within the Division of International Cooperation & Sustainable Development. This includes cooperation with Danish Embassies, national partners and other public and private actors. Participation in international cooperation also contributes to maintaining and developing DEPA's competencies and is used as an element in attracting and recruiting staff with an interest in international work.

As part of the 2027–2030 Framework Programme, DEPA intends to further strengthen competencies relevant to the development context of SSC, including context and risk analysis, capacity development, results-based monitoring and learning, rights-based approaches and social and gender considerations.

Matching competencies with partner demand

Ensuring alignment between competencies and partner needs is central to the SSC approach. The competencies mobilised in each project are identified through continuous dialogue with partner authorities, project preparation and scoping missions, and ongoing cooperation between Project Managers, Sector Counsellors, technical specialists and Danish Embassies. This allows the combination of competencies to be adjusted to local priorities and changing conditions.

The knowledge and expertise within water management and climate adaptation currently provide a strong match with the needs and priorities identified by many of the SSC partner authorities. At the same time, the specific technical focus differs between projects and develops over time as cooperation matures.

DEPA's comparative advantage lies primarily in its practical experience as a regulatory authority and in the combination of policy, regulation, planning, data and implementation. Where relevant, this regulatory and administrative expertise is combined with operational and technical experience from other Danish actors. This is important because partner authorities may require competencies that extend beyond DEPA's own mandate or internal capacity.

Mobilising wider Danish competencies

The main competence input to SSC projects comes from DEPA's own staff. However, DEPA also draws on the broader Danish environmental and water sector when additional or complementary competencies are needed. Relevant expertise may be provided by other Danish public authorities, municipalities, water utilities, universities and knowledge institutions, associations, consultants and private companies.

Denmark has a broad water-sector knowledge base, including actors such as municipalities, utilities, DANVA, Danske Vandværker, GEUS, DI Water, Water Valley Denmark, EIT Water, DTU, Aarhus University, SDU and private technology and consultancy companies. These actors may be included when their competencies are relevant to identified partner needs.

This approach is already used in the existing SSC projects. In South Africa, for example, VIA University College has contributed to the development of training and certification

related to well drilling. Longer-term agreements have also been established in several SSC projects with 3VAND – the water utilities of Copenhagen, Aarhus and Odense – to support institutional and human-resource development related to water-utility management, performance and services.

Danish private-sector solutions may also be included as practical examples of how regulatory requirements can be implemented. Such involvement is based on the technical objectives of the SSC projects and partner demand and does not change the non-commercial nature of the authority-to-authority cooperation.

Core competencies and thematic focus areas

Based on the thematic direction described in section 2.1 and the current SSC portfolio, five main competency areas have been identified:

Thematic focus area	Relevance across the portfolio
Integrated water governance and planning – sustainable surface and groundwater management	Strengthening institutional capacity for mapping, monitoring, planning, protection and sustainable management of surface and groundwater resources. This includes data management, modelling, regulatory approaches and coordination between relevant authorities and stakeholders at national and local level.
Water resilience, climate adaptation and nature-based solutions	Supporting approaches to water scarcity, flooding and other climate-related water challenges, including planning tools, nature-based solutions, geodata and visualization tools relevant to national and local authorities.
Efficient drinking water services	Supporting safe, efficient and resilient drinking water services, including utility performance, reduction of non-revenue water, water efficiency, operational management and relevant regulatory and planning approaches. Collaboration with Danish utilities and DEPA's water-supply competencies is important in this area.
Wastewater management and energy optimization	Supporting sustainable wastewater management and environmental protection through regulation, improved treatment and operational performance. Energy efficiency and CO ₂ neutrality in wastewater treatment are increasingly relevant, linking water, climate and energy considerations.
Cross-cutting competencies	Supporting the technical cooperation with international project management, capacity-development approaches, results-based monitoring and learning, context and risk analysis, rights-based approaches and relevant social and gender considerations.

The competency areas are interlinked and may be combined differently across projects. Water–climate–energy linkages are becoming increasingly relevant, particularly where energy use and CO₂ neutrality form part of efforts to improve water-supply or wastewater systems. In such cases, cooperation with other Danish authorities or specialist institutions may be relevant.

The competencies also relate to the three overarching objectives of the SSC instrument. They are primarily used to support capacity development and stronger framework conditions in partner institutions. Long-term institutional cooperation can at the same time contribute to bilateral relations, while the involvement and visibility of relevant Danish knowledge institutions, utilities and companies may create opportunities for longer-term engagement beyond SSC.

Competency development during the Framework Programme

Given the long-term nature of the programme, competency needs may develop during the 2027–2030 period in response to partner demand, lessons from implementation and emerging technical or regulatory challenges. Continuous learning within and across projects and periodic programme reviews will contribute to identifying such needs.

Complementary competencies may be brought into existing projects where they support agreed objectives and respond to partner demand. DEPA will assess whether the required expertise is available internally or should be drawn from other Danish authorities, utilities, universities, knowledge institutions, consultants or other relevant actors.

More substantial changes to the thematic focus or competency base of the Framework Programme will be addressed through the relevant programme governance structures. This provides flexibility to respond to changing partner needs while keeping the programme anchored in DEPA's mandate and competencies.

2.3 STRATEGIC GOALS

The strategic goals of the Framework Programme reflect the three overall objectives of the SSC instrument – capacity development, strengthened bilateral relations and private-sector engagement – complemented by a fourth goal addressing effective Framework Programme management and institutional learning.

Strategic Goal 1: Strengthened institutional capacity for sustainable water management & climate adaptation

Partner authorities have strengthened their capacity to develop, implement and enforce regulatory and management approaches for sustainable water management in areas relevant to their national priorities.

Long-term peer-to-peer cooperation supports the development and application of relevant knowledge, regulatory approaches, methods and tools. Particular attention will be given to partner ownership and to ensuring that relevant results are embedded in partner institutions and can be sustained beyond individual activities and project phases.

Progress may be reflected in partner authorities applying or adapting new approaches, methods or tools, strengthened organisational practices and competencies, and continued use of relevant SSC results.

Strategic Goal 2: Strengthened bilateral relations and shared strategic commitments

Partner authorities and Denmark have strengthened and, where relevant, formalised their cooperation on shared environmental and water-related priorities.

Long-term SSC cooperation can support MoUs and other cooperation agreements, joint strategies and priorities, high-level dialogue and cooperation on relevant international environmental and sustainable development agendas. It may also contribute to networks and platforms involving authorities, universities, think tanks and other institutions, providing opportunities for continued cooperation beyond individual SSC projects.

Progress may be reflected in new or strengthened cooperation agreements, joint strategies or priorities, sustained high-level dialogue, strengthened networks and platforms, and joint engagement in relevant international fora.

Strategic Goal 3: Increased engagement with relevant Danish private-sector and knowledge actors

Partner authorities have increased access to relevant Danish private-sector, utility, consultancy and research expertise and solutions in response to identified partner needs.

Where relevant to project objectives, Danish companies, utilities, consultants, universities and knowledge institutions may be involved through technical exchanges, demonstrations, study visits and targeted assignments. This provides practical insight into Danish approaches and solutions while establishing professional relationships that may continue beyond SSC.

Progress may be reflected in increased involvement of relevant Danish actors, strengthened professional networks, partner interest in continued cooperation and, where relevant, subsequent institutional or commercial engagement.

Strategic Goal 4: Effective Framework Programme Management and Institutional Learning in DEPA

DEPA maintains effective and professional management of the Framework Programme by continuously developing relevant competencies, strengthening institutional learning and ensuring that organisational capacity and support functions match the size and complexity of the SSC portfolio.

Building on existing experience, DEPA will continue to develop Project Manager and other SSC-related competencies, strengthen learning across projects and cooperation with technical divisions and Embassies, and make systematic use of monitoring and results to support programme management. Flexible resource planning and appropriate involvement of support functions, including financial and legal expertise, will develop in line with the portfolio.

Progress may be reflected in continued competency development, systematic sharing and use of learning across the portfolio, effective financial and legal support, flexible resource management, and strengthened monitoring and use of results, outcomes and impacts.

2.4 ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

Core assumptions

The Framework Programme is based on continued commitment and collaboration between DEPA and partner authorities and a sufficiently enabling environment for implementation. It is assumed that partner authorities maintain adequate technical and managerial capacity, allocate the necessary resources and support timely decision-making, and that the cooperation remains relevant to national priorities and sector policies.

On the Danish side, the Framework Programme assumes continued availability of relevant technical and managerial capacity and effective cooperation between DEPA, the Embassies and other Danish actors involved in implementation.

Key risks, monitoring and response

The main cross-cutting risks fall into three categories: contextual, programmatic and institutional risks.

Contextual risks include international crises, armed conflict, pandemics, changing political priorities and climate-related or other natural shocks that may affect cooperation and implementation. Such developments are monitored through the individual projects, Embassies and programme governance. Responses may include adjustment of work plans, activities and missions and, where necessary, increased use of virtual or hybrid cooperation. Experience from Ukraine demonstrates that substantial peer-to-peer cooperation can continue despite physical interaction, at times, is constrained. These risks correspond to the contextual risks identified in the Risk Management Annex.

Programmatic risks primarily concern delays in partner authorities' internal processes and difficulties in mobilizing partner staff. Continuous dialogue with partners, early identification of barriers and adaptive management provide the main means of monitoring and responding to these risks. Activities, timing, inputs and budgets may be adjusted where necessary while maintaining the agreed objectives of the cooperation.

Institutional risks include changes in the division of responsibilities among partner and Danish authorities, maintaining an appropriate balance between the Sector Counsellors' different roles, and ensuring that DEPA's organizational capacity develops in line with the size and complexity of the SSC portfolio. These risks are monitored through programme management, resource planning and cooperation between DEPA and the Embassies. Responses may include adjustment of responsibilities, flexible mobilization of resources, competency development and appropriate involvement of technical and administrative support functions.

Adaptive management is an integral part of the SSC approach. Risks will therefore be reviewed through regular project and Framework Programme monitoring and governance, allowing mitigation measures and implementation approaches to be adjusted as circumstances change.

A detailed assessment of the key cross-cutting risks is provided in Annex 5: Risk Management

PART 3: FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

3.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Following transfer of three Circular Economy projects in Thailand, Indonesia and Kenya to Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, seven ongoing projects remain with DEPA.

Two cooperations (with China and South Africa) will expire during the FP timeframe, and are planned to be replaced by two new projects. Furthermore, it is anticipated that two extra new projects will be initiated in 2027-28 following the mid-2026 hearing of MFA on new projects.

Country	Phase	Period	Status	Objective and thematic focus
Morocco (water)	Phase 2	2027-2030	Planned	Specific objective TBD. Focus is expected to be on 1) water resources management, 2) groundwater mapping and protection, data/database management, geophysical/hydrological modelling, 3) water supply – asset management, efficient water supply through reducing leakage, water savings and energy efficiency of pumps, water quality, PFAS monitoring etc., 4) climate adaptation/nature-based solutions – digital planning tools, training, education and piloting of nature-based solutions. Main partners are national water ministry and water supply utility.
Ethiopia (water)	Phase 2	2027-2029	Planned	Specific objective TBD. Focus is expected to be on 1) groundwater mapping and protection, setting up a database and modelling capability, as well as guidelines for groundwater protection; and 2) pushing/show casing opportunities for efficient water supply through reducing leakage, water savings and energy efficiency of pumps. Capacity building is supported through the national water training institution. Main partner is the national water ministry.
	Phase 3	2030-2033	Expected	TBD
Kenya (water)	Phase 1	2025-2027	Ongoing	The overall objective is to enhance the groundwater quality and quantity in Kenya with focus on securing a safe and sustainable groundwater-based drinking water resource for current and future generations. This will be done via capacity development focusing on implementation of enhanced

				groundwater mapping and monitoring in Kenya, mapping of anthropogenic pollution sources and protection and recharge of aquifers using Nature based Solutions (NbS). Main partner is the national water ministry.
	Phase 2	2028-2030	Expected	The focus will remain on groundwater, building on the learnings from phase 1 and up-scaling especially on NbS and groundwater monitoring. It is also expected that there will be a bigger element with focus on the supply side incl. non-revenue water incl. water from the ap. 40 % unregistered boreholes in Kenya.
South Africa (water)	Phase 4	2027-2029	Planned	Specific objective TBD. Focus is expected to be on support of the South African Water Reform and support of unserved communities with water supply through capacity building at regional level, economical regulation and tariffs, groundwater mapping, reduction in non-revenue water, and industrial water efficiency. Main partner is the national water ministry.
Ukraine (water)	Phase 1	2026-2028	Ongoing	The overall objective is to support the green rebuilding and transition of Ukraine's water sector. Focus is on governance and sustainability of Ukrainian water sector through improved regulation of water resources and supply with a cross-cutting focus on harmonization with EU directives, norms and standards. Thematic focus areas are: ▪ Water Resources: Groundwater Management, ▪ Water supply efficiency and sustainable operational and financial models, ▪ Sustainable Wastewater Treatment and Cost Recovery and

				▪ Pollution control to aquatic environment from small and medium industries. Main partners are the national environment and water ministries.
	Phase 2	2028-2031	Expected	The overall objective is expected to remain on supporting the green rebuilding and transition of Ukraine's water sector, with a thematic focus on groundwater, water supply, waste water and industrial pollution. EU approximation, sector reform and regulatory frameworks for a green transition and modernization of the water sector will be in focus.
India (water)	Phase 2	2025-2029	Ongoing	Objective is to support sustainable management of water supply in rural areas through support to the Indian Jal Jeevan Mission through utility development & regulatory framework for utilities, groundwater source mapping and protection, and community awareness. Focus is on national level governance through guidelines and norms for the states to implement, supplemented with pilot projects in selected states, and inputs to national level training institutes of Danish approaches on O&M of water supply and groundwater mapping. Main partners are the national water ministry and state water authorities.
	Phase 3	2029-2032	Expected	TBD
China (water)	Phase 3	2026-2029	Ongoing	The objective is to improve the nationwide implementation of China's regulatory framework and practices on groundwater and wastewater management in order to enhance overall water environmental quality. Focus on 1) groundwater (protection, mapping and modelling) via courses for decision makers and enhanced stakeholder engagement, 2) wastewater (enhance overall

				water quality) via improved waste water management of environmental harmful substances in rural areas, PPP solutions, cooperation platforms with academia and companies and 3) risk management in terms of water protection based on qualified data bases and digital tools. Main partners are the national ministries for environment and water.
New project 1	Inception	2027	TBD	In process of identification now
	Phase 1	2028-2030	TBD	
New project 2	Inception	2028	TBD	In process of identification now
	Phase 1	2029-2031	TBD	
New project 3	Inception	2029	TBD	Replacement for expired project with China
	Phase 1	2030-2032	TBD	
New project 4	Inception	2030	TBD	Replacement for expired project with South Africa

3.2 BUDGET SUMMARY

Figures in the indicative budget below are preliminary and subject to Parliamentary approval of the annual finance bills. The detailed budget is included in annex 1.

		2027	2028	2029	2030	Total
Projects	Morocco	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	20,000,000
	Ethiopia	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	20,000,000
	Kenya	5,171,985	5,000,000	5,000,000	3,500,000	18,671,985
	South Africa	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000		15,000,000
	Ukraine	3,758,746	4,838,331	5,000,000	5,000,000	18,597,077
	India	3,898,184	4,831,462	5,000,000	5,000,000	18,729,646
	China	4,749,436	4,744,436			9,493,872
	New1	2,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	17,000,000
	New2		2,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	12,000,000
	New3			2,000,000	5,000,000	7,000,000
	New4				2,000,000	2,000,000
Crosscutting	Results, Monitoring, and Learning	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
	Public Diplomacy and Communication	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
	Mid-Term Review		1,000,000			
	Unallocated funds					16,507,420
Total		35,578,351	43,414,229	43,000,000	41,500,000	180,000,000

Unallocated funds are a strategic reserve for new activities according to the guidelines chapter 6.3.6.

SIGNATURES

Danish Ministry of Environment

Name:

Title:

Date:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MYNSEK

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signature

Signature

OVERVIEW OF ANNEXES:

- **Annex 1: Detailed budget**
- **Annex 2: Terms of Reference for the Programme Management Group**
- **Annex 3: Terms of Reference for the Strategic Management Group**
- **Annex 4: MEAL**
- **Annex 5: Risk Management**

For appraisal and approval of the framework programme, links to the already approved SSC project documents in the portfolio will be provided.

TEMPLATE 4b - SSC FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME BUDGET

Framework Programme title:	Framework Programme Ministry of Environment and its agencies 2027-30
MYNSEK P360 File No.:	
MYNSEK Engagement No.:	
MYNSEK Job ID Nr.:	
Danish Authority Name:	Danish Environmental Protection Agency
Danish Authority Framework Programme ID No.:	2026-85132
Programme Start (YYYY):	2027
Programme End (YYYY):	2030

		Total Framework Programme budget according to grant agreement	Year 1 2027	Year 2 2028	Year 3 2029	Year 4 2030	Total Budget
Name	Period	DKK	DKK	DKK	DKK	DKK	
Morocco, Phase 2	2027-2030		5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00		15,000,000.00
Morocco, Phase 3	2030-2033					5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00
Total Morocco		0.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	20,000,000.00
Ethiopia, Phase 2	2027-2029		5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00		15,000,000.00
Ethiopia, Phase 3	2030-2032					5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00
Total Ethiopia		0.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	20,000,000.00
Kenya, Phase 2	2025-2027		3,671,985.00				3,671,985.00
Kenya, Phase 3	2028-2030		1,500,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	16,500,000.00
Total Kenya		0.00	5,171,985.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	20,171,985.00
South Africa, Phase 4	2027-2029		5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00		15,000,000.00
Total South Africa		0.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	0.00	15,000,000.00
Ukraine, Phase 1	2026-2028		3,758,746.00	1,838,331.00			5,597,077.00
Ukraine, Phase 3	2028-2031			3,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	3,500,000.00	11,500,000.00
Total Ukraine		0.00	3,758,746.00	4,838,331.00	5,000,000.00	3,500,000.00	17,097,077.00
India, Phase 2	2025-2029		3,898,184.00	2,331,462.00			6,229,646.00
India, Phase 3	2029-2032			2,500,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	12,500,000.00
Total India		0.00	3,898,184.00	4,831,462.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	18,729,646.00
China, Phase 3	2026-2029		4,749,436.00	4,744,436.00			9,493,872.00
Total China		0.00	4,749,436.00	4,744,436.00	0.00	0.00	9,493,872.00
New 1, inception	2027		2,000,000.00				2,000,000.00
New 1, phase 1	2028-2030			5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	15,000,000.00
Total New 1		0.00	2,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	17,000,000.00
New 2, inception	2028			2,000,000.00			2,000,000.00
New 2, phase 1	2029-2031				5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	10,000,000.00
Total New 2		0.00	0.00	2,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	12,000,000.00
New 3, inception (after China)	2029				2,000,000.00		2,000,000.00
New 3, phase 1	2030-2032					5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00
Total New 3		0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	7,000,000.00
New 4, inception (after South Africa)	2030					2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00
Total New 4		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00
Results, Monitoring, and Learning			500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	2,000,000.00
Public Diplomacy and Communication			500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00	2,000,000.00
Mid Term Review				1,000,000.00			1,000,000.00
Unallocated							16,507,420.00
Grand total		0.00	21,171,985.00	21,000,000.00	21,000,000.00	16,000,000.00	180,000,000.00

SSC Environment Framework Programme
2027-2030
MFA-MoE

Terms of Reference for Programme Management Group

1. Background

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Danish Ministry of Environment (MoE) collaborates on strategic sector cooperation in partner countries within the areas of water management, environmental protection, climate adaptation and other cross-cutting areas related to biodiversity, green transition, green and climate diplomacy, sector climate neutrality and other cross-sectoral issues.

The Programme for Strategic Sector Cooperation is governed by two bodies, namely the Strategic Management Group (SMG) and the Programme Management Group (PMG). This Terms of Reference relates to the PMG. Each SSC Project has its own Project Steering Committee comprised of members from the national authorities, the Danish Embassy, and DEPA.

The SSC Programme is implemented during the period from January 2027 to December 2030 consisting of SSC Projects in China, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and Ukraine.

2. Mandate and scope

The PMG has the following overall mandate and scope of work:

- Assess and discuss overall progress, results, learnings and challenges of the Programme and its projects;
- Approve annual work plans, budgets, accounting, and status reports for the Programme;
- Discuss relevant sector themes and issues, implementation modalities and lessons learned of relevance for the Programme and its Projects; if needed;
- Assess financial status and recommend major adjustments under the programme budget to the SMG; if needed;
- Decide on reallocation of funds between projects and the use of unallocated funds within the programme budget;
- Approve new projects and phases as planned by the Programme and guided by the SMG; and
- Other topics of relevance for the Programme.

3. Specific tasks and responsibilities of the Partnership Steering Group comprise:

The tasks and responsibilities of the PMG are the following:

- Dialogue on progress, results and challenges, learnings, major policy and strategy developments in the sectors to ensure continued coherence between policies, strategies, bilateral cooperation in partner countries, SSC projects, etc.;
- Ensure follow-up on findings from the projects, ToR and recommendations of the programme review;
- Assessment and discussion of documents presented to the PMG, i.e. annual work plans and budgets, annual status reports, annual financial statements, thematic/technical reports and other major deliverables from individual SSC Projects etc.;
- Monitor overall progress of the SSC Programme with a special focus on opportunities, indicators, delays, problems, bottlenecks and possible significant changes in assumptions and risks;
- Keep the SMG informed, e.g. regarding the approval of new projects, new project phases, finalisation of projects;
- Endorse project changes as decided by the PSCs and ensure that all stakeholders are informed and in compliance with all requirements, and;
- Other topics of importance of the strategic direction and development of the Programme.

4. Composition

The Programme Management Group is comprised of members DEPA and MFA. Any member of the PMG can send alternates, if needed.

- Chair, Head of Division, International cooperation & Sustainable development, DEPA
- Member, Head of Division, Water Resources, DEPA
- Member, Head of Division, Groundwater, DEPA
- Member, Head of Division, Finance and Services, DEPA
- Member, Coordinator of SSC Environment, GDK, MFA
- Member, EU & International, MoE
- Secretary, Programme Manager, International Cooperation & Sustainable development, DEPA

The composition reflects the contributing units of DEPA, and may thus be expanded with Heads of Division from additional DEPA units. Project Managers of the SSC Projects participate in PMG meetings as and when needed.

The PMG membership is institutional. Representatives from civil society organisations, other organisations etc. may be invited as observers.

5. Working procedures

The PMG will be chaired by the Head of Division, International cooperation & Sustainable development of DEPA, and decisions are made in consensus.

The PMG will meet bi-annually.

In the Spring (February-March) the PMG will meet with a main focus on the annual report and financial expenditure report, as well as possible budget adjustments.

In the Autumn (October-November), the PMG will meet with a main focus on the coming year's work plan and budget.

Standard agenda for PMG meetings:

- 1) Update on major developments in the Environment Framework Programme and its SSC Projects with relevance to objectives, plans, targets and key assumptions for the Programme.
- 2) Taking stock of progress, results performance and challenges.
- 3) Status of the SSC projects and results performance, review of thematic areas etc.
- 4) Update and assess financial status of the Programme and its SSC Projects.
- 5) Recommendations for the SMG.
- 6) Discuss incoming suggestions.
- 7) A.O.B.

The PMG will be supported by DEPA's International Team, which will act as Secretariat for the PMG, and is responsible for planning the PMG meetings as well as drafting and distributing the minutes to all participants within a week after the meeting and finalise within two weeks of the meeting;

The Secretariat will announce the meetings with at least two weeks' notice together with a draft agenda. All documentation for the meetings shall be distributed to the members at least one week in advance.

The PMG meetings may be arranged as physical or virtual meetings.

If urgently needed, decisions of the PMG can be made through written procedures, based on a specific proposal by a member of the PMG and subject to approval by DEPA and MFA.

SSC Environment Framework Programme
2027-2030
MFA-MoE

Terms of Reference for Strategic Management Group

1. Background

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Danish Ministry of Environment (MoE) collaborates on strategic sector cooperation in partner countries within the areas of water management, environmental protection, climate adaptation and other cross-cutting areas related to biodiversity, green transition, green and climate diplomacy, greenhouse gas mitigation and other cross-sectoral issues.

The Programme for Strategic Sector Cooperation is governed by two bodies, namely the Strategic Management Group (SMG) and the Programme Management Group (PMG). These Terms of Reference relates to the SMG. Each SSC Project has its own Project Steering Committee comprised of members from the national authorities, the Danish Embassy, and DEPA.

The SSC Programme is implemented during the period from January 2027 to December 2030 consisting of SSC Projects in China, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and Ukraine.

2. Mandate and scope

The SMG has the following overall mandate and scope of work:

- Provide overall policy and strategic guidance and direction for the Programme, building on general environment-, development- and foreign policies;
- Assess overall results achieved and Programme performance;
- Decide on new countries or projects to be included in the Programme, as well as early closure of projects, if relevant;
- Decide on major changes to the programme budget;
- Ensure that all stakeholders are adequately informed; and
- Other topics of relevance for the Programme.

3. Specific tasks and responsibilities of the Strategic Management Group

The tasks and responsibilities of the SMG are the following:

- Dialogue about major policy and strategy developments in the sectors to ensure continued coherence between policies, strategies, bilateral cooperation in partner countries, SSC projects, etc.;
- Ensure follow-up on findings and recommendations of reviews and evaluations;

- Assessment and discussion of documents presented by the PMG. The documents must be presented in a brief, concise and executive form to facilitate the strategic decision making by the SMG;
- Monitoring overall progress of the SSC Programme based on questions and recommendations raised by the PMG, as well as broader references by the SMG members; and
- Other topics of importance of the strategic direction and development of the Programme.

It is the responsibility of the SMG members to understand the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes of the Programme and take a genuine interest in the outcomes and overall success of the Programme and its Projects. The SMG members should support an open discussion and encourage fellow SMG members to voice their insights, while understanding and representing the interests of all stakeholders.

4. Composition

The SMG is comprised of members from high-level management of MFA and DEPA as listed below. Any member of the SMG can send alternates if needed.

- Co-Chair, Deputy Director General, DEPA.
- Co-Chair, Head of Department, Green Diplomacy and Climate, MFA
- Member, Deputy Secretary of State, MoE
- Member, Head of Division, International cooperation & Sustainable development, DEPA
- Member, Head of Division, EU and International, MoE

Representatives from other divisions and units in MoE, DEPA or MFA may be invited to take part in the SMG meetings, if deemed relevant.

The SMG membership is institutional. Representatives from civil society organisations, other donors etc. may be invited as observers.

5. Working procedures

The chair of the SMG will be circulated between MFA and DEPA, DEPA being the chair in 2027 and 2029, and MFA being the chair in 2028 and 2030.

Decisions are made in consensus.

The SMG will meet once a year (April-June) as physical or virtual meetings. If needed, decisions of the SMG can be made through written procedures, based on specific proposal by a member of the SMG, and subject to approval by DEPA, MFA and MoE.

Standard agenda for SMG meetings:

- 1) Update on major policy and strategy development.
- 2) Overall status of the SSC Programme and its projects.
- 3) Follow-up on recommendations from the PMG.

- 4) Bilateral cooperation and synergies among Danish-supported initiatives in SSC partner countries.
- 5) Review of thematic areas as relevant.
- 6) Discussion of incoming suggestions.
- 7) A.O.B.

The PMG will prepare a brief status report prior to the annual SMG meeting. DEPA will act as secretariat to the SMG, responsible for planning the SMG meetings as well as drafting and distributing the minutes to all participants within a week after the meeting, and finalise within two weeks after the meeting.

The Secretariat will announce the meetings with at least two weeks' notice together with a draft agenda. All documentation for the meetings shall be distributed to the members at least two weeks in advance.

Programme level

What	How	Responsible	Frequency	Reporting mechanism	Notes
SMG	Meetings	DEPA	Annually	Reports and minutes	
PMG	Meetings	DEPA	Biannually	Reports and minutes	
Result framework	Indicators and targets	DEPA	Annually	Annual report	
Economy	Account and budget	DEPA	Quarterly	Internal reports and biannually external reports	
Risk management	Risk matrix	DEPA	Continuously	Annual report	
Quality Assurance	DEPA system for design of new phases and implementation of projects	DEPA	Continuously	Final project proposals and continuous progress reports	
Mid-term review	External reviewers	MFA	Q2 2025	Review report	
Project Manager team reflections on experiences and lessons learnt	Weekly team meetings Monthly in-depth sessions	DEPA	Continuously	Adaptive management summarized in Annual report	
DEPA reflections on corporate experiences and lessons learnt	Workshops	DEPA	Ad-hoc	Summary of meetings	
Communication products	Sharing of learning and achievements	DEPA	Continuously	Media products	
Cross-cutting issues	Trainings, workshops	DEPA	At least annually	Reports	Use of external resource persons
Stakeholder dialogue	Meetings a cross of the projects	DEPA	At least annually	News and summaries of meetings	Annual business dialogue on Water, plus other stakeholders like DFC.
Meetings (regional/thematic) with Embassies (Ambassador/Deputy and	Virtual meetings	DEPA	Ad-hoc	Summary of meetings	Scope: broader impact and options for synergies

sector councillor), MFA and DEPA					
-------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

MEAL plan (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning)

Project level

What	How	Responsible	Frequency	Reporting mechanism	Notes
PMG	Meetings	DEPA	Biannually	Reports and minutes	
Project Steering Committee	Meetings	DEPA	Annually	Reports and minutes	
Project management team	Meetings / ongoing dialogue	DEPA	Continuously	Ad-hoc minutes	
SSC Team meetings DEPA/Embassy	Daily planning and implementation	DEPA	Weekly/monthly	Ad-hoc minutes	
Result framework	Indicators and targets	DEPA	Annually	Annual report	
Risk management	Risk matrix	DEPA	Continuously	Annual report	
Economic accounting	DEPA economic governance	DEPA	Biannual	Updated internal budget and PMG reports	
Status with Sector Councillor, local expert and DEPA	Meetings with DEPA management	DEPA	Annually	Summary of meetings	
Working Groups with partners	Continuous sharing and learning	DEPA/Embassy	Continuously	Ad-hoc minutes and adaptive management	
Events with partners	Sharing and learning	DEPA/Embassy	Continuously	Ad-hoc minutes and adaptive management	
Joint case studies	Documenting results and lessons learnt	DEPA/Embassy	Ad-hoc	Reports	
Project managers team reflections on experiences and lessons learnt	Weekly team meetings Monthly in-depth sessions	DEPA	Continuously	Adaptive management Summarized in Annual report	
Project teams reflections on experiences and lessons learnt	Workshops	DEPA	Ad-hoc	Agenda and summaries of workshops	Teambuilding and learning to strengthen implementation
Reflections across SSCs within the theme	Workshops on Water (or subthemes)	DEPA	Ad-hoc	Agenda and summaries of meetings	Learning across to strengthen implementation

					and explore new DEPA strongholds
DEPA presentations and support to DFC courses	Broader sharing of lessons learnt	DEPA	Regularly	Presentations	
Communication products	Coordinated with communication colleagues	DEPA	Continuously	Media products	
Stakeholder dialogue	Ad-hoc meetings and dialogue	DEPA	Continuously	Summaries of meetings	

Annex 6: Risk management

Risk Factor	Likelihood	Impact	Risk response	Residual risk	Background to assessment
Contextual risks					
International crisis or pandemics stall or delay project activities and travel	Likely	Major	Changing schedule and plans for missions, study tours and other physical events and activities; make use of virtual communication means		International crisis can escalate as experience with COVID in 2021-2022. This may interrupt capacity development activities involving travel, or in case the partner authorities' urgently need to shift focus of staff and resources to addressing pressing other needs. This can impact working relations and results performance for some activities.
Changing political priorities and plans	Likely	Major	Changing work plans, activities and increase dialogue on priorities, plans and activities within the SSC project document.		Elections, changing governments, restructuring, changing division of labour with national partners and in Denmark.
Climate variability and natural shocks especially affecting water resources	Likely	Minor	The FP itself is largely a response to this overall risk which is therefore already reflected in its focus. Moreover, the FP's focus on strengthening framework systems will remain relevant and may not necessitate fundamental adjustment in case of extreme weather events, or similar. Besides this, the risk will mainly be addressed at country/project level where activities/focus of the support would be adjusted to events not already reflected in the project designs.	Some risk will remain	Climate variability and natural shocks are frequent in several of the partner countries.
Programmatic risks					
Partner authorities' internal processes delay implementation progress.	Likely	Major	Analyse causes for delays as basis for deciding response; On-going dialogue and up-front assessment of potential barriers, as basis for deciding the necessary adaptation of work plan, activities and budgets; learning and adaptation.	Associated risks might continue and longer-term change of programme and focus might be necessary.	A typical risk in public sector reform and institutional development process, which has affected some projects in the previous phase. At times due to sudden emergence of competing other national priorities, which shift staff/institutional focus momentarily; unexpected capacity weaknesses in areas key to, but not targeted by, the authorities' capacity development activities: shifting of staff, or other institutional barriers emerging.

Challenges in mobilizing national partner staff for inputs on specific activities.	Almost certain	Minor	Requires adaptive and flexible management, change of work plan, activities, timing and inputs from DEPA and others.	Some activities can be delayed or not implemented as foreseen.	Changes in context, framework conditions and/or institutions are common.
Institutional risks					
Changes in division of labour among national and Danish authorities and partners	Likely	Major	Changes to work plans, activities and mobilisation of staff. Assignment of new staff, if necessary.	Some activities can be delayed or not implemented as foreseen.	Recent changes in division of labour among Danish ministries, 2026.
Organisational capacity does not develop in line with the size and complexity of the SSC portfolio	Possible	Major	Regular assessment of resource and competency needs across the portfolio; flexible resource planning; continued development of Project Manager competencies; and appropriate involvement of technical and support functions, including financial and legal expertise. Programme-level learning and monitoring will support early identification of emerging capacity needs.	Some risk will remain if portfolio growth or changing requirements create short-term capacity pressures.	DEPA has extensive experience in managing SSC cooperation and a well-established organisational set-up. However, an expanding or increasingly complex portfolio may place additional demands on project management, technical resources and administrative support. Maintaining effective implementation therefore requires organisational capacity and competencies to develop in line with the portfolio.
The sector counsellors do not maintain the needed balance between advising partner authorities and linking with trade council/Danish commercial actors	Unlikely	Minor	The Embassies and DEPA will be responsible for properly defining the expectations for the Sector Counsellor and monitor the Sector Counsellor's performance of his/her roles, also with inputs from the Partner Authority. In addition to technical skills and knowledge, Sector Counsellors will be selected for their personal skills and ability to exercise good judgement.	Some risk will remain since there will continue to be shifting pressures and the right balance cannot be defined exactly in practice.	The sector counsellors' responsibilities include linking with Danish commercial actors as well as advising partner authorities, and it may not always be straightforward how to best manage the balance between the two roles, for instance to avoid compromising the partner authorities' long-term interests.

