

Danish Red Cross feedback to Ukraine Strategic Framework 2025-2028

1. Clear Targets, Indicators, and Theory of Change (ToC)

We strongly recommend incorporating clear targets, indicators, and a Theory of Change (ToC) to evaluate the strategy's progress and effectiveness. Currently, Chapter 3.2 (p. 14-15) outlines activities but does not detail envisioned results or impacts. Without specific metrics, it is challenging to assess the success, see the complementarity of interventions, or make relevant adjustments to overall programming. A well-defined ToC will help articulate how these interventions lead to desired impacts, providing a roadmap for achieving Denmark's strategic objectives, and guide partners in how they contribute to the overall vision.

2. Greater focus on coordination mechanisms

We are happy to see that a section is made to ensure coordination of the Danish efforts (section 6.3) and support the development of robust and inclusive coordination mechanisms that facilitate collaboration among the Danish government, Ukrainian authorities, civil society, private sector, and international partners. It is suggested that more clarity is provided in the strategy and a clear framework for achieving this integration is outlined in the strategy. The Partner Forum described in the strategy (p. 33) is a positive step, assuming it'll be anchored within Ukraine, but it is recommended that the section is expanded to include cross-sectoral representation, particularly civil society, and private sector actors. This could be achieved through the following phrasing:

- a. *Partner Forum for International and Danish Core Implementing Partners (p. 33)*
In addition to the above, a partner forum for the implementing partners, including Danish civil society organizations, of the programme will be established. To ensure effective implementation and relevance, the Partner Forum will take place within Ukraine, enabling closer engagement with national and local stakeholders.
The forum will include civil society, private sector actors, and local authorities to ensure cross-sectoral representation. This will strengthen the exchange of knowledge and experiences, ensure activities are adapted to the local context, and improve coordination in relation to planned interventions and national priorities.

Additionally, a unifying coordination strategy is essential to align efforts by including the Peace and Stabilisation Fund, humanitarian aid, and EU macro-financial support, into a cohesive and impactful approach. Without such mechanisms, there is a risk of fragmentation and missed opportunities for synergy. For example, in Mykolaiv, closer collaboration between civil society and private sector actors could significantly enhance the impact of reconstruction and early recovery efforts. This can lead to missed opportunities for localized, sustainable interventions if not coordinated with locally anchored CSOs, with whom Danish civil society typically works closer.

3. EU, the EU Presidency and UN Security Council

We recommend that the strategy explicitly outline how Denmark's roles in the EU Presidency and UN Security Council will align with and support the objectives of the Strategic Framework. These positions offer unique opportunities to, advocate for Ukraine's needs, and promote global policy alignment, secure international funding. It is recommended that Denmark prioritize working closely with the EU at all levels and take an active influencing role in ensuring civil society organization (CSO) participation in Ukraine, particularly within the Ukraine Facility. For instance, Denmark's leadership in these forums could facilitate greater international coordination on reconstruction funding. However, the strategy currently makes no mention of leveraging these roles, foregoing an opportunity to strengthen Denmark's influence in supporting Ukraine. A dedicated section on this alignment and closer links with the EU would enhance the framework's strategic coherence and maximize Denmark's impact on key initiatives such as the Ukraine Facility.

4. Inclusion of civil society in 'Goal 2'

We recommend explicitly including civil society organizations (CSOs) in the achievement of Strategic Goal 2: Energy security, green transition, and just growth. While CSOs are recognized

as key partners in Goals 1 and 3, their exclusion from Goal 2 overlooks their vital role in advocacy, monitoring, and community mobilization for green energy initiatives and reforms. CSOs can ensure that energy reforms and green transition projects are inclusive, equitable, and transparent. They can also advocate for marginalized and vulnerable populations to benefit from renewable energy investments. For instance, p. 19 of the strategy outlines promising projects for green transition but omits CSOs as a crosscutting instrument from Goal 2 in the overall strategic summary table. Including CSOs in Goal 2 will permit a more community-driven and sustainable approach to energy independence and just growth.

5. Demining and Mine Risk Education

On page 44, the strategy highlights that demining efforts will focus on ensuring environmentally safe agricultural production areas and sustainable farming, with additional consideration for transport corridors. While the focus on economic demining is important, the strategy currently lacks defined goals and risks overlooking the broader implications of mine clearance for community safety, infrastructure development, and societal stability, the Humanitarian Mine action part. Additionally, there is limited attention given to mine risk education and non-technical surveys, which is a critical component of Humanitarian Mine Action. It is recommended not to limit the focus to demining, which could be read as only focusing on the mine clearance activity. While including Humanitarian Mine Action in the strategy, a more inclusive and humanitarian perspective is included that considers the vulnerabilities of affected populations. The non-technical surveys are important, as experience has shown that substantive amount of land (including agricultural land) has been declared safe after a non-technical survey. Equally, the education of the risks related to mines and unexploded ordnances should be clearly stated in the strategic document with a focus on particularly vulnerable groups such as children and displaced persons.

6. Greater balance in focus of vulnerabilities

While we support the inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a priority and recognize its critical importance, we would like to encourage greater emphasis on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in the strategy. The number of people in need of MHPSS is significant, reflecting the widespread psychological impact of the ongoing conflict. Recent data from the Ukrainian government indicates a 57% increase in MHPSS needs from 2023–2024, highlighting the urgency of addressing mental health services comprehensively. Veterans represent a critical group requiring targeted reintegration initiatives, including vocational training, psychosocial support, and employment opportunities. With estimates of upwards of 2.000.000 Ukrainian veterans expected to return home, reintegration will require a holistic approach that addresses not only the veterans themselves but also the families and communities they return to. Building support structures around families and local societies will be essential to facilitate this transition and promote long-term social cohesion. By rebalancing the focus on vulnerabilities, the strategy can ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing the diverse needs of Ukraine's population. For instance, while p. 10 and p. 17 highlight SGBV as a significant concern, the representation of veterans' needs is limited and lacks specificity. Incorporating updated data and broadening the focus will strengthen the strategy's inclusivity and responsiveness.

Links to reports:

- [Corioli Institute: Reintegration, Resilience and Participation Strategies for Ukraine's Veterans](#)
- [IOM: Mental Health in Ukraine: Displacement, Vulnerabilities and Support - November 2024](#)
- [Data Friendly Space: Ukrainian Crisis: Vulnerabilities, Needs and Conflict Incidents in Frontline Settlements](#)
- [NGO Girls: Gender-Based Violence in Ukraine Amid War: An Assessment Report – September 2024](#)