



Danida Information & Engagement Fund (2022-2025)

# CONCEPT NOTE - DRAFT

August 2021



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## 1. Introduction

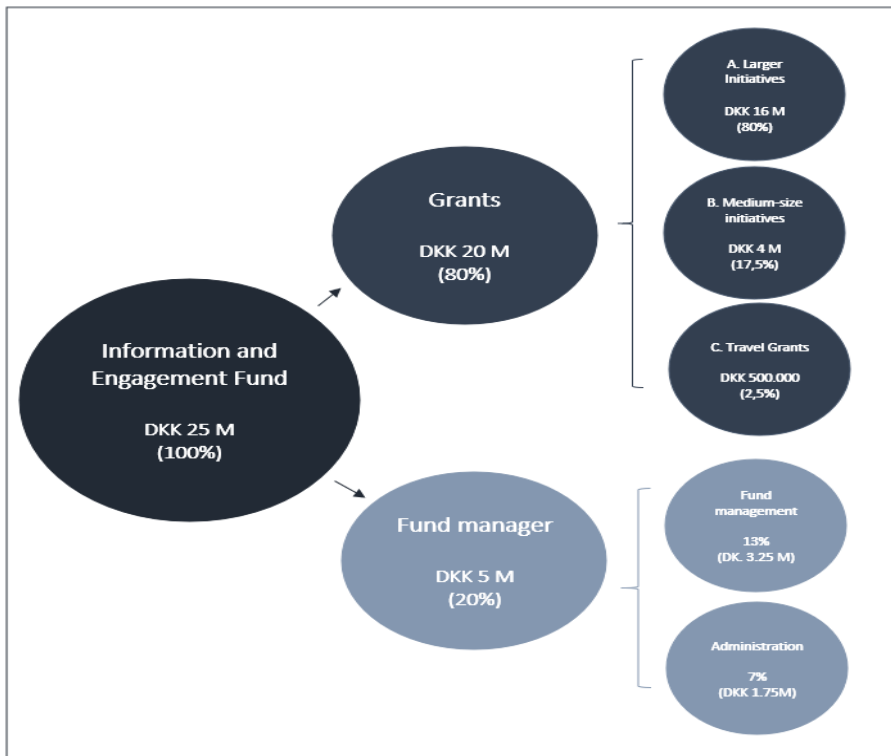
Information and public engagement have been key to Danish development cooperation since 1962 when Danida was established with an important input from civil society and strong communications profile exemplified by a televised fundraising event often referred to as the ‘birth of Danida’<sup>1</sup>.

Informing and engaging the Danish public is a multi-stakeholder tradition with a division of labour between Government and civil society actors. A recent evaluation has documented the comparative advantages of non-state actors in reaching wider audiences and at the same time confirmed the challenges of reaching beyond the established audiences of already supportive segments of Danes. Key recommendations included longer time horizons and incentives for stronger collective impact<sup>2</sup>.

This note outlines the concept for a new funding mechanism to support information and engagement of a wide spectrum of Danish target groups on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global development. The mechanism will replace the former MFA Information Fund (‘Oplysningspuljen’) and the current Engagement Fund (‘Engagementspuljen’) as *one* ‘Information and Engagement Fund’ and safeguard some of the best qualities of these mechanisms.

Support will be implemented by a Fund Manager identified in an open tender process launched in October 2021. The selected Fund Manager will be charged with grant-making and supportive activities for grant recipients such as professional networks for experience exchange and an annual high-profiled event for practitioners. The new Fund is expected to be in place by April 2022.

Figure 1: Danida Information and Engagement Fund – Flow of funding



<sup>1</sup> ‘Danida født på fjernsynet’ - [http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/11139/html/printerversion\\_chapter05.htm](http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/11139/html/printerversion_chapter05.htm) (2012)

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society – Thematic Evaluation of Public Engagement in Denmark (April 2021)



## 2. Objective

The overall objective of the Information and Engagement Fund is to *inform Danes on issues of relevance to development cooperation and Sustainable Development Goals and engage citizens in making a difference for Denmark's role in the world.*

Informing and engaging is understood broadly in this context as comprising documentary publicism as well as initiatives to engage Danes in specific call-to-action in response to global challenges.

In pursuit of this objective, the Fund will make the most of available resources by prioritising:

- a. Joint initiatives bringing together CSOs, media professionals and other stakeholders, particularly new applicants with strong channels of communication to priority target groups.
- b. Effective approaches leading to relevant and documentable engagement outcomes, including scaling up of initiatives that have proven effective.
- c. Funding that complements existing sources of information and engagement funding.
- d. Diversity of technical approaches to wide audience reach and new partnership constellations
- e. Longer-term perspective allowing for proper planning and documentation of results

In addition to grant-making, the Fund aims to contribute to partnerships and professional excellence by dedicating resources for experience exchange, documentation of results and joint learning through networks and an annual high-profile event for the information and engagement profession.

## 3. Grant modality

A budget of DKK 25 million drawn from Finance Bill §6.35.01.13 ('Oplysning i Danmark') is expected to be available for the modality from 2022-2025, subject to annual parliamentary approval.

**Table 1: Three principal elements of the Information and Engagement Fund**

Budget item	Relative share	Amount (DKK million)
Grants awarded through two annual calls for proposals (see details below): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A. Large initiatives</li> <li>- B. Medium-Sized Initiatives</li> <li>- C. Travel Grants</li> </ul>	80%	DKK 20m
Fund management, own 'supportive activities' of Fund Manager and other activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory services vis-à-vis applicants</li> <li>- Documentation of results</li> <li>- Network activities</li> <li>- Annual conference</li> </ul>	13%	DKK 3.25m
Administration	7%	DKK 1.75m
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>DKK 25m</b>

The budget format for the grant modality (with split of funds between grants, fund management and administration) may be subject to finetuning in response to on-going revision of current guidelines by MFA (for details, please refer to Fund Management Guidelines [via this link](#), "Puljer og netværk", in Danish).



### 3.1 Three grant windows

Three windows of funding mechanism are envisaged:

- a. DKK 16 million a year dedicated to **Larger Initiatives** with three key requirements:
  - Applicant consortium of a minimum of three partners (CSO, media, others)
  - Long-term perspective reflected in a timeframe of at least 12 and at most 30 months
  - Budgets of between DKK 250,000 and DKK 2,500,000 per application
- b. DKK 3.5 million a year dedicated to **Medium-Size Initiatives** with three key requirements:
  - Open to sole or consortia of applicants (CSOs, media, others)
  - Short/medium-term perspective reflected in a time frame of at least three months
  - Budgets of between DKK 100,000 and DKK 250,000 per application
- c. DKK 500.000 a year dedicated to **Travel Grants**
  - Open to media and engagement applicants, focus on wide audience reach
  - Opportunity to cover mobility costs for information and engagement
  - Budgets between DKK 25,000 and DKK 100,000 per application

All three windows allocate grants during two annual rounds where applications are invited for the same deadline and assessed in parallel by the Grant Committee.

### 3.2 Target groups

Funding will be prioritised where applicants submit convincing proposals for outreach to new audiences, notably where these target groups include segments with limited current exposure to Danish involvement in development and SDGs. For applications aiming at these target groups, priority will be given to communication of not only general issues relating to developing countries but information and engagement with a development cooperation and SDG dimension.

Applicants can propose documentary publicism as well as call-to-action-oriented initiatives where new target groups can act as change agents as part of an engagement concept. Priority will also be given to initiatives with convincing plans for engagement of new segments. This is a particularly strong feature of the medium-size grants window but also relevant for larger grants.

The new modality aims to complement existing funding mechanisms. It will differ from the earlier information and engagement modalities where primary and secondary school students have been found by evaluations in 2016 and 2020-21 to be the by far largest target group. The mechanism replacing Recycling for Development - GLOBUS - envisaged to be functional by 2022 is expected to be the principal entry point for education sector applicants, but schools and colleges can still apply for support from the Information and engagement fund provided they are part of broader consortia and reach beyond educational institutions in their proposals.



### 3.3 Criteria for grant-making

Criteria applied by the Grant Committee when assessing application for support will include:

- ❖ Compliance with defined minimum requirements
- ❖ Relevance of proposed initiative and strategic outreach and outcome (hard and soft targets)
- ❖ Links to actively involved partners in the Global South
- ❖ Challenges and results of developing countries, SDGs and development cooperation
- ❖ Capacity and track-record of applicant(s) to reach priority target groups
- ❖ Strategic approach to engaging (new) priority target groups
- ❖ Cost of proposed initiative vis-à-vis dissemination and expected outcome
- ❖ Innovative elements and preparedness to take calculated risk

### 3.4 Applicants

Registered public or private entities in Denmark eligible to apply for funding include:

- a. Civil Society Organisations, including strategic partners and network organisations
- b. Professional bodies, trade unions and membership organisations
- c. Private companies, including film producers, publishing houses and gaming companies
- d. Public entities and self-governing institutions
- e. Private foundations and charities

The Information and Engagement Fund aims to complement existing mechanisms. By implication, priority is given to applicants who do not already have arrangements with Danida or access to funding, such as strategic partners entitled to spend a share of their Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) budget on public engagement in Denmark and educational institutions who have access to support under GLOBUS by 2022. However, educational institutions and strategic partners are not refrained from applying to the new Fund individually if they are a part of broader partnership consortia.

Partnership applications are a particular priority of the Fund. The larger of the three windows proposed in Section 3.1 encourages collaboration by requiring applications to be based on partnerships of at least three partners, ideally with different comparative advantages (CSO, media, others). The rationale is to minimise organisational self-branding and encourage the scaling up of joint approaches to outreach and longer-term collective impact in relation to global issues.

### 3.5 Supporting activities

In addition to the primary objective of grant-making for information and engagement initiatives, a role is also foreseen for the Fund in stimulating partnership approaches, joint learning and professional excellence by organising a number of supporting activities. Such activities include:

- a. Documentation of grant-making results at output and outcome level
- b. Compilation of annual report highlighting grant-making results and Fund priorities
- c. Professional network meetings for information and engagement practitioners
- d. Capacity building activities in the form of training sessions and technical seminars
- e. Annual high-profile event for the information and engagement profession



The proposed supporting activities follow up on recommendations from evaluations, surveys and reports calling for improved documentation of results and incentives for stronger collective impact<sup>3</sup>. Such supporting activities can draw on lessons learned from professional networking such as the MFA initiative 'Dialog Døgnet' (2010-2014), engagement seminars managed by CISU and networks for popular engagement professionals organised by Global Focus.

### Examples of eligible initiatives

Applications from public and private entities registered in Denmark are invited for two annual rounds of grant-making for information and engagement in Denmark and assessed against criteria of strategic relevance, capacity of applicant, solidity of planned target group outreach and cost vs. expected outcome. Illustrative examples of eligible initiatives include:

- **Youth for sustainable cities**  
Danish youth organization in partnership with circular economy activists in Kampala to co-create campaigns on steps citizens can take to promote green transition.
- **Documentary film production**  
Seed-funding or co-funding for high-end documentary film production that include partnership and dissemination plans to reach broad segments of the public.
- **Innovative corporate partnerships**  
Partnership involving a CSO, a retail chain and a trade union to engage staff in a two-year initiative as ambassadors for fair-trade products and/or focused fundraising.
- **Gaming on a serious note**  
Involvement of Danish youth in design and marketing of a large-scale digital gaming device in a partnership of professional designers, a CSO and groups of young people.
- **Diaspora civic engagement**  
Partnership between CSOs involved in refugee and migration issues and volunteers from diaspora groups in Denmark engage in *Dilemma Dialogues* across the country.

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<sup>3</sup> Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society - Public Engagement in Denmark (2021), Evaluering af Danidas Oplysningsbevilling (2016), Danskernes kendskab og holdninger til det danske udviklingssamarbejde og FN's verdensmål – Advice (2020).



## 4. Governance

The Fund will be managed by an operator identified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following an open tender process. The process is expected to commence in October 2021 and be completed in time for the Fund to be operational by April 2022. The Fund has a two-layered management setup stipulated by the fund management agreement to ensure accountability of government expenditure as well as opportunities for stakeholder dialogue and synergy between engagement professionals:

- Grant Committee – five members appointed by and reporting to the Fund Manager
- Fund Manager – contracted for a four-year period following an open tender process

### 4.1 Grant Committee

A Grant Committee comprising five members reports to the Fund Manager and is charged with grant-making prioritisation. In preparation of the twice-annual meetings of the Grant Committee, applications are assessed by the Fund Manager. The outcome of the two grant-making rounds is communicated by the Fund Manager to the MFA for information.

The Fund Manager and all other interested stakeholders are invited in a public announcement to nominate candidates for the Grant Committee. Based on these nominations, five members are appointed by the Fund Manager for a four-year period. Profiles of the committee members will include solid expertise in (a) development communication, (b) marketing, media production, public engagement (development or other areas) and real-life events, (c) monitoring, evaluation and learning, (d) financial management and (e) fund management. Based on these nominations, the Fund Manager appoints five Grant Committee members a period of four years.

### 4.2 Fund Manager

A public tender will be launched in October 2021 to identify the best qualified candidate for the role as Fund Manager for the four-year period from 2022 to 2025. Criteria will be specified in the tender documentation to include as a minimum:

- Organisational capacity to manage grant-making, administration of public funds and multi-stakeholder activities, including solid financial management systems and outreach skills.
- Three professional profiles with solid experience in (a) fund management, (b) content production and (c) public engagement regarding global challenges, SDGs and development.

The role of the Fund Manager is essentially two-fold:

1. Open, transparent and efficient grant-making of the three funding windows (Larger, Medium-size and Travel Grants) with application rounds twice a year.
2. Supporting activities with grant recipients as the primary target group including:
  - Documentation og distribution of grant-making results at output and outcome level
  - Compilation of annual report highlighting grant-making results and Fund priorities
  - Professional network meetings for information and engagement practitioners
  - Capacity building activities in the form of training sessions and technical seminars
  - Annual high-profile event for the information and engagement profession





## 5. Results documentation

The Fund Manager is responsible for financial and narrative reporting to the Grant Committee and MFA of results output as well as at the traditionally somewhat more challenging outcome level.

More specifically, documentation of grant-making performance is summarised in an annual report to be submitted to MFA six months into the following year submitted and made the subject of reflection and discussion during the annual high-profile event for the profession of that year.

### 5.1 Financial reporting

Audited accounts according to professional standards are submitted to the MFA on annual basis.

### 5.2 Output and outcome results

The Fund Manager is charged with documenting results at the levels of outputs (grant utilisation, film/audio/digital content, audience reach) and outcome (indications that overall results have been achieved). Outcome level results is a learning challenge that lends itself to joint learning efforts.