



OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FROM 2020 REVIEW

This document contains sections from the review that CISU particularly takes notice of besides the review's concrete recommendations.

Overall, the review finds that the Civil Society Fund delivers relevant results in the global South through a well-functioning CISU appropriation and capacity development system meeting formal requirements and through highly motivated grant holders (GHs) and partners.

This overall conclusion is supported by a number of more specific findings:

- CISU's Strategy 2018-21 is well-aligned with the MFA World 2030. It addresses the needs and expectations of members and bridges the wide diversity of members, ranging from small volunteer organisations to medium-sized and professionalised CSOs. The strategy is relevant to the diverse needs of members as well as to the World 2030 and agreement with the MFA.
- CISU's governance structure provides effective and accountable governance with good collaboration between the CISU Assembly, the Board and the Secretariat leadership and staff.
- The results framework is useful as a simple, lean management tool, and the Annual Report to the MFA provides quantitative verification of organisational results and examples of project related results.
- Overall, CISU operates with adequate systems to provide effective management oversight on results delivery and emerging issues.
- CISU has vigilantly pursued a simplification agenda and introduced new grant modalities. The new 2019 version of the guidelines is more accessible, and the requirements proportionate with the nature, scope and risk of the interventions and the applying organisation's capacity.
- CISU has enriched its modalities, e.g. through the new Small-Scale Intervention, which allows smaller and less experienced applicants to get exposure. There are also modalities targeted at mature organisations in the growth phase. The 'menu' of modalities is diversified and well-tailored to the spectrum of CISU applicants and partners. With the CSF increasingly under pressure, the prioritisation of CSF funds across the menu of modalities becomes increasingly important.
- CISU's appropriation system is solid and well tested. The applications formats and processes are tailored to modalities ("kravsafstemt") and ensure that selected projects are aligned to the CSF (and MFA) strategic direction. The system is built around an 'arms-length' principle to ensure impartiality between CISU advisory services and the application assessments.
- CISU provides a number of services, capacity development and networking opportunities funded through the CSF. There is high appreciation for CISU's counselling services. The courses are also found to be relevant, although it is also difficult to bridge the diversity of CISU's constituency.
- Partnerships are at the heart of CISU, and CISU plays a highly constructive value-addition here. CISU's value-add is geared around strengthening partnership thinking, joint project management and organisational capacities, whereas the value-add is weaker in the more technical or specialised skills required in some projects. CISU has a wealth of knowledge and experience around partnerships and stimulates these through the various funding windows and through its advisors.
- All the projects visited were relevant and well on track to deliver solid results with local ownership and engagement. The results frameworks are of a varying quality given the diversity of the project portfolio, however, and the quality increases with the experience of the organisation. Documentation of



outcomes is particularly diverse across organisations, although the majority of projects do seem to generate outcomes in terms of e.g. community empowerment.

- MEL responsibilities sit at all three “tiers” of the CISU delivery system: CISU, GHs and partners. The GHs constitute the main monitoring mechanism in the system.
- Popular engagement and communication play a very important part in CISU. Popular engagement is one of the two key objectives of the 2018-21 CISU strategy and pertains to both Denmark and the countries where development activities are carried out. The review finds that CISU and the members play an important part in engaging Danes in development cooperation, from young and old and across cities and rural areas alike. The level of engagement and enthusiasm witnessed is impressive and encouraging.
- CISU’s financial management systems and practices are generally in place, enabling CISU to adhere to accountability and transparency in regard to performance and compliance of MFA requirements.
- CISU is managing the CSF with a focus on cost-effectiveness. CISU is in compliance with MFA requirements with regards to financial management.