



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*

Danida Information & Engagement Fund (2022-2026)

# CONCEPT NOTE

September 2021



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## 1. Introduction

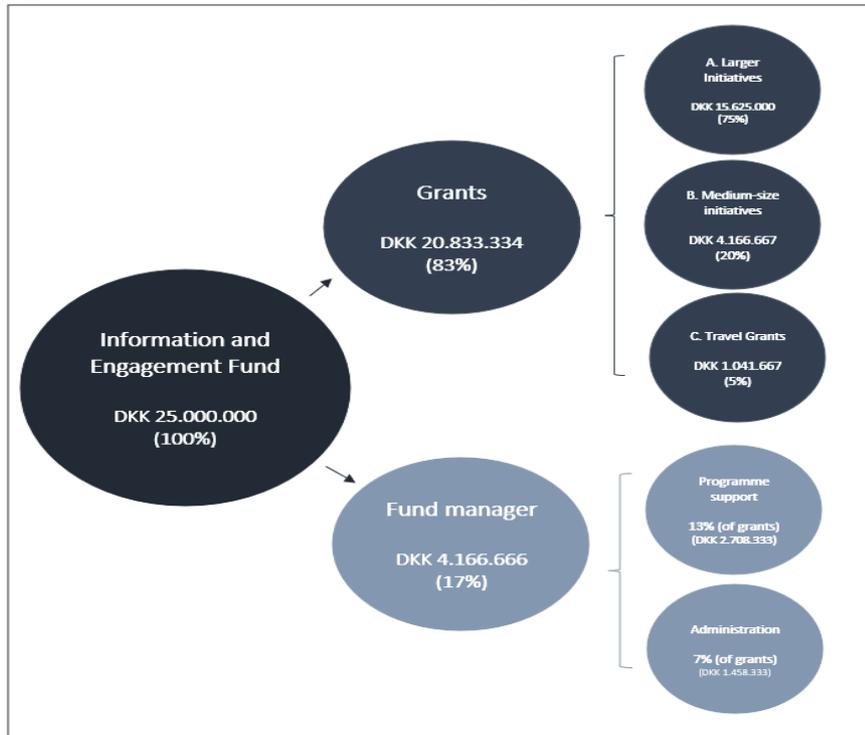
Information and public engagement have been key to Danish development cooperation since 1962 when Danida was established with an important input from civil society and strong communications profile exemplified by a televised fundraising event often referred to as the ‘birth of Danida’<sup>1</sup>.

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.

The Fund 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 global issues of relevance to development cooperation and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or **engage** citizens in making a difference for a more just, secure and sustainable world.

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

- a. Partners teaming up with strong channels of outreach communication to priority target groups.
- b. Effective approaches leading to documentable engagement outcomes, including a mix of scaled-up initiatives that have already proven effective and preparedness to take calculated risk.
- 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.

Grants are available for a wide spectrum of initiatives, each assessed for their relevance for the intended target group. Focus is on outreach to segments not already involved in development cooperation and SDGs. Quantitative goals on audience reach may be relevant where target groups have limited prior knowledge and experience while qualitative and longer-term goals may be appropriate for initiatives aiming for active engagement of intended target groups.

In addition to grant-making, the Fund aims to contribute to partnerships and professional excellence by dedicating resources for support activities such as nurturing of new partnership arrangements, 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 grant windows combined with support activities for the profession**

Budget item	Relative share	Amount (DKK million)
Grants awarded through two annual calls for proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A. Large initiatives</li><li>- B. Medium-Sized Initiatives</li><li>- C. Travel Grants</li></ul>	83% (of total budget)	DKK 20.833.334
Programme support, 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% (of grant amount)	DKK 2.708.333
Administration	7% (of grant amount)	DKK 1.458.333
<b>Total</b>		<b>DKK 25.000.000</b>

Fund management must follow all requirements in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark's Financial Management Guidelines: <https://amg.um.dk/en/tools/financial-management/>.



### 3.1 Three grant windows

Three windows of funding mechanism are envisaged:

- a. DKK 15.625.000 (75%) a year dedicated to **Larger Initiatives** with requirements including:
  - Applicant consortium of at least two partners (CSO, foundations, media, companies)
  - Long-term perspective reflected in a timeframe of at least 12 and at most 30 months
  - Budgets of between DKK 500,000 and DKK 2,500,000 per application
- b. DKK 4.166.667 (20%) a year dedicated to **Medium-Size Initiatives** with requirements including:
  - 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 500,000 per application
- c. DKK 1.041.667 (5%) a year dedicated to **Travel Grants** with requirements including:
  - Open to media as well as engagement applicants with a strong dissemination plan
  - Opportunity to cover travel costs for information/engagement with audience reach
  - Budgets between DKK 20,000 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 context by the Grant Committee, coordinating with related funding mechanisms. In each round, applicants can apply in one of the three windows. Successful applicants can be awarded grants for similar initiatives in up to three successive rounds.

### 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, grants are awarded for communication of general issues relating to developing countries as well as information and engagement with a development cooperation and SDG dimension.

Applicants can propose documentary publicism, campaign concepts, educational materials or call-to-action-oriented initiatives where new target groups can act as change agents as part of an engagement concept. Priority will be given to initiatives with convincing plans for information of and engagement with the chosen target audience.

The new modality aims to complement existing funding mechanisms. Primary and secondary school students have been found by evaluations in 2016 and 2020-21 to be the by far largest target group in past information and engagement initiatives, producing a wealth of quality educational materials. In many cases but not all, these materials have reached the intended target groups. The mechanism replacing Recycling for Development, GLOBUS, will constitute an important entry point for education sector applicants, but schools and colleges can apply for support from the Information and engagement fund as part of broader consortia and educational materials can be supported where didactic quality is underpinned by co-creation with teachers and learning professionals and where professional marketing and dissemination plans are fully integrated into the proposal.



### 3.3 Criteria for grant-making

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

- ❖ Compliance with defined minimum requirements
- ❖ Strategic relevance of proposed initiative and intended outcome (hard and soft targets)
- ❖ Relevant perspectives for partnering with Denmark and the Global South<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Communication of challenges 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, self-governing and cultural institutions
- e. Non-profit private foundations, charities and socio-economic companies

Danida's Information and Engagement Fund will support those applications with the most convincing proposals to reach priority target groups. All three funding windows are open to applicants with a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), especially those with smaller grant agreements - and educational institutions who also have access to support under GLOBUS.

Partnership applications are a particular priority of the Fund and nurture of new partnerships is included as one of the support activities to be undertaken by the fund manager. The largest of the three windows encourages collaboration by requiring applications to be based on partnerships of at least two partners with different comparative advantages. The rationale is to encourage outreach and the scaling up of joint approaches to longer-term outreach and collective impact.

### 3.5 Support activities for the profession

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

- a. Network meetings on the various funding windows and partnership matchmaking
- b. Documentation of grant-making results at output and outcome level
- c. Compilation and dissemination of annual report highlighting funding results and priorities
- d. Capacity building activities in the form of training sessions and technical seminars
- e. Annual high-profile event organised with MFA for information/engagement professionals

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<sup>3</sup> For a definition of the Global South, please refer to: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf>



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>4</sup>. Such supporting activities can draw on lessons learned from professional networking such as the MFA initiative 'Dialog Døgnet' (2010-2014), engagement seminars by CISU, networks for popular engagement professionals by Global Focus, the Unleash approach: <https://unleash.org/about/> or the LEAD Festival - <https://leadagency.dk/2020/08/18/lead-festival-9-september/>.

### 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
- **Educational materials about deforestation and sourcing of sustainable wood**  
Digital and analogue materials and interactive workshops developed in cooperation with learning professionals and targeting timber apprentices at vocational schools.
- **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.

<sup>4</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:

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

Separation of the two functions of grant-making decisions and supportive activities is essential in order to avoid conflicts of interest. The key principle is separation of supportive activities such as advisory services and nurturing of partnerships conducted by staff of the Fund Manager from assessment of grant applications conducted by the external Grant Committee.

### 4.1 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.
- Professional profiles with solid experience in (a) Communication and public engagement manager – Team Leader, (b) Results manager and (c) Fund and financial manager.

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 and distribution of grant-making results at output and outcome level
  - Compilation of dissemination of annual report on grant-making results and priorities
  - Professional network meetings for information and engagement practitioners
  - Capacity building activities in the form of training sessions and technical seminars
  - Annual high-profile not-to-be-missed event for the profession organised with MFA

### 4.2 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 a detailed description of the five profiles.



Selecting from 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. Global issues, development cooperation and SDGs
- b. Strategic communication, public engagement, events and target groups
- c. Journalism and documentaries
- d. Educational materials, marketing and learning
- e. Financial management, results documentation and knowledge-sharing.

## 5. Results documentation

The Fund Manager is responsible for financial and narrative reporting to the MFA of results at output as well as at the traditionally somewhat less tangible 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 same year.

In the case of grants to a consortium of applicants, reporting on financial management, output and outcome results is the responsibility of the primary applicant submitting reports on behalf of the entire consortium.

### 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.