



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**
Danida

Guidelines for Approval of Projects, Programmes, Multilateral Organisation Strategies, and Strategic Frameworks

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
April 2024

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Introduction

Processes for presentation of projects, programmes, multilateral organisation strategies, and strategic frameworks

These guidelines describe the procedures within the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for presentation and approval of projects, programmes, multilateral organisation strategies, and strategic frameworks.

An overview of the procedures is provided in the diagram on the next page. For details on the mandate, scope, composition, and working procedures of the Programme Committee and the Council for Development Policy, please refer to chapters A and C.

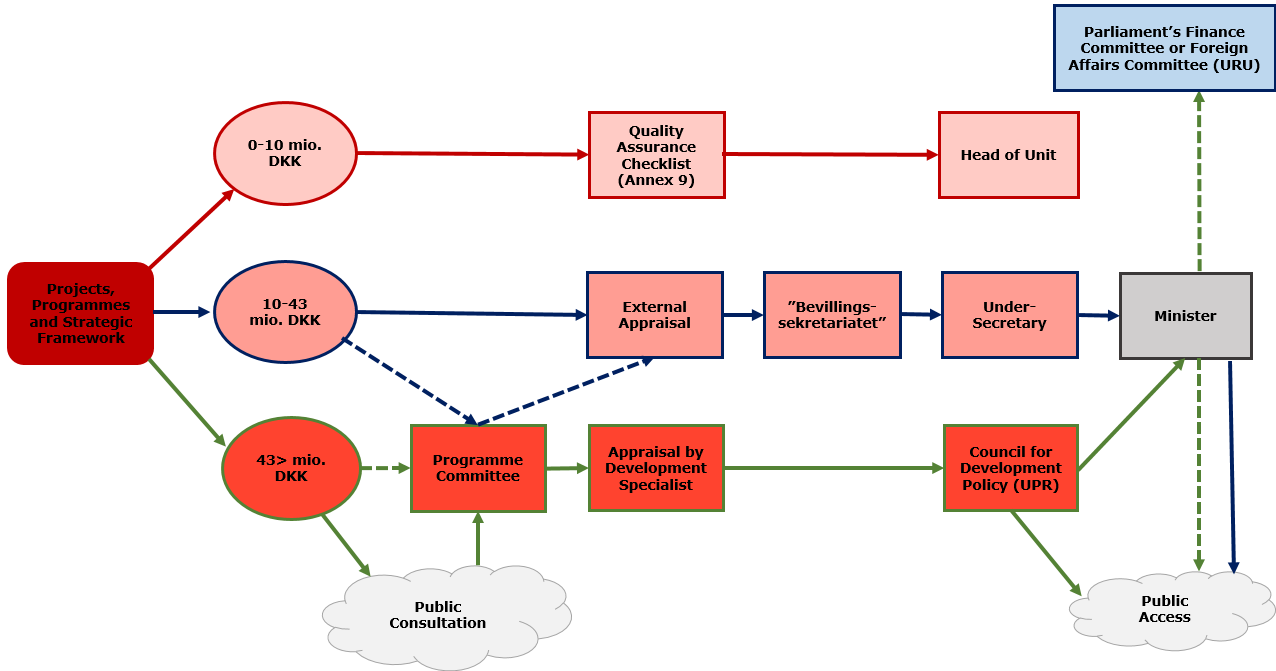
All documents submitted to the Programme Committee and the Council for Development Policy will be published on [Danida Transparency](#). Exemption from the obligation to publicise is only applicable in extraordinary cases and must be authorised by the Under-Secretary for Development Policy.

It is the responsibility of the Head of the department or representation to ensure that draft projects, programmes, or strategies are quality assured prior to submission.

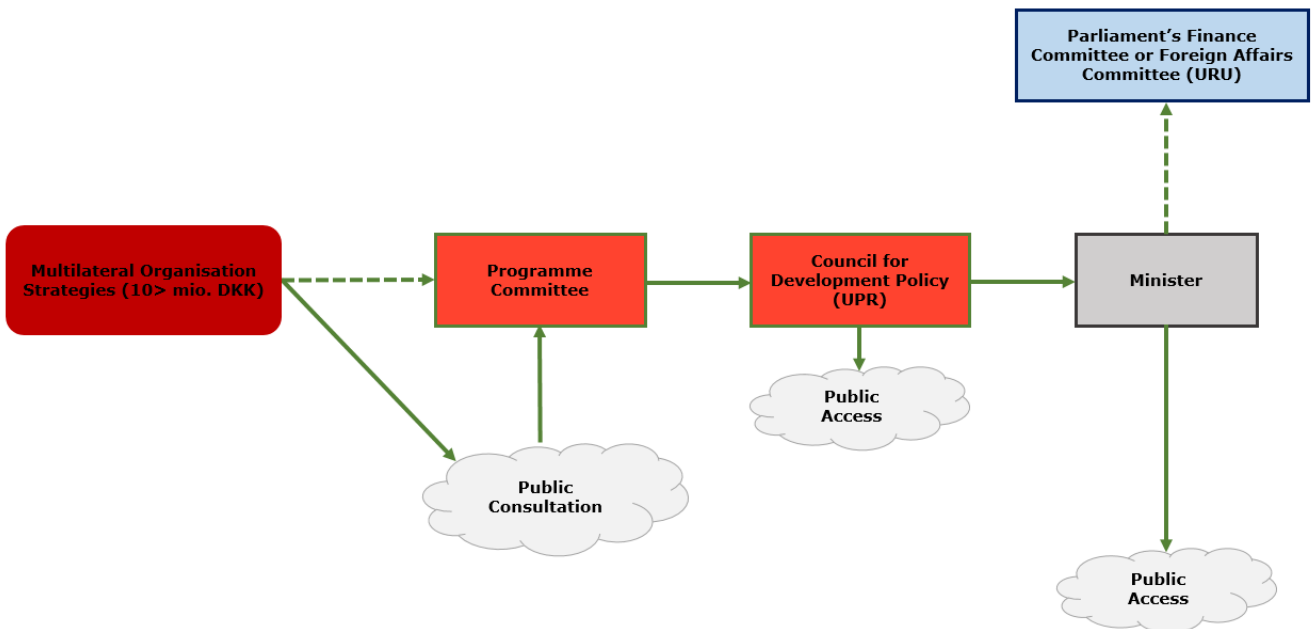
[The registration facility on UMBrella](#) must be used to place items on the agenda of the Programme Committee and the Council for Development Policy.

Overview of procedures for presentation and approval of projects, programmes, multilateral organisation strategies, and strategic frameworks

Bilateral support¹:



Multilateral organisation strategies²:



¹ See the guidelines for bilateral support on [AMG](#).

² See the guidelines for multilateral support on [AMG](#).

A. Presentation to the Programme Committee (PC)

Mandate and scope

The role of the Programme Committee is to provide quality assurance and guidance on best practises to bilateral (above DKK 43 million) and multilateral development cooperation (i.e. organisation strategies with annual contributions above DKK 10 million). The Programme Committee also promotes coherence between specific programmes and overall policy issues. The Programme Committee is consulted on draft projects, programmes, multilateral organisation strategies, and strategic frameworks at an early stage. The Committee gives advice on the implementation of policy priorities and on linkages between bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and guidance on technical aspects. It also provides quality assurance of rules and procedures and endorses initiation of the formulation and appraisal phase of programming. The Programme Committee is a forum for decision-making, strategic discussions, organisational learning, and knowledge-sharing, also among representations that may participate as peer reviewers, when relevant.

Issues which must be presented to the Programme Committee are:

- a) Draft strategic frameworks for Denmark's overall engagement in specific countries and/or regions.
- b) Draft organisation strategies for cooperation with multilateral organisations (that receive a core contribution of more than DKK 10 million annually).³
- c) Draft bilateral and earmarked multilateral projects and programmes with a budget frame (commitment) above DKK 43 million. However, the principle regarding accumulation of grants must be taken into account. For further information, see [AMG](#).
- d) Draft programme documents for programmes with a budget frame (commitment) between DKK 10 and 43 million can - depending on the nature of the programme and upon request from the responsible unit and/or the Under-Secretary for Development Policy - be presented to the Programme Committee. For further information about the approval of such grants, see chapter B.
- e) Management response to evaluations.
- f) Other matters of principle on an ad hoc basis.

Composition

The Programme Committee is chaired by the Under-Secretary for Development Policy.

For grants presented by units at the MFA in Denmark, the following units are considered permanent members of the committee:

- Africa, Policy and Development (AFRPOL).
- Evaluation, Learning and Quality (LEARNING).
- Financial Management and Support in relation to Development Cooperation (TILSKUD).

For grants presented by representations, the following units are considered permanent members of the committee:

- Africa, Policy and Development (AFRPOL).
- Evaluation, Learning and Quality (LEARNING).
- Financial Management and Support in relation to Development Cooperation (TILSKUD).
- Green Diplomacy and Climate (KLIMA).
- Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HUMCIV).

³ See the guidelines for multilateral support on [AMG](#).

- Migration, Peace and Stabilisation (MIGSTAB).
- Multilateral Cooperation Policy (MULTI).

In case of presentation of new modalities (in the recent past e.g. blended finance), new thematic areas (recently e.g. forestry) or grants which cut across several of the existing fields of responsibility (e.g. humanitarian-climate nexus), all the above-mentioned departments will be invited even though a unit in MFA in Denmark is responsible.

LEARNING is the Secretariat of the Programme Committee.

Units not mentioned above, incl. regional departments and units involved with global policy, security, trade, and communication as well as multilateral and bilateral representations, are welcome to participate in the Programme Committee meetings (through video conference). These units can also forward written comments before the meeting.

The presenting department/representation as well as other participating units must be represented by their Heads/Deputy Heads, who may be accompanied by one or more desk officers. The Head/Deputy Head and/or the desk officer presents the case on behalf of their unit.

The presenting unit may suggest to LEARNING that a relevant department or representation is invited to participate in the meeting.

Working procedures

The Programme Committee meets on a regular basis with approximately 2 weeks between the meetings.

Before the meeting in the Programme Committee, the documents for public consultation will be published on [Danida Transparency](#). It should be noted that some presentations are exempt from the public hearing (e.g. programmes and projects under the Peace and Stabilisation Fund).

Each meeting has a maximum of four agenda items. Requests to have items on the agenda will usually be accommodated on a first-come-first-served basis. Documents to the Programme Committee must be sent to Danida PC (danidapc@um.dk) with CC: carull@um.dk no later than 8 working days prior to the meeting at 12PM. It is the responsibility of the Head of the presenting department/representation to ensure that the documentation has been quality assured prior to submission. For more information on meeting dates and the specific deadlines, please consult [UMBrella](#).

Preparation and submission of documentation

The deadline for confirming agenda items is 6 weeks prior to the meeting.

The formats and content of the draft programme documents, project documents, or strategies should comply with the requirements listed in the relevant guidelines on [AMG](#). Bilateral programmes, projects, and earmarked multilateral contributions should follow the format for [Presentations to the Programme Committee](#). The document should be written in English and abbreviations should be avoided.

A standard appropriation cover note has to be prepared for each draft [programme](#), [project](#), or [multilateral organisation strategy](#). The templates for the cover notes can be found [here](#) (under tools and templates). Please note that the minimum font that can be used is 10.

The documents must be submitted in the following separate files:

1. Appropriation cover note in a Word format (1 page)
2. Programme document /strategy, excluding annexes in a Word or PDF format.
3. Annexes in a single Word or PDF file.

The draft programme, project, or strategy will be subject to a public consultation on [Danida Transparency](#) for 10 working days. The consultation will end one week after the Programme Committee meeting. Responses to the public consultation must be taken into account by the presenting unit in their revision of documents after the Programme Committee meeting.

The presenting department/representation may but is not obliged to submit 1-3 strategic questions in writing to the Programme Committee focussing on e.g. dilemmas, the balance between priority areas, etc. The purpose is to foster a strategic discussion with a view to further elaborate the document before appraisal and presentation to the Council for Development Policy. The questions may be submitted to LEARNING in parallel with the submission of documents.

Preparation and submission of written comments

Permanent members of the Programme Committee must prepare their comments in writing prior to the meeting, preferably in bullet form and ½-1 page. Written comments should be sent to the Secretariat 2 working days prior to the meeting at 3PM. The Secretariat will distribute the written comments and the responses from the public consultation the day before the meeting. Late submissions must be distributed to all permanent members of the Programme Committee by the relevant unit.

The Programme Committee meeting

The Secretariat distributes the meeting invitation and publishes the documents on [Danida Transparency](#) for the public consultation 7 working days prior to the meeting.

The meetings are chaired by the Under-Secretary for Development Cooperation. In his/her absence, the meeting is chaired by LEARNING.

Normally, an agenda item is opened with questions and comments from the permanent members of the Programme Committee. The members should highlight only key points from their submitted written comments. Afterwards, the responsible unit will respond, including to any comments from the public consultation.

The key observations, received responses to key issues raised in the public consultation, and the Programme Committee's recommendations and decisions are presented in a short, written summary. The summary is written by LEARNING and should include the Chair's main points of conclusion. The summary must be taken into account by the relevant units in the subsequent formulation phase.

Timeline for the preparation of meetings in the Programme Committee

Deadline	Action	Responsible	Role of Secretariat
6 weeks prior to the meeting	Departments and representations confirm requests for agenda items.	Departments and representations in MFA	
8 working days prior to the meeting, 12PM	Departments and representations submit quality assured draft programme documents, project documents, or	Departments and representations in MFA	Ensure that all draft programme documents, project

Deadline	Action	Responsible	Role of Secretariat
	strategies. They may submit strategic questions.		documents, or strategies are received
6-8 working days prior to the meeting	The draft programmes, project documents, or strategies will be published for public consultation and shared with the members of the Programme Committee.	Programme Committee Secretariat in LEARNING	Upload on Danida Transparency and notify subscribers. Share with the members of the Programme Committee
2 working days prior to the meeting, 3PM	Deadline for written comments by permanent members of the Programme Committee.		
1 working day prior to the meeting	Written comments from the relevant departments/representations are distributed to the members of the Programme Committee and the departments/representations involved in development cooperation. If responses to the public consultation have already been received, these are also distributed to the permanent members of the committee.	Programme Committee Secretariat in LEARNING	Distribute the written comments to the members of the Programme Committee
5 working days after the meeting	Public consultation ends. Responses to the public consultation are distributed to the presenting unit.	Permanent members of the Programme Committee	Distribute the responses from the public consultation.
7-10 working days after the meeting	A summary of the meeting is written and distributed.	LEARNING / Programme Committee Secretariat	Distribute summary

B. Approval of bilateral projects and programmes between DKK 10-43 million (“Bevillingssekretariatet”)

Working procedures

Projects and programmes with a budget between DKK 10 and 43 million are to be approved by the Minister for Development Cooperation after submission through “Bevillingssekretariatet” and endorsement by the Under-Secretary for Development Policy.

The Head of Unit is responsible for the content and quality assurance of the project/programme.

Departments and representations are requested – in consultation with the relevant Under-Secretary – to determine whether or not a draft programme document should be subject to a discussion in the Programme Committee. Considerations in this regard should include the complexity, risk level, or strategic interest of the intervention, whether it is a new programme/area/partner, the preparation process, etc. For further information, see chapter A.

Programme or project documents must be written in English and should follow the guidelines on [AMG](#). The relevant documentation is submitted through “Bevillingssekretariatet” in LEARNING to the Under-Secretary. For the moment, units are requested to submit the documentation to Bevillingssekretariatet (carull@um.dk, cc: joscal@um.dk). After ensuring that all the relevant documentation is included, Bevillingssekretariatet will submit the documentation to the Under-Secretary on behalf of the responsible unit.

LEARNING facilitates that the project/programme is approved by the Minister and published on [Danida Transparency](#).

The role of LEARNING

LEARNING will not quality assure the project/programme. LEARNING will check that the mandatory documents are attached and the proper quality assurance procedures have been followed.

LEARNING will be available for consultations with departments and representations in the preparation of the documentation and for clarifications regarding the approval process.

Finalisation of documentation before approval

The programme documentation must include all standard annexes for the specific type of support. For further information, please refer to [AMG](#). Furthermore, an appropriation cover note must be included in the programme documentation. Please note that the minimum font that may be used is 10.

Approval of project/programme

There are two steps for approval of the project/programme:

- 1) The Under-Secretary's endorsement (through submission in "Bevillingssekretariatet").
- 2) The Minister's approval.

While the unit is responsible for obtaining the Under-Secretary's endorsement, LEARNING will submit the project/programme for the Minister's final approval.

The Under-Secretary's endorsement

The documentation required for this step is:

- a) Checklist for approval (can be found on [AMG](#) under Formulation, Quality Assurance and Approval).
- b) The appropriation cover note (can be found on [AMG](#) under Formulation, Quality Assurance and Approval).
- c) Programme or project document incl. mandatory standard annexes (annex 1-8 on [AMG](#)).
- d) Signed Quality Assurance Checklist for appraisal of programmes and projects (annex 9 on [AMG](#)).
- e) "Forelæggelsesnotits" to the Minister.

The Minister's approval

LEARNING is responsible for forwarding the project/programme for the Minister's final approval.

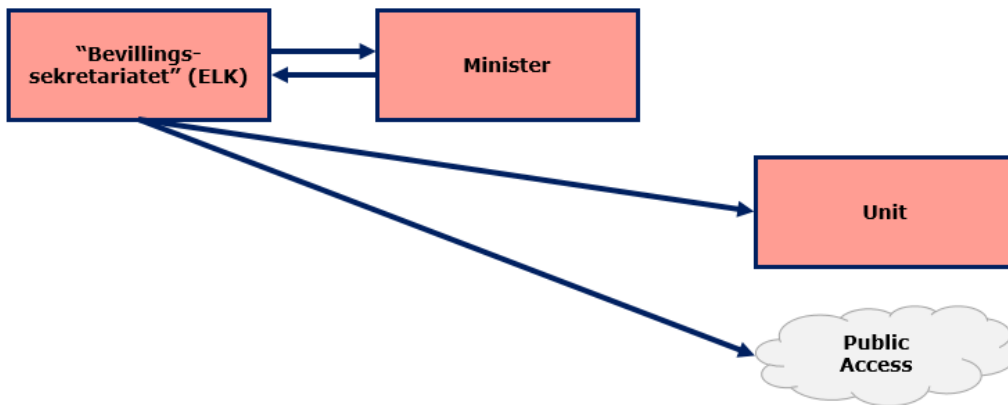
After the Minister's approval, LEARNING will inform the unit and publish the project/programme document on [Danida Transparency](#).

Overview of procedures for approval of projects and programmes between 10-43 mio. DKK

Step 1



Step 2



C. Presentation to the Council for Development Policy (UPR)

Mandate and scope

According to the [Act on International Development Cooperation](#), the mandate of the Council for Development Policy is to provide strategic advice to the Minister in relation to the preparation and implementation of Danish development cooperation. The Council also quality assures and recommends draft bilateral projects and programmes (above 43 million DKK) and multilateral organisation strategies (with annual contributions above 10 million DKK) to be approved by the Minister.

The rules of procedure for the Council for Development Policy are available [here](#) (in Danish only).

The Council for Development Policy will discuss and advise the Minister on:

- a) Draft Strategic Frameworks for Denmark's overall engagement in specific countries and/or regions.
- b) Draft bilateral and earmarked multilateral projects and programmes with a budget frame (commitment) above DKK 43 million. However, the principle regarding accumulation of grants must be taken into account. For further information, see [AMG](#).⁴
- c) Draft organisation strategies for cooperation with multilateral organisations (that receive a core or soft earmarked contribution of more than DKK 10 million annually).
- d) Other strategies within the scope of development cooperation.
- e) Priorities in the annual evaluation programme.

Furthermore, the Council will receive an annual briefing about the Proposal for the new Finance Act. The Council will be briefed about other support as and when this is relevant e.g. through business instruments, civil society organisations, and the Peace and Stabilisations Fund as well as support to development research and communication, including information activities.

Annual Stocktaking Reports should be presented to the Council between January-May, see [AMG](#).

Composition

The Council currently consists of 11 members appointed by the Minister. The members are appointed for a period of 3 years, and they can be re-appointed once. The current composition of the Council can be seen [here](#).

The Council meetings are led by a Chair (or Deputy Chair).

LEARNING is the Secretariat of the Council for Development Policy.

Working procedures

The Council will meet 8-10 times per year.

The Secretariat will finalise the agenda after consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair. Departments and representations can register agenda items by using [the registration facility on UMBrella](#). The internal deadline for confirming agenda items is 6 weeks prior to the meeting. All agenda items must be confirmed by the Secretariat. For further information on specific deadlines, please consult [UMBrella](#).

⁴ See the guidelines for multilateral support on [AMG](#).

The Secretariat will assist the Chair in planning the meetings to ensure balance between the different agenda items. The documents for agenda items that are for discussion and recommendation to the Minister are published on [Danida Transparency](#). The agenda will also be made public approximately 10 working days before the meeting.

The standard language for documents to the Council for Development Policy is English unless special circumstances suggest otherwise. Documents must be prepared in accordance with the relevant guidelines on [AMG](#).

The internal deadline for submitting documents to the Council is 13 working days prior to the meeting. The documents will be published on [Danida Transparency](#) approximately 10 working days prior to the Council meeting. For further information on specific deadlines, please consult [Umbrella](#). A special UPR frontpage must be prepared (see Annex I). The documents must be submitted in the following separate files:

4. UPR frontpage in a Word format
5. Appropriation cover note in a Word format (1 page)
6. Programme document /strategy, excluding annexes in a Word or PDF format.
7. Programme document / strategy, including annexes in a Word or PDF format.
8. Signed summary table of appraisal with recommendations and follow-up (if applicable).

The Council meeting

The meetings are normally conducted in Danish. Representations can participate via video conference. The presenting department or representation must be represented by its Head/Deputy Head. The Council will comment and ask clarifying questions, which the department /representation will answer. The Council will then deliberate, and the Chair then summarises and concludes on each agenda item.

The Chair must conclude whether the proposed project, programme or strategy is to be either:

- a) recommended for approval by the Minister, or
- b) not recommended for approval by the Minister.

The Chair will summarise the Council's key observations and main recommendations on each agenda item. The presenting department or representation is responsible for drafting the minutes, which should reflect all of the Council's comments and the Chair's summary (a detailed guidance note on how to write the minutes has been prepared by LEARNING). The Secretariat prepares the minutes based on written contributions from the presenting departments and representations. The Council comments on the draft minutes before approval by the State Secretary/Under-Secretary for Development Policy and the Minister. The Secretariat will publish the approved minutes on [Danida Transparency](#).

The UPR Secretariat is responsible for forwarding the project, programme, and strategy for the Minister's final approval. After the Minister's approval, LEARNING will inform the relevant unit. Exempted are only the Country Strategic Frameworks which the presenting department or representation is responsible for submitting for approval, see [AMG](#). After the meeting, the department or representation may revise the programme document, project document, or strategy until it is submitted by LEARNING for the Minister's approval.

Timeline for the preparation of meetings in the Council for Development Policy

Deadline	Action	Responsible	Role of Secretariat
6 weeks prior to the meeting	Departments and representations confirm requests for agenda items.	Departments and representations in MFA	Finalise the agenda which will be approved by the Chair and Deputy Chair. LEARNING confirms the agenda with units in the MFA
13 working days prior to the meeting	Departments and representations submit documents (projects, programmes, and strategies)	Departments and representations in MFA	Ensure that all documents, including all annexes are received
10 working days prior to the meeting	Agenda and documents are circulated electronically to the Council members and internally in the MFA	Secretariat	Send the agenda and the documents incl. annexes by email to the Council and relevant units in the MFA
10 working days prior to the meeting	Agenda and documents are published on Danida Transparency	Secretariat	Upload the agenda and the documents (for discussion and recommendation) to Danida Transparency
1 working day after the meeting	Input to the minutes is sent to the Secretariat	Departments and representations are responsible for writing the minutes for their respective agenda items	Collect inputs and elaborate draft minutes, including the Chair's conclusions
Approximately 3 weeks after the meeting	Approval of minutes and forwarding of projects, programmes, and strategies to the Minister's approval	Secretariat	Receive comments to the minutes from the Chair, Deputy Chair, and the Council members. The approved minutes are published on Danida Transparency. The Secretariat will forward the proposed projects, programmes, and strategies to the Minister's approval.

D. Presentation to the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee (URU)

As illustrated in the figure on page 2, multilateral organisations strategies are presented to the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee (URU) *after* the Council meeting.

Prior to the Council meeting and to initiating the proper formulation process of Country Strategic Frameworks, the Minister undertakes an early consultation with the Foreign Affairs Committee for the members to provide input to the subsequent formulation.⁵ Other documents presented to the Council for Development Policy are normally not discussed in URU.

It is up to the responsible unit to forward the relevant documents to URU (see procedures for URU as of 13 September 2021 on UMBrella – only in Danish). Questions regarding the procedures should be directed to the Ministers' and Executive Secretariat (MLSEK).

All documents to URU should be presented in Danish. Note that organisation strategies for multilateral and international organisations should be presented in the original English version as per the [Guidelines for Management of Danish Core Support to Multilateral and International Organisations](#).

E. Presentation to the Parliament's Finance Committee (FiU)

It is up to the responsible unit to present the relevant projects, programmes, and strategies to the Parliament's Finance Committee (FiU). The unit must inform the UPR Secretariat about the expected timing for the presentation to FiU in due time (no later than 6 weeks before the meeting in the Council for Development Policy). Questions regarding the procedures for presentations to FiU should be directed to the Department for Africa, Policy and Development (AFRPOL).

⁵ See [the Guidelines for Country Strategic Frameworks, Programmes and Projects](#).

Annex I. Frontpage for Presentations to the Council for Development Policy (UPR)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – (Department for [insert name])

Meeting in the Council for Development Policy on [insert date, month, year]

Agenda Item No. [insert number]

1. Overall purpose: [choose: *For information and discussion*
For discussion and recommendation to the Minister]
2. Title: [insert from agenda]
3. Amount: [insert the total amount of the grant (year-year)]
4. Presentation for Programme Committee: [insert date, month, year]
5. Previous Danish support presented to UPR: [if applicable, insert date, month, year.
If not applicable, insert text “No, this is the first presentation to UPR”]