Project Development Guidelines

How to prepare your project idea for implementation

Diaspora Project Support (DiPS)
Diaspora Programme

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The Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora Programme (DP) facilitates, supports and enhances the role of diaspora as agents of humanitarian assistance and development in their country of origin.

DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

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1.INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Congratulations, your project idea has been selected for the DiPS project development phase! This means that the idea in your concept note received a high score from the DiPS assessors. While you have a great idea for a project, there are still many steps left before the project idea from the concept note can be successfully implemented. Having your application selected for the development phase does not mean that you are guaranteed to receive funding from DiPS to implement your project. It means that you and your project team will work together and with DiPS to see if you can develop your idea into a full project plan that is ready to be implemented and eligible to receive funding from DiPS. This is what the develop phase is all about.

The develop phase is expected to last approximately five months and will include one-on-one meetings and collaborations with DiPS to develop your project, attending workshops and trainings with other diaspora organizations, and working extensively on your project with your project team.

You will work to develop a good project plan which will include filling out many documents and thinking through many aspects of your project. You will also reflect about and decide together with DiPS on what you would like to learn as an organization while implementing your project.

During the develop phase a final decision will be taken about whether or not your project can be successfully implemented and if it is eligible for funding from DiPS. In case your project cannot be funded by DiPS, the funds will be released back into the DiPS fund and used to implement other projects in the future.

These guidelines for developing a project with DiPS will provide information about the steps to develop a project, as well as the requirements, roles, and responsibilities during the project development phase. The specific requirements to receive funding from DiPS will differ depending on your project idea and what you agree with DiPS, but these guidelines provide an overview of the general requirements and steps.

2.REQUIREMENTS DURING THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Requirements

An important part of the development phase will be to agree on what needs to be done for the project to be ready for successful implementation and receive a contract. Some of what needs to be done will be agreed on together with the project team and DiPS based on your priorities as a project team. Some of the requirements will be mandatory and set by DiPS. These requirements are based on the aims of DiPS, DRC rules and procedures, and on standards that are shared throughout the humanitarian and development community internationally, such as the Core Humanitarian Standards and the SPHERE handbook.

All projects will need to meet the below requirements in order to receive a contract:

- The project is based on a need within the community/target group.
- The target group has been clearly and fairly selected.
- The project will not do harm to any stakeholders involved or to the environment.
- There is a clear added value of the diaspora`s engagement in the project.
- The project is coordinated with and complementary to relevant initiatives.
- The project has been approved by relevant local, regional, or national authorities.
- There is a Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and workplan that reflect clear and feasible activities and timeline.
- There is a project budget which is feasible, cost effective, and compliant with DiPS requirements.

- The project meets technical standards within the relevant sector.
- There is a plan for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) during the project including a plan for how the target group and community can submit complaints and feedback.
- The project team:
  - Includes at least two members of the diaspora in Denmark who actively participate in planning and managing the project and have the capacity to meet DiPS requirements for managing the project.
  - Has a clear and feasible division of roles and responsibilities.
- The diaspora organization is a registered association in Denmark with a CVR number, statutes, and recent general assembly.
- The diaspora organization and the local partner (if applicable) have separate bank accounts used only for the DiPS-funded project.
- The diaspora organization and the local partner (if applicable) successfully complete the DRC vetting procedures.
- The diaspora organization is willing to sign and adhere to DRC`s code of conduct or have their own code of conduct which meets DRC`s requirements.

How these requirements apply to your project will vary depending on the nature of your project. Some projects may also have additional requirements, and in certain cases some of the projects may already have been met during the develop phase. DiPS will provide written feedback and discuss how these requirements apply to your project with you in the project kick-off meeting (see steps in the develop phase below).

Documents to use during the develop phase

To demonstrate that you meet the requirements, address DiPS`s feedback, and ensure you have a strong and well-documented project plan, you will prepare and submit two main documents as well as supporting documents:

1. **The project document** where you will provide information about the needs assessment and target group, do no harm, diaspora added value, complementarity and coordination, project team set-up, accountabiliy to affected populations, sustainability, and coordination with DiPS.
2. **The project excel** with several sheets that you will fill out including a workplan for the develop phase, LFA & workplan for the project, budget, eligibility checklist, technical standards, risk assessment, and MEAL plan.
3. **Supporting documents**; the supporting documents you will have to submit may vary depending on your project and should be finalized together with DiPS. In most cases supporting documents to be submitted will include:

   - Approval letter from authorities where the project will be implemented
   - Partnership agreement between the diaspora and local partner
   - Diaspora organization`s statutes
   - Minutes from the diaspora organization`s most recent general assembly
   - Proof of diaspora organization bank account with a balance of 0 DKK
   - Registration and/or information on local partner`s organizational status
   - Proof of local partner bank account with a balance of 0 USD (for local partners in Somalia that will receive payments from DiPS, this must be a Dahabshiil bank account)
   - Annex 1 Authorized signatories form

You will prepare and submit the documents through an online platform called Sharepoint where all the documents you work on will be saved online as you go and always accessible by everyone in your project team and DiPS. You will receive separate instructions and training on how to access and use this online platform.

The guidelines that you should refer to during the develop phase are:

- *The Project Development Guidelines* (this document)
- *The Implementation Guidelines* and annexes; these are the guidelines and annexes about how to manage a project that is being implemented with DiPS. You will be required to adhere to these if you receive a contract to implement your project.

Meeting the requirements and final decision about funding

During the develop phase, the funding you have applied for will be reserved for your project. At the beginning of the develop phase you will receive feedback from DiPS with requirements and suggestions for your project. You will also collaborate with DiPS to make a clear workplan for when you need to meet which requirements to start the project implementation on time. Your project team and DiPS will then follow-up closely on the workplan throughout the entire develop phase. During the develop phase you and DiPS will continuously assess your project and if you are on track to meet the agreed-upon requirements. If you face significant delays or cannot meet the requirements set by your project team and DiPS by the end of the develop phase, your project will be cancelled and will not receive funding. The funds reserved for your project will be released for other projects. In case you or DiPS believe the project is at risk of being cancelled or ineligible for funding, this will always be clearly discussed with DIPS and you will receive a written warning and clear timeframe to address the requirements.

How easy or difficult it is for each project to meet the requirements and submit the documents will depend on the type of project, the local context, the project team, and other factors. For some projects, several of the requirements may already have been met in the concept note. For other projects, most of the requirements may not have been considered and could take significant time and resources for the project team to work on and meet.

In some cases there could also be unforeseen contextual challenges or project-specific issues that arise and make it impossible to implement the project. For example, the same project may already be started in the community or by another actor, the security situation in the area could change, or someone from your project team could become sick and no longer have time to work on the project. These are examples of times when the project may have to be cancelled, even though you have worked hard on it.

3.CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE

One of the main goals of DiPS is to support and strengthen the role of diaspora organizations in responding to needs of people affected by conflict and displacement in Afghanistan and Somalia. When you are working with DiPS to develop and implement your project, you will also have a chance to receive support and focus on learning or development in areas that are important to you as an organization or as a diaspora actor. At the beginning of the develop phase, and throughout the collaboration with DiPS you will talk with DiPS about what you want to learn. If DiPS can support you in these areas then you will make a plan together with DiPS for how to work on this during the development and implementation of your project.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES DURING THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE

During the develop phase your project team will work closely with DiPS to develop the project idea and hopefully to start the implementation of your project. The main roles and responsibilities during this phase are listed below. Your project team includes members of the diaspora in Denmark and local actors such as the local partner or community members. The roles and responsibilities within the team will be decided by you during the develop phase.

Roles and responsibilities of the project team during the develop phase:

- Communicate the project team`s vision for the project to DiPS. Ensure the project is developed in line with the main aims of the project and the needs of the target group.
- Develop the project and meet the requirements to receive a contract. Ensure sufficient time and resources within the project team to do this.
- Together with DiPS, set realistic goals and deadlines for steps in the develop phase and adhere to these deadlines.
- Attend DiPS meetings and workshops and be responsive to communication from DiPS.
- Communicate challenges and concerns for the project development and/or implementation to DiPS as they arise. Ask for help from DiPS when needed.
- Ensure buy-in from the board of your organization and make sure to keep them informed about the project developments.
- Ensure a good collaboration within the project team, especially between members of the diaspora team and local actors such as a local partner or community members.
- Consider and communicate areas where the project team would like to learn and build capacity to DiPS.

Roles and responsibilities of DiPS during the develop phase:

- Clearly communicate the requirements that are necessary for a project to receive a contract and be funded by DiPS.
- Communicate challenges and concerns for the project development and/or implementation to the diaspora as they arise, including clear communication if issues arise that will prevent the project from implementation and receiving a contract.
- Based on agreements with the diaspora and their project teams, support diaspora in developing their projects and meeting the requirements to receive a contract.
- Review and provide feedback on project documents shared by the diaspora. Remain available to answer questions.
- Ensure all projects that receive a contract meet DiPS, DRC, and humanitarian standards for implementation.
- Ensure all projects that receive a contract are feasible and likely to be successfully completed.
- Support diaspora in accessing learning opportunities and coordination opportunities.

5. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE PROJECT DEVELOP PHASE:

Below is a summary of the main steps during the develop phase. For an overview of dates and how to register for the meetings and workshops mentioned, please see the develop phase calendar that has been shared as a separate document.

Step #1:	Step #2:	Step #3:
Introduction to the develop phase and project kick-off	Developing your project	Preparing for implementation

Step #1: Introduction to the develop phase and project kick-off

During the first 4-5 weeks of the develop phase you will learn more about the develop phase, get to know DiPS, and reach a shared agreement with DiPS and your project team about how to work together during the develop phase. You will also receive feedback on your project from DiPS and agree on a workplan for preparing your project for implementation.

Workshops:
- **Introduction to the DiPS Develop phase:** In this workshop all diaspora organizations selected for the develop phase will receive a full introduction to the develop phase with DiPS, including the general requirements, workshops, documents that need to be prepared, and the online platform where you will work on them.

Meetings w/DiPS:
- **Introduction meeting:** In this meeting you will meet with DiPS for the first time and have the chance to share more with DiPS about your project idea, what you hope to achieve through your project, any major expected challenges, what the capacity is of your organization and project team, and what you hope to learn while working on the project. At this time the specific requirements for your project will not yet be prepared.
- **Project kick-off meeting:** This will be a long meeting with DiPS where you will receive specific feedback from DiPS about your project, make a workplan for developing the project, and discuss how to work together and what kind of support you need during the develop phase.

Tasks:
- Read the DiPS Develop guidelines (this document)
- Prepare your project team to start working on the project
- Work with DiPS to agree on project requirements and a workplan for the develop phase

Step #2: Developing your project

The majority of the develop phase will be focused on this step. Here you will work closely with DiPS and your project team to further develop your project, prepare the project documents, and meet the requirements and milestones that you have agreed on with DiPS. This will be an intensive phase and everyone in your project team should set aside sufficient time every week to work on the project. While working on the feedback from DiPS and the required documents, you should contact your DiPS focal point any time you have questions, challenges, delays or problems. Remember that DiPS is here to support you throughout this process.

Workshops:
- **Project Cycle Management #1:** During the PCM 1 workshop you will spend the morning with Dharbaxo discussing and working on the needs assessment, LFA, and workplan. In the afternoon you will work together with someone from the DiPS team on your project budget.
- **Technical working group meetings**: If several organizations are developing projects in the same sector, then a training or workshop will be hosted that focuses specifically on each sector. For example, organizations working on a project in economic recovery will meet with other organizations working on the same sector, as will be the case for educations working on health, etc.
- **Project Cycle Management #2:** In the PCM 2 workshop, you will be introduced to how to develop a plan for Accountability to Affected Populations and for monitoring and evaluation of your project as well as for project sustainability.

Meetings w/DiPS:
- Project Check-in meeting #1
- Project Check-in meeting #2
- Adhoc meetings, calls, and check-ins as needed

In the check-in meeting with DiPS you will receive feedback and help from DIPS on the documents, bring up any challenges, new ideas, or updates, and check-in on the progress made so far with developing the project. The documents and requirements you discuss in each meeting will depend on the workplan you have agreed on with DiPS during the kick-off meeting.

Tasks:
- Work with your project team to prepare the project excel, project document, supporting documents, based on the feedback you receive from DiPS in the project kick-off meeting.
- Submit agreed-upon documents to DiPS for review. Ensure all documents that will be discussed in the meeting are available in the online platform, Sharepoint, at least three days before the meeting.

Step #3: Preparing for implementation

This step will begin only if you have submitted all the required documents, addressed the feedback given by DIPS, and achieved the agreed-upon steps for the develop phase. This is the start of the process to issue a contract to your organization so you can start implementing your project. It is expected to take 4-6 weeks from the time you start this step to when you have received a contract.

Workshops: none

Meetings w/DiPS:
- **Local partner assessment and vetting:** This meeting is a part of the DRC standard assessment and vetting process. The DiPS representative in Afghanistan or Somalia will visit or call your local partner and ask them standard questions about their organization. They will also ask for copies of their passports or national IDs and a background check will be conducted by DRC.
- **Diaspora organization assessment and vetting:** This meeting is a part of the DRC standard assessment and vetting process. DiPS will take you through the DRC "vetting" process which includes asking some standard questions about your organization. DiPS will also ask for copies of your passports or IDs a background check will be conducted by DRC.
- **Contract planning meeting:** In this meeting you will discuss the installment plan for the contract, the expected timeline for issuing the contract and paying out the first installment, as well as the first steps of project implementation.

Tasks:
- Local partner and diaspora organization participate in assessments, sign the assessments, and submit copies of passports/national IDs to DRC for background checks.
- Agree on installment plan for the contract with DiPS.
- Review, sign, and submit the contract to DiPS.
- Agree with DIPS on how to work together during project implementation.

6. AFTER THE DEVELOP PHASE: IMPLEMENTING A PROJECT

After the contract with DiPS has been finalized and signed by the diaspora organization and DRC, you will receive the first installment of funds and be ready to start implementing your project. During implementation you will continue to work closely with DiPS, especially the focal point in Afghanistan/Somalia. All information about the requirements and procedures for implementing your project is written in the DiPS Implementation Guidelines which you will have to read closely before starting implementation. Early on in the implementation phase, after receiving your contract, you will attend trainings on financial management and reporting as well as procurement.

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