

Project Evaluation Guide



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Welcome

Dear Project Team Volunteer,

Welcome to ADP!

You are joining a highly motivated group of people that believe in going beyond traditional charity. Your team will be interacting with an NGO to determine whether their proposed project is likely to yield a significant, measurable and sustainable social return on donor funds. ADP will only support this project if your team (this includes the project team members as well as the Evaluation Committee Member) is satisfied that it fully meets this threshold.

If your project is approved, your team will stay in touch with the NGO to monitor the results of the decision you will help make. If it does not make the cut, you will have helped ensure that donor money is only channeled to the most deserving initiatives. In either case, we hope that this experience will include:

- Learning about the development needs of the poor
- Developing a relationship with a non-profit organization
- Experiencing first-hand the challenges in allocating scarce resources when needs are so vast
- Using your intellect, experience and skills to support development
- Meeting other volunteers who are passionate about similar issues

We have put this document together to serve as a guide through the Project Evaluation Process. It describes the various steps involved and what is expected of your team, as well as some templates to use when presenting your findings. Please read the entire packet before starting your project and use it as a reference guide throughout.

Finally, never hesitate to reach out to any member of the ADP Leadership Team if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to support you and help you succeed. Once again, welcome!

Sincerely,

ADP team

Overview of ADP's Philosophy

ADP's Vision

To promote an engaged society that transforms lives by working with small non-profits that deliver strong results

Criteria

To meet these goals, ADP evaluates each project across the following key criteria:

Critical Need:

The project addresses a major hardship or threat to the community (e.g. sanitation, health) and/or a crucial element of the poverty cycle (e.g. education, energy) that is currently not being adequately addressed.

Social Return:

The project is a cost effective solution for tackling the need identified above and presents a high social return compared to other available solutions.

Measurability:

Ability to measure impact by establishing specific metrics for the project which will give a reasonable indication of the impact created. These metrics should measure impact, and not just whether elements of the project were successfully executed.

Sustainability:

In a country as impoverished as Pakistan, the poor often rely on charity for their day-to-day subsistence. Given the widespread opportunities for charitable giving at an individual level, ADP focuses its limited resources on projects that can create a lasting impact. We evaluate projects along two dimensions of sustainability: 1) Whether the impact will last beyond the duration of our funding and 2) Whether the project itself is sustainable. The second dimension is often the most challenging but our best projects will achieve it by becoming self-funding or have a clear path from our "seed" funding to longer-term financial support.

Credibility:

ADP places a lot of weight on the credibility and quality of the people with whom we are partnering. There are three aspects of the organization that we evaluate:

- 1) **Responsiveness:** The NGO should be responsive in communication with ADP, in addition to taking ownership of the project and being eager to implement it.
- 2) **Capability:** The NGO should have a track record suggesting that they have the ability to successfully execute the project under review. Does the organization have the leadership and personnel to fulfill the objectives of the project? Were the field officers and local directors of the organization familiar / interacting with the beneficiaries of the project? Did you find the staff knowledgeable on the subject area and what were your overall impressions? In general, we have found that NGOs that are more focused on a particular problem are the best long-term partners for ADP.
- 3) **Integrity:** The partner must be trustworthy and completely transparent. This is often a qualitative assessment based on interactions, a review of historical financials, as well as reference checks and site visits.

Resources

People

- **DIRECTOR, PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS:** Responsible for overall operations of ADP along with health and water sectors
- **DIRECTOR, PROGRAMS & OUTREACH:** Responsible for outreach, donor relationships and fundraising along with education and energy sectors
- **HEAD, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS:** Responsible for overall marketing and media strategy and operations
- **OPERATIONS MANAGER (OM):** Responsible for staffing volunteers on projects and site visits. Connected with all ADP volunteers
- **PROJECT TEAM LEADER (PTL):** Experienced ADP project member who will be leading the diligence effort
- **EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBER (PEC):** Experienced EC member who will oversee the diligence of the project and help guide you throughout the process
- **GENERAL COUNSEL (GC):** Help you ensure that the NGO and our due diligence ensures compliance with US laws
- **TREASURER:** Manages the finances of ADP and responsible for disbursing funds to approved projects

Tools

- **FORMS:** The forms to be used during evaluation can be downloaded from ADP's website in the "[Resources](#)" section
- **GOOGLEGROUPS:** Googlegroups are used for all project evaluations so all communications and discussions among project team members are accessible in one place after the project has ended.

1. Initial Diligence

When ADP selects a project to be evaluated, it means it has been screened by an Evaluation Committee member who believes the project merits a closer look. After the Operations Manager (OM) and the Director, Programs & Operations have spoken to you about ADP, you are now ready to begin the diligence process! After the Project Team Leader (PTL) and the OM have initiated you on ADP and on the project in the general kick off call, you are now ready to begin the diligence process!

- Before the project team's kick off call, you should have received a completed Project Proposal (along with supporting documentation) and the names and e-mail addresses of your team members from the OM along with a filled out project Screening Checklist with a list of questions put together by the project screener. If you have not, please contact the OM
- We encourage your team to discuss the key issues on the project, the information that needs to be collected and outline specific responsibilities for each team member. The information you need will likely need interactions with the NGO and external research to test their assertions. We strongly suggest you establish a working relationship with at least 2 representatives of the NGO
- Remember, the Evaluation Committee member on your Team and (if needed, the general ADP Leadership team) is available as a resource to provide you with diligence oversight and to ensure that you are heading in the right direction by asking the right questions

Check List:

- ✓ Gather information from the NGO and external sources using ADP's investment criteria
- ✓ Complete diligence and reach a decision on whether a site visit needs to be conducted or not

Your team and the EC will jointly determine whether or not the project appears promising enough to perform further work. At this time, your team will:

- Vote YES or NO on continuing the evaluation. If YES, they will:
 - Identify additional key questions to be investigated
 - Suggest tasks that could help to answer those questions
 - Authorize a **Site Visit**

Check List:

- Summarize your findings and make a recommendation on whether the team would like to continue with the project
- Conduct a YES/NO gating vote
- If voted YES, agree on a list of follow-up activities and organize a Site Visit

2. Follow up Diligence and Site Visit

There are a few main activities to be completed in this phase:

- Collect information to answer any outstanding questions or concerns.
- Arrange a **Project Site Visit**. This is a very important check to confirm the facts you have been given by the NGO as well as obtain further information.

Here are the key steps:

- Fill out the ‘Outstanding Project Questions/Concerns’ section of the **Pre-Funding Site Visit Form** with the questions that you would like the **Site Visit Volunteer** to investigate
- If one of the Project Team members cannot conduct the visit, you need to inform and work with the OM to identify a Site Visit Volunteer
- Send the Site Visit Form to the Site Visit Volunteer along with the **Project Proposal** and **Project Summary**
- Talk to the **Site Visit Volunteer** to give them enough background on the project and explain the key outstanding issues
- Introduce the Site Visit Volunteer to the NGO so that they can work out the logistics of the visit
- The Site Visit Volunteer should send you their report within a week of their visit
- After the site visit, conduct additional follow-up diligence as needed.
- Develop mutually agreed upon metrics to measure the success of the project, milestones to be achieved for staged funding (whenever possible) and a post-funding monitoring plan

Check List:

- ✓ Conduct diligence on outstanding issues
- ✓ Fill out relevant Preliminary Site Visit Form sections, execute site visit
- ✓ Develop monitoring plan and milestones for staged funding

3. Approval

This is the exciting part! Now your team is ready to make a final decision on whether the project should be funded.

In order for a project to be voted YES, it must meet the following requirements:

- Satisfy ADP's Project Criteria
- Have the documents and information outlined in the Project Summary Form (e.g. historical NGO financials, detailed project budget)
- Receive a majority of the votes cast by the Project Team (including the EC)

Check List:

- Discuss the Project Team's final report
- Conduct a vote on the project during the meeting or right after
- Inform the NGO of the results of the vote

4. Legal

The legal components are very important for execution of ADP's projects. The two main legal components are the General Counsel (GC) screening and the written contract between ADP and the partner NGO:

- Email ADP's General Counsel to conduct anti-terrorism screening on the NGO and project. If the NGO does not meet our compliance policy, we will not be able to fund the project. The General Counsel will check to make sure that the partner NGO is a legitimate organization with no ties to any kind of terrorist or political organization
- If ADP's General Counsel gives the team the green light to move ahead with the project, start drafting the contract for the project. The contract should include all metrics and monitoring provisions necessary. If possible, a tiered structure for funding should be implemented, where funds are released based on successfully reaching project milestones

Check List:

- ✓ Work with PTL to email GC for project anti-terrorism screening
- ✓ If project is approved for funding, draft contract

5. Closing

Congratulations! Your project has been approved. Your team has worked hard to bring this evaluation to an end and it is now time to implement it!

There are a few key tasks to be completed in this phase:

- Inform ADP leadership and the Treasurer of the conclusion of your diligence and the decision to fund the project
- Finalize NGO Contract: Modify the **NGO Contract Template** to include specific monitoring requirements for your project, as well as milestones for staged funding (where appropriate). Note that, wherever possible, funding needs to be structured in stages so that if the NGO fails to meet mutually agreed milestones, the remaining funding can be held back
- ECs and PTLs are required to fill out feedback forms that will be sent to them by the OM.

Check List:

- Communicate final conclusion of diligence to ADP leadership
- Finalize NGO Contract
- Give process feedback

6. Fundraising

While ADP has a separate fundraising team to raise funds for the project, Project Teams are expected to help raise a small percentage of the total disbursement amount (\$1,000) and also to create some of the basic marketing materials, as they are most familiar with the project details.

A few steps to fundraising that Project Teams should help with are:

- Work with the Head of Marketing & Communications/ADP media team to set up a Project Webpage that includes a project description, budget, target date and a Donate button
- Create a fundraising email with a link to the Project Webpage
- Forward the email to friends and family and ask the OM to send it to the ADP Network
- Create a widget that can be uploaded onto your profile on Facebook or any other community profiles you may have

Once you have these basics, Project Teams can partake in the fundraising in conjunction with the fundraising team. Fundraising can be a lot of fun and can be done in a variety of ways like organizing a cricket match, a small movie get-together, etc.

Have fun!

Check List:

- Create project web page and a fundraising email
- If desired, work with the Fundraising team to develop and execute fundraising strategy
- Facilitate transfer of funds to NGO

7. Monitoring

Project monitoring is critical for achieving results and ensuring that the future stages of a project receive funding. Each team should appoint someone who will be responsible for monitoring the project through its life-cycle.

There are several key activities in this phase:

- Maintain regular contact with the NGO to keep track of metrics and ensure that project implementation is reaching milestones
- Approve subsequent tiered funding based on project reaching milestones. Alert EC if project is not meeting milestones and evaluate funding options
- Ensure that the NGO delivers **6-month and 12-month reports** as outlined in the contract
- It is highly encouraged that a **Post-funding Site Visit** be completed to evaluate the implementation of the project in person after the first 6 or 12 months or upon key milestones. Steps to completing this are similar to the first project site visit
- Work with the Head of Marketing & Communications/ADP media team to post project updates (pictures, statistics, metrics etc.)

Check List:

- Maintain regular contact with the NGO
- Approve subsequent tiered fundings (alert EC if project is failing to meet milestones as specified in contract)
- Ensure NGO delivers 6-month and 12-month reports
- Conduct post-project site visit
- Discuss findings with EC
- Update website after significant milestones to share progress with the ADP network

Thank you for all the hard work, time and tremendous effort you and your team have put into this project!