

**GENERAL CRITERIA
for
PROGRAMATIC AND PROJECT WORK OF DMD,**
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Within its mandate, core functions, and available resources, DMD gives priority to programs encompassing programmatic activities and member churches' projects that meet the following criteria:

Clearly refer to one of the LWF priority areas and promote the achievement of shared commitments of the LWF a communion of churches, and respond to expressed needs of member churches and challenges in the context in which they exist and work.

- Are result oriented (i.e. have specific outcomes that can be measured and evaluated). The choice should be for fewer but impact-conscious programs and projects.
- motivate, mobilize, organize and enable member churches and communities to plan, participate in and implement mission and development initiatives which equip people and communities in their struggle for their well being and human dignity;

raise awareness and deepen people's understanding of the root causes of the problems they face in daily life, to equip them to influence decisions affecting their living conditions and move towards selfreliance and sustainable development;

are focused on and oriented towards the most deprived and oppressed sections of the population - people living in vulnerable conditions;

enhance promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, especially for women, children, differently able, indigenous people, and encourage reconciliation and unity within and among churches, communities and nations;

contribute to leadership training at all levels and unfold capacities of human beings;

Foster exchange of resources, personnel, ideas and aspirations among member churches, congregations and communities in all regions;

will contribute to reducing dependence and increase utilization of available local human and material resources;

promote responsible management of the environment and natural resources and respect the integrity of God's creation;

respond to new opportunities for proclamation and diaconal ministry of the churches;

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may have a multiplying effect and be shared at a regional or even global level;

Specific criteria for member churches projects

As a communion of churches, we feel a special responsibility and understand projects as important instrument for accompaniment of member churches. Particular attention shall be given to the needs of minority and struggling churches with capacity building component built into the projects of these churches for more focused accompaniment.

The following specific criteria will guide the selection of member churches projects:

1. *Expectations of positive indication for the quality of implementation*
 - a) The quality of the project planning (in terms of the process followed and the planning document itself).
 - b) Recent experience of the quality of implementation and reporting
 - c) Management structure and quality of governance
 - d) Specific capacity required for the plans are available
 - e) Strong and sustainable mobilization of own resources
 - f) The reality of DMD's capacity to meaningfully accompany the project in implementation.
2. *DMD staff critically assesses the need for external financial resources to ensure sustainability of the project.*
3. *Likelihood of funding*
 - a) LWF staff shall assess the financial volume of the proposals vis à vis the funding level that can be realistically achieved. The total financial volume of projects submitted for approval should not exceed DMD funding income level.
 - b) LWF staff may 'match' proposals of member churches that meet the policy priorities of certain partner agencies. Such projects therefore receive a pragmatic priority.
 - c) Prior discussion has taken place with some potential funding partners resulting in positive indications.
4. LWF staff will endeavor to maintain a fair distribution of resources among member churches, between and within regions.
5. If more than one application is submitted by the same church, the order of priority should be indicated

LWF-DMD and Exit strategies in projects

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1. As a communion of churches, we recognize that many ministries of the church are by nature part of the being of the church and therefore need to be sustained for a long time or even life time, for example pastoral care, Christian education/nurture and worship services. While the church headquarters provide coordination and leadership for the purpose of unity, most of these activities are carried out by and through strong lay leadership, good governance principles and practices, delegation of authority, strong stewardship and ownership by congregants. Thus, the notion of “exit” in the technical sense does not apply. Yet, because of the need for the churches to assume ownership and for financial reasons, projects should be time bound.
2. However, it is to be understood that while projects that have had continuation phases may end, the relationship between DMD and the project holder, i.e., the member church, continues as expression of communion relationship. This affirms LWF as relationship oriented body that may engage in joint project work, yet recognizing that project cooperation is not the core of the relationship. Thus, ‘exiting’ refers to the evolvment of the life of the project and does not mean leaving the relationship. In other words, DMD may exit from specific project work not abandoning relationships.
3. From project or program perspective, **the sustaining of achievements** in fully implemented projects and programs is of crucial importance for both organizations. LWF-DMD will encourage member churches to pay attention to the question of sustainability from the initial project design. An important function of project work in the LWF communion is mutual learning and interdependence. Sustained achievements of projects and programs (after their initial investments) are to be key witnesses of interdependence.
4. Different ‘exit strategies’ apply for different projects and processes. There is no blanket pattern. Rather, DMD will review each project independently and will request the member church to define such strategies, in collaboration with all stakeholders.
5. The word ‘exit’ may not in all cases be applicable. In principle, project support should be limited in time and aim at reducing dependency on LWF. Local churches or communities should take over. As LWF exits from this first relationship, it shall try to bring the relationship to another level.
6. One can only speak of ‘exit’ when there is also a moment of ‘entry’. This implies a deliberate decision to start a specific project that should by its nature be limited in time. When processes depend to some extent on external support, the church should plan processes and activities that are limited in time and therefore have relevant strategies for termination or exit.
7. The church is the one to determine and design strategies -in a participatory way- for termination of its direct involvement and responsibilities.

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Proposed checklist based on experience gathered recently

I. When activities are implemented in communities:

- a. Promote local/indigenous organizations that may continue to accompany the work, e.g. municipalities, community structures such as community elders or leaders. These are to be involved at the start of the project and throughout implementation
- b. Have people been trained and organized to ensure continuation of acquired skills or services? What benchmarks need to be set to assess readiness for ‘exiting’?
- c. How are duties and responsibilities agreed in the communities? Does the project have sufficient governance structures and decision-making instruments in place? Who are the custodians of these?
- d. Are sufficient resources available over time –or can these be generated in the communities on the long term- to ensure continuation of the achievements?
- e. Have measures been taken to ensure that the ‘exiting’ organization monitors the sustaining of the achievements/results for a period of up to three, 5 or 10 years (normally with a reducing frequency)?
- f. Have assets been carefully handed over –with protocols- to community groups or organizations? This needs to be done formally. Everyone should be aware of the commitments, roles and responsibilities

II. For all organizations that are to maintain quality of achievements after termination of external support:

- g. Are preparatory processes or specific training needed in order to prepare the organization to carry on its mission?
- h. Have focused efforts been designed and implemented to establish strong local ownership of the mission of the organization or institution?
- i. Are governing structures that facilitate local ownership and continuation of work without external support in place?
- j. Have investments and structures been avoided that have become cumbersome and actually create dependency on external resources?