

Domestic Support Raising – Strategy development

1. Introduction and concepts

Strategy development and planning are closely related. Both are concerned with the future activities of a project or organisation. Where planning is meant to identify concrete activities, strategy development is more concerned with the future direction, rather than with concrete objectives and activities alone. A strategy is a translation of the organisations' mission into aims, and provides ideas how these aims could be pursued. As there may be various ways, depending on the environment, strategy development provides a choice among alternatives. Planning is then the concrete translation of the chosen strategy into concrete objectives, activities and related means. Some key differences between planning and strategy development are given in table below (though in practice the distinction is gradual rather than absolute):

Table 1. Some key differences between Planning and Strategy Development

Strategy development	Planning
Searching direction	Concrete (direction is given)
Innovation (search for new)	Rearranging old ideas
Synthesis	Analysis
Aims/visions	Objectives
Ideas	Actions
Long term	Short term
Attention to strengths and opportunities	Problem solving (weaknesses, threats)
Expansion/forward orientation/anticipation	Consolidations/past - present orientation prediction/reaction
Allowing intuition, including soft information	Rational, using hard information

2. DSR Strategy Development

DSR is a long-term process because it contains steps that should be carefully analysed and approved within the organisation. Decisions have impact for the organisational values and sustainability and should therefore not be taken easily. DSR is about making changes for and within your organisation.

For that reason, DSR strategy development should result in a carefully developed pathway that assists an NGO to take decisions to maximise effects for their impact and organisational sustainability. This pathway assists NGOs to determine challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing context, to clearly define its organisational identity, to develop strategies based upon needs of the own organisation and those of others, and finally to assess what changes are needed within the organisation to implement a strategy.

Of course this is not the end: the DSR strategy implementation and monitoring are the second step. This is about making changes possible for your organisation and working towards sustainability.

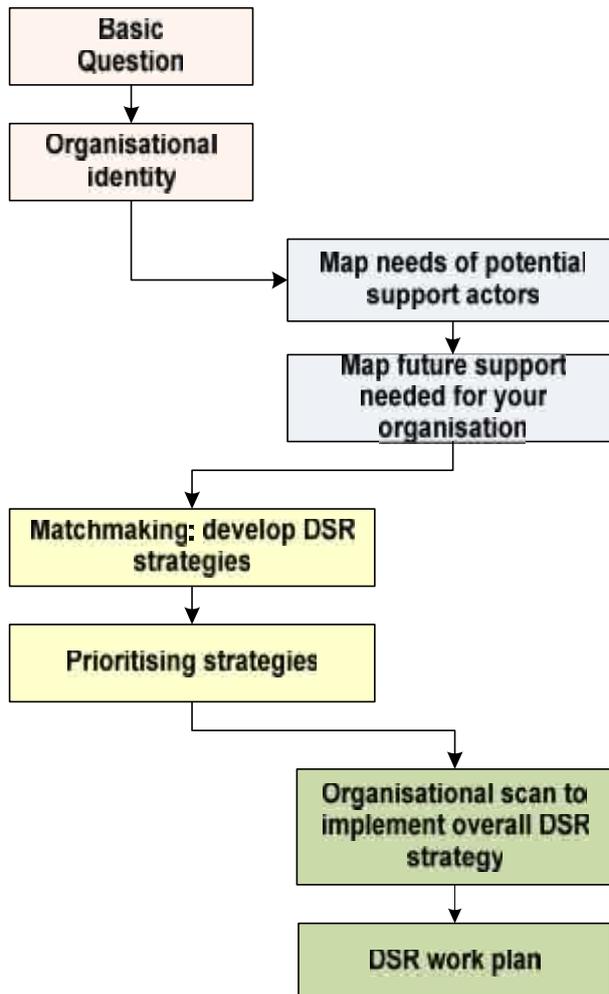


Figure 1. Steps in designing a DSR strategy

2.1 Develop a basic question

As identified in ‘global trends and changes’ NGOs face challenges to maintain resources in order to fulfill the vision and mission of their organisation. For that reason, NGOs are looking how to diversify their support base in order to reach organisational sustainability.

To develop a strategy to diversify one’s support base, a leading research question is key. In order not to effect the position of your NGO negatively, it is important to clearly define what your organisation is looking for. Formulated generally your basic question is:

How can our organization become more recognized, build and strengthen relations and mobilize support and resources (material and non-material) from the general public, government, private sector, other NGOs, media, educational institutes and other support actors so we are continuously able to carry out our mission while maintaining our strong focus and values?

2.2 Organisational identity

Each organization has its own identity. This includes particularly its mission, vision & (stated) core values (e.g. accountability, legitimacy, strategic direction) and (often implicit) organizational culture.

A clear NGO identity is useful when approaching potential support partners, as this identity summarizes the organization. It can also give unity to your staff and make it clear to people outside what your NGO is about. The identity is a collection of perceptions about an organization, formed by its every communication, action and interaction with other partners.

Questions to ask yourself are:

- What was the organization set up to do? What need(s) does it address?
- What are the main areas of work and the desired outcomes?
- What ethical values are important to us?
- What are unique selling points?
- What makes us unique?
- Or even: What are key words we like to describe ourselves, or are happy to hear back as feedback from our target groups, partners and clients?

2.3 Map needs of potential support actors

NGOs are increasingly being seen as an actor which is able to provide assistance to other NGOs, governments, businesses and other actors. NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions for different purposes and actors. For instance:

- NGOs are also looking for support from NGOs, either in partnerships, networks or assistance (e.g. consultancy, lobby advice)
- Both governments and corporate sector organizations, for ideological reasons or simply to boost sales, want to be known as green, fair and free in terms of press or in regarding issues of child labor. NGOs can play the role of watchdog and advisor: specialized NGOs (and their coalitions) can at once advise and even certify companies and government agencies, but also (threaten to) raise awareness on their weaknesses.
- Private sector, government and educational institution want to contribute to effective community development. Highly experienced NGOs with a wealth of technical expertise, community knowledge and local networks can assist.
- Individuals and religious institutions want to contribute to social responsibility either in kind, donations or time (e.g. volunteers).

Potential support actors: local governments, private sector (staff of corporate sector organisations, multinationals as well as SME's, state-owned enterprises (SOE's) and small businesses), NGO networks, educational institutes, media as well as the general public.

Fill in the first column of the DSR matrix:

Actor	1. What do they need from us?	2. What support do we need?	3. Match-making strategies	4. Prioritising strategies
Private sector				
Government				
Other NGOs				
General public				
Educational institutions				
Celebrities				
Media				
Others				

2.4 Map future support needed for your organisation

As already indicated, your organization is looking for support. This support is:

- Material (finances/ goods to carry out your organizational activities)
- Non-material (expertise/ networking/ advocacy/ access/ knowledge/ endorsement): concrete examples are articles published in the newspaper, work permits from the government, expertise from volunteers

Assess for each actor what support your NGO needs. Fill in the second column of the DSR matrix.

2.5 Matchmaking: develop DSR strategies

Once you have mapped what type of support actors are looking for and the support your organisation is looking for, you need to develop strategies. Fill in the third column of the DSR matrix.

Examples:

- “We want to be known as a child supporting NGO in order to raise donations among the general public” (link between trend ‘people want to donate / do good’ and ‘getting resources for yourself)
- “Our organisation can continuously attract and manage volunteers to contribute to organisational work and programmes”
- “We collaborate with educational institutions for improving our accountability” (educational institutions are looking to provide input for community services/ assist in doing baselines and you are looking for being accountable/ have good research results).

2.6 Prioritising strategies

Once you have developed matchmaking strategies for your organization, you can select most promising strategies. You select priority strategies according to the following criteria:

- has highly positive effects (impact) for your organization
- has clear identifiable benefits for the partner (actor)
- cost-effective
- unique
- does not compromise your NGOs identity and values
- has longer term impact for your organization and the partner(s)
- is innovative or new for your NGO
- your mix of priority strategies has (sufficient) short- and medium-term effect to keep momentum
- other criteria determined by the organization

Make use of an analytical decision-making tool to weight your selected criteria and rate each match-making strategy. Calculate the sum of for each strategy. The highest sums might be your most promising strategies.

	Weight (A)	Match-making strategy A.1		Match-making strategy A.2		Match-making strategy B.1	
		Rate (B)	Value (A*B)	Rate (B)	Value (A*B)	Rate (B)	Value (A*B)
Positive Effects (high impact)	5	3	15	4	20	2	10
Matches with organisational identity	2						
Capability of organisation	4						
Innovativeness	5						
Longer-term effects	3						
			SUM		SUM		SUM

Finally, fill in the last column of your matrix with 'yes' and 'no'.

2.7 Organisational scan

Once you have selected priority strategies, you have to carry out a scan in your organisation how to implement the strategies. Identify support actions needed with the questions below.

Aspect	Questions
Input	What resources do we need? Start-up capital? How can we make our organization visible (e.g. website to communicate, brochures)?
Structure	(How) should we restructure ourselves to implement the strategies? Need of new department (e.g. fundraising, business development)?
Systems	Which systems need to be reviewed? Database client/ volunteers, IT system, M&E system for being accountable?
Staff	Is staff competent to implement strategy (skills, knowledge, attitude)? Is there need of new staff (e.g. fundraising officer, business developer)? How can staff be encouraged to implement strategy (trainings, time available, job descriptions)?
Style of management	Does management support DSR success?
Culture	Which beliefs and behaviors support or hinder change?

2.8 DSR work plan

Make a detailed work plan for your priority strategies:

Priority strategy 1	We can continuously attract and manage volunteers to contribute to organizational work and programs		
Outputs	1. Assign volunteer coordinator	2. Developed HR Plan for volunteers	3. Staff prepared to coach volunteers
Activities	1.1. Recruit new coordinator (internally)	2.1. Needs assessment 2.2. Planning 2.3. ToR / job descriptions	
Indicator	1 new coordinator recruited in 2014		
Responsible	Management	Commission coordinator	
Time frame	As soon as possible	End 2015	