nsia

The National Society
Investment Alliance

Smart Investment for Local Impact

National Society Investment Alliance

Guidelines for Applicants 2024

ICRC | IFRC

These guidelines are for National Societies that are interested in applying to the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) for support for their sustainable medium and long-term development.

The guidelines apply to the 2024 round of funding and will be developed further in the light of experience and learning.

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National Society Investment Alliance

Guidelines for Applicants 2024

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Summary

This section outlines the main messages of the NSIA Guidelines for Applicants 2024. However, we recommend you take your time to properly read and analyze the Guidelines.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY INVESTMENT ALLIANCE – NSIA

- The NSIA invests in the medium and long-term sustainable development and strengthening of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in fragile contexts.
- Eligible National Societies can submit proposals for a long-term Accelerator grant (two to five years for a maximum of CHF 1 million) or a short-term Bridge grant (one year for up to CHF 50,000).
- Successful Accelerator proposals are long-term investment plans, with developed business cases. Accelerator proposals should demonstrate evidenced base implementation and sustainability plans. They should also integrate all necessary supporting documentation, such as business plans, market assessments, asset management plans, etc.
- If the Accelerator business case is not developed enough, or if a component of the strategy needs to be developed, an eligible National Society should consider applying for a Bridge grant.
- NSIA does not fund stand-alone projects not clearly linked to a long-term objective for the National Society sustainable development. NSIA also does not support ongoing operational activities, basic running costs, core costs, or any activities that will not clearly contribute to the longer-term sustainability of the National Societies capacities beyond the period of the NSIA investment.

THE NSIA APPLICATION PROCESS

- National Societies are eligible to apply for NSIA grants if they are in very high or high-risk contexts, or in the most fragile countries in a medium-risk context, according to the INFORM Index. See the list in section 7, 'Country risk environment'. National Societies must also display a high level of integrity.
- Applications to NSIA grant must be submitted through the NSIA online platform (www.nsia.fund) during the opening period of the Call for Proposals 2024.
- NSIA applications are reviewed and assessed through a multi-level process and are approved by the NSIA Steering Committee.
- Once the NSIA Office has confirmed the investment, an agreement will be signed between the National Society and IFRC on behalf of NSIA. National Societies whose Accelerator proposal has been approved by the Steering Committee will undergo a financial capacity review and risk assessment, using IFRC's Capacity Review and Risk Assessment (CRRA) process (unless they have already undertaken it).
- Rejected proposals will receive individualised feedback.

HOW TO APPLY SUCCESSFULLY

- The new NSIA application form streamlines and rationalises the template, applying a results-based management approach. Annex 1 provides guidance for using the new template and gives practical suggestions for drafting a good proposal, with examples. By correctly using the template, National Societies will enhance their probability to access NSIA funds, improve project management and acquire competences that will help them with other donors.
- An NSIA Accelerator proposal must include mandatory supporting documents, such as relevant financial information, significant assessments and business case planning (including market assessment, asset management, HR plans, etc. as relevant).
- National Societies interested in applying for a NSIA grant are advised to approach the respective IFRC and ICRC delegations to discuss their proposal. The NSIA Office can provide appropriate clarification and guidance, in the respect of a fair call for proposal process.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NSIA INITIATIVE

- The National Society is solely responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting and learning from the NSIA initiative. Designated IFRC and ICRC field staff will provide support and act as a link between the National Society and the NSIA Office.
- The National Society must conduct continuous assessment of the implementation, regular results monitoring and learning activities. This enables tracking progress against plans and intended results, as well as learning from experiences.
- The National Society is responsible for providing timely and complete financial reports, plus semi-annual and final reports.
- Future no-cost extensions must be requested in writing through the appropriate template, by a senior staff member of the requesting National Society, at least one month before the end of the project. The extension request must include an evidence-based justification of the request and clear plans for successfully completing the initiative. It should also show learning from past challenges.

1

The National Society Investment Alliance

The National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA) is a joint initiative in which the IFRC and the ICRC work together and raise funds to invest in the medium and long-term sustainable development and strengthening of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies.

NSIA invests in National Societies in very high or high-risk contexts, or in the most fragile countries in a medium-risk context (see section 7). Its purpose is to strengthen their capacity to deliver relevant and effective humanitarian services in their countries.

The NSIA will provide significant and flexible multi-year financing and support to enable National Societies to:

- enhance the relevance, safe access, quality and sustainability of their services
- strengthen leadership, governance and systems, ensuring accountability and transparency
- develop and implement adaptive financial and business strategies and mobilize diversified resources to enhance organizational sustainability

The NSIA will facilitate access to expertise and technical support. It will also promote knowledge-sharing and learning across the Movement and the wider humanitarian sector.

NSIA will complement existing funding and capacity strengthening efforts undertaken by the IFRC, ICRC and National Societies, enabling recipient National Societies to plan and develop their organization in a sustainable, holistic and coordinated manner.

The National Societies supported by the NSIA will be in the driving seat: planning, coordinating, implementing and learning for their own development. NSIA is aimed at National Societies and their leadership with the ambition to undertake change and to take their organization to new levels of performance and humanitarian impact.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The NSIA is governed and jointly managed by IFRC and ICRC according to the Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions (signed in October 2017).

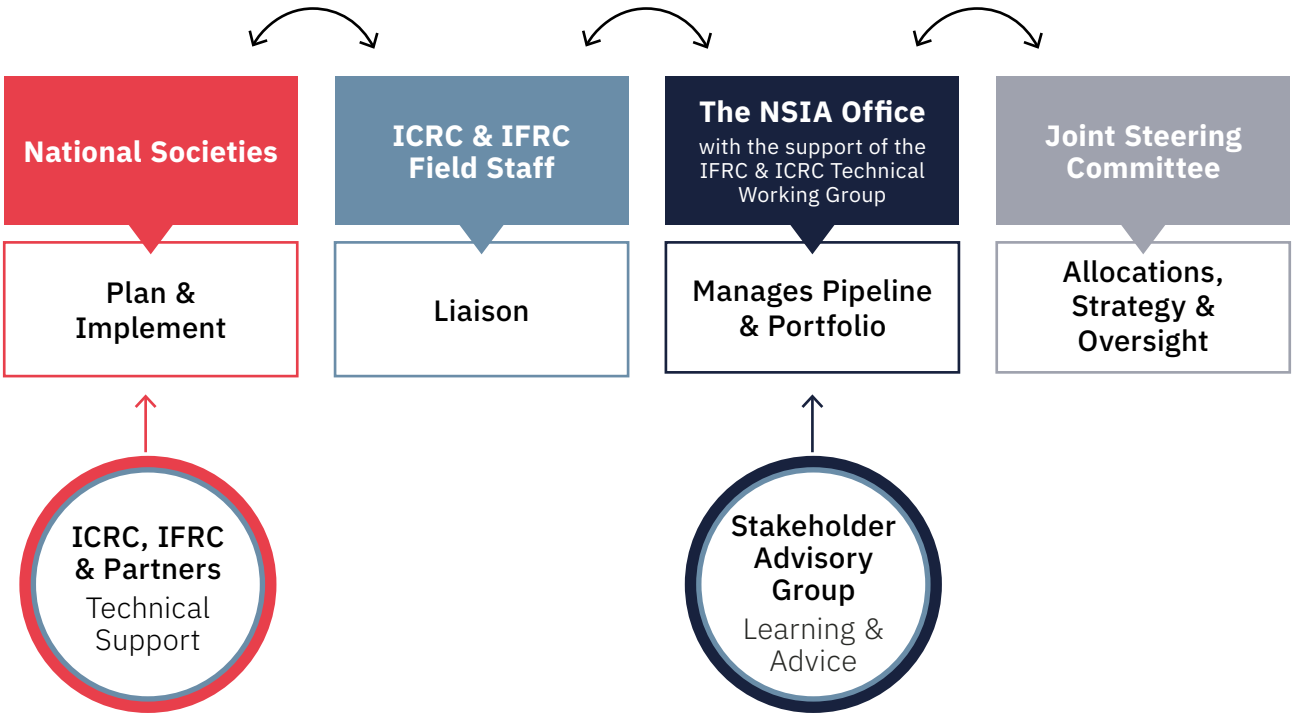
A **Steering Committee** has overall responsibility and strategic oversight for NSIA. It is comprised of four individuals, two senior staff each of IFRC and ICRC. The Steering Committee agrees on a funding strategy for each round and decides on how the funds will be allocated.

The **NSIA Office** is responsible for the effective management of the investment fund. It reports to the Steering Committee. The NSIA Office also works closely with National Societies, with the support of ICRC and IFRC staff in headquarters and in field structures, both in relation to the fund portfolio, and through the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

The NSIA Office works in coordination with the **Technical Working Group**. The latter is formed by IFRC and ICRC NSD, Cooperation and resource mobilization staff. It is coordinated by the NSIA Fund Manager. As well as assisting the NSIA Office with day-to-day work, it contributes to supporting National Societies in their application and implementation process, as well as providing strategic recommendations to the Steering Committee. IFRC and ICRC **field staff** located close to the National Society receiving investment will have a **NSIA liaison role**. Such staff will support the NSIA Office in contracting, monitoring and reporting processes, and help ensure that any National Society concerns or questions are dealt with rapidly.

A **Stakeholder Advisory Group** of National Society representatives ensures continuous learning for the NSIA and wider National Society development approaches. It will advise the Steering Committee on improvements.

National Societies supported by the NSIA are at the centre of the process. They will develop and implement medium to long-term investment plans, sourcing technical support from partners inside or outside the Movement as needed and appropriate.



2

What funding and support does the NSIA provide?

The NSIA is open to National Societies in very high or high-risk contexts, or in the most fragile countries in a medium-risk context as defined by the list in section 7.

Funding is provided through two funding streams: multi-year Accelerator funding, and smaller Bridge grants to support National Societies in preparing for future investment.

ACCELERATOR FUNDING

Accelerator funding is open to National Societies with a clear vision and plan for their long-term organization's development and who are looking for the investment to make it happen.

The funding will be provided on an annual basis for two to five years. The maximum total funding for each National Society will be CHF 1 million. The NSIA will support investment plans that are appropriate for the National Society's needs and absorption capacity.

Investment Plans should include processes and activities designed to strengthen key organizational areas that will lead to increased relevance, quality and sustainability of the National Society's humanitarian services.

This should take a holistic view of the development of the organization operating in a fragile context.

Proposals should include mechanisms and activities to support planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout the implementation of the plan, including an annual national-level learning meeting for Accelerator investments. An updated learning guide will be shared to support National Societies in this area.

The investment plan submitted should fit with the National Society's existing strategic or development plan and build on current development initiatives. It should provide the basis for the National Society to coordinate and align support from its partners inside and outside the Movement.

REQUIREMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ACCELERATOR PROPOSAL

To apply for Accelerator funding, a National Society should be able to submit an evidence-based investment plan that has been widely discussed within the organization and fulfils the selection criteria for Accelerator funding (see section 4).

Accelerators are long-term investments. As such, they will only be supported if they are mature and developed enough to provide evidence of their future success. For example, an Accelerator that aims at developing a business initiative must include a business plan, revenue streams, break-even point and profit analysis, market assessment, etc. Similarly, if a proposal aims at developing a building, it should include an asset management plan, sustainability plans, etc.

These supporting documents are essential for a successful Accelerator proposal. If the National Society is not able to do this by the application deadline, then it should instead consider applying for a Bridge grant – see below.

BRIDGE FUNDING

Bridge grants of up to CHF 50,000 over 12 months will support National Societies to develop an investment plan for their development, increasing their readiness to apply for the NSIA Accelerator or other sources of funding. Bridge funding is intended to support the development of a business case and overall National Society strategy.

Support will be provided to activities that contribute to such broader objectives, such as:

- Strategy development – developing a shared vision and strategy involving internal and external stakeholders, reviewing the organizational model to deliver relevant and effective humanitarian services
- Assessment – carrying out an organizational self-assessment process such as OCAC, PER or SAF, or an assessment of the external context; carrying out a financial audit or a financial capacity and risk assessment such as IFRC's CRRA; or other types of assessment that are relevant to the purpose of the plan.
- Business, resource mobilization strategy and partnership development – carrying out a market assessment for commercial/income generating activities, developing an evidence-based business plan and financial model, or developing a resource mobilization and fundraising strategy.
- Strengthening critical capacity areas or issues that affect chances of future investment – for example, finance system development, improving governance, or a National Society's legal, statutory and policy base.

A Bridge grant can be used for related research, or to test ideas that could be the basis of medium/long-term investment.

Bridge grant proposals should include mechanisms for planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning from the activities supported.

There is no guarantee that National Societies will automatically access Accelerator funding if they have received Bridge funding to develop good-quality investment plans meeting Accelerator funding criteria. However, many National Societies have followed the Bridge-to-Accelerator pipeline, and Bridge funding also increases a National Society's chances of accessing other sources of funding.

WHAT IS NOT FUNDED?

The NSIA will not support the implementation of ongoing operational activities, basic running costs, core costs, or any activities that will not clearly contribute to the longer-term sustainability of the National Societies capacities beyond the period of the NSIA investment. While salary costs are eligible, only National Society staff fully engaged in the implementation of the Investment Plan can be covered by the NSIA. It is advised to provide information about the long-term sustainability of the proposed salaries once the project comes to an end.

Overheads will only be covered where there is an approved and functioning cost-recovery policy which is in line with IFRC financial policies. Capital expenditure and related costs will only be funded if there is a clear benefit and the outcomes of the investment can be maintained after NSIA support finishes, for income generating commercial activities this should include financial projections with a defined break-even point. Proposals that seek funding to cover deficits, or which do not consider existing financial obligations will not be accepted.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND ACCOMPANIMENT

Each National Society will define the technical support needed, and from where it wishes to source that support, be it from inside or outside the Movement. Costs can be budgeted for in the proposal. The NSIA Office, working with relevant IFRC and ICRC field structures will help to identify support as requested. Support may include: consultancy; expert advice; training and other learning mechanisms; peer-to-peer support; coaching and mentoring for leadership (this is not an exclusive list).

The NSIA will support National Societies to learn from their experiences, through learning activities included in National Society Investment Plans. It also supports sharing of experiences with other National Societies in international learning exchanges.

IFRC and ICRC field staff located close to a National Society receiving investment will provide support to the contracting, monitoring and reporting processes, and help with concerns or questions around the NSIA.

It is advised to contact the IFRC and ICRC field staff at their respective Delegation to discuss the proposal before drafting and submitting it.

3

Applying to NSIA

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

An application to NSIA proceeds in five key stages.

1

Application

Eligible National Societies apply for a NSIA Accelerator or Bridge grant using the online application form on the NSIA platform- (www.nsia.fund).

2

Initial Eligibility

Basic eligibility and relevance, screening for integrity issues and basic fulfilment of requirements, including key supporting documents for Accelerator proposals (see section 3, “How to make an application) (i.e. complete applications)

3

Consultation

Extensive consultation with IFRC and ICRC field structures to triangulate and evidence proposal details.

4

Steering Committee

Short-listed proposals ranked and presented to the Steering Committee for review and final decision-making.

5

Fund disbursement

Following the agreement of the Steering Committee and a risk assessment, agreements are signed with National Societies

FROM APPLICATION TO AWARDING

1

Call for proposals

Invitation to eligible National Societies to submit completed applications to the NSIA Office, via the updated online application form on the NSIA portal accessible via www.nsia.fund.

2

Review of applications

The NSIA Office will determine the eligibility of the applications and review them against set criteria. It will use a combination of approaches to assess the applications, such as review by IFRC and ICRC experts, field feedback from Movement actors, and interviews with the National Society leadership and technical staff.

3

Decision by the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee, advised by the NSIA Office and oriented by the overall investment strategy of the NSIA fund, will decide on the provisional allocation of funds based on three criteria: context fragility, National Society need of NSD support, and risk and relevance and quality of the proposal.

The Steering Committee may:

- accept an application, or
- request the fulfillment of specific conditions before proceeding with the funding award, or
- propose support is given through the Bridge grant rather than Accelerator funding, or
- decide the NSIA is unable to support a given application at this stage.

The decisions of the Steering Committee will be communicated to applicants and shared publicly. Constructive feedback will be given to National Societies on unsuccessful applications.

4

Due diligence and risk assessment (applicable only to the Accelerator funding)

National Societies whose application for Accelerator funding has been approved by the Steering Committee will be required to undergo a capacity review and risk assessment, using IFRC's Capacity Review and Risk Assessment (CRRA) process (unless they have already undertaken it). The NSIA agreement, conditions and funding modality will be adapted according to the results of this assessment.

Proposals which involve significant capital expenditure, or high investment in fundraising and resource mobilization activities, are likely to receive further checks prior to investment. These may be carried out by Movement experts or by external experts hired by the NSIA Office.

5

Agreement

Once the NSIA Office has confirmed the investment, an agreement will be signed between the National Society and IFRC on behalf of the NSIA. This will confirm the terms and conditions of the investment, including reporting requirements and how NSIA will monitor and review progress.

HOW TO MAKE AN APPLICATION

1

Application

Applicants are asked to apply via the online portal. They should complete the application form, available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish, and submit all relevant supporting documentation. The NSIA application form has been reviewed to better support the National Societies in drafting and implementing NSIA grants. The new NSIA application form will:

- Support the National Society in reflecting strategically and in better structuring the proposal. This includes an updated planning and monitoring framework and tools.
- Provide an effective platform for impacts reviews.
- Support the National Society in using and/or developing competences on result-based management and its tools. This is good practice for successful project management and is aligned with donors' standards.

By applying this methodology, National Societies will enhance their probabilities of accessing NSIA funds. They will also be more successful in implementing the NSIA initiative and will be in a better position to demonstrate results and impacts in line with donors' requirements. In turn, NSIA will be able to aggregate and analyse results and impacts at the global level.

It is important to note that the new NSIA application form does not ask different or new questions. It streamlines, organizes and rationalizes the template by applying a result-based management lens.

The NSIA Office will communicate with applicants in English and French only.

The Application Pack is available at www.nsia.fund. It includes additional information and notes on completing the online application form. In addition, Annex 1 provides guidance and suggestions to properly fill the application template. Finally, Annex 2 provides a glossary of key terms and Annex 3 includes practical suggestions for drafting a good proposal, based on the analysis of all feedback provided in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

2

Mandatory supporting documents for applicants for Accelerator funding

Applications for **Accelerator** funding must include electronic versions of the following documents:

- **Financial information:** relevant available information on the National Society financial situation, e.g. audit report or financial statements for the last two years; and conclusions of any financial management capacity assessment, e.g. ICRC Due Diligence Assessment or IFRC WWPP/CRRA.
- **Assessment:** relevant organizational assessment directly related to the plan, e.g. OCAC, SAF, PER or similar process. This should give a clear description of the issues facing the National Society and its context, have been developed through a consultative process, and be endorsed by National Society leadership.
- **Business case plan:** relevant documentation must accompany the Accelerator application. For example, proposals involving commercial ventures or large-scale fundraising should include relevant supporting documentation: for example, a business plan including financial projections with a defined break-even point, market research, or a resource mobilization strategy. Other key examples of relevant documentation include: detailed procurement and asset management plans for significant capital expenditure; and a recruitment plan and staff retention/sustainability strategy for significant HR initiatives.

3

Other supporting documents

All applicants should include electronic versions of any material showing that they meet the application criteria and/or that will help the NSIA Office to better understand their proposal, e.g. a Strategic Plan, Annual Report, etc.

SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING APPLICATIONS

National Societies are strongly advised to approach the respective IFRC and ICRC delegations for discussing the proposal idea. National Societies can approach the NSIA Office to access advice and support in thinking through their applications, in a spirit of fairness for other applicants.

IFRC and ICRC field structures or external sources can also provide guidance and support. The best placed field structure will depend on the type of proposal and the expertise available.

Support to applications might include:

- Advice on the type of application (Bridge or Accelerator)
- Advice on which materials should be submitted
- Advice on potential sources of technical support from inside or outside the Movement
- Help in thinking through the application.

While the NSIA Office, IFRC and ICRC field structures or external actors should be potential sources of advice and support, a National Society is responsible for drafting its own application. **The final application must be the work, and is the responsibility, of the National Society.**

DISCUSSION WITH PARTNERS

National Societies are encouraged to discuss their proposals with their domestic and international partners, and to look at how current and future support can be coordinated around their plans. Partners might provide technical support, support complementary activities, or help scale up activities under the plan.

The Investment Plan can provide a frame for the National Society to coordinate and align support from its partners inside and outside the Movement.

4

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be reviewed and assessed against pre-set criteria, depending on the nature of the application.

ALL APPLICATIONS

- **Country-level Humanitarian Risk** – In 2024, the NSIA will only be accepting applications from National Societies operating in very high or high-risk contexts, or in the most fragile countries in a medium-risk context as defined by the INFORM risk index (the list of eligible countries in 2024 is available in section 7). The risk environment will be reflected in the scoring of applications.
- **National Society** – The assessment will include an assessment of the underlying level of risk related to the National Society. This includes the specific risks of the proposed investment and its potential impact, the complexity of delivery, the capacity of the National Society, and consequences of delay or failure.
- **The need for NSD** is also assessed and taken into consideration: this ensures NSIA prioritizes National Societies that have fewer chances to access other funds for long-term organizational development and positive change.
- **Investment Impact** – The third level of analysis is the potential impact of investment in a National Society over the long-term. Attention is paid to whether an intervention will lead to measurable impact (humanitarian and/or financial), as well as the availability of other NSD funds and the potential catalytic effect of NSIA funds. As a reminder, Accelerator proposals must be fully developed business cases and Bridge proposals cannot be stand-alone projects (see section 3)
- **Governing Board and Senior Management commitment** – The National Society's Governing Board and Senior Management must endorse the proposed plan, commit to it, and take ownership of its implementation. Strong and credible National Society leadership, which is clear about the change it is seeking to bring about, will be central to successful investment proposals.
- **Alignment with the goals of the NSIA** – Proposals must support the medium- and long-term development and strengthening of National Societies, with the ultimate aim of delivering relevant and effective humanitarian services to communities in need.

ACCELERATOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS

In addition, applications for Accelerator funding will be evaluated according to the following criteria and supporting documentation:

- **Vision and Strategy:** plan fits with the National Society's existing strategic plan; a clear and shared vision on its development and future humanitarian impact
- **Quality of proposed plan:** a viable and realistic plan based on a thorough assessment of the National Society and its context, with clearly defined measures of success
- **Business case:** a fully-developed business case that includes evidence-based analysis, plans and implementation strategies.
- **Impact and Sustainability:** likely sustainability of the outcomes of the plan; likely potential to improve humanitarian impact (recognizing the challenges of complex and high-risk environments)
- **Implementation capacity:** leadership and management capacity to implement the changes proposed, or plans to develop such capacity with a relevant technical support plan
- **Budget:** a realistic budget and cost-effective activities.

Mandatory Supporting Documentation:

- Relevant **Organizational Assessment** (OCAC or similar), and link to proposal focus
- **Financial information:** relevant available information on the National Society's financial situation and financial management capacity assessment
- **Full business case documentation:** the proposal should include all relevant documentation to demonstrate the viability of the proposal.

Proposals that involve significant capital expenditure, commercial ventures or large-scale fundraising, particularly those involving investments of over CHF 25,000, should include supporting documentation that backs up the proposed approaches.

See Section 3, "How to make an application" for more information on these mandatory supporting documents.

BRIDGE GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applications for the Bridge grant will be evaluated according to the following main criteria:

- Proposal is viable and realistic
- Proposal is built on a clear analysis of the organization's current development needs
- A realistic technical support plan with appropriate partner support is in place.
- Realistic budget and cost-effective activities
- Proposed process likely to lead to a good quality investment plan and readiness for future investment from NSIA Accelerator or other sources of funding.

Decisions will be guided by the scoring and associated information related to the criteria above.

5

Implementation

The National Society will be responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting and learning related to the development process supported through the NSIA.

Each National Society receiving funding should identify a senior staff member to oversee implementation and provide an ongoing communication channel to IFRC, ICRC and the NSIA Office.

In addition, each investment will be linked to designated ICRC and IFRC field staff, who act as a link between the National Society and the NSIA Office. The ICRC/IFRC field staff will provide support for the agreement, monitoring and reporting, and be the first point of contact for National Society questions. Terms of Reference for this role are available on the NSIA website and will be shared with relevant stakeholders.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Each National Society will manage the technical support it identified and budgeted for in its approved proposal. The NSIA Office, working with IFRC and ICRC field structures, can help to identify support.

MONITORING AND LEARNING

Monitoring, reviews, and learning are important tools for making decisions and demonstrating accountability. NSIA is strengthening its processes to embed regular checks and analysis during the implementation of both Bridges and Accelerators. The revised processes have two aims. First, they will ensure all conditions for successful implementation are in place, and allow timely and relevant adjustments and support. Second, they will allow the NSIA Office to enhance monitoring and learning at the global level.

National Societies will continuously **assess Implementation** and adjust their plans and activities as necessary. Twice a year, at the end of month 3 and month 9, a light Project Implementation Review will be conducted with the IFRC and ICRC liaisons. This will be based on two process indicators: spending rate and activity rate. The main objective of this Implementation Review is to review these indicators, analyze progress against plans, i.e. whether or not the initiative is on track. The Review will highlight significant achievements and/or challenges. If the project is partially or not on track, the Review offers an occasion to discuss adjusting plans and/or ambitions and providing additional support (strategic or technical).

In addition, the National Society will regularly **monitor Results**. This will include Semi-Annual Results Reviews in month 6 and month 12, based on the results frameworks introduced in the Application form. The National Society will collect data and information on outputs and outcomes indicators, and assess progress towards intended outputs and outcomes. The objective of the Results Review is to monitor whether implementation leads to planned results, i.e. intended outputs and outcomes. Sometimes implementation is on track as planned but does not lead to the intended results, or the other way around. It is therefore equally important to review progress towards intended outputs and outcomes and if required adjust plans and/or ambitions, as well as highlight good practices and/or lessons to be learned.

Learning is an integral part of NSIA investments. This includes identifying lessons that may be learned to improve practices and impacts, as well as identifying good practices that may be replicated in other actions, projects, or programmes. National Societies will conduct **learning activities** based on suggested thematic and means indicated in the Application form. Learning from implementation reviews, results monitoring and learning activities should be documented and shared with the NSIA Office. National Societies may also be invited to attend global learning meeting(s) to share experiences, good practices and lessons.

The NSIA Office will regularly conduct learning activities, implementation reviews and results monitoring at projects and global levels. It is currently developing an **Impacts reviews** framework to enable identification and assessment of impacts of NSIA investments: whether intended or unintended, positive or negative. National Societies that have received and that are receiving funding will be invited to participate in Impacts reviews activities. These may include interviews, workshops, short surveys, visits, etc.

ADAPTING INVESTMENTS TO CHANGING CONDITIONS

NSIA funding offers flexibility to amend plans based on implementation and results monitoring, learning activities or, when necessary, changes in external circumstances. Amendments will need to remain within the broad goals of the investment and be agreed with the NSIA Office. Amendments should be explained and discussed with ICRC and IFRC liaisons, and the NSIA Office, at the earliest opportunity.

REPORTING

The National Society will be responsible for providing timely and complete financial and narrative reports about projects. Narrative reports will consist of semi-annual reports and final reports. The semi-annual reports will focus on implementation and progress towards intended results. The final report will focus on results achieved and learning.

RENEWING ACCELERATOR FUNDING FOR SUBSEQUENT YEARS

The NSIA will organize a review of progress three months before the end of the funding year. Once the National Society has submitted a plan and budget for the next year, the NSIA Fund Manager will make a recommendation to the NSIA Steering Committee on whether to renew the investment. In its decision, the Steering Committee will consider the results from the initial investment, the quality of future plans, and adherence to NSIA conditions.

EXTENSION OF NSIA INITIATIVES

Any change to the implementation timeframe (extension) without modification of the total approved budget shall be requested in writing by senior leadership of the National Society to the NSIA Office **at least 1 month before the end of the implementation** as per signed agreement.

Extension will only be accepted if clearly justified by reasons of force majeure or other significant adverse events impacting the capacity of the NS to implement the agreed activities within the initially agreed timeframe. Extensions need to be requested through the appropriate template. They should include an evidence-based justification of the request, clear plans for successfully completing the initiative, and show learning from past challenges.

TRANSITIONING FROM BRIDGE TO ACCELERATOR FUNDING

The NSIA cannot guarantee that it will be able to support well-prepared investment plans developed through the Bridge grant. In such instances, National Societies will be encouraged to use their investment plan to attract other sources of funding.

EVALUATION

The NSIA may commission an independent external evaluation to assess the organizational and, if possible, humanitarian impact of each Accelerator investment. This will be carried out at the end of the investment plan in conjunction with the National Society and made publicly available.

6

Further information

For further information please contact:

NSIA Office

- Online: www.nsia.fund
- Email: NSIA.Office@IFRC.org

IFRC and ICRC field structures

Country level:

- IFRC: Country Cluster Coordinator / National Society Development (NSD) delegate
- ICRC: Cooperation Coordinator / Delegate

Regional level:

- IFRC: Head of Membership Services and/or NSD Coordinator
- ICRC: Supra Coordinator / Cooperation Advisor

7

Country risk environment

The tables below show the level of risk for different countries according to INFORM risk index 2024 (mid-year).

National Societies from these countries are eligible to apply for NSIA funds if they operate in very high or high-risk contexts, or in the most fragile countries in a medium-risk context (risk score until 3.7 inclusive). For more information on the INFORM index, please visit: http://www.inform-index.org.

VERY HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT			
Afghanistan	Burkina Faso	Central African Republic	Chad
Congo DR	Ethiopia	Haiti	Myanmar
Somalia	South Sudan	Sudan	Syria
Uganda	Yemen		

HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT			
Angola	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Burundi
Cameroon	Colombia	Congo	Côte d'Ivoire
Eritrea	Guatemala	Guinea	Honduras
India	Indonesia	Iran	Iraq
Kenya	Lebanon	Madagascar	Mali
Mexico	Mozambique	Niger	Nigeria
Pakistan	Palestine	Papua New Guinea	Philippines
Togo	Ukraine	Venezuela	

MEDIUM RISK ENVIRONMENT			
Belize	Benin	Bolivia	Brazil
Cambodia	Djibouti	Dominican Republic	Ecuador
Egypt	El Salvador	Ghana	Guinea-Bissau
Jordan	Korea DPR	Liberia	Libya
Malawi	Marshall Islands	Mauritania	Namibia
Nepal	Panama	Peru	Russian Federation
Rwanda	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Solomon Islands
South Africa	Tajikistan	Tanzania	Thailand
Turkey	Vanuatu	Viet Nam	Zambia
Zimbabwe			

Annex 1
NSIA Application Form 2024 user guide

The online application form includes some explanations that can be consulted directly on the platform. The below table provides an extended guide to each question, with examples. We strongly advise National Societies to consult the user guide when drafting a proposal.

QUESTION

What is your National Society's risk context as listed in the INFORM index?

GUIDANCE

NSIA promotes sustainable medium- and long-term development of National Societies in fragile contexts. The only National Societies eligible to apply to NSIA are those operating in very high or high-risk contexts, or in the most fragile countries in medium-risk contexts, according to the INFORM index mid-2024.

QUESTION

Which type of funding are you applying for?

GUIDANCE

Accelerators are long-term investments. As such, it is necessary to demonstrate that the development of the business case is complete.

For example, if the proposed initiative includes recruitment of new staff, an HR plan should be included as an annex. The plan should explain the timeline of recruitment, how new staff will be onboarded, possible challenges, and how salaries will be paid in the long term.

Similarly, if the initiative aims at building a new headquarters for the National Society, it is important to show whether additional capital will be necessary to complete construction and where it will come from. Such applications should also include an asset management plan to show how the new property will be managed and maintained in the long term.

Likewise, business initiative proposals should show a clear business plan, market assessment, forecasted revenue streams, break-even point, profit management, etc.

If the business case is not mature enough and/or planning is not complete, the National Society should apply for Bridge funding and use it to complete the planning. It is not guaranteed that an Accelerator will be granted in the future, but this will reinforce the business case substantially. In addition, it will equip the National Society with a complete plan that could be taken to other potential donors and investors.

QUESTION

Title of the NSIA development initiative

GUIDANCE

The title of the NSIA initiative should give a clear idea of the goal(s) the National Society intends to achieve. For example: 'Promote financial sustainability of the XXRCS through the development of a business plan for commercial first aid'.

QUESTION

Total requested amount in CHF

GUIDANCE

Automatically filled from budget below.

QUESTION

Number of year(s) of implementation

GUIDANCE

The Accelerator is a multi-year instrument that promotes the medium- and long-term sustainable development of a National Society in fragile contexts. Therefore, the application should be from 2 to 5 years of duration.

QUESTION

National Society

GUIDANCE

It is helpful if you spell out the full name of the National Society, as well as the acronym that is normally used: 'XX Red Cross Society, XXRCS'.

QUESTION

Focal person for application

GUIDANCE

This should be the staff member that manages the application and who can be reached for questions and clarifications.

QUESTION

Focal person's position in National Society

GUIDANCE

Enter position

QUESTION

Email address of focal person

GUIDANCE

Enter email

QUESTION

Secondary contact's name

GUIDANCE

This person should be familiar with the application and be able to step up if the focal person is unavailable. This person will be copied into all NSIA communications to the focal person.

QUESTION

Secondary contact's position in National Society

GUIDANCE

Enter position

QUESTION

Email address of secondary contact

GUIDANCE

Enter email

QUESTION

Please provide a brief overview of the initiative proposal and of its objectives (max. 350 words)

GUIDANCE

The question provides a short but clear summary of the initiative proposal. In a clear, straightforward way, it explains the goals and objectives that will be achieved through the proposal and how they will be reached.

By reading the short paragraph it will be possible to clearly understand what the proposal is about.

QUESTION

Please explain which process/tool the National Society used to identify the need for this initiative (max 300 words)

GUIDANCE

Please, briefly describe the needs the initiative will address and explain which process and tools were utilised to identify them, e.g., OCAC, BOCA, PER, etc.

For example, an OCAC may have identified some gaps in the management of data, so that a digitalisation process may be needed.

QUESTION

Please, describe and explain how the initiative will contribute to achieving the long-term goals of the National Society. (max. 300 words)

GUIDANCE

This question links the objectives of the proposal with the National Society's wider strategic goals. In other words, it explains how the proposed initiative contributes to this overall strategy.

For example, one of the long-term objectives of a National Society may be to enhance financial sustainability. The proposed initiative could contribute to this goal by promoting financial independence through digital resource mobilisation.

QUESTION

Please describe if and how this initiative will contribute to address some key humanitarian issues. (max. 250 words)

GUIDANCE

The applicant should provide relevant information on the humanitarian context, focusing on elements that clarify the proposal. The applicant should link the objectives of the proposal to the main elements of the context, explaining how by achieving the proposal objectives will contribute to tackle some key humanitarian issues the National Society is facing.

For example, the proposal could explain that local communities in hard-to-reach parts of the National Society's area of operation need support but are often neglected – and therefore reinforcing branches and volunteers will enable the National Society to better help these people.

QUESTION

Please detail in the following table the outcomes of your initiative and related outputs to achieve them, broken down into concrete activities.

GUIDANCE

The filled table will represent the proposal's 'results framework'.

It uses the 'result-management approach', which is a standard for main international organisations and donors. It is also a good management tool that supports future decision-making (adjusting plans when necessary), accountability (reporting on progress towards intended results) and learning.

This approach divides results in three different levels: outputs, outcomes and impacts (captured as the Goals in the section above). It also identifies results-monitoring tools (indicators, baselines, targets, and means of verification). See Glossary for definitions of key terms.

The table needs to be completely filled in. Some cells (in grey) will be automatically generated. A Bridge application only includes one table, with a breakdown by quarter of the one-year implementation plan.

In contrast, an Accelerator application starts with a first table with a breakdown by years of implementation (two to five years). Once this first table is completed, a second table will open: this zooms into the first year of implementation, broken into the four quarters of the year.

Please take time to review the provided explanations, examples and glossaries.

The table replaces and streamlines the Excel document that applicants were asked to annex to their proposals until 2023. The tables mirror and replace the following sheets in the old Excel template: 'Year 1 funding (Acc & Bridge)'; 'Funding per year (Acc only)'; 'Funding per year (Acc only)'.

QUESTION

Outcome 1

GUIDANCE

What is an outcome? An outcome describes the effect or change the proposal intends to achieve through the completion of specific outputs and related activities. An outcome must directly contribute to the overarching intended Goal/impacts.

Example: if the overarching goal is to reinforce local outreach and support to communities in need, through the enhancement of financial sustainability, one of the outcomes may be: 'The National Society at branch level has increased its revenues through income-generating activities/businesses.'

In the case of a Bridge proposal, another outcome may be: 'The National Society at branch level demonstrates its potential for initiating/strengthening income generation streams. This makes it a viable partner for future investments through the development of a feasible business plan on commercial first aid.'

Selecting generic outcome: The National Society can select from the dropdown list the most relevant generic outcomes that will contribute with the goal of the proposal. This list of generic outcomes has been identified based on a thorough analysis of past NSIA investments. However, the dropdown list of generic outcomes is not comprehensive and **not restrictive**. If none of the generic outcomes are relevant, the National Society should select "Other" and formulate the intended outcome(s).

Selecting 'Other' and formulating an outcome: When identifying intended outcome(s), it may help to reflect on the following questions:

- What will change with the achievement of the activities/outputs?
- What effect(s) will the completed activities/outputs achieve?
- What will be increased, enhanced or strengthened, for example regarding knowledge, attitudes and practices?
- Who will benefit from the change or effect?
- Will it be the National Society at national level, or at branch level, or both?
- Will it be the National Society staff, leadership or volunteers?
- Will it be the communities?

Then, to formulate the outcome, start with the who and add the what.

Example: if the goal is to contribute to addressing climate change challenges, an outcome may be: 'The NS branches have increased the mobilization of their communities in tree-planting campaigns.'

Adding outcome(s): A National Society may wish to achieve more than one outcome. For example, the National Society may want to increase the effectiveness of its fundraising though a digital platform, and at the same time enhance its staff's knowledge and skills in fundraising. A National Society may also wish to work around a different thematic to achieve another outcome.
In both cases, simply add another outcome with the **'+ Click to add new Outcome'** button.

However, it is important to reflect on the feasibility (in terms of resources and time) of achieving multiple outcomes. It is usually more successful and effective (but NOT compulsory!) to focus on one outcome (for a Bridge proposal) or two (for an Accelerator proposal).

QUESTION

Level of implementation

GUIDANCE

Development of branches is key for the long-term sustainable development of National Societies, especially in fragile contexts. It is also a key element of the localisation agenda, because it brings operation closer to the communities.

However, branch development can be achieved through different outcomes, e.g. resource mobilisation, development of systems, BOCA assessments. This means the generic outcomes, or any other outcome that is identified, may be achieved at branch level.

Therefore, this question asks where the outcome will take place, i.e. at national level, branch level, or both.

QUESTION

Outcome budget

GUIDANCE

The total budget assigned to an outcome corresponds to the sum of total budget assigned to each of the outputs related to the outcome.

It is automatically generated by the system adding up the various budget assigned to the outputs. It is also disaggregated, either by year (Accelerator) or by quarter (Bridge).

QUESTION

Indicators

GUIDANCE

What is an indicator? An indicator is a unit of measurement that is used to track progress towards intended results. It can be quantitative, such as a number or percentage. Alternatively, it can be qualitative, capturing perceptions or other descriptive aspects.

Identifying outcome indicators An outcome indicator should provide a simple means to measure achievement or reflect change connected to the outcome.

- When identifying outcome indicators, it might be useful to reflect on the following questions:
- What will success look like?
- How can success be captured?
- What critical aspect(s) of the outcome can demonstrate positive change?

Example: Suppose the generic intended outcome is "The National Society has enhanced its knowledge and skills in resource mobilization/fundraising (at branch level)". In that case, one quantitative outcome indicator could be the percentage of branches with at least 2 staff that have successfully completed the fundraising training. Similarly, a qualitative indicator may be the percentage of branch staff that have successfully completed the fundraising training who feel equipped with the knowledge and skills to initiate and conduct fundraising activities in their branch. Another quantitative outcome indicator may be the percentage of branches where staff have completed the fundraising training that have initiated fundraising activities.

Example: Suppose the generic intended outcome is: "The National Society demonstrates its potential for initiating/strengthening income generation streams, making it a viable partner for future investments (re business plan)". A qualitative (descriptive) indicator may be: "The business plan meets all characteristics of a solid business plan (characteristics to be described)". Another indicator (quantitative) may be: "Number of potential investors approached that expressed interest in the business plan".

Number of indicators It is important to reflect on the number of indicators identified for each intended outcome. More indicators allow for more interesting insights into progress and achievements – but also make it more difficult to manage data collection, collation and analysis. Fewer indicators make the process more manageable but provide less evidence. It may be useful to ask which critical aspects will show progress and achievements, then focus on identifying indicator(s) for the **most** critical aspect(s).

QUESTION

Baselines

GUIDANCE

The baseline is the status or value of each indicator at the beginning of the initiative. It is the reference point against which progress or achievements will be assessed.

Example: Suppose the indicator is the percentage of branches that have a minimum of 2 staff that have successfully completed the fund-raising training. The baseline may be "0%" if none of the branches have a minimum of 2 staff trained. However, if previous training has taken place, the baseline may be "40%", for instance.

Example: One indicator could be the percentage of branch staff that have successfully completed the 2024 fundraising training who feel equipped with the knowledge and skills to initiate and conduct fundraising activities in their branch. In this case, the baseline is obviously "0%" as the training has not yet taken place.

When there is no data or information on the baseline, it is possible to put a dash (-). In that case the first data/information collected on the indicator will serve as the baseline.

If a numerical value is not applicable, it is possible to put "n/a". One such indicator would be: "The business plan meets all characteristics of a solid business plan (characteristics to be described)".

QUESTION

Targets

GUIDANCE

The target is the intended status or value of each indicator at the end of the initiative. It is the status or value that the National Society hopes to achieve.

It is important to carefully reflect on each indicator's target and set a relevant value or status. It must be ambitious but realistic considering resources and contextual factors.

Example: Suppose the indicator is the percentage of branches that have a minimum of 2 staff that have successfully completed the fund-raising training. A target of 100% may make sense, depending on the number of branches and the resources available to conduct multiple trainings, and whether some training has occurred previously. However, a target of 100% may not be realistic if resources are limited; if some branches have limited staff; or if training takes place at headquarters, making transport and boarding too costly for hard-to-reach branches that would only send one staff member.

For qualitative and descriptive indicators, targets may also be descriptive, or use "quantified description". Suppose the target is: "The business plan meets all characteristics of a solid business plan (10 characteristics to be defined and described)". The target may be: "10 out of 10 (i.e. 100%) characteristics met".

QUESTION

Sources and means of verification

GUIDANCE

This means where and how data and information on each indicator will be collected. Sources and means should be described as precisely as possible to ensure consistency in data collection. Sources ("where") are normally reports or other documentation. It is good practice to detail the exact title of the specific report/document that will be the source of information. When known, it is better to indicate "Checklist annexed in the Business case consultant monthly report" than "Consultant report".

Sources may also include beneficiaries such as National Society staff, volunteers, leaders, community members or partners. It is also better to indicate "Staff having participated in the training" instead of "Staff".

Means of verification ("how") is normally document review.

Sometimes it is necessary to create tools such as questionnaires, surveys, checklists, to ensure consistency in data collection for an indicator.

Example: consider the indicator "percentage of branch staff that have successfully completed the 2024 fundraising training who feel equipped with the knowledge and skills to initiate and conduct fundraising activities in their branch". The means of verification may be: "Short questionnaire sent to all training participants that have completed the training, 2 weeks after the training". The source may then be: "Post-training questionnaire aggregated results report". Alternatively, the source could be a short anonymous test taking place at the end of the training. In that case, the source would be "Training final test aggregated results"

QUESTION

Sustainability

GUIDANCE

Explain the sustainability of the initiative by describing how the achieved outcomes will be maintained by the National Society once the NSIA funds are finished.

For example, if a business is created, explain how the influx of revenues will overcome costs so that the business will continue over the years. Alternatively, if new positions are created and new staff recruited, the long-term HR plan should be explained. It should indicate if the position(s) will continue and how the costs will be covered, or if the position will be closed when the NSIA initiative concludes.

QUESTION

Outputs for outcome 1

GUIDANCE

What is an Output? An Output is defined as the product, capital good or service that results from initiatives' activities. Outputs are the means to achieving the intended outcome.

Outputs are *not* activities. They are the results of series of completed activities. For example, conducting a training workshop is an activity. The result of the workshop is learning: this is the output. Such an output could be: "5 staff members of HQ and 10 staff members of Branches XX, XX and XX are trained in international financial and accounting standards".

Identifying outputs All outputs that need to be achieved to reach intended outcomes (i.e. effects or changes that will contribute to the overall goal) must be clearly described. To identify and describe outputs, it might be helpful to reflect on the following questions:

- What do we need to have to make the change occur?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who will benefit from what, and where?
- What existing policy, framework, strategy, expertise/experience (at local, Movement or sector levels) could help identify what needs to be done to enable the intended effects/outcomes?
- What are the good practices and lessons learned?

Example: Suppose the outcome is: "The National Society has enhanced its knowledge and skills in resource mobilization/fundraising (at branch level)". Outputs may include: "A curriculum in fundraising and training tools are developed"; "All branches have a minimum of 2 staff trained in fundraising"; "All branches have access to a fundraising specialist based at the National Society HQ to support their fundraising initiatives".

Example: Consider the outcome: "The National Society demonstrates its potential for initiating/strengthening income generation streams, making it a viable partner for future investments". Outputs may include: "A market study identifies opportunities for commercial first aid"; or "Based on the market studies and other relevant assessments, a comprehensive business plan for commercial aid is developed".

Once all outputs are defined, it is important to verify whether there are any missing or unnecessary outputs.

You should also verify whether they are all outputs and not activities. For example, "recruiting a consultant" or "consultant recruited" is not an output: it is an activity. The output is the good or service the consultant will provide, such as an assessment or plan of action.

QUESTION

Output 1 budget

GUIDANCE

The total budget assigned to each output corresponds to the total budget assigned to all activities related to the output. It is automatically generated by the system, by adding up the various budgets assigned to the activities.

The output budget is also broken down by years (Accelerator) or by quarters (Bridge) of implementation.

QUESTION

Indicators

GUIDANCE

What is an indicator? An indicator is a unit of measurement that is used to track progress towards intended results. It can be quantitative, such as a number or percentage. Alternatively, it can be qualitative, capturing perceptions or other descriptive aspects.

Identifying output indicators An output indicator should provide a simple means to measure progress or achievement connected to the output.

When identifying output indicators, it can be useful to reflect on the clarity of the output. The clearer the output, the easier it is to find relevant indicators.

Example: Suppose the output (quantitative) is: "All branches have a minimum of 2 branch staff that are trained in fundraising". One indicator may be: "Number of branch staff that have completed the training in fundraising (disaggregated by branch)". Another indicator could be: "Percentage of branch staff that, having completed the training in fundraising, have passed the test with 75% or higher".

Example: Consider the output: "A curriculum in fundraising and training tools is developed". One indicator (qualitative, descriptive) could be: "The training curriculum is developed and available according to the terms of reference (specific dispositions to be specified)".

Number of indicators Once all outputs' indicators are identified, it is important to reflect on the number of indicators. Obviously, the more outputs, the more indicators are needed – therefore more data must be collected, collated and analysed. A good tip is to keep output indicators that are a "must have" to demonstrate progress and achievement of the outputs. Remove any that are only "nice to have".

QUESTION

Baselines

GUIDANCE

The baseline is the status or value of each indicator at the beginning of the initiative. It is the reference point against which progress or achievements can be assessed.

Example: Suppose the output (quantitative) is: "All branches have a minimum of 2 branch staff that are trained in fundraising", and the indicator is: "Number of branch staff that have completed the training in fundraising (disaggregated by branch)". The baseline may be 0 if none of the branches have staff trained in fundraising. However, it could be higher if some of the branches have trained staff. For instance, the baseline could be: "8 (2 in branch XX; 3 in branch YY, 3 in branch ZZ)".

When there is no data or information on the baseline, it is possible to put a dash (-). In that case, the first data/information collected on the indicator will serve as the baseline.

If a numerical baseline is not applicable (e.g. for "A market study identifies opportunities for commercial first aid"), it is possible to put "n/a".

QUESTION

Targets

GUIDANCE

The target is the intended status or value of each indicator at the end of the initiative. It is the status or value that the National Society hopes to achieve.

When an output is clearly described, the indicator's target should be easy to set.

Example: Suppose the output is: "All branches have a minimum of 2 branch staff that are trained in fundraising", and the indicator is: "Number of branch staff that have completed the training in fundraising (disaggregated by branch)". If there are 10 branches, the target will be "20 (2 per branch)".

Regarding qualitative and descriptive indicators, targets may also be descriptive as well or "quantified description".

Example: For the indicator "The business plan meets all of the terms of reference's requirements", the target may be: "10 out of 10 (i.e. 100%) requirements met".

QUESTION

Sources and means of verification

GUIDANCE

Sources and means of verification are where and how data and information on each indicator will be collected. They should be described as precisely as possible to ensure consistency in data collection.

Sources ("where") are normally reports or other documentation. It is good practice to detail the exact title of the specific report/document that will be the source of information. For example, when known, it is better to indicate "Checklist annexed in the consultant terms of reference updated in the monthly report" than "Consultant report". Sources may include beneficiaries such as National Society staff, volunteers, leaders or community members. It is better to indicate "Staff having participated in the training", rather than simply "Staff".

Means of verification ("how") is normally document review.

Sometimes it is necessary to create tools such as questionnaires, surveys, checklists, to ensure consistency in data collection for an indicator.

QUESTION

Activities for output 1

GUIDANCE

Activities are the tasks and day-to-day actions that will be carried out to achieve the related output, and by extension contribute to the achievement of the intended outcome.

Activities include: developing terms of reference based on a consultation of all stakeholders, recruiting the consultant, or conducting trainings.

To avoid endless lists of tasks, it is recommended to group activities. For example, "Conduct 5 trainings in 5 regions (include organisation, logistics, etc.)".

It is important to review the list of activities to ensure they logically lead to the achievement of the related output, that none are missing and that none are unnecessary.

QUESTION

Budget

GUIDANCE

The total budget for the activity. The total corresponds to sum of the years [Accelerator] / quarters [Bridge] of implementation.

The applicant must provide the budget by year [Accelerator] / quarter [Bridge]: the system will then automatically generate the total activity budget for the initiative.

QUESTION

Please detail in the following table the concrete activities related to the proposed Accelerator for year 1 and output-level indicators. Respective outcome and output fields will be automatically generated.

This is relevant for Accelerator only

GUIDANCE

The second table zooms into year 1 of the proposed Accelerator. The table is automatically populated from the first table. The applicant needs to provide a breakdown of:

- Budget of single activities by quarter. The sum of the four quarters should be the year 1 budget for the activity.
- Output level indicator targets by quarter. The sum of the four quarters should be the year 1 target for the output indicator.
- Outcome-level indicators are not part of this breakdown, because they are longer-term and will be assessed on a yearly basis.

QUESTION

Outcome budget

GUIDANCE

Automatic / Outcome budget comes from the main table outcome “Year 1” Total

QUESTION

Output budget

GUIDANCE

Automatic/ Output budget comes from the main table output “Year 1” Total

QUESTION

Activity budgets by quarter

GUIDANCE

The activity budget per quarter quantifies how much will be spent per activity in each of the four quarters of year 1. The sum of the four quarterly budgets is the total yearly budget of the activity, which is automatically generated from the previous table.

Example: Suppose the activity is ‘100 staff are trained on the National Society Code of Conduct’ and the total expected budget is ‘CHF 5,000’. The budgets by quarter can be: ‘Q1: CHF 0’; Q2: CHF 2,000; Q3: CHF 2,000; Q4: CHF 1,000’.

QUESTION

When the initiative is accomplished, who will benefit and how? (max. 200 words)

GUIDANCE

In this question, the applicant should spell out how the National Society will benefit in the long-term from the planned initiative. The benefit(s) should be in the spirit of the NSIA objective, i.e. “promote the sustainability of National Societies in fragile contexts”.

The National Society may benefit in its entirety from the initiative. For example, after the launch of a business, the National Society is expected to be financially independent.

Alternatively, specific departments or branches may be particularly impacted by the initiative. For example, the HR team is reinforced through the adoption of innovative HR policies and approaches.

External stakeholders may also be positively impacted. For example, the counterpart government could see its services improved through a new ambulance service, or remote communities could experience reduced health risks thanks to branch-level volunteers’ training in first aid.

QUESTION

What could go wrong and how will you prevent it from occurring? Please provide a list of all identified risks along with their corresponding mitigation measures.

GUIDANCE

The applicant should identify at least two risks that could hinder the success of the initiative. Risks can be external, such as high inflation or outbursts of conflict, or internal, such as high staff turn-over or lack of necessary extra resources.
By clicking on the drop-down menu, indicate the likely impact and probability of the identified risks.

It is important to indicate which mitigation measures the National Society could put in place to mitigate the identified risks. For example, to limit the effects of an outburst of violence, the National Society may plan to train volunteers on first aid.

QUESTION

Risks

GUIDANCE

See above (question on 'list of all identified risks')

QUESTION

Mitigation measures

GUIDANCE

See above (question on 'list of all identified risks')

QUESTION

What do you expect to learn from this initiative and how will you capture this learning?

GUIDANCE

Learning is an integral part of NSIA investments. It includes identifying lessons that may be learned, leading to improved practices and impacts, as well as identifying good practices that may be replicated in other actions, projects, or programmes.

With this question, the National Society should indicate which aspect(s) of the initiative will be subject to further reflection. These could include improvement of current practices, the challenges of an innovative undertaking, or simply ensuring that the initiative considers previous learning or good practices. The considered aspects may be programmatic, strategic, technical, or linked to management processes and practices. Lessons learned may be of use primarily within the National Society or shared with other stakeholders such as members of the Movement if relevant.

To ensure learning, it is important to set and plan means by which reflection will take place and be documented. Such means may include: meeting(s); ongoing documenting of experiences; or a workshop to share emerging good practices.

QUESTION

Learning

GUIDANCE

See above (question on ‘learning’)

QUESTION

Means

GUIDANCE

See above (question on ‘learning’)

QUESTION

If the proposed initiative is expected to contribute positively to addressing social inequalities related to gender and/or other diversity factors like age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc., could you elaborate on how it aims to do so?

GUIDANCE

If the initiative is anticipated to have a positive impact on addressing the needs of gender equality and/or other needs of marginalized individuals and groups, please explain how.

Example of actions that have a positive impact may be:

- Providing gender-segregated spaces for interventions supporting people who have experienced violence, discrimination or exclusion (dignity)
- Ensuring that services are accessible to all, e.g. facilitating access for individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities, people speaking minority languages, or remote rural populations (access)
- Creating community committees with diverse representation to support the implementation of the initiative (participation)
- Ensuring that safeguarding protocols are in place, and that staff and volunteers are trained on them (safety)

Please, skip this question if not relevant.

QUESTION

Do you plan to involve other partners, within or beyond the RCRC Movement, who share a common interest in addressing the issue? (max. 150 words)

GUIDANCE

We recommend discussing the proposal with the IFRC and ICRC Delegations before submitting it.

QUESTION

Are you seeking other sources of funding for this initiative? (max. 150 words)

GUIDANCE

If yes, please indicate which fund(s)/partner(s), the date of the application and the requested amount.

QUESTION

Would the National Society need any technical support from IFRC or other National Society partners to manage the implementation of this initiative? (max. 200 words)

GUIDANCE

If yes, please indicate what support you would need and at which phase(s) of the initiative.

QUESTION

Governing Board and Senior Management commitment

GUIDANCE

Leadership buy-in is key for the success of a NSIA initiative. Therefore, we can only consider a proposal if it is formally endorsed by the senior leadership of the National Society.

QUESTION

Document to upload (Management Commitment)

GUIDANCE

Document provided in attachment, to be signed by senior leadership

QUESTION

Please confirm that you are aware that, in case of approval of the proposal, any change to the implementation timeframe (extension) without modification of the total approved budget shall be requested in writing by senior leadership of the National Society to the NSIA Office at least 1 month before the end of the implementation, as per the signed agreement. Extension will be accepted only if clearly justified by reasons of force majeure, or other significant adverse events impacting the capacity of the National Societies to implement the agreed activities within the initially agreed timeframe.

GUIDANCE

Tick yes to confirm you understand

QUESTION

Additional supporting documents or materials - Optional

GUIDANCE

You can use this space to upload key documents that could reinforce your application. These could be strategic/relevant documents such as the National Society strategy, audit reports, OCAC recommendations, etc.

For Accelerator proposals, it is essential to prove that the business case is well developed, so you must provide supporting documentation, depending on the nature of the application. Supporting documents could be HR plans, business plans, etc.

Annex 2
Glossary of key terms

KEY TERM	EXPLANATION
Activities	Activities are the tasks, day-to-day actions that are carried out to achieve the related output and by extension contribute to the achievement of the intended outcome.
Assessment	The systematic collection, review, and use of information about projects/programmes undertaken for the purpose of improving learning and implementation. It is a broad term and can include initial assessments, evaluations, reviews, etc.
Baseline	The baseline is the status or the value of each indicator at the beginning of the initiative/ project that is the refence point against which progress or achievements can be assessed.
Effects	Intended or unintended changes due directly or indirectly to an intervention.
Evidence	Facts or information that support the validity and truth of a conclusion, assumption, or assertion.
Goal	The higher-order objective to which the proposal/project is intended to contribute.
Indicator	An indicator is a unit of measurement that is used to track progress towards intended results. It can be quantitative, such as a number or percentage Alternatively it can be qualitative, capturing perceptions or descriptive aspects.
Impacts	The ultimate effects or longer-term changes resulting from the project. Such impacts can include intended and unintended, positive, or negative higher-level effects. Note: Impacts is used here in the plural in reference to its meaning as a type or level of result, as distinct from the impact criterion.
Monitoring	A continuing process that involves the systematic collection and/or collation of data (on specified indicators or other types of information). Provides the management and other stakeholders of an intervention with indications of the extent of implementation progress, achievements of intended results, occurrence of unintended results, use of allocated funds and other important project and context-related information.)
Outputs	An Output is defined as the product, capital good, and service which results from initiative/ project activities. Outputs are the means to achieving the intended outcome. Outputs are not activities; they are the results of series of completed activities.
Outcomes	An outcome describes the effect or change the proposal/project intends to achieve through the completion of specific outputs and related activities. An outcome must directly contribute to the overarching intended Goal/impacts.
Results	The outputs, outcomes, or impacts (intended or unintended, positive, or negative) of a project.
Review	An assessment of the performance of a project, periodically or on an ad hoc basis.
Sources and means of verification	Sources and means of verification are “where” and “how” data and information on each indicator will be collected. They should be described as precisely as possible to ensure consistency in data collection.
Target	The target is the status or the value of each indicator at the end of the project. It is the status or value that the National Society hopes to achieve.

Annex 3
Applying to NSIA – Action-oriented recommendations for applicants

INTRODUCTION

This guide distills essential insights from previous NSIA application feedback and strategic analysis, providing straightforward, actionable advice for developing successful NSIA applications in 2024. Our aim is to equip you with practical strategies and recommendations that seamlessly fit into your application process. Concentrating on key aspects of application development, this resource is designed to help you effectively navigate the NSIA application process. It should enable you to craft proposals that align with your organization's objectives, while contributing to the broader humanitarian mission.

FOUNDATIONS OF OUR PRACTICAL ADVICE

The recommendations provided in this guide are rooted in a comprehensive analysis of NSIA application feedback from 2021, 2022, and 2023. Through a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods, we have identified pivotal trends and key areas where applications often faced challenges. This analysis revealed the most common reasons for unsuccessful applications, and highlighted best practices and success factors.

We have crafted practical advice aimed at addressing these specific areas, ensuring that National Societies are equipped with targeted strategies to enhance their application effectiveness and alignment with NSIA goals. This approach ensures that our guidance is not only based on theoretical best practices, but is also informed by real-world experiences and learnings from previous application cycles.

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR EFFECTIVE NSIA APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Strategic alignment

- Align with your National Society's and NSIA's goals. Ensure your proposal clearly demonstrates how it supports these overarching objectives.
- Maintain consistent messaging throughout the proposal to reinforce this alignment.

Example: A National Society developed a proposal for enhancing their volunteer management system. This proposal was closely aligned with both their strategic goal of community engagement and the NSIA's emphasis on capacity building, successfully demonstrating how this project would strengthen their long-term operational efficiency.

Objectives and budgets:

- Set specific, measurable goals. Clearly link each budget item to these objectives.
- Justify key expenses, ensuring budget items directly support your project's aims.

Example: For a project aimed at improving internal data management capabilities, a National Society meticulously detailed a budget that included costs for training, software acquisition, and system maintenance. They clearly linked each budget item to specific project objectives like increased data accuracy and staff efficiency.

Sustainability:

- Define a sustainability vision to continue delivering impact post-funding.
- Develop a plan for long-term resource management, including potential partnerships and revenue streams.

Example: A National Society developed a proposal for establishing a conference centre. To ensure sustainability, the proposal included a revenue plan comprising service fees and partnerships with local businesses. This revenue would cover the operational costs, including human resources, making the center self-sustaining in the long term.

Consultative process and involvement of IFRC/ICRC Delegations:

- Engage in a robust consultation with internal teams.
- Prioritize active consultations and discussions with IFRC and ICRC delegations, both before and during the proposal development process. Such dialogues can provide critical insights, guidance, and even potential areas of collaboration, enhancing the relevance and impact of your application.
- Continuously seek and incorporate input from relevant stakeholders, including Partner National Societies and other entities aligned with your project's objectives.

Example: In preparing a proposal for modernizing its technological infrastructure, a National Society conducted extensive consultations with IFRC and ICRC delegations in country. They provided support in refining the objectives and established a contact with IT experts from the Movement. This process ensured that the proposed solution was both technologically advanced and tailored to the unique needs of humanitarian field operations.

Clear communication:

- Develop a concise, coherent narrative. Ensure each section logically connects to the next.
- Focus on clearly defined goals, concise information, and consistent messaging throughout.

Example: In a proposal to expand commercial first aid services, a National Society outlined a clear and compelling narrative. The proposal began by highlighting the gap in first aid services in the community, followed by a detailed description of how their commercial first aid program would operate, including training methodologies, service delivery mechanisms, and expected health outcomes. The proposal was structured to lead the reader logically from the identification of the need, through the proposed solution, to the anticipated impact on community health and safety.

Feedback utilization and continuous improvement:

- Actively use feedback from past submissions to refine your proposal.
- Document lessons learned for ongoing improvement and remain open to new ideas and methodologies.

Example: After receiving constructive feedback on an earlier proposal for a community resilience project, a National Society refined their approach by incorporating more robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, leading to a more compelling subsequent application that was successful.

TAILORED PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCELERATOR PROPOSALS

The following are specific action-oriented suggestions for elaborating good Accelerator proposals:

- **Strategic alignment and long-term organizational sustainability:** Ensure your proposal demonstrates a strong connection to the National Society's strategic plan. Emphasize how the project will bolster organizational long-term sustainability. For instance, if you plan a volunteer engagement program, describe how it aligns with your strategic goal of increasing volunteer retention and how it will contribute to building a resilient volunteer base that sustains the organization's mission over time.
- **Coherent proposal structure and robust business plan:** Your proposal should be based on a robust business plan that outlines the viability and strategic relevance of the initiative, regardless of the nature of the project. You should provide evidence of the maturity of the business case, through the elaboration of the project and providing full documentation. For example, for any construction project, a comprehensive market analysis, projected costs, and revenue streams should be included to show how the infrastructure will support the National Society's services in the long run. Similarly, if you are proposing an ERP system, start with a needs analysis that demonstrates the system's strategic necessity for your National Society and detail how it will enhance operational efficiency in line with strategic objectives. Among other analyses, provide a clear cost-benefit analysis showing the expected efficiency gains and long-term cost savings. Explain briefly how the ERP will integrate with existing systems to improve data flow, support decision-making, and maintain service excellence beyond the project lifecycle. If the project does not have this level of maturity, consider applying first to a Bridge to develop the business case.
- **Precise objectives, measurable outcomes, and detailed budgets:** Set specific, quantifiable objectives (outcomes and outputs) and pair them with a budget that reflects the activities needed to achieve these goals. For example, for a commercial first aid initiative, set a goal to increase training course enrolments by X%. Accordingly, allocate budget for marketing, instructor training, and first aid equipment, ensuring each expense is justified by its direct impact on achieving this enrolment target.
- **Impact forecasting, sustainability, and post-project maintenance:** Articulate how your project will deliver enduring value and outline a sustainability plan that extends beyond the life of the funding. For example, if your proposal includes significant HR costs, you could detail a transition plan where initially funded positions become self-sustaining through the establishment of paid service offerings, like first aid courses for local businesses.
- **Leverage learning from past submissions and completed NSIA projects:** Reflect on feedback from previous proposals to strengthen the current application. If this is a continuation of a Bridge project, clearly show how you are building on the successes and learnings from that phase. Demonstrate how past experiences have informed the current proposal's strategy and execution plan. For example, if you are building upon a previous Bridge project focused on developing volunteer policies, the Accelerator proposal could detail how the new initiative will operationalize these policies by establishing a volunteer coordination unit. The unit would be responsible for implementing the policies, tracking their effectiveness, and adapting training programs – ensuring a consistent, high-quality volunteer experience and retention that aligns with the long-term strategic goals of the National Society.

TAILORED PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRIDGE PROPOSALS

The following are specific action-oriented suggestions for elaborating good Bridge proposals:

- **Strategic foundation and capacity building:** Prioritize initiatives that lay the groundwork for broader strategic goals and enhance organizational capacity. Aim for initiatives that are a precursor to more comprehensive projects, in particular NSIA Accelerators. For instance, develop a business case for an upcoming Accelerator project by conducting preliminary research, feasibility studies, market assessments, needs assessments and any other activity that will inform the future Accelerator proposal.
- **Clear, measurable objectives with an aligned budget:** Set precise, achievable objectives for the Bridge that contribute to the long-term vision, ensuring they can be realistically accomplished within the year. The budget should be detailed and directly linked to these objectives, with a focus on investment in the development phase rather than covering operational costs. For example, if the objective is to enhance the volunteer management system, the budget should include specific costs for the development of training modules and pilot implementation, with clear indicators for success such as increased volunteer retention or improved training feedback scores.
- **Incorporation of past NSIA feedback:** Reflect on feedback from past NSIA proposals (if any) to improve your proposal. This includes adapting to previous recommendations, addressing any noted shortcomings, and building upon the strengths identified by NSIA reviewers. For example, if previous feedback emphasized the importance of aligning objectives, actions, and budget, ensure your Bridge proposal exemplifies this integration. For instance, if the goal is to enhance the National Society's disaster readiness, outline specific training modules and capacity-building exercises, correlating each activity with a budget line. Clarify how these will contribute to the strategic development of the National Society, avoiding operational expenses (e.g., community-based trainings) and focusing instead on initiatives that build long-term National Society capacity, e.g. tailored branch DRR plans.

CONCLUSION

In preparing your NSIA application, prioritize your National Society's strategic priorities with clear objectives and a realistic budget. You lead the process; NSIA funding aims to bolster your identified goals. Engage with IFRC and ICRC delegations for insights that align with NSIA's mission and utilize the NSIA Office's support while navigating the competitive process. This collaborative approach enhances your proposal's potential for success and drives your Society's long-term development.

ICRC

IFRC