

Announcement

Financial support provided through the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II”

Since 2018, the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II” has been available to German municipalities, their municipal enterprises and other municipal actors and associations that wish to apply for financial support in order to expand project partnerships and implement partnership projects with municipalities hosting Syrian refugees in the Middle East region. The financial support is provided through Engagement Global/Service Agency Communities in One World on behalf of and with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Announcement

The “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II” (www.initiative-nahost.de) addresses German municipal administrations and enterprises, municipal decision-making bodies as well as municipal associations and district administrations that as a rule have already initiated or established a town/city/project partnership with a municipality hosting Syrian refugees or with a host-municipality association in the Middle East.

The “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II” aims to support and strengthen the development engagement of German municipalities in municipalities hosting Syrian refugees in the Middle East. In project partnerships, municipalities from Germany and the partner countries develop project ideas on core municipal themes and sustainable development, and then implement them jointly in a partnership of equals. The host municipalities are to be supported in improving basic public services for the benefit of both the local population and the refugees. The aim is to strengthen development engagement in both municipalities and to support networking between the relevant actors.

The support provided through the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II” is subject to the availability of budget funds.

Requirements on the submission of proposals

The following requirements must be observed during project planning and subsequent implementation:

1. Who can submit proposals?

Proposals can be submitted by German municipal administrations, municipal enterprises, municipal decision-making bodies, municipal associations or district administrations. The applicants should have already established a town/city/project partnership with a municipality hosting Syrian refugees or with a host-municipality association in the Middle East. Evidence of a solid relationship must be provided based on measures undertaken jointly within the framework of previous cooperation. Previous implementation under the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package I” serves as a reference for an established partnership but is not a requirement for applying for support under the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II”.

Proposals submitted by consortia of several German municipalities are generally permissible. In such cases, one German municipality assumes the roles of applicant and contact organisation for the project. The other municipalities support the project as cooperation partners.

If local initiatives, registered associations, NGOs or specialist organisations play an important role in implementing the proposed partnership project, up to 1/3 (and in exceptional circumstances up to 50%) of the financial support provided can be passed on to these bodies by the applicant; this arrangement must be anchored in a private-law contract. This also applies to NGOs that work locally and have specific knowledge of the country.

No cooperation partners participating in the project may pursue commercial interests. When awarding contracts to service providers (e.g. universities or consulting firms), the applicable contract award criteria must be observed. The overall management of the project shall not be entrusted to third parties.

2. What themes and content can the projects focus on?

Only projects working in the field of municipal development cooperation and whose aim is to improve the situation (of refugees and the local population) in municipalities hosting Syrian refugees in the Middle East are eligible for support. Municipal development cooperation is understood here to mean the sum total of resources and measures that municipalities apply or implement in order to promote global sustainable development in partner municipalities in developing and transition countries. In the context of the municipal project partnership, the proposed project must be planned and implemented jointly between equals.

The transfer of know-how between the German and the partner municipality is of prime importance. Support is not provided for projects in which the main object is to finance operating expenses – including personnel costs.

The project objective must be clearly defined and achievable within the envisaged budget and time frame. The project benefits must be achieved within the project term. It is essential that results can be monitored/assessed.

The sustainability of the project beyond the period of support must be guaranteed.

The projects must take the gender mainstreaming objective into account, and be designed on a conflict-sensitive basis.

The BMZ strategy papers relevant to the project applied for (Helping refugees build a future (March 2017); Informationsbroschüre Kommunalwirtschaftliches Know-How (Information brochure on municipal management know-how, German only) are to be observed during project planning and implementation. You can access the documents at: www.bmz.de/de/mediathek/publikationen.

In line with the definition of municipal tasks and the statutory requirements in the partner country¹, support can be provided to projects in the following areas.

¹ The definition of municipal tasks differs to some extent in the target countries of the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II”.

2.1. Direct improvement in physical municipal infrastructure that benefits refugees and the local population

Examples:

- Solid waste management: waste collection, separation, recycling and avoidance;
- Renewable energy: cost-efficient and resource-conserving power supply to the municipal infrastructure;
- Water supply and sanitation: extending the sewerage system, measures to secure the quantity and quality of the water supply, wastewater treatment and management, sewage treatment plants etc.;
- Formal and non-formal education: building, renovating and equipping schools, sports facilities, youth and community centres; modifications to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities;
- Health care: equipping and extending public health clinics, material supplies for prevention and vaccination campaigns;
- Work and career: establishing, extending and equipping vocational education and training centres;
- General service provision/individual emergencies: establishing and equipping charity shops, setting up women's refuges, establishing centres for distributing donations of food and clothing;
- Transport: expanding the public transport system, erecting and/or extending bus shelters, procuring vehicles;
- Disaster risk management and safety: procuring fire engines, providing fire extinguishers for public buildings and refugee homes if necessary, establishing pedestrian crossings, installing or extending road lighting, providing public notice boards etc.;
- Child and youth work, culture, leisure activities: constructing/extending kindergartens/nursery schools, play areas, parks and youth centres;
- Administration: procuring office furniture, procuring and installing IT systems and databases etc.

The individual measures are to integrate complementary activities that a) build the capacity of administrators and policy-makers in the host municipalities and their municipal enterprises as well in municipal decision-making bodies, municipal associations and district administrations, and b) complement awareness-raising measures for the population.

2.2 Measures for refugees and the local population that improve social cohesion and integration

Examples:

- Developing and offering language and integration courses for displaced persons;
- Developing and implementing measures to promote volunteer work and build the corresponding capacities, improving civic participation, identifying marginalised population groups, improving the inclusion of marginalised population groups etc.;
- Developing and implementing mediation courses and measures to reduce conflict potential;
- Measures to include refugees in the labour market, awareness-raising work on employment law, local economic development and advice on business start-ups;
- Developing and implementing measures to combat child labour and human trafficking and to promote human rights education, for example by offering courses, producing and distributing PR materials, creating radio spots, developing apps and circus projects etc.;
- Developing and implementing joint projects run by refugees and the local population to promote intercultural and interfaith awareness and improve integration.

2.3 Strengthening the planning and proactive management capabilities of the administrative structures in municipalities and municipal service providers

- Training and advising on organisational and personnel development; establishing information management systems, knowledge management systems, and data collection and analysis systems; budget and project planning; financial management and controlling; and improving municipal revenue streams;
- Training and advising on sustainable, resource-conserving municipal development;
- Training and advising on improving the involvement of marginalised and under-represented population groups in gender competence issues, on intersectionality for improved civic participation and on establishing effective structures to promote and support volunteers;
- Training and advising on municipal awareness-raising work and conducting campaigns, for example to improve immunisation and health care, to make public spaces and pathways safer, to combat child labour and human trafficking etc.

Support is provided for advisory services or peer-to-peer workshops and other exchange formats with municipalities hosting refugees in the partner country, in Germany, regionally (MENA region) and in exceptional circumstances also internationally as well as for expert assignments, training and participation in training courses, train-the-trainer activities, project planning workshops, work-shadowing and internships.

2.4. Municipal information work in Germany and the partner country

- Awareness-raising and educational work on the project partnership and/or the partner municipality/region, if possible involving local migrant and refugee organisations.

3. What can financial support be provided for?

3.1. ___ Investment

- Building measures (new construction, conversion and renovation) and the purchase of plots of land and buildings, including the necessary planning expenditures and reports;
- Equipment and fixtures, initial provision of consumables including the necessary procurement and transport costs.

3.2. Project implementation expenditures and operating costs

- Project implementation expenditures and operating costs (for the assumption of operating costs that do not cease after the end of the project partnership it is necessary to explain how these are to be financed after this point in time).
- Training and upgrading measures that are necessary and appropriate in the project context and knowledge transfer (accommodation and meals, travel and/or transport costs, cost of materials, fees, hire of seminar rooms, course fees if applicable etc.).

3.3. Awareness-raising and education work (support measures in Germany)

- Cost of awareness-raising and educational work on the project partnership and/or partner municipality/region.

Expenditure on awareness-raising and educational work in Germany may not exceed 20% of the eligible total expenditures of the project (see interim total Cost and Financing Plan items 1 to 5).

3.4. Personnel expenditure

- Support is not provided for personnel expenditure in Germany.² If the applicant is unable to make personnel resources available for planning, implementation and/or follow-up work on individual project activities, external services providers may be commissioned with this task (e.g. universities, consulting firms or experts working on a fee basis); in such cases, the applicable contract award criteria must be observed (see also 3.5). The overall management of the project shall not be entrusted to third parties.
- Project-related personnel expenditures in the partner country are eligible for financial support. If these expenditures do not cease after the end of the project partnership, it is necessary to explain how these are to be financed after this point in time.

² There is a dedicated Service Agency offering for this eventuality: Koordination kommunaler Entwicklungspolitik (Coordination of municipal development cooperation). A grant for personnel resources for municipal development cooperation can be applied for through this financing instrument. See: <https://skew.engagement-global.de/koordination-kommunaler-entwicklungspolitik.html>.

3.5. Other expenditures

- The costs of producing technical/academic studies and of drafting strategies and concepts in the course of the project may not exceed 33.3% of the eligible total expenditures of the project (see interim total in the Cost and Financing Plan items 1 to 5). The costs must be individually justified and relate to the successful implementation of the tasks set out in 2.1 – 2.3.
- Project support missions from Germany to the partner country and exchange visits (in accordance with the German Federal Travel Expenses Act). In projects lasting more than one year, no more than one journey of up to 7 days with two persons can be applied for each year for the purpose of project support. Visits undertaken by delegations for purely representative purposes are not eligible for support. Prior to the commencement of the visit, travellers must register online at <https://service.diplo.de/elefandextern/home/registration!form.action>. The decision on arranging an additional personal contact to the embassy is at the discretion of the Grant Recipient. Engagement Global must be notified of any journeys to countries for which safety instructions or travel warnings apply at least 6 weeks prior to the commencement of travel; these journeys require separate approval. If several activities take place within a one-year period in the partner country, the project support mission must be combined with missions that serve other purposes.
- Exchange visits to Germany by the partner municipality in order to present the project partnership to the municipality submitting the proposal, to the public in the municipality and to the municipality's networking partners; and visits for the purposes of joint dialogue workshops and planning and evaluation (see also 3.2 and 3.3).
- National, regional and, in exceptional circumstances, international exchange, networking and dialogue forums between project partners (assumption of the costs of accommodation and meals, transport costs and other travel-related costs provided these do not exceed the amounts stipulated in the German Federal Travel Expenses Act; costs of room hire; fees for external service providers who undertake planning, organisational and coordination tasks and facilitator functions due to the lack of municipal resources available; fees for content-related inputs in especially justified cases if there are no suitably qualified experts available in the municipal context).

Engagement Global/Service Agency decides on the admissibility of the expenditures.

Application cannot be made for compensation for other expenses/time expended.

4. What other formal requirements must be taken into account?

- Project proposals can be submitted at any time. The maximum project term is three years.
- The grant amount can range between **EUR 50,000 and EUR 250,000**.
- Grants of up to EUR 250,000 can be awarded as full financing.

- Application can be made for a funding reserve of 3.5% to compensate for cost increases due to inflation and unavoidable extra expenditures as well as for a lump sum of up to 7% towards administrative costs.

The greater part of the payments to cover expenditures incurred in the implementation of the project partnership are to be made in the partner country.

In the case of projects lasting more than one year, the proposal must clearly state which funds will be applied for in which budget years. Funds not called up in a financial year shall be forfeited. It is not possible to carry funds forward to the following year.

Before Engagement Global/Service Agency transfers funds to the individual project executing agency, a project agreement under civil law must be entered into with this agency.

Before the transfer of funds from the project executing agency to the partner municipality or other cooperation partners, the applicant must enter into a project agreement with these parties in order to ensure compliance with the contractual provisions agreed with Engagement Global/Service Agency.

5. Contact persons and deadlines

If you are interested, you can submit a proposal now using the form available on the website. We will be pleased to advise you in all stages of project development and the submission of applications – from the initial expression of interest to the final submission of the proposal.

The application for financial support via the “Middle East Quick-Starter Package II” must be signed by an authorised signatory and received both electronically and by surface mail at the addresses below **at least three months (date on postmark) prior to the commencement of the project term**. You are also welcome to submit your proposal earlier.

Engagement Global/Service Agency will examine the proposals and, subject to compliance with the grant criteria, approve the grant-eligible and signed proposals in the order in which they were received.

There is no entitlement to funding.

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