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PROCUREMENT & LOGISTICS

FIELD OFFICE START-UP GUIDE

– For SELF/CO-IMPLEMENTATION

1st edition

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1 INTRODUCTION:

The Field Office Start-Up Guide is a guideline for setting up a new office by renting, building or through local partners. Additionally, it provides some steps that will help to increase the success of the start-up.

The content of the Start-Up Guide is not set in stone; it is a living document which is updated regularly on the basis of experiences and best practices. Users of the Guide are therefore encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions to the Guide to the DCA Procurement and Logistics HQ Unit.

The Guide can be downloaded from the DCA website Link where also the 5th edition of the Procurement Manual and Logistics Manual can be found Link. Please note all procurement shall be compliant to the DCA Procurement Manual

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A prior assessment of the area of operation should always be conducted before deciding on setting up an office/residential accommodation. The Guide provides some helpful tools for the assessment of the area. Based on the findings and results, you can decide where and how your office/residence should be set up.

The list below can be used during the assessment, and at the stage of designing the project in the situation of self/co-implementation. Additionally, if setting up an office alone and not through partners, the following should be taken into consideration:

2 RENTING AND RESIDENTIAL ACCOMODATION

2.1.1 LOCATION:

a. See who your neighbours are! (If any VIP or political/military leader) check the individual's popularity and what implications might occur in an emergency situation or in a possible conflict situation. Will he/she be of any threat to you?

b. Find out where most NGO's are settled and how they are clustered. You might want to settle in an area where most of the NGO's are.

c. Check where the nearest police station is placed.

d. Check where your nearest airport/airstrip is.

e. Are there any banks in your Area of Operations or is cash the only possibility?

2.1.2 RENTING:

a. See if you can rent office space without having to build.

b. Before renting or building anything, ensure that you are legally registered in the area of operations or Country - It can be a problem with local authorities if you are not registered within the country of operation and do not have the right registration certificates. This may be different in emergency situations, but whatever the intervention is, please ensure that, as minimum, you have the authorisation of local authorities before doing anything.

c. If you can rent an office space, ensure that it is sufficient in size, is spacious and has some basic facilities (such as water & electrical supply, toilets, bathrooms, bedrooms, etc.)

d. Ensure that you have signed a rental lease agreement. Also, check with a lawyer before entering an office space. Verbal agreements must be avoided as they can result in unpleasant situations. Therefore, please ensure that you have an official agreement between you and the property owner.

2.1.3 FURNISHING AND FACILITIES REQUIRED:

a. If the property is not furnished, make a list of the required items, and decide where they should be sourced from (capital city of local). Always check your local market.

b. Designate a space that can be used for eating, and a room that can be used as a kitchen. Explore the option of building a grass-roofed shelter for eating/cooking outside every day. If you decide to cook inside or have no option of eating outside, ensure that you have a list of cooking utensils that you will need to purchase. Decide whether you would like to hire a cook or have the staff prepare food themselves. Hiring a cook and setting a healthy menu is a very affordable way of ensuring at least one nutritious meal for staff, especially in emergency situations where time for cooking is unlikely to be available.

c. Ensure that you have functioning toilets and bathrooms. If not, see what can be done in order to make sure that you do have these facilities - improvise if possible.

d. Will you install a safe? How big? Who will have the key and combination for the safe?

e. Where will you store your running cost cash?

2.1.4 SECURITY:

a. Take into consideration the security situation; is it a safe place/neighbourhood to rent or build the office?

b. Establish if there is easy access even during rainy season, and in case of evacuation, check if you have identified your evacuation routes and if you have a security plan in case of emergency.

c. See if you need a perimeter fence - one would most definitely be needed, but check what is more appropriate (barbed wire, bamboo or wall fence). In the case of a wire fence, consider adding a grass/bamboo screening to give additional privacy/security.
d. See if you need additional security lights.
e. Check if you need a security guard who can control traffic in your office during the daytime, and ensure that he keeps a visitors logbook of who is going in and out. If available, private security companies may be an option. They can give you some degree of insurance in case of theft or robbery. If there are no security companies, then you can hire guards through the other channels. Night watchmen should also be hired.
f. Ensure that you do have fire extinguishers in case of fire.
g. Ensure that Security plans are developed for that specific office or sub office, and that they are updated regularly.
h. Please check your escape/evacuation routes in case of an evacuation.
i. Please check what your evacuation plan is in case of Emergency Situation (please have a plan A, B and C).
j. Please ensure that you have hibernation kits in case of extended periods of stay due to insecurity.
k. Please ensure that you have a ”safe haven” in case of a security situation.
l. Ensure that you have Quick Run/Grab Bags for every staff that will have essential items to help you survive for few days in the bush.
m. Ensure that all your doors and windows are reinforced with metal bars so they are not easily broken.
n. Ensure that your main gate is a heavy-duty metal door.
o. Ensure that you have proper communication equipment so you can stay in touch with people you need to.
p. Have a list of Emergency numbers in case you need to get hold of people that can save your life.
q. Coordinate with other stakeholders and attend any security coordination meetings.

Please see section 5.3 SECURITY in the Logistics Manual for further information LINK.

2.1.5 POWER:

a. Check if there is mains electrical power connection or if there is an available option.
b. If there is mains electrical power, see if you have everything properly installed and please check the quality of cables used - sometimes, if the wire is not thick enough, it can overloaded with heavy electrical equipment and lead to wires being overheated which can easily cause a fire.
c. Even if there is mains power, it is advisable that you always have a back-up generator big enough to supply the entire office space. Power cuts in developing countries are always possible and highly likely.
d. Check what generator you would go for: Brand, Make, Engine (Diesel or petrol?). Is it difficult to get spare parts and can it be fixed locally? Would you like to get a silence one? Would you like to build a Generator house? How far from the office space so it is not too loud for the employees working in the office. Building a Generator House is mandatory as that will keep the generator away from the rain but also protect it from heat as well. Consider buying a generator with an odometer/fuel usage gauge to enable easy fuel consumption calculations
e. Explore the option of Solar Power supply through solar panels and solar batteries. It can be expensive initially but become a very efficient, cheap and hassle free service in the long term. Before deciding on which solar system, you should have the property inspected by a specialized or a solar expert. The more electrical appliances you have, the larger the capacity of the solar system should be. Please note that Solar Systems should always be for lights, computers, small printers, fans, refrigerators and TV’s. Solar is not for running Air Conditioners (AC) or heavy power equipment such as welding machines, etc.

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f. When possible, have the Solar System installed in such a way that it is charged in different ways and not only by the sun as there sometimes might not be enough sun for batteries to charge. Don't forget that the battery system can also be charged when there is mains power or when the generator is on. This means that the batteries can be set up in such a way that they can be charged by solar, by generator and by mains power.

2.1.6 FUEL:

a. See if you can build a fuel tank close to the generator so you do not have to worry about fuelling the generator every evening - you can connect the fuel tank directly to the generator so it runs smoothly. This will ensure a better control on usage of fuel, and fuel will not get lost. It will make it easy to track fuel usage as well, and also prevent dirt from getting into the engine which can cause serious problems.
b. If no fuel tank is possible, consider fuel drums so you can store enough fuel that can allow you run for at least 2-4 weeks. Be aware of how you store the fuel drums; if they are exposed, water and dirt can go inside and this can result in engine damage. It is advisable to build a shed to protect fuel drums from dirt and rain. Be aware of the security factor as well: Fuel is in many countries an attractive item for theft. Therefore, it's advisable that fuel is kept in a secure place (lockable if possible).

2.1.7 WATER:

a. See if there is stable water supply either from a well or from the mains. Check if the water is drinkable and what it can be used for. Always preform a test if possible to see if it can be used for drinking, bathing, cooking, etc.
b. If there is no water, build a water tower so you have enough running water for the premises. Even if you have mains supply, it is always advisable to build a water tower so you can store water in case of emergency or water cuts. Have a tank of at least 5,000 litres. One way of cleaning water is by using water purifying tablets that can be put directly into the water tanks (be careful to use the correct number of tablets proportional to the quantity of water to be treated).
c. Water filters can also be installed inside the house so that water from the kitchen tap for example, passes the water filter first, ensuring a free use for cooking.
d. Check if there is a system for "foul drainage" or sewage water: If there is none, ensure that you construct a septic tank underground to specifications based on expected occupancy of the property. It should be big enough so it only needs to be emptied twice a year. Ensure that it is properly sealed and easily accessed when emptying.

2.1.8 INTERNET:

a. Ensure that you do have a V-sat installed that will enable you to communicate properly with your Country Office and beyond. This is beneficial for all staff at different levels, as it will help you keep constant communication with key people in case of security/emergency issues. It also facilitates regular reporting to your Country Office, donors, etc. V-sat is the only reliable equipment that will work when it comes to setting up an internet connection for field offices. Once you have the V-sat installed, you can then have the rest of the internet wiring done through wireless routers so the entire office can have access to internet. When creating passwords, please keep them confidential as it can affect your internet speed if the password is given to too many users. Passwords should be changed at regular intervals.
b. Explore whether easier options to internet connection to your office are available - there may be internet service providers in the area who can give you a better and more reliable internet connection.
c. Having the internet installed can take time, and you will need immediate internet connection. If there is local network coverage, local mobile companies can offer you internet via mobile USB modems or other internet packages via their local network.
d. Please also explore the option of having internet via the B-gan. It is portable and very efficient. However, this means of communication is very expensive, and one should be aware of its usage (no YouTube, no social media websites - strictly work only).

Please see section 4.2.1 INTERNET in the Logistics Manual for further information LINK.

The above-mentioned issues will have to be applied for the Residential Area as well. All of the above should be checked prior deciding on a Residential Area. Please note that sometimes an Office Space/Compound can be used as an Office and Residential Area as well, but it may be healthier to keep these separate. However, if combined, there will be a great amount of savings, especially in running cost, and more efficiency when it comes to logistics, administration, security, etc., around the compound and keeping the Office and Residential Area up and running. Combining is preferred in shorter periods, but this can be decided upon by management when the initial assessment is done.

3 BUILDING THE OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND

If renting an office is not possible but you need to build one from scratch, then you need to hire a construction company who can build the office and residential building(s). The size of the compound can vary depending on the budget and operational size, but of course, as a starting point, you need to ensure that the land is either donated to you by local government or purchased privately.

Whatever options are available (donation, rental or purchase of land), ensure that you do have all official documents in place before you start constructing anything.

It is advisable that you first hire an engineer/architect who can help you prepare BoQs and designs, but it is also essential to supervise the construction of your office and residential space. This will help you ensure the quality of the work, but also ensure an efficient and practical construction of your office and residential premises.

As mentioned above, if you go into construction of office buildings it is a lot cheaper if you combine office and accommodation into one compound. Running costs will be approx. 50% cheaper.

3.1 SETTING UP THE OFFICE THROUGH LOCAL PARTNERS

If you go through your existing local partner, then you will first need to see what space is available, what assets do they have and what assistance your partner can be of with staff, transport, warehouse, etc. What systems do they have in place and are they working, etc.

The list above can also be used for similar situations as well.

4 LOCAL STAFF TO BE HIRED

For an operation to have a successful start, the following staff is recommended as minimum to be in place and hired:

- Local (Field Office) Coordinator
- Finance/Admin Officer
- Procurement and Logistics Officer
- Base/Compound Manager
- Store Manager/Keeper
- Guards
- Drivers
- Cooks
- Cleaners

If you utilize local partner's assets and residence, and they already have some of the above-mentioned staff in place, then you do not have to hire more of the same staff.

Next are some important points to have in mind when hiring new staff:

4.1 HIRING OF STAFF:

a. When Hiring staff, please ensure that staff are hired respecting local labour laws.
b. Knowing local labour laws is essential to prevent long-term problems with local authorities and your staff.
c. Always ensure that job adverts are posted on appropriate local channels, and local rules for such advertisement are respected.
d. Ensure that hiring of staff is done in the most transparent way possible, as this will prevent you from having only one tribe/clan being hired for a specific programme/project.
e. Please draft clear job adverts.
f. Please draft clear job descriptions for each position, and ensure that they are understood by the employees before signing the contract.
g. Please have the contract signed with each staff **before** hiring them, and please ensure that contracts are in accordance with local labour laws. For this, you may need to hire a local lawyer who can advise you if the contracts are legally acceptable.
h. Please ensure that qualified staff are hired.
i. Please ensure that sufficient staff are hired **before** activities are initiated as that will help you get things on track early enough.
j. Please note that one person cannot do five different jobs at the same time. He/she will try to perform but will not be efficient at what they do.
k. How will you pay your employees? Cash vs bank transfer.

It is also important that you ensure that all staff have received adequate trainings and are aware of the DCA Procedures (Procurement, Logistics, Storage, Financial and accounting, etc.).

5 STORES AND WAREHOUSE

a. Ensure that you have a sufficient store that can be easily accessed - installed in a secure location. When relevant, put a secure fence around it and have it cleaned regularly and keep it professional and orderly at all times.
b. Ensure that there are proper storage systems to enable you to efficiently track movements of goods.
c. Have Proper forms developed. Check forms in ADMIND[1] software and forms from the DCA Logistics Manual.
d. Have Stock Cards for every item (both soft and hard copy) - sample can be obtained from ADMIND and from the DCA Procurement website.
e. Ensure that your Stock List is updated daily - Sample of Stock List can be obtained from ADMIND or Logistics Manual.
f. Ensure that you have an Inventory List, and that it is updated accordingly - Sample of Inventory List can be obtained from ADMIND or Logs Manual.
g. Issue Asset Contracts for items assigned to staff (Laptops, Phones, GPS, Cameras USBs, etc.), it is to be signed by the issuing officer and the receiving individual. On return, the issuing officer signs the item/s back into the stores.
h. Ensure that everything is updated accordingly on your computer, and hard copies are properly filed.
i. As the stock is running low in the store, please request for new stock so you do not run out completely which will hinder the operation.
j. Please ensure that reports are provided biweekly or monthly (as per your internal agreement).
k. Have everything purchased in time using proper procurement procedures.
l. Have everything documented and filed properly.

5.1 FLEET:

a. Ensure that every vehicle has its own Folder composed of different documents (a sample of vehicle folder can be found in ADMIND).
b. Ensure that every vehicle has an updated logbook where you can read the mileage, fuel, repairs, spares, etc.
c. Ensure that each vehicle is regularly serviced and is kept in good order.
d. Each vehicle should carry the updated DCA logo positioned in agreed positions on the vehicle. Consider mounting 'no firearms' stickers in areas of conflict or heavy police/military activity.
e. If you plan on storing spare parts - please do so for the most basic ones (such as tires, brakes, bushes, oil, fuel, air filters).
f. Ensure that fuel is properly monitored and accounted for by using fuel log sheets. Please note that fuel is one of the most common items that can easily disappear, hence strong supervision is required

Please see section 3 FLEET MANAGEMENT for further information LINK.

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[1] ADMIND is DCA's Logistics system. A Manual for the systems is under progress. Please contact your Procurement & Logistics Counterpart or Procurement & Logistics HQ at SSC@dca.dk for further information and/or help.

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6 FRAMEWORK CONTRACTS:

A Framework contract is a long-term (maximum five years) contract. It is used to define the general terms such as subject, technical specifications, price(s), duration, procedure for the award of specific contracts etc. for future procurement of a series of goods or services for which the precise quantity or scope and time of delivery cannot be defined at the outset of the contract.

It is recommended having Framework Contracts with service and supply providers as it helps to avoid paper repetitive work and losing much time. Furthermore, Framework Contracts helps reduce costs, improve efficiency in supply chain management and improves relations with reliable contractors. Framework contracts may never be used in such a way as to prevent restrict or distort competition.

Framework Contracts does not need to be tied to a specific project or action and it can only be used for the purchase of service or supply (often it is related to office purchases). It is not possible to have a Framework Contract for works.

Framework Contracts are subject to procurement rules thus the DCA Procurement Manual is applicable.

Framework Contracts can be put in place for the following items, but are not limited to:

- Office supplies (Stationary)
- Office supplies (Tea, coffee, sugar)
- Office Supplies (Toiletries)
- Office supplies (Drinking water)
- Fuel
- Rubbish collection
- Security Services
- Maintenance services (maintenance of ACs, and or any other electrical work)
- Vehicle Service
- Generator Service
- Project related Supplies, Services or Works, etc.

Please see section 4.9 FRAMEWORK CONTRACTS in the 5th edition of the Procurement Manual for further information LINK.

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