



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Justice, Freedom and
Security



How to design a good Daphne project

Preparing a project

It is not just enough to have a good idea for a project or to have identified a need and want to satisfy it. All projects supported by the Daphne III Programme¹ have to comply with the overall objectives of the programme and the **annual** priorities set each year. Reminding yourselves of these, even if you think you know them, is the very first step you must take. You will find them in the *Call for Proposals* published each year, and some explanation in the *Guide for Applicants* that is also updated annually. The call for proposals and all relevant documents are published on the Daphne III website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne3/funding_daphne3_en.htm

To further grasp an idea of the 'spirit' of the Daphne Programme, you can read the background documents such as the history of the Daphne Programme, called *The Daphne Experience 1997-2003*, available on the Daphne Toolkit website²:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/daphnetoolkit/

When you are sure that the project you have in mind fits into the Daphne Programme's remit, then you can move onto the next step.

Building a project on good foundations

Very many projects submitted to the Daphne Programme for funding – including quite a few that claim to be 'the first time an action has been taken in this area' -- in fact repeat projects already funded under the programme or that have been undertaken or are in progress elsewhere. The first background research you should do in the planning stages, therefore, is to thoroughly search out any projects or programmes that cover the same issue you wish to address.

If you find that projects already exist, that does not mean that you should just abandon your idea. Contact the projects you have found or read available reports and ask what they have done and what the results were. Are these relevant to your situation and, if they are, could you design a project to adapt and test them in new situations (for example in different countries)? If activity has already covered the area you had planned to address, is there a possibility of building on that and developing a further stage of action? Since the Daphne Programme does aim to develop new knowledge and find innovative ways of dealing with violence against children, young people and women, then 'new' projects are always hoped for, but valid projects that build on existing experiences and actions also develop the knowledge base and move the agenda forward, so should not just be dismissed as 'been there, done that'-type actions.

¹ The Daphne III Programme to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and protect victims and groups at risk (in short, the 'Daphne Programme')

² Note that the Daphne Toolkit website is estimated to be available in October 2008.

Matching cause and effect

The ideal project is one where the problem identified and the solutions proposed are a perfect match. In other words, the actions you undertake should clearly contribute to solving the problem. That problem should be spelled out in clear terms. 'Stopping sexual violence against children' is too huge and widespread a problem to be 'solved' in one Daphne project, for example, but 'contributing to ending sexual violence against children in six European countries by developing and encouraging self-protection mechanisms among children aged eight to 11' could realistically be undertaken and results achieved in one year. In this example, clearly you would not design a public information campaign based on posters and TV spots; rather you would put together a participatory process to design educational materials based on thorough research already existing on self-protection for children, and pilot these first in one school in each partner country, before reviewing them and then producing and distributing them on a larger scale.

The kinds of actions that Daphne supports may change from year to year, but generally include research and data collection, networking and exchange of information and experience (sometimes called 'capacity building'), targeted awareness-raising activities, support to victims and actions designed to prevent violence and protect those vulnerable to it. In describing the problem identified and what you propose to do to contribute to solving it, be sure to accurately describe the beneficiaries your project is designed to help. Give the age groups where appropriate and do not be tempted to exaggerate and put 'children, young people and women' because you think it will make your project look more impressive. And do your research; read as much current information as you can on the specific topic you wish to work on and try to take into account what is known both about the problem and the kinds of response that have been tried out to address it.

By the end of this step, you should be able to describe your project in one simple paragraph, along the lines: "This project will contribute to solving X problem facing Y beneficiaries in Z countries. It will do this by A methodology, resulting in B output." For example: "This project will contribute to improving teachers' and youth workers' understanding of the impact of domestic violence on adolescents in five countries of southern Europe. It will do this by organizing focal groups of adolescents in schools and youth clubs to collect information and work with the young people to develop information modules designed for teachers and youth workers which will then be tested in each partner country. An assessment of the usability of the materials and increased understanding of the target group will be made and recommendations for next steps included in the final project report."

Building a project team

When you have an idea of the kind of project that you wish to design, then be realistic about the part you will play in it. If the problem to be addressed is a lack of information and understanding and you therefore believe research and data collection are necessary, ask yourself whether you are the best person/organisation to do that.

If you do not already have experience in this area, it is likely that there will be someone else who does have experience and who could do the work better. Remember that should you be supported to do the work and not produce a good result, then it is unlikely that funds will be available to do the work again, so that the opportunity will be lost and beneficiaries will suffer as a result. List the strengths and weaknesses of your organization and decide what your most valuable contribution to the project would be. You might be an excellent coordinating body, good at motivating partners, keeping them active and in touch with each other, with skills in organizing meetings and drawing up and managing complex budgets. Clearly you could manage a multi-partner project, even if someone else actually does the fieldwork.

Ask yourself questions relating to access to the target groups.

- If, for example, your project is based on designing and implementing educational models for schoolchildren, do you have experience in working in the school environment, and can you guarantee that you will have full access to classrooms and the cooperation of the schools concerned?
- If your organization normally works in issues relating to violence against women, are you sure you are able to extend your working procedures and staff skills to the very specialized area of support to child victims of violence?
- And similarly, if you normally work in the area of child welfare, will you be able to acquire the skills required to work appropriately with adult victims?

This is a step that requires a great deal of honesty about your organization's weaknesses, but it is also a step that allows you to recognize your strengths and use them to their fullest potential.

Choosing partners for a project

Daphne projects have to have more than one organization working into the project. This means you will have to find appropriate partners. Since Daphne aims to develop actions that cross European borders and give insight that will inform European, rather than national issues and policies, at least one partner must come from another EU Member State. In fact, the 'geographical shape' of your project should be decided based on what you hope to achieve and on the nature of the issue you are dealing with. Your research should have shown you the range of countries in which your project is most likely to be valid because the conditions facing victims or vulnerable people are similar or, conversely, different enough to make comparison useful. Your initial ideas about the format the project will take will also indicate the range of skills and experience that you need to make the project work. Take these into account when you choose your partners. Do not simply choose them because you already know them; even more important, do not choose a partner on the basis that they come from a country you want to see included in the project without first carefully checking the partner's profile, expertise and reliability.

Sometimes partners are clearly mismatched – for example, a large university research department with a small NGO from another country that has few resources and cannot bear the burden of communication costs or extra workload. Sometimes this 'mismatch' is part of the project, as a large organisation works alongside a smaller organisation in order to share expertise and develop the smaller partner's capacity. These are all issues you should bear in mind as you choose partners. Where the project aims to build multisectoral partnerships, think again of the range of experiences and coverage you need. A multisectoral group responding to reports of abuse, for example, might include legal personnel, social workers, law enforcement officers, specialists in psycho-social trauma as well as administrators and coordinators.

Putting together the right team is vital to the success of your project!

Planning project activities

Carefully plan the activities in your project according to the needs of the action. You will want to consider the appropriate methodologies to use depending on the nature of your project (for example, if it is a data collection project, will you do desk research, develop a questionnaire, organise focus group meetings?).

In addition to the activities that relate directly to the desired outcomes of your project, you will also need to consider what activities are necessary to make your project a truly 'European' project. This means considering in detail the exact role that each partner will play and how the efforts of each partner will be brought together. For example, in a research project which has included research and data collection in four EU countries,

how will you analyse, compare and contrast the results in order to draw 'European' conclusions? Will you do this in a meeting of the partners? Do you need to meet more than once (for example, at the outset to negotiate the methodology to be followed; mid-way to compare results; at the end to share conclusions, evaluate the process and decide dissemination and concrete follow-up). Or do you not really need meetings because you can work well together by e-mail and on the telephone?

Often projects underestimate the time it takes to add a European dimension to the project, in particular getting translations done, or maybe waiting for one slower partner to finish a piece of work before the whole team can move ahead.

Identifying target groups

It is important to understand the difference between target groups and beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are the children, young people and women that the Daphne Programme is designed to help and support. Projects, though, do not always work directly with these beneficiaries but with people who, often on a daily basis, come into contact with them, provide support of various kinds, or who can influence the lives of the beneficiaries in one way or another. By improving the capacity of these people, increasing their understanding, giving them tools for action or otherwise upgrading their ability to support and protect, a project can have a lasting impact, albeit through indirect means, on the lives of children, young people and women.

Target groups often include teachers, parents, law enforcement personnel, judiciary, representatives of the media, social workers and decision-makers. They may also include those who have a negative impact on the lives of beneficiaries, including perpetrators of abuse and violent men. Finding the right target group, that group of people who can make a difference to the lives of the beneficiaries, and securing access to them is an important element of project planning. Equipping them with better understanding and skills forms the basis of many Daphne projects.

Defining and including beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are the children, young people and/or women your project is designed to help. When you plan your project, you should think carefully on which beneficiaries, exactly, the project will have an impact. 'Children' includes any person up to the age of 18 (this is in line with international conventions), while 'young people' is used to cover people aged 12 to 25. This group includes 'teenagers', 'adolescents' and 'youth', terms that are often used quite loosely. 'Women' means female people aged 18 or over. If you want to include teenage girls in this group, then you should specify 'Women and young people' as your beneficiary groups. While these broad terms will be used to categorize your project in the Daphne files, the actions you undertake will most probably be targeted at a smaller range of beneficiaries, for example "children between the ages of 5 and 11", or "women who are single heads of households". Many projects say they aim to help 'children, young people and women' (maybe because the project leader thinks this will give the project a better chance of being chosen – it doesn't!). Clearly this is unrealistic; a project that aims so broadly is likely to be unfocused and its impact will be dispersed. The more specific you can be with the beneficiary group you are aiming to help, the more likely it is that the actions you design will be tailored to this group and so more likely to have an impact on them.

You should also attempt to include beneficiaries as active participants in your projects where this is appropriate. Children and young people have opinions about the issues affecting them and a right to express these opinions. They also have good ideas about solutions that might work, and they understand the problem differently and often better than those who want to help. So give them a chance to be involved at all stages of the project, from planning to measuring the results. Women who have been victims of violence, or are in a high-risk situation, also have a unique view of the problem the project aims to address and should be involved at all stages of the project. In all

instances, though, you must take steps to ensure that people at risk, or those who have already encountered violence, are protected and given the support they need. Their individual situations must be considered and, for example, their right to privacy and confidentiality should be respected. This is particularly true in any project that includes communication elements that may expose beneficiaries to the scrutiny of the media, or the general public. The best way to be sure that beneficiaries' rights are respected is to consult them throughout the project and take their views into account.

Considering ethical questions

Because of the nature of violence and the fact that it involves relationships – between men and women, adults and children, children and children and so forth – there are all kinds of risks involved in 'interfering' in those relationships or interacting with those who perpetrate or are subject to violent acts. All projects, regardless of their nature, must consider carefully the ethical questions that may arise in the project. These include the need to protect the confidentiality of data relating to victims, perpetrators and people at risk – and cover, for example, the way data is collected, how it is stored, who has access to it and how it is used. They include the right to privacy of both victims and perpetrators and the repercussions of ignoring that right – including, for example, the right not to answer questions, to participate in data collection or to grant interviews. They include the risks that those working on the project might face if they come into contact with perpetrators or can be traced – risks ranging from harassment to physical harm. They include the nature of questions asked, especially given the often intimate personal nature of violent relationships and suffering. All projects should take a human rights-based approach to implementation and all methodologies used should pass the test of ethical conduct.

Additionally, organizations working in Daphne projects (lead agencies and partners) must be able to demonstrate that they have procedures in place to screen staff and volunteers who come into contact with beneficiaries, especially children. Any volunteers must be fully briefed on the ethics of project activity and beneficiaries should be protected at all times.

Analysing risk and planning contingencies

Risk analysis essentially answers the question: "What might go wrong?" Issues around privacy may in some projects be included in risk analysis. Projects that intend to collect data from victims, for example, should take into account the fact that victims may not wish to provide the data required, and that this is their right. Other forms of risk include changes in the political or social climate affecting project activity – for example a change in the education regime that closes access to schools, or an event that makes talking about sexual violence taboo at a certain point in time. Yet another form of risk covers implementation of the project itself – for example, that a partner might decide not to continue and drop out before work is completed, or that a key staff member in an organization changes jobs and is no longer available to the project. Risk analysis should also question what might happen if key assumptions turn out to be incorrect – for example, that a given set of information that is central to the project may not be available. Risk analysis allows project leaders and partners to anticipate things that might go wrong. It is also useful to consider whether the project will stand to gain from any changes in the socio-political climate.

Once risk analysis has been done, then the project planner should attempt to find ways to overcome any obstacles that arise or at least to get around them so that the project can proceed. This is what 'planning contingencies' means. Contingencies might include identifying other sources of data, changing methodology from face-to-face interview to desk research, having back-up staff on a project or two co-coordinators, or even acknowledging that certain obstacles might involve a drastic re-think of the project. Setting out the risks and what they will mean in terms of project activity at the very

beginning is the best way to ensure that a project does not fail because of unforeseen events.

Planning monitoring and evaluation

Ultimately, the question that must be asked about every project is:

“Has it made a difference for the beneficiaries?”

or at least:

“has it engendered change that will be for their benefit?”

Not enough projects ask themselves these questions and too many give the answer without any basis other than a personal feeling that the project went well. Evaluation – of the results of the project and the output from the project – is as close as we can come, within the life of the project, of knowing whether there has been an impact. Evaluation should be considered and set up when the project is designed.

There are many different kinds of evaluation, and good projects often use a combination of several different kinds. Internal evaluation of different elements of the project – done by the organizations involved, the target groups and the beneficiaries (ideally a combination of all these) can take the form of pre- and post-testing (for example, at the beginning and end of a training course, to measure improvement in understanding or knowledge), formal feedback (for example through questionnaires to see whether the methodology engaged those participating), informal feedback (for example through a comments section on a website, to allow people to comment freely on the project outputs), in meetings (for example of partners, to evaluate whether communications have been smooth and deadlines have been met. External evaluation of both the project validity and its outputs can be commissioned from an independent expert, or a team of people who ‘accompany’ the project without being directly involved in it. Generally this will require a negotiated set of ‘indicators’ to be put in place at the beginning of the project – these are like targets that the project must strive to reach; they can measure output (for example whether a planned publication was produced on time, on budget and to expected quality standards), performance (for example whether the partners all met their commitments and the budget and reporting were handled efficiently), or impact (whether the change desired was realized).

Monitoring is a part of evaluation that begins as soon as the project does. Monitoring is effectively a mini-evaluation that is carried out regularly to make sure the project is on track. It, too, can cover output, performance and impact, although it generally (especially in a short project) will focus on output and performance. Often monitoring is done by a team of people led by the project coordinator, whose responsibility it is to see that the project progresses smoothly. The partners should ideally be involved also, as should representatives of the beneficiaries and target groups. The important thing about monitoring is that it should raise alarms when things are not going well, or when plans need to be changed or indeed when new possibilities arise that were not foreseen. It is much better to modify a project that needs review than to carry on regardless and hope for the best.

Ensuring European added-value

Daphne projects are all European projects. This means a number of different things. Most of all, though, it means that at some time the project will have relevance for all the Member States of the EU (and often also in other European countries). The project should generally ‘operate’ in more than one EU country (there are some exceptions, for example a pilot project involving only two or three states aiming to set up a model multidisciplinary task force to tackle domestic violence in a particular context with a view to later sharing that model with other countries). To work together, countries do not

necessarily have to have identical problems or responses to these. There is much to be learned from the different ways different Member States respond to issues of violence, and there will be differences in the form that violence takes, too. By working together, organizations from different Member States can explore these differences and also identify similarities, moving towards models, practices and policies that can cross the borders and become 'European'.

So, European added-value includes geographical coverage of a project but most of all analysis and experimentation that leads to recommendations for common models, protocols, guidelines, structures, mechanisms, policies and processes. In time, for example, a small project run in two or three countries might lead to the production of components of a training course that can be adapted for use in all the Member States. Research on legislation or standards of care, and materials for school curricula or awareness-raising campaigns might lead to EU-wide actions and change. Importantly, the lessons learned from Daphne projects should be able to feed into European debate and inform policy makers on both the issues and possible responses. In practice, to build 'European added-value' into a project, it is necessary not only to attempt to run the project in a number of Member States and build multinational partnerships, but also to look beyond the confines of the project to find the broader European relevance of the issues, the actions and the output of the project. Every project should end, if possible, with a clear indication of how the project can be further developed at EU level, and with a statement of its potential for European debate and action.

Developing the budget

The budget should clearly 'match' the actions and output that have been planned. All of the actions and output should be funded through the budget and, at the same time, there should be nothing in the budget that does not directly relate to the actions and output proposed. A number of areas need special attention: if the lead organization and partners are from different EU countries, then there should be sufficient budget allocation to allow for translation and interpretation if these are necessary. Many projects rely on volunteer translators, or the chance that one member of the team speaks the languages required. But what if that person leaves the team? And what if the volunteers' language skills are fine when they speak but not good enough for preparing a publication? Beyond the working needs of the project, thought should also be given to the 'product' and the languages in which it will appear.

It is not appropriate to presume that 'everyone speaks English' and to create a website, for example, just in English. Thought must be given to opening up access to the results of the project to as many people in Europe (and beyond) as possible. Sometimes this is too costly but there are often 'compromise' possibilities, for example producing a research report in only one language but adding a summary in several other languages. Because Daphne projects involve partnerships, travel and communication costs often appear to take up a large proportion of the budget. Think about meetings. Make sure they are necessary. Get the most you can out of them by organizing study visits or information sessions around them. And, if you have the choice, hold the meeting in a country where costs are relatively low.

It may seem obvious, but check that the figures in the budget add up. Often budgets change while they are being drafted and errors creep in. Ensure also that the budget is balanced; a project whose budget comprises 80 per cent staff costs is not going to be seen as good value for money, since the output will be minimal. And be sure not to include items that the Commission does not accept – check the Guidelines for Applicants carefully. Also, be sure that the partners have seen the budget and are satisfied that it also covers their expectations. A central pillar of a good partnership is that everyone understands the project's financial limitations from the outset and that demands on the lead organization are not unrealistic.

Writing a proposal

Often applicants for project funding complain that the application form does not give enough space to explain everything they want or need to write. In fact, if you have prepared the project thoroughly, it should take very little space to explain it clearly and precisely. You do not need to write a long essay explaining the issue you are going to tackle – if you have done your research, this will be clear, and you can give a simple reference to your background materials. For example:

"Domestic violence has been increasing in CountryX over the past 10 years [Bloggs and Bloggs, Hurt at Home, Publisher, London, 2003, p.13]. This project aims to explore the causes for this increase through desk research, interviews with women who have taken refuge in shelters in CapitalCity, and through consultations with social workers, police and refuge staff. Parallel research will be carried out in CountryY and CountryZ with a view to identifying patterns and trends and recommending actions and policies at national and European levels to halt this growing form of violence."

You can see that these few lines set out the problem to be tackled, the essence of the actions that will be taken and the expected results of the project. In fact, the application form gives more opportunity for explanation than this, so there is plenty of space in which to be clear and precise.

In addition to statements of the problem, the methodology proposed for tackling it and the expected outcomes, the proposal should also give practical details of how the project will run. The partners should be named and their roles clearly described. A workplan (which might change as the project progresses, if that becomes necessary) that illustrates how the work will be allocated and that sets targets for project activity, should be included. Questions relating to ethical issues considered, risks potentially to be met and contingencies being put in place also are asked. If you have followed these steps through, you should have no trouble at all completing the proposal form!

Finally, which language will you submit your proposal in? Although the Commission must accept applications in all official EU languages, it strongly urges applicants (for practical reasons to avoid long delays caused by translation) to use English, French or German. However, do not be tempted to submit your application in a language that is not your own unless you are absolutely sure that it is written clearly in that language and that the reader will understand what you want them to understand. You may also want to consider using the language of communication within your project partnership so that all partners can contribute to the application.

Good luck !

For more information:

Daphne Helpdesk:

JLS-DAPHNE@ec.europa.eu

Daphne Website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne3/funding_daphne3_en.htm