

SUPPORTIN SPORT

Creating a Development Plan

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What is a Development Plan?

A Development Plan is a strategic document that sets out your sport organisation's vision and aims for the future and details the actions you'll take to achieve them. It acts as a roadmap to support the growth and development of your organisation over a specified period, usually including direction for the short, medium and long-term.

Why is it important for every sport organisation to have a Development Plan?

A Development Plan can:

- Help you identify your vision and aims
- Provide a strategic plan to help achieve your short, medium and long-term objectives
- Help you plan for your future by identifying your current position and opportunities for improvement
- Provide a clear direction and purpose for everyone to work towards
- Help you set out how you'll attract and retain participants and volunteers

- Demonstrate to external stakeholders (including funders) that your organisation is well run and plans to grow
- Help secure your future sustainability
- Help ensure the efficient and effective use of resources
- Help you proactively develop plans to mitigate any foreseeable challenges and risks
- Improve links with local partners

How do I create a Development Plan?

Creating a Development Plan may seem like a daunting task but should be seen as an exciting and engaging process that helps to give everyone involved in your sport organisation a clear, shared plan for the future.

Creating a Development Plan can be made easier by:

1) Involving the right people.

If you can, create a small working group, involving people with different skills and knowledge to help shape your plan.

2) Assigning roles and responsibilities.

Once you've established your working group, assign people tasks to improve your effectiveness, communication, and collaboration. You could also form a sub-committee who report progress back to the main committee.

3) *Consulting with your people.*

An effective Development Plan will be developed in consultation with others, including your participants, volunteers, and wider stakeholders. This will ensure it represents and has buy-in from everyone.

4) *Be clear on what you want to achieve and by when.*

It's important that your plan is achievable and realistic. Through consultation, outline what you want to achieve and by when. Development Plans vary in duration from 1 year – 10+years, so it's important to pick a timescale that's appropriate for you and what you want to achieve.

What should a Development Plan cover?

Your Development Plan should cover every aspect of your operations and sport offer. It should seek to answer key questions, including:

1) **Why does your sport organisation exist?**

The first step in creating a Development Plan is to be clear on what your organisation's purpose and vision is. Think about what's most important to you and your people. Write down your shared values. Having a clear and united understanding of this from the outset will help you identify your future aims and actions as you move through the stages of creating a development plan.

2) Where is your sports organisation currently at?

Be sure to find out what your current position is. You can do this by conducting a SWOT analysis of your organisation's Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O) and Threats (T). When creating your SWOT analysis, be sure to consider all aspects of your organisation, including your:

- Facilities and infrastructure
- Workforce (voluntary and paid)
- Participant pathways and talent support (including who you currently reach and who you want to target)
- Activities (including those you already offer and those you wish to)
- Finances and sustainability
- Marketing and communications
- Community links and stakeholder support
- Governance and structures

Example SWOT Analysis:

<p>Strengths</p> <p><i>What do we do well?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong volunteer workforce • Wide variety of activities offered to participants across varying age groups and abilities
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p><i>What do we need to improve?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited finances to support the development and growth of our organisation • Limited social media following and promotion of our activities
<p>Opportunities</p> <p><i>How could we develop?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract participants, members and volunteers from different backgrounds and skillsets • Create more partnerships with local organisations to raise awareness of our offer
<p>Threats</p> <p><i>What could impact our offer or delivery?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure leased facility expiring in 18 months • Cost of living (decrease in disposable incomes) • Increased costs for the organisation (energy and consumables)

Once you've completed your SWOT analysis, discuss the findings and implications with your committee or leadership team. Use this opportunity to identify any challenges to address and priorities to develop. You can use a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating system to highlight actions that require more immediate attention, and those that may feed into your longer-term plans. These

themes can then be drawn out to create a set of goals and objectives that align with your sport organisation's overall vision and mission.

3) Where do you want to be and by when?

Once you've analysed where your sport organisation is, focus on where you want to be in the future. Think about the findings of your SWOT analysis and your overall vision to determine some short, medium, and longer term aims. Be sure you build on your strengths, address any weaknesses, capitalise on any opportunities, and be aware of and mitigate against potential threats.

Ensure your aims are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) and are realistic in terms of timescales, cost, and the resources that you have available.

4) How will you get there?

The next step is to plan how you'll achieve the SMART aims you have set. It's good to break down aims into smaller, easier to achieve actions which can form the basis of your organisation's development. Ideally, your action plan will cover your:

- **Aims** - what you want to achieve
- **Actions** – the specific steps that will need to be taken to achieve each aim
- **Timescales** – when each action will be achieved (short, medium, or long term)
- **Responsibility** - the person/people that'll be responsible for each action
- **Resources** – how much it will cost, what people, equipment and time is needed
- **Success measure** – how you will track progress and know you've succeeded

Once you've developed your action plan, be sure to make it available to your participants, members, workforce (both paid and voluntary), sponsors, and community partners. If you're applying for funding, you may also want to share your plan with funding organisations to demonstrate what you want to achieve and how you will do this.

5) How will you know if you've achieved your targets, and what comes next?

It's important to regularly monitor your progress against the aims and actions you have set. This will ensure you continue to move in the right direction and will help you to recognise and measure what you've achieved. Your Development Plan should be a working document, so it is important to regularly review and monitor it. Not only will this enable you to monitor progress, but also update or make revisions due to unforeseen delays or changes to circumstances e.g. people or available finance. An example of good practice could be including your Development Plan (or certain parts of it) as a regular feature on your sport organisation's committee meeting agenda and discussing it wider with your participants and members at AGMs.