

Building a better future

Strategy and Strategic Focus Areas

2015 – 2020



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Introduction

Engineers Without Borders Denmark (EWB-DK) was established in 2001 as a technical engineering resource base, offering technical engineering corporation on a non-profit basis to larger NGOs. Our partners included Red Cross, UNHCR, Norwegian Peoples Aid, DanChurchAid, among others. Our first independent project started in 2007, and since that point EWB-DK has developed into a passionately active and engaged grassroots movement with a strong work ethic and solidarity with the World's poorest and most marginalised people. Over the last eight years, EWB-DK has grown and further developed as a progressive sustainable development organisation, despite our relatively small size.

Today, EWB-DK focuses on technical humanitarian activities, disaster relief, project activities, project development and sustainability, among others, based on volunteer efforts.

The aim of this document is to describe EWB-DK's strategy and focus areas for the coming five years (2015-2020) for members and other interested parties. EWB-DK's Board of Directors together with the Secretariat are responsible for execution of the strategy, within the framework of the current organisational mandate.

Why a strategy for EWB-DK

In order to come further from mission statement to realisation of a vision, we as an organisation must formulate a strategy and objectives, that is, create coherence and a foundation for the organisation's activities.

Reaching our objectives is achieved through the development of milestones for EWB-DK (Strategy) as well as a time and action plan. The action plan supporting EWB's strategy 2015 – 2020 will, as a point of departure, be for one year and followed up regularly, functioning as a measure of progress for the current Board of Directors.

EWB-DK from 2015-2020

Based on the strategy "Building a better future – Strategy and Focus Areas 2015-2020", EWB-DK will proceed forwards towards to following goals.

- EWB-DK has established a close and long-term relationship with a number of relevant partners, both internationally and locally (NGOs and Donors).
- EWB-DKs projects have significant coherence and synergy across EWBs thematic focus areas, and are oriented around an organisational project program.
- EWB has specialisation with specific core areas and specific technical solutions. We can offer technical solutions as well as transferable knowledge, which has been tested and deemed appropriate within the given local context where EWB works. These solutions and knowledge can help to give further value to a given context in an effort to improve life quality.
- EWB-DK bases its work on a broad but solid disciplinary foundation, involving an increasing number of active volunteers with knowledge and experience within EWB's focus areas.

Engineers Without Borders' Vision and Mission

Vision (EWB-DK's overall goal)

EWB-DK's Vision:

Engineers Without Borders Denmark works in an effort to develop strong and sustainable communities as well as supporting development processes that build upon a fair distribution of available resources.

EWB-DK works in a way that engages the World's poorest people such that they too become active in the fight against poverty and marginalisation. We believe, and have as a point of departure, that the World's poorest have, and can develop the technical and disciplinary competencies necessary to play a leading role in the development of their respective communities. EWB-DK has a vision for the creation of sustainable and resilient communities, where development is generated on the basis of relevant capacity building, provision of sustainable methods and solutions, and a high level of community participation. It is necessary that local communities contribute to the identification of problems and solutions to their own poverty, social and economic, or any other form of marginalisation.

Mission (EWB-DKs effort to reach our overall goal)

EWB-DK's Mission:

To support vulnerable communities through technical, sustainable and local solutions.

To execute development and disaster relief projects, drawing on the Danish resource base.

To develop knowledge and qualifications within our resource base in an effort to work in a global development context.

Drawing upon the Danish professional technical resource base in a broad sense, EWB-DK's mission is to mobilise a solidarity and engagement in projects that supports distressed and

impoverished populations through relevant technical solutions. EWB-DK seeks to develop technical competencies and a foundation for communities in our partnering countries in a way to become active in their own development.

Ensuring that the Danish resource base has an understanding of the general development issues, and continues to develop a knowledge and capacity necessary to work towards poverty reduction through the implementation of relevant and sustainable technical solutions in the development perspective, is central to EWB-DK's mission.

EWB-DK bases its ability to transfer knowledge on a foundation of highly qualified technical expertise in our resource base. With a focus on poverty alleviation, EWB-DK offers collaboration and support to communities all over the world who otherwise do not have an opportunity to engage with commercial engineering consultancies. For EWB-DK, the primary mission is to provide engineering support in an effort to secure communities with the most basic of needs, thereby improving quality of life for the World's poorest.

As reflected in EWB-DK's values, sustainability is a core focus in our mission. Sustainability in the EWB-DK context refers to the following:

Environmental Sustainability: Technical cooperation and results, which do not negatively affect the surrounding environment, or welfare of the community in a local and global context.

Social and Institutional Sustainability: Capacity development and strengthening of local organisations in order to secure future results and technical cooperation.

Economic and Financial Sustainability: Ensuring the generation of long-term economic surplus within the technical cooperation, and following the finalisation of EWB-DK's support such that the end-users do not continue to be reliant on significant financial support.

Engineers Without Borders' Values

EWB-DK is built upon solidarity between people and volunteerism

For EWB-DK, it is need that is the most important, not religion or politics: We take a point of departure in the international development goals, laws, rules and international conventions including the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights

For EWB-DK, sustainability is the foundation for a better future: EWB-DK's projects and activities shall be relevant for the fight against poverty and securing this without negatively impacting the opportunity for future generations to meet their needs

EWB-DK takes a point of departure in help for self-help: Through participation, capacity building and partnerships, local and international, EWB-DK seeks to undertake relevant activities with concrete results.

EWB-DK believes in the democratic leadership of society, where inclusion, openness and transparency are paramount for all development: EWB-DK has a zero tolerance policy for corruption and seeks, through its work to promote transparency and democratic processes that respect all people.

Engineers Without Borders' Focus Areas

(Technical and Geographical)

Technical Focus Areas

With the selection of specific technical focus areas that support EWB-DK's mission, it is critical that EWB-DK's activities are founded in solid technical expertise and experience throughout our member base. With respect to the strategic technical focus areas, EWB-DK will continuously seek to measure the expertise and experience available amongst the membership base in order to approve new projects and further expand upon these technical focus areas. Should additional input be required, external expertise will be engaged from outside of the membership base.

The decision to focus on specific technical areas follows a demand from within the organisation to further consolidate an existing knowledge and technical competence base. Furthermore, by focusing on specific technical areas, the development of experiences within a given field and the improvement of the quality of EWB-DK activities can be continuously brought into focus. This consolidation shall target given geographic areas with respect to current partnerships and the technical nature of that partnership. As a consequence, EWB-DK will evaluate new projects on the basis that there is an opportunity for long-term collaboration with a given partner and a given technical area.

With a point of departure in the experiences and expert qualifications found internally in the organisation, EWB-DK's Strategy 2015-2020 prioritises activities within the following four technical areas:

- Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Health
- Environment (Waste, Sustainable Energy, Environmental Planning, Sustainable Resource Management)
- Food Security
- Disaster Relief and Emergency Aid (including disaster preparedness and long-term reestablishment)

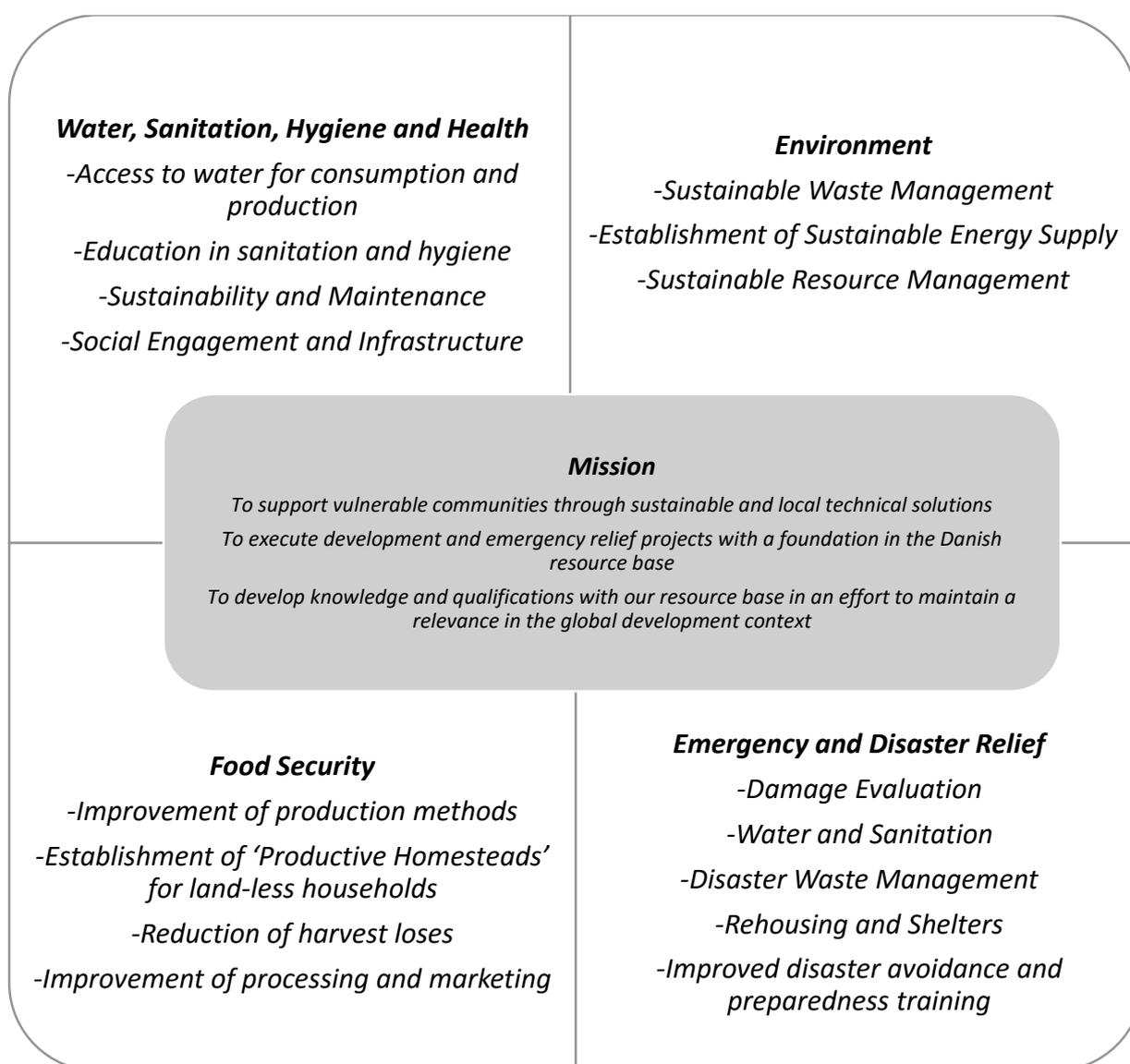


Figure: Technical Focus Areas under EWB-DK's Strategy 2015-2020

Geographic Focus Areas

EWB-DK will specifically seek to consolidate its work geographically where there is an opportunity for long-term partnerships based on an evaluation of EWB's internal organisational capacity and the capacity of our partners.

By focusing on a relatively small group of countries, EWB-DK sees an opportunity to further develop its knowledge for a given national context and therein increase the quality of the project and partnership results. Through existing long-term partnerships, EWB and our partners can further develop a deeper understanding for a given context politically, socially and economically, as well as between the partnering organisations.

With a point of departure in the geographic focus of recent years, the development of experience and the potential for further development of EWB-DK's technical focus areas, EWB-DKs Strategy 2015-2020 will prioritise focus on the following countries:

- Bolivia
- India
- Kenya
- Pakistan
- Sierra Leone
- Tanzania

EWB-DKs country selection should not be seen as the permanent status quo. EWB-DK will continuously assess the partnership opportunities that arise in Denmark and in the South in consideration for an expansion of the geographical focus. There shall however be relevant and strong arguments for prioritising a new country as a focus area.

The continuous assessment of country selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Potential for developing EWB-DKs technical focus areas
- Opportunity for solid partnerships
- The necessary internal resources are available with EWB-DK

EWB-DK will establish a project program to focus on cross disciplinarity between specific activities in order to further encourage synergies and learning between EWB-DK's partners and those activities. A program focus will ensure a long-term strategic perspective within the activities EWB-DK has together with their partners as well as increase quality, sustainability and learning as a result.

Cross-disciplinary Considerations

Combined with our organisational values, the following cross-disciplinary considerations will be addressed in all interventions:

- Needs-based and participatory analysis of project formulations shall engage all relevant actors, civil society, private and public (no matter gender, age, political or ethnic orientation). All actors are to be included and heard in the identification of local issues and the development of solutions to those issues.
- Local capacity development shall always include the development of knowledge and organisational capacity at a community level.
- Provision of appropriate technologies and solution methods shall be based on an analysis of available local resources, and an analysis of the local capacity to operate and maintain these technologies.

- Work proactively within the frames of international and national development strategies in cooperation with the relevant actors in the given context.
- Encourage transparency and fair distribution of social, economic and environmental resources, including working with issues of marginalisation with a point of departure in gender, ethnicity and age, for example.
- Continuously maintain documentation, monitoring and evaluation.

Engineers Without Borders' Organisational Focus Areas

The following organisational focus areas shall support EWB-DK's development and strengthen the organisation's ability to fulfil its mission:

- Through continuous focus on and development of EWB-DK's areas of expertise seek to make EWB-DK the foremost partner for international and Danish development organisations.
- Consolidation of EWB-DK as a continuously improving organisation via mentor programs, cross organisational learning between EWB-DK and its partners, the continuous development of member qualifications, and the retention of members.
- Maintaining and developing the internal working structure in order to uphold EWB-DK's mission and ambitions in an effective and rational way.
- Development of partnerships both in Denmark and the developing South, with a special strategic focus on collaboration with other branches of EWB.
- Increased inclusion of the Danish resource base in all EWB-DK activities.
- Make EWB-DK a catalyst for effective, relevant and innovative technical capacity development and knowledge sharing in the development context. EWB-DK shall encourage an informed and creative approach to its projects.
- Develop the decentralisation of EWB-DK through strengthening the organisational independence of EWB-DK's Local Chapters both in relation to being an active resource in EWB-DK projects and communication.
- Transparency, communication and inclusion of all relevant actors in Denmark and in the South.

Funding

Funding of EWB-DK's activities is primarily based on membership fees, donations and support from public aid organisations.

It is the aim that income from membership fees will cover running costs, such that EWB-DK's operation is independent from fluctuating donations and support from other aid organisations. This shall be achieved through a significant increase in the total number of members, both individual and corporate members. Furthermore, the extent of individual and corporate donations shall be increased.

EWB-DK has previously worked in cooperation with the larger Danish aid organisations, who have funded EWB-DK's activities. Maintaining this cooperation is also a priority in the coming years.

EWB-DK has successfully secured donations from corporate funds and foundations. These donations are a solid foundation for EWB-DK's projects and shall therefore be maintained, and prioritised as long-term collaborators.

Support from public aid organisations has comprised support from CISU which can further lead to framework agreements with CISU/Danida. There are opportunities to receive support from international aid organisations such as NDF and EDF. It is expected that projects will be larger and more complex in relation to EWB-DK's traditional approach.

Challenges and Risks

EWB-DK has in recent years undertaken an organisational change which has made projects more complex and long-term as well economically demanding.

This challenges EWB-DK to retain but also expand a qualified resource base within its membership, and further requires that project leadership competencies are continuously developed.

In this sense, projects in the coming years will be undertaken on a volunteer basis but with the option for support from professional organisational support functions. EWB-DK's leadership will seek to develop a structure that supports volunteer engagement. In this way, there will be focus on volunteer input that is purely technical without the heavy burden of administrative, communication and coordination work. It is expected that this structure will help manage the increased complexity of EWB-DK's activities.

In relation to an increased complexity and the implementation of a program focus, EWB-DK and the volunteer resource base will be challenged in how secondment is approached and managed where long-term secondment is often not possible within the frame of volunteer engagement. In this context, EWB-DK will therefore open up for opportunities long-term paid secondment where it is not possible to engage participants on a volunteer basis.