
Request for Proposal

**NGO PARTNER FOR IMPLEMENTING
THE
DIGO PROJECT**



**Swisscontact Nepal
Oasis Complex, 4th Floor
211 Madan Marg, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, Nepal**

January 11, 2025

Request for Proposals

Swisscontact intends to begin implementation of the “**DIGO**” project in 2025. The project will be registered under the Social Welfare Council. To support the implementation of the project, Swisscontact is actively seeking applications from local non-governmental organisation (NGOs) as implementing partners for the programme for which this Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued.

The RFP includes the following documents:

Section I. Terms of Reference (TOR)

Section II. Instructions to the Applicant

Swisscontact invites local NGOs to submit Technical and Financial Proposal for the services detailed in Section I. Terms of Reference (TOR) of the RFP.

The selection procedures and application templates are detailed in Section II. Instruction to the Applicant of the RFP.

The Proposals must be delivered electronically to np.info@swisscontact.org with the Subject: Partner–DIGO by 26 January 2025.

No late proposal shall be accepted.

Swisscontact reserves the right to accept and reject all proposals without further notice.

Note: Priority will be given to the local NGOs of Kaski district.

Section I. Terms of Reference

1. Introduction to Swisscontact

Swisscontact is an independent non-profit development organisation established in 1959 by representatives of the Swiss private sector and civil society. Our development work focuses on private sector-led, sustainable economic development with improved quality of life for all in developing and emerging countries. A key focus is to strengthen the skills of individuals and foster the competitiveness of businesses.

Swisscontact, registered as an International Non-Governmental Organisation in Nepal, has been operating in Nepal since 1991. Currently, Swisscontact Nepal has six development programmes across all seven provinces, with a well-functioning country office that employs over 145 staff members.

2. Background to the project

Tourism plays a pivotal role in Nepal's economy, contributing 6.1% to GDP and supporting 1.08 million jobs. With an annual growth rate of 4.3% (2023-2033), the sector is projected to contribute \$3.9 billion to GDP by 2033 while creating an additional 200,000 jobs. In FY24, the accommodation and food service sectors were expected to grow by 21.84%, reflecting the increasing importance of tourism. However, current tourism trends, including an average tourist stay of 13.2 days with a daily expenditure of \$41, highlight the need to transition from low-end tourism toward high-value sustainable tourism.

Designated Nepal's "Tourism Capital" in 2024, Pokhara contributes 25.4% of its local economy through tourism. The city offers unique natural and cultural attractions and various leisure and adventure activities. It also serves as gateway and endpoint for major trekking routes. Despite these strengths, systemic challenges such as weak destination governance, environmental degradation, unplanned development, and unsustainable practices have hindered the tourism sector's sustainable growth. To maintain its appeal, Pokhara must adopt sustainable tourism practices by diversifying offerings, targeting high-value markets, improving service quality, and fostering collaborations to connect sustainable tourism products to global markets. Incentives for green business models and enhanced destination governance are critical to mitigating issues like pollution and overcrowding.

Sikles, a traditional Gurung village in the Annapurna Conservation Area, is gaining popularity for its cultural heritage, eco-tourism offerings, and off-the-beaten-path treks. However, rapid tourism growth—up to 1,500 visitors daily during peak seasons—has led to environmental degradation, erosion of cultural heritage, and poor waste management. A lack of skilled human resources also affects the visitor experience. To unlock its potential, Sikles must embrace sustainable tourism by managing visitor flows, enhancing seasonal tourism diversity, and targeting quality tourists. Strengthening connections with national and international tourism networks and promoting its unique cultural and natural assets are crucial for long-term growth.

Accommodation enterprises are central to the tourism ecosystem in both Pokhara and Sikles. They drive local economic activity, create jobs, and support cultural preservation. Their transition to sustainable business practices is essential for improving service quality and reducing environmental impact. By adopting innovative, green business models and collaborating with stakeholders, accommodation enterprises can play a pivotal role in creating a sustainable tourism framework in Nepal.

3. Project goal

The primary goal of the DIGO project is to create additional jobs and income in the tourism sector while generating positive environmental impacts. The project intends to achieve the desired goals by supporting enterprises in selected tourism destinations in Gandaki Province to transition towards more sustainable practices, and products and supporting enablers to strengthen destination planning for sustainable tourism.

4. Project Activities

The project will be working in Gandaki Province and specifically focussing in Pokhara Metropolitan City and Madi Rural Municipality. Project activities are targeted towards the following key target groups to achieve the desired results:

- Accommodation enterprises in selected destinations
- Existing and prospective workers (including management) in accommodation enterprises
- Local population in selected destinations
- Enablers in selected destinations

Activities will be carried out across two interlinked intervention areas that results in strengthened sustainable tourism offer and competitiveness of the selected destination and the tourism enterprises.

- A. Intervention Area (IA) 1: Destination Assessment and Policy and Planning Support
- B. Intervention Area (IA) 2: Strengthening Capacities for Sustainable Tourism.

IA 1 follows Swisscontact's Sustainable Tourism Destination Management (STDM) approach to strengthen local capacity in tourism destination governance. The structured approach through its collaborative process in assessing tourism destinations and visitor behaviour culminates in tourism stakeholders gaining a shared and improved understanding of opportunities and challenges in their destinations and subsequently allowing them to develop and implement appropriate actions.

Key activities include:

- Destination assessment in 2 destinations based on STDM tools
- Participatory visitor flow mapping and analysis
- Analysis of visitor flow and generation of recommendations for sustainable tourism strategies for local enablers

IA 2 focuses on building the capacities and supporting local communities and the private sector to transition to more sustainable practices and products in tourism. DIGO will support mainly accommodation enterprises to launch and promote innovative business models, products, and practices centred around sustainable tourism. It will also work with training service providers to provide sustainable tourism and green skills training for key occupations in the accommodation sector.

Key activities include:

- Green skills gap assessment and develop and facilitate roll-out of upskilling courses in selected occupations in the accommodation sector.
- Develop and facilitate roll-out of sustainable tourism business management training.
- Technical business support for accommodation enterprises to develop and transition to sustainable business models and products in tourism and promotion of successful models.
- Training and coaching to tourism communities/village on sustainable tourism and support to develop and promote new sustainable tourism products.

5. Responsibility of Implementing Partner (IP)

- Support in design and planning, and lead implementation, in collaboration with relevant private and public sector actors and Swisscontact, of appropriate project interventions to address the key constraints.
- Implementation of project activities as a facilitator and not as core market actor.
- Integration of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI), environmental responsibility, financial capability, good governance, and conflict sensitivity aspects in designing and implementing project activities.
- Orientation of project and its activities and expected roles to all stakeholders.
- Endorsement of project activities from relevant stakeholders and organisations.
- Identification and outreach, awareness, and sensitisation of target groups.
- Support in identification and selection of ecosystem partners.
- Coordination with ecosystem partners and stakeholders.
- Monitoring and reporting of project activities as per system used by Swisscontact. Swisscontact follows the DCED standards for monitoring and result measurement (MRM). To capture the impact of the activities, the IP will develop their monitoring and evaluation system following the guideline and formats of Swisscontact. The IP will be responsible for carrying out the monitoring and evaluation activities; Swisscontact team will assist and suggest necessary steps in the due process. The MRM activities will include (but will not be necessarily limited to) the following activities:
 - Intervention plans/ MRM plans
 - Cases and stories of the Interventions
 - Monthly monitoring reports
 - Interim impact assessments and reporting
 - Final impact assessments and reporting
 - Intervention Reports
 - Supporting evidence documentation (e.g., meeting minutes, field visit reports, event/activity participation lists and reports, pictures, copies of MoUs, contracts, etc.)
 - Relevant studies (formal/informal) conducted for an intervention
- Work closely with relevant teams from Swisscontact and within project structures and framework developed by Swisscontact.
- Submit monthly report to Swisscontact, which will include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - Monthly activity overview of previous month
 - Activity plan and intervention strategies for following one month (for approval)

- Financial projection for upcoming activities, once in every two months or every quarter (for prior approval).
- Impact and monitoring reports and data (whenever required).
- Half yearly review report describing interventions, impact, learning, etc. Interventions specific deliverables will be set upon regular meetings (at least twice in a month) between Swisscontact and the IP.
- Study reports after completion of relevant studies.
- Specific reports such as field updates, activity status, etc., as per request by the project team.
- MRM and communication related data and documents as and when required.
- Project completion report on completion of the assignment contract.
- Ensure deliverables on time, meeting targets within the proposed budget, and propose recommendations for improvements.
- Commit to management commitments and adhere to project's operational guidelines.
- Commit a pool of agreed staff dedicated to the project.
- Any other tasks as assigned by Swisscontact pertinent to the project.

6. Eligible applicants (Implementing Partner)

Applicants fulfilling the following criteria shall apply:

- Legally registered with the Government of Nepal and preferably in project area(s).
- Must be registered under the Social Welfare Council as an NGO.
- Registered as Tax Exempted Entity with Inland Revenue Office (IRO) and submission of latest renewal of the same.
- At least 3 years of working experience in one of the target area and should have an operating office in Pokhara.
- Have a track record of more than 3 years of implementing activities preferably in sustainable tourism or in areas such as sustainable economic development.
- Have more than 3 years of experience of working as implementing NGO partner.
- Experience working with wide range of stakeholders including government agencies, civil society organisations, and the private sector.
- Demonstratable commitment towards economic development and poverty reduction principles, economic empowerment of women, and anti-fraud and anti-corruption.
- Having sound financial management practice and procedures in place including meeting of all government related compliance.
- Registered in VAT/PAN.

7. Time frame

The project will be implemented from January 2025 to December 2028. The implementing partner will be contracted initially for one year. Contract renewals will be based on annual and periodic reviews and evaluations by Swisscontact against key performance metrics.

Applicants should submit project approach, methodology, activities, workplan, team structure, and budget for the entire duration of the project.

Section II. Instructions to the Applicant

1. Clarifications on RFP

Interested applicants may request for clarification(s) or submit questions electronically to np.info@swisscontact.org with the Subject: Clarification– DIGO by **15 January 2025**. Swisscontact will make the compilation of answers to questions and clarifications available in the web location provide below on **17 January 2025**. (<https://www.swisscontact.org/en/countries/nepal/requests-for-proposal>)

2. Preparation of the proposal

Application pack from an NGO shall consist of the following two components, the templates of which are provided in ensuing sections:

1. Technical Proposal
2. Financial Proposal

The language of the proposal shall be in English.

The applicant is requested to examine the requirements of the RFP in detail. Missing information and documents and not adhering to the proposal template may result in disqualification of the application.

3. Structure of the proposal

Technical proposal

The technical proposal is to be accompanied by a cover letter (max 1 page) with the organisation’s letterhead expressing the willingness to participate in the project. The cover letter shall be signed by a person of the right authority of the organisation.

The technical proposal must follow the following template and provide information and responses as requested not exceeding the page limit.

Page layout	Size: A4; Margin: Normal
Font	body text: Calibri 11; table text: Calibri 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cover Page ○ Table of contents ○ Abbreviations <p>I. Introduction to the organisation (max 3 pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of organisation’s mission, profile, capacity, and expertise related to proposed project ○ Demonstration of eligibility as detailed in Section 7 of ToR ○ Experiences relevant to the project <p>II. Understanding of the terms of reference (max 3 pages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Situational Analysis of current context and constraints and challenges with respect to sustainable tourism in target area ○ Understanding of target group needs ○ Understanding of project goals and objectives and broad activities described in ToR. 	

Technical staff											
Staff 1											
Staff 2											
Staff 3											
Staff.....											
Monitoring and Evaluation											
Staff 1											
Staff...											
B. Intervention Area 1											
			Number of Units				Annual Total				
Description	Total Units	Units rate	2025	2026	2027	2028	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Activity costs											
Activity 1											
Activity 2											
Activity 3											
Activity ...											
Other costs											
Other costs 1											
Other costs 2											
Other costs...											
C. Intervention Area 2											
			Number of Units				Annual Total				
Description	Total Units	Units rate	2025	2026	2027	2028	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Activity costs											
Activity 1											
Activity 2											
Activity 3											
Activity ...											
Other costs											
Other costs 1											
Other costs 2											
Other costs...											
Sub-total											
Overhead @....											
Grand-total											

4. Submission of application

Separate Technical and Financial Proposals must be delivered electronically to np.info@swisscontact.org with Subject: Partner– DIGO by 26 January 2025. No late proposal shall be accepted.

Swisscontact reserves the right to accept and reject all proposals without further notice.

5. Evaluation process

Swisscontact will open and evaluate the technical proposals first. Financial proposals will be opened and evaluated only when the corresponding technical proposals get at least 70% of the total technical score.

The received proposal will be evaluated in three stages.

Stage 1: Assessment of meeting of minimum eligibility requirements

Bidders complying with all the requirements detailed in Section 6 of the Terms of reference will proceed to the second stage of technical evaluation.

Stage 2: Evaluation of technical proposal

The Technical Proposal will be weighted 70% of the total score. The technical proposal will be evaluated among other things on the following:

1. Experience and qualification of the organisation relevant to the project (20)
2. Understanding of the context (15)
3. Implementation Strategy (30)
4. Work plan (10)
5. Key professional staff including MRM (25)

Stage 3: Financial proposal evaluation

Proposals who score 70% on technical evaluation will proceed to the Stage 3 wherein the financial proposal shall be evaluated. The financial proposal weightage shall be 30% of the total score. Financial scoring will be based on the following:

1. Cost assumptions and remarks on budget (10)
2. Price of the financial proposal (20)

The bidder with the lowest-priced financial proposal is awarded the full weighted score. The weighted scores of the other financial proposals are calculated as: $20 \times \text{Lowest price proposal value} / \text{Proposal under consideration}$.

The firm achieving the highest combined technical and financial score will be invited for negotiations.

6. Contract Negotiations and Award

Before awarding and signing the contract with the selected organisation, Swisscontact will undertake an assessment of the organisation's financial and management capacity and the relevant practices, through one or more meetings and visits.

If necessary, Swisscontact may ask an organisation to make changes in their proposed team or activities. Swisscontact may also want to conduct additional meetings with the organisations and their proposed teams, before making the final decision. Swisscontact can cancel an award if the proposed team is drastically changed by the organisation during the negotiation period and/or right after signing the contract.

Swisscontact can cancel the whole tender in case all proposals are found unsatisfactory.

Annex 1

Re: Declaration of Independence

We hereby declare that we as an organization and our staff do not have **any conflict of interest**¹ with Swisscontact, its key management team or its staff directly related to the execution of the proposed Partnership/Consultancy Assignment /Project implementation/Supply of Goods /Others.....

We further declare that we do not have any business, professional, personal, or other interest, including, but not limited to, the representation of other clients, that would conflict in any manner or degree with the performance of its obligations under the proposed assignment. (In case of any conflict of interest, please specify)

In addition, we further declare that we have not been punished for an offense relating to the concerned profession or business and that our Company/Firm has not been declared ineligible by any law of the land. (In case of any offense, please specify)

We ensure that if any such actual or potential conflict of interest arises during this assignment, we shall immediately inform Swisscontact in writing.

We are aware and accept that if we fail to declare any information mentioned above or if, in the reasonable judgment of Swisscontact, such conflict poses a material risk to the performance and obligations under this Agreement, then Swisscontact may terminate the Agreement immediately upon written notice to the Contractor.

Authorized Signature:

Name and Title of Signatory:

Name of Firm/Company/Institute:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Date:

¹ "Conflict of Interest" refers to a situation in which an organization or individual or close relative of such individual has competing personal or financial interests that could potentially compromise their ability to make impartial decisions or act in the best interests of others.

"Close relative" here includes spouse, parent, child, grandparent, brother, sister, grandchild, parent-in-law, daughter/son-in-law, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, great-grandchild, grandparent-in-law, brother/sister-in-law, grandchild-in-law, cousin, cousin brother/sister-in-law, cousin son/daughter-in-law.