



DFA Working Group Series: Revenue Generation

Revenue Generation Strategies for Digital Finance and Fintech Associations: Best Practices and Insights



**Alliance of Digital Finance
and Fintech Associations**

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Introduction

This report is part of a series examining key operational, management, and revenue-generation challenges faced by Digital Finance and Fintech Associations (DFAs), particularly in emerging economies. Based on responses and research from DFAs within [Alliance of Digital Finance and Fintech Associations \(AllianceDFA\)](#), the series provides insights to strengthen DFA operations and sustainability.

This report, titled, *Revenue Generation Strategies for Digital Finance and Fintech Associations: Best Practices and Insights*, was developed and produced by the Revenue Generation Working Group, led by Amadou Sow, [Association Digital Frontiers Senegal \(ADF-SN\)](#).

We'd like to thank the following DFA Members for sharing their experiences and insight:



About AllianceDFA

[The Alliance of Digital Finance and Fintech Associations](#) (AllianceDFA) is a global hub, uniting regional and national associations to foster knowledge exchange, create synergies, and amplify impact in the digital finance and fintech sector. By empowering our members with resources to impact local markets, AllianceDFA strengthens the digital finance ecosystem globally, enabling the development of inclusive and responsible digital financial products and services.





Objective

The aim of this initiative is to identify the challenges DFAs face in generating funds to start and launch their DFA and to generate long-term sustainable revenue. This report provides actionable insights based on both successful strategies and lessons learnt from less effective approaches.

The findings guide DFAs in starting and strengthening their revenue-generation methods, helping them avoid common pitfalls and replicate proven strategies.

Methodology

The Working Group conducted a survey to assess the revenue challenges faced by DFAs, gathering strategies and examples for improvement. A total of **27** responses were received from **35** DFAs across the AllianceDFA network, representing a **77%** response rate. The survey focused on identifying the legal structures, funding sources and strategies, revenue generation models, and lessons from both successful and unsuccessful fundraising activities. Additional insights were gathered in a working session which provided context and depth to the survey findings. The data was analysed to develop actionable recommendations.

Legal Entities of DFAs

Type of Organisation	Number of Respondents
NPO (Non-Profit Organisation)	12
NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation)	9
Association	3
Private Company	1
Trust	1
Society	1

The majority of respondents represent non-profit and non-governmental organisations. These legal structures benefit from tax exemptions and the ability to receive grants and donor funds, widening potential funding sources. It also reflects their purpose to support and grow the industry and their members rather than delivering profits.





Considerations for Legal Establishment and Generating Revenue

DFAs must meet legal and regulatory requirements to be able to accept and generate funds/revenue. While the specific requirements vary by country, common conditions include:

- 1. Registration and Licensing:** DFAs must be registered as formal entities (e.g., private companies, NPOs, or NGOs) with relevant government bodies, such as registrars and ministries, Registration may require additional approvals from financial or regulatory authorities such as the Central Bank.
- 2. Compliance with Financial, Regulatory, and Tax Standards:** DFAs must comply with financial regulations, tax laws, and standards for financial management, audits, and data protection, as well as other regulations and laws specific to the jurisdiction and legal entity type.
- 3. Governance and Operational Standards:** DFAs must establish governance structures (e.g. Board of Directors, Articles of Association/Incorporation or Constitution) and implement operational procedures, including financial management and membership policies.
- 4. Where Non-Profit Status has been chosen:** DFAs must align their activities with their specified mission and comply with tax exemptions, financial reporting, audit requirements, and fundraising regulations.
- 5. Bank Account:** DFAs must open a bank account under the legal registered name with processes for signatories, authorisation of transactions, and oversight of expenses paid, and income received.

Initial Funding and Revenue Sources for DFAs

Out of **27** respondents, **14** DFAs have received funding to support the launch and establishment of their associations. The sources of initial funding varied, with a combination of membership fees, grants, industry sponsorship, and founder/leader financial support being the primary contributors.

Source of Initial Funding	Number of Mentions
Membership Fees	8
Grant from a Donor Organisation (e.g. BMFG, UNCDF)	5
Industry Sponsor (e.g. Bank, MNO, Fintech)	3
Digital Frontiers for facilitating the country's Community of Practice meetings	2
Industry Leaders (e.g. Fintech Founders)	1
Consultancy Fees	1
Government Funding	1





Of the 14 DFAs who received funding, the top three sources were membership fees (57%), grant from a donor organisation (36%), and industry sponsorship (21%).

Funding Received in the First Round by DFAs

Funding Amount	Number of DFAs
Under \$5,000	6
\$5,000 - \$10,000	1
\$10,000 - \$15,000	3
Over \$15,000	4

Key Insights for Gaining Initial Funding

Sources of funding

- **Membership Fees:** A common method for securing funding, giving DFA flexibility to use the funds without specific conditions or deliverables.
- **Grant from Donor Organisations** (e.g. BMFG, UNCDF): Secured for specific activities like policy advocacy and research, with DFAs aligning their projects with funding requirements.
- **Industry Sponsors** (e.g. Banks, MNOs, Fintechs): Sponsorship of the association events or reports played a crucial role in initial funding, demonstrating the importance of industry partnerships.
- **Consultancy Fees:** DFAs leveraged expertise through consultancy contracts, particularly for market insights, adding an alternative revenue stream.
- **Government Funding:** can be a source of funding in some markets where there is public sector support and funding for fintech and digital development.

Successful strategies for fundraising

- **Strategic Planning:** DFAs need for clear funding strategies, aligning funding activities with organisational goals and that of the donor/sponsor/member.
- **Networking and Pitching:** Successful funding often involved extensive networking and multiple pitches to key stakeholders and industry players.
- **Diversified Funding Sources:** Many DFAs combined different funding sources (membership fees, grants, industry sponsorships, consultancy), to support start-up and to give flexibility on how the funds are used.
- **Amount Required:** The majority started their DFA with less than \$15,000 – small amounts utilised well can start the journey to credibility and establishment.





Subsequent Funding and Revenue Sources for DFAs

Concurrent Revenue Sources for DFAs

Revenue Source	Number of Mentions
Membership Fees	12
Events	10
Consultancy	5
Industry Sponsors	4
Donor funds and grants	4
Projects	3
Other (e.g., Training, Technical Assistance)	2

Membership fees remain the primary source of regular yearly income for industry associations (86%), closely followed by events (71%) and then consultancy (36%). Donor funds and grants (29%) and industry sponsorship (29%) remain important for some DFAs. These findings underscore the significance of membership fees while also emphasizing the importance of diversifying revenue streams through events and consultancy services once the association has credibility and influence.

Revenue Generation Challenges Faced by DFAs

This section identifies commonly experienced challenges in revenue generation and provides strategies to avoid, mitigate and manage the challenges.

Challenge	Strategy
Over-Reliance on Membership Fees Affordability of membership fees can, particularly in economically challenging periods along with market and industry size can be limiting factors for growth and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Save funds to cover tough periods.• Explore and pitch for alternative funding.• Ensure continuous value for members to maintain fee contributions.
Securing Timely Funding and Building Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponsors may require evidence of ongoing activity or a track record of at least one year before committing.• Securing funding can take time from initial discussions and funding received.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build reserves to handle delays.• Develop a clear pitch deck and resource pack to highlight your value.• Keep communication active to maintain momentum and continue to build trust.





<p>Lower-than-Expected Performance and Revenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events, projects, or programs generate less revenue or perform below expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess key issues that impacted the finances, such as unrealistic expectations, low attendance, or budget issues. • Decide whether to improve and repeat the project or discontinue it.
<p>Lack of Viable Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in identifying projects that attract funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on expanding membership, partnerships, and connections. • Identify market opportunities and align projects with the priorities of donors and key stakeholders.

Priority Funding Areas

The Working Group also identified what DFAs needed funding for and how they plan to utilise their existing funding or any new funding they attract. DFAs identified two areas – one to strengthen the DFA itself and the other to promote the growth and innovation of the broader industry. This dual approach ensures the DFA’s long-term sustainability while also benefiting its members and the fintech ecosystem. Specific areas mentioned for investment include:

DFA Focused

- **Technical and Operational Infrastructure:** Improving internal systems, office setup, and staffing to ensure smooth operations and better service to members.
- **Sustainability and Revenue Generation:** Securing financial stability that allows resource to focused on execution and delivering impact and ability to pursue other fundraising avenues to ensure continued independence.
- **Events and Community Engagement:** Hosting events to engage members, strengthen community ties, and enhance the DFA’s visibility.

Industry Focused

- **Regulatory Advocacy and Research:** Shaping enabling regulations and conducting research to support evidence-based advocacy and industry growth.
- **Education and Talent Development:** Upskilling professionals to build a capable workforce that can adapt to evolving technologies and market needs.
- **Innovation Support:** Supporting fintech startups through accelerator and incubator programs to drive innovation and new technologies within the industry.





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