

Components and Writing of Fundable Project Proposals

Presented

By

Martha Olwenyi

Email: molwenyi@gmail.com

Tel: 0772574677

Objective:

- To enhance the participants' knowledge and Skills in Preparing Quality Project Proposals so that at the end one can:
 - Explain what a project proposal is
 - Sketch a proposal

Introduction

- ❑ There are no golden rules for writing a fundraising proposal.
- ❑ It is a matter of personal style and temperament. What works for one may not work for another.
- ❑ It is also dependent on the target *donor or sponsor*.
- ❑ A project proposal should contain adequate information to elicit a *yes* from donor/sponsor

What is a proposal?

- A project proposal is a statement of intent, also known as **a suggestion**, an offer, a plan, a scheme, an application, a proposition, a tender or a bid for approval to implement or for funding.
- Proposals take several forms:
 - Which gives a broad view of the operational and administrative steps to be undertaken to achieve the intended goal in a *convincing* manner.

Importance of Proposals

- It is a plan of action
- It can be used to solicit support
- It is a commitment to undertake a certain development activity
- Promote your organisation and its work *e.g. Urban refugee programme*

General observations

- ❑ Understanding the organisation and the external env't is critical to proposal writing
- ❑ Sometimes some organizations end up changing their identity in pursuance of grants yet some donors want to support existing structures
- ❑ This leads them into supporting programs not related to the core mission of the organization

Strengths, Weaknesses and Identity

- **Identify your Organization's Strengths, Weaknesses and Identity**
 - Locate information on the history, philosophy and mission of your organization i.e.
 - Organizational charts,
 - Staff and organizational bios,
 - Evaluation plans,
 - A list of previous funding,
 - An inventory of resources
- You cannot hope to “sell” or promote a project if you do not know, and cannot present, a picture of your organisation as a “good risk”

Strengths, Weaknesses cont.

- Your selling points i.e. the idea, why it is important and worth supporting.
- Facts and figures about your idea i.e. the extent of the need.
- Identify and document the accomplishments of the organization.
 - Sometimes called a "credibility file "
- Collect any examples of how the organization is involved in the community

Know and Record your Track Record

- Remember that, if a donor decides to support your project, it is taking a risk, so you must be able to present evidence to show that it is a “good risk.”
- The following are common areas in which you should be able to present such evidence:
 - Previous results and impact.
 - Good management competence with regard to projects and people.
 - Good financial management skills and skills in drawing up a financing strategy.
 - Technical competence in your particular field.

Discussion

- Conduct an assessment of your organisation and list the strengths, weaknesses and selling points which can facilitate project proposal writing

Donor Research

- Obtain Application Guidelines and Information
- Clarify Any Questions About the Guidelines Before You Start Writing
 - Understand what the funder require from you
 - Colleagues and friends in other agencies can be of great help to you at this level
 - What size of grant the donor usually gives.
- Donor research i.e. a list of potential supporters
 - What they can give and what they cannot give.
 - Identify any connections between you and the donor.
 - Back-up literature i.e. brochures, annual reports

Questions to Consider When Researching a Donor

- ❑ What are the donor's priorities and organizational values?
- ❑ What kind of projects has the donor funded in the past?
- ❑ Where has the donor funded projects?
- ❑ Are there expenses that the donor will not fund?
- ❑ What are the proposal guidelines?
- ❑ When is the due date for proposals?
- ❑ What are the budget levels that the donor will fund?

Summary of Donor wants:

- ❑ Your name and position in the organisation or project.
- ❑ The name and contact details of the organisation.
- ❑ What community you serve and what your links to the community are.
- ❑ The mission, goals and strategy of the organisation.
- ❑ What your governance structures are and who is on them.
- ❑ The level of expertise of the staff and/or volunteers involved.
- ❑ Your particular strengths as an organisation in the context within which you function.
- ❑ Your track record in terms of impact, competence, project and financial management.

Discussion

- What would be the appropriate mechanisms of getting prior information from potential donors before writing project proposals?

Key Questions Prior to Writing

- Who is the reader/funding source?
- What are his interests/funding areas?
- What are his funding mechanisms?
- What project proposal format does he require?
- What are the important deadlines?
- For?
 - *Concept paper* or
 - Fully developed Proposal

A cartoon illustration of a scroll with the text "Writing the Proposal". The scroll is white with a black outline and is held by four golden rings. The text is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font in the center of the scroll.

Writing the Proposal

An applications form supplied by the donor.

- Guides you on what information to supply.
- May be necessary to attach a covering letter
- Form usually designed to allow comparisons
- Use fundraising language, communicate needs you are meeting, and how effectively

An Application letter.

- ❑ In an application or appeal letter, you set your case
- ❑ Clarity showing what you are doing, evidence that it is exciting project that meets a real and important need, and that you can make an impact.
- ❑ Keep the applications to one page, for circulation and readability.
- ❑ Extraneous material are as important as key points..
- ❑ A good application is one that shouts from a pile to read.

Concept note

- ❑ Many funding agencies/donors would prior to writing of the project proposal request you to submit a *concept paper*.
- ❑ The purpose among others is to assess whether the proposed interventions are in line with their goals and objectives or funding priorities.
- ❑ The *concept paper* also saves the applicant from spending too much energy/efforts applying for what may not be fundable by that particular donor or sponsor

Concept note cont'd

- The concept paper summarise the key areas of the proposed project.
- It's components would basically cover the following components:
 - ❖ Cover Page
 - ❖ Background Information on the Organization
 - ❖ Problem Statement
 - ❖ The Proposed Project/intervention and its Description:
 - ❖ Project Justification
 - ❖ Goal and Objectives
 - ❖ Proposed Budget (Block figures/estimates)
 - ❖ Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Note: *Try to limit your concept paper to 2 pages*

A few issues to note –A concept paper:

- ❑ Many funding agencies/donors would prior to writing of the project proposal request you to submit a concept paper.
- ❑ The purpose among others is to assess whether the proposed interventions are in line with their goals and objectives or funding priorities.
- ❑ The concept paper also saves the applicant from spending too much energy/efforts applying for what may not be fundable by that particular donor or sponsor

Detailed Project Proposal -Outline

A few issues to note: Format for proposals

- Donors and sponsors normally have their own project proposal formats, which could be a requirement to present your application.
 - ❖ This can be in a narrative format or filling in particular designed forms. It is to facilitate their own *appraisal* and *comparability*
- This session provides a general format having components of a fundable project proposal and will form the basis of the presentation:

Detailed Project Proposal *-Outline*

- Project title
- A Summary
- The Body
 - Introduction
 - (Interpretation of the terms of reference)
 - Institutional capacity of applying organisation
 - Problem statement
 - Project description
 - Implementation schedule, strategy and team
 - Cost estimates – budget
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Risks and assumptions
 - Sustainability
 - Conclusion.
- Backup information/attachments

Introduction cont'd

Format/components:

- Title/Cover Page
- Executive Summary
- Background Information on the Organization
- Background and Context of the Project
- Problem Statement and Need
- The Proposed Project/intervention and its Description:
- Project Justification
- Goal and Objectives
- Implementation Plan
- Proposed Budget
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Sustainability Mechanisms/Plans
- Annexes

1. Title/Cover Page:

- This is the first page of the proposal document.**
- It outlines the key aspects a donor would like to know at a glimpse or glance.**
- It should outline the title of the proposal.**

2. Executive Summary:

- **The executive summary is a summary of the written proposal.**
- **It should contain the salient points or critical elements in the proposal.**
 - ❖ **the kind of things which a donor selecting proposals for funding would want to know before reading the rest of the proposal, if time allows, or interest grows.**
- **Try to limit it to one page or two**

2. Executive Summary: cont'd

Note the following:

- **Be specific and brief.**
- **Briefly mention the intervention/project you intend to do and its importance, purpose and outputs.**
- **State the total cost of the project in an appropriate currency.**

3. Background Information on the Organization:

- This section includes a brief description of the organization.
- The section should respond to questions such as:
 - ❖ What is this organization? I.e. faith based, interdenominational, umbrella org etc
 - ❖ Who are the founders? (i.e. was it a group of professional women, doctors, farmers, what triggered its founding etc)
 - ❖ When was this organization found?

3. Background Information on the Organization: cont'd

- Questions the section should respond to: cont'd:
 - ❖ Why was it found? (i.e. founding purpose/objectives)
 - ❖ What is your vision, mission, values, guiding principles.
 - ❖ What is the organizational focus (areas of programme intervention)

3. Background Information on the Organization: cont'd

- Questions the section should respond to: cont'd:
 - ❖ What are your achievements?
 - ❖ What is your track record in the project being proposed?
 - ❖ Who are your previous and current supporting partners/donors?

4. Background and Context of the Project:

- This section should employ a funnel structure approach to the background to the project in question by providing information on the project at the wider level down to the narrow level.
- For example the background to an OVC project could begin with the OVC situation at national level, district and then sub-county level.

5. Problem Statement and Need:

- The problem, its root causes and effects should be carefully analyzed.
 - The project intervention (s) should be directed to the root causes and not the symptoms.
- What are the causes of that problem?
- How widespread is the problem within the target community? (This could be at national, district or grassroots level)
- Are there any evidences in form of data to support the case?
- What is the effect of this problem on the people, children, community etc

6. The Proposed Project/intervention and its Description:

- Having articulated the problem in the above section, you propose the best intervention (s) /solution (s) on how that problem could be addressed.

- Describe this proposed solution (s)/ intervention by mentioning:
 - ❖ The proposed activities,
 - ❖ Beneficiaries and
 - ❖ Beneficiary participation and
 - ❖ Outputs.

6. The Proposed Project/intervention and its Description: cont'd

□ Under this section you may have a single intervention or a number of them.

❖ Questions to ask your self may include:

➤ What are the proposed activities that will address the needs of the target people?

➤ Who are the people targeted for these activities (women, men, children etc)?

6. The Proposed Project/intervention and its Description: cont'd

❖ Questions to ask your self may include:
cont'd

- How many beneficiaries are targeted per each specific activity etc?
- How many of each category of beneficiaries are direct beneficiaries?
- How many of each category are indirect beneficiaries?

7. Project Justification:

- ❑ This section states why the project should be carried out now.
- ❑ May include pointing out a gap in service delivery in that area/sector
- ❑ It highlights the preconditions which favour the implementation of this project in terms of:
 - ❖ Local needs and aspirations,
 - ❖ Available inputs, and
 - ❖ The existing government policy
 - ❖ Social-economic situations Etc

7. Project Justification: cont'd

Questions to ask your self: cont'd

- Are there favorable market conditions?
- How favorable are the climatic factors?
- How favorable are the social-economic conditions?
- How favorable is the government policy?

8. Goal and Objectives:

a) Goal:

- The goal is the long term desired situation that is to be achieved through several activities.

- You may ask yourself the following questions:
 - ❖ What is my overall aim/objective for this project?

Examples of Goals

- Improved sanitation facilities/ practices and access to clean water to 900 marginalized households of Mutukula Town, Muleba Town and Bukoba Municipality for sustainable livelihoods by the end of December 2013.
- The general objective of this proposal is to raise funds for continued intervention in addressing the problem of the needy children and their homes given the increased number of AIDS orphans, prevalence of children in difficult circumstances and poverty in rural homes.

8. Goal and Objectives:

b) Objectives:

- ❑ Output objectives are more specific aims which the project is to achieve.
- ❑ They are immediate targets, easily translated into concrete outputs, whose achievements lead to the fulfillment of the project purpose.
- ❑ Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound). Next slide

Objectives should be “**SMART**”:

- ***S*pecific** to avoid differing interpretations
- ***M*easurable** to monitor and evaluate progress (preferably numerical)
- ***A*ppropriate** to the problems, goal and your organization
- ***R*ealistic** achievable, yet challenging and meaningful
- ***T*ime-bound** with a specific time for achieving them

Performance Indicators Should be:

- ❑ Practical, Targeted, Qualified, and independent
- ❑ S - specific indicating precisely what will change
- ❑ I - immediate showing time frame
- ❑ M - measurable, shows acceptable proof of success
- ❑ P - practical, relevant to hierarchy and cost effective
- ❑ L - logical displaying linkages of one level to another
- ❑ E - evaluable i.e. should show how much change has to occur for the project to be effective

9. Implementation Plan:

- This section entails identifying the project implementation team and evolving an organizational and administrative set up to successfully implement the project.
- Under this section, you need to present a work plan outlining activities, targets and schedules.
- See an example of a work plan:

Example of a Work Plan

ACTIVITY	TIMING			
	Jan	Feb	March	April
Mobilization	XXXXXX			
Sensitization		XXXXXX	XXXX	
Selection of committees			XXXX	
Training of committees				XXXXXX

9. Implementation Plan: cont.

□ Some key issues to consider are:

- ❖ What is the composition of the team that will be involved in the implementation of this project?
 - Is the team already in place?
 - If no, how many are in place?
- ❖ Illustrate the proposed project chart (oganogram) and show how it will link to the main organizational procedures/organization chart.

Key Personnel

- The recommended length for this section is half a page or less.
- An interested donor will want to be convinced of the human resources for the tasks proposed.
- In this section, describe:
 - Who will work on the project?
 - What responsibilities will they have?
 - What proportion of their time will be used to support the project?
 - What qualifications do they have?

10. Proposed Budget

- This is the estimate of the cost of inputs in financial terms.
- You will enumerate the costs of planned inputs and activities.
- Although estimates must be realistic, keep in mind that a budget is a forecast rather than a definitive statement of costs and prices.

10. Proposed Budget: cont'd

- The key questions to ask are:
 - What unit should I use to estimate?
 - What is the cost of each unit?
 - How many units should I plan for?
 - What is the total cost of all the units?

10. Proposed Budget: cont'd

- You also need to ask yourself the following questions?
 - What is the budget ceiling for the donor?
 - How much can I manage given my capacity?
 - What is the duration of the project?
 - Have I considered overheads to be incurred e.g. salaries, allowances, rent, equipments, office running, etc.

Note:

See an example of a budget format:

Example1: Budget Format

Activity	Unit	Unit cost	Qty	Amount
1.Training of 5 Counselors for 2 days				
a) Accommodation	Nights	10,000	10	100,000
b) Meals	Days	20,000	10	200,000
Sub Total				300,000

Example II: Cost Estimate for the Research Project

Activity	Quantity 1	Unit1	Quantity 2	Unit2	Unit Price	Total
1. Produce Research Materials	3	Researchers	30	Questionnaire	2000	$3 \times 30 \times 2000 = 180,000$
2. Field Travel:						
Dr. Namara	1	Researcher	300	Kilometre	840	$1 \times 300 \times 840 = 252,000$
Mr. Lwanga	1	Researcher	900	Kilometre	840	$1 \times 900 \times 840 = 756,000$
Dr. Kugonza	1	Researcher	950	Kilometre	840	$1 \times 950 \times 840 = 798,000$
3. <i>Per Diem:</i>						
Dr. Namara	1	Researcher	2	Night	110,000	$1 \times 2 \times 110,000 = 220,000$
Mr. Lwanga	1	Researcher	4	Night	110,000	$1 \times 4 \times 110,000 = 440,000$
Dr. Kugonza	1	Researcher	4	Night	110,000	$1 \times 4 \times 110,000 = 440,000$
5. Data Analysis	3	Data Analyst	2	Days	300,000	$2 \times 6 \times 300,000 = 3,600,000$
6. Report Drafting	3	Researcher	2	Days	500,000	$3 \times 2 \times 500,000 = 3,000,000$
7. Dissemination of Findings	40	Participants	1	Drinks	1,000	$40 \times 1 \times 1000 = 40,000$
TOTAL						9,756,000

10. Proposed Budget cont'd

Budget explanation:

- The budget explanation enables you to justify certain items within the budget that a donor might raise questions on.
- This could be how you arrived at certain figures, why certain costs may be high, why you are requesting for certain items.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

- A monitoring and evaluation plan describes in your project proposal exactly how you would know whether your planned interventions have been achieved.

Note:

At times donors are keen to know whether you have a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework/plan?

11. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan cont

□ Things to Note about the M and E framework:

- Normally the framework would indicate strategies for monitoring and evaluation,
- Monitoring and evaluation indicators,
- Reporting mechanisms/guidelines
- Information sharing,
- Logical frameworks (process, outputs, outcomes and impact indicators)

11/19/2021 ■ Monitoring and evaluation timetable, etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation cont.

- Who?
 - Self, External
- What?
 - Inputs, Progress, Time, etc
- When?
 - Periodic, Mid, Terminal
- How?
 - Reports, Inspection

12. Sustainability Mechanisms/Plans

- Donor support is normally for a given period.
 - ❖ This could be a year or less or more.
 - ❖ Which ever the case, donors are interested to know how the proposed interventions can be sustained after the funding period.

- The sustainability plan therefore indicates how you will manage the interventions after the end of the funding period.
 - ❖ In this case provide the short term and long term strategies.

12. Sustainability

Mechanisms/Plans: cont'd

- Some of the strategies may be focused on covering overhead/capital costs/administrative costs e.g. salaries, stationery, fuel etc.

- Some organizations set up IGAs e.g. businesses projects to generate income such as schools, shops, clinics etc.

□ **12. Sustainability**

Mechanisms/Plans: cont'd

- **Some of the strategies may be focused on ensuring that interventions continue even after the funding e.g.**
 - ❖ **“send a cow strategy” where by one beneficiary passes on an in calf to the next one,**
 - ❖ **“ the revolving fund scheme”**

12. Sustainability Mechanisms/Plans: cont'd

- ❑ Some strategies are focused on establishing implementation structures where the beneficiaries are actively involved in the development process such as:
 - ❖ “Establishment of water user committees”,
 - ❖ “Establishment of maintenance committees” etc.
- ❑ Donors would also be interested to know that you have the capacity to raise resources beyond them as this would ensure continuity of the interventions.

Crosscutting Issues

- Gender
- HIV/Aids
- Environment
-

Annexes:

- ❑ Ideally a proposal should not exceed 12 pages minus annexes.
 - ❖ In this case the additional information should be placed in the annexes.
 - ❖ This information could be the logical framework for project monitoring.
 - ❖ The information could also be a description of your organization.
 - ❖ If you have a brochure it suffices.

Annex

Type of information in the annex: continued

- The legal entity
- The organization constitution
- List of board members and their contacts
- Organogram

Annex

Type of information in the annex: continued

- Number of employees and proportion of professional staff.
 - ❖ Under this, you could include short resume/CV of the staff already on board or to be recruited who will work on the proposed project.
- The size of your current budget and your major funding sources

Annex

Type of information in the annex: continued

- Institutional goals and key areas of technical and geographical operation
- Track record in relation to the type of project you are proposing to implement e.g.:
 - ❖ experience in planning
 - ❖ Managing
 - ❖ Implementing and evaluation of such projects as well as your achievement in this area

Annex Summary

- Logical Framework
- Implementation Schedule (Time line)
- Information dissemination Plan
- Organisation Chart
- Location Map
- Detailed Budget
- Equipment Schedules
- M&E Plan

Project Monitoring and Resource Control

- Determine the key resource aspects of to control: Quality, quantity, time, cost, scope, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develop and performance standards for resource mobilization, allocation, organizing and utilization
- Continuously collect and analyze data on resource mobilization, allocation, organizing and **utilization**
- Measure actual performance on resource mobilization, allocation, organizing and utilization
- Compare actual performance on resource mobilization and utilization with set performance standards
- Determine resource performance gaps, discrepancies, deviations and variations
- Find out reasons for such resource performance gaps, discrepancies, deviations and variations
- Suggest recommendations to improve such resource performance gaps, discrepancies, deviations and variations
- Prepare resource mobilization, allocation and utilization performance reports.
- Disseminate and communicate your findings to key resource mobilization and utilization stakeholders.
- Get feed back from the stakeholders and incorporate in your resource performance reports
- Develop lessons learnt in form of best practices and weaknesses in resource mobilization and utilization
- Do corrective actions in form of implementing better strategies to under more effective resource mobilization and utilization

Thanks for your participation

Questions and Concerns are welcome