

# **Iraqi Civil Society Program ICSP**

## **Proposal Writing for Development Projects**

### **Trainer's Manual**

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# Introduction

## Overall goal of the program:

Upon completion of the workshop program, participant will be able to:-

- Describe beneficiaries / group(s) affected by the problem.
- State needs and conduct problem assessment;
- State project goals & activities
- Develop implementation, monitoring and evaluation plans;
- Understand budget line items and its importance for the project proposal writing;
- Identify other project components (training, environmental impact, sustainability ...etc);
- Identify appendices, types and importance
- Get acquainted with project proposal writing components including:-
  - Introduction, description of the organization capabilities;
  - Cover page / title;
  - Project proposal executive summary;
  - Covering letter;
  - Develop project proposal, individual revising, check list; and
  - Identify post proposal writing procedures (proposal follow up)
- Develop project proposal, individual revising, check list; and Identify post proposal writing procedures (proposal follow up)

## Training Program Agenda

### First day

Day	Session	Topics	Time	
First	First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get acquainted exercise and program introduction.</li> <li>• Training program objectives and expectations.</li> <li>• Project life cycle.</li> <li>• Project design - Project proposal writing (overall view).</li> <li>• Project proposal writing stages and steps.</li> </ul>	9.00	11.00
		Rest	11.00	11.30
	Second	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The basic component of project proposal.</li> <li>• Pre proposal writing steps.</li> <li>• Description of beneficiaries / problem affected group.</li> </ul>	11.30	1.30
		Rest	1.30	2.00
	Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs assessment, problem defining.</li> <li>• Stating goals and activities.</li> <li>• Determining work, monitoring, evaluation plans.</li> <li>• Sustainability guarantees.</li> </ul>	2.00	4.00

## Second day

Day	Session	Topics	Time	
Second	First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget and its importance for project proposal.</li> <li>• Other components of project proposal.</li> <li>• Appendices types and importance.</li> <li>• Introduction community and organization description.</li> <li>• Cover page /title.</li> </ul>	9:00	11:00
		Rest	11:00	11:30
	Second	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The letter attached to the proposal.</li> <li>• Executive summary of the proposal.</li> <li>• Additional components of project proposal.</li> <li>• General recommendation for project proposal writing.</li> <li>• Guideline for editing and revision of project proposal.</li> </ul>	11:30	1:30
		Rest	1:30	2:00
	Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal check list.</li> <li>• Common reasons for disapproval of financing use project proposal.</li> <li>• Developing project proposal.</li> <li>• Lessons learned from attending use project proposal writing training.</li> <li>• General recommendation for project proposal writing.</li> <li>• Summary and closing statement.</li> </ul>	2:00	4:30

# First Day

## **Session 1: introduction**

**Duration:** Two hours.

**Time:** 9:00 – 11:00 am.

**Topics:** During this session the following topics will be addressed:

- Getting acquainted exercise and presentation of the workshop time frame/agenda;
- Workshop objectives and participants expectations;
- The project life cycle;
- Project design and proposal writing (overall view);
- Proposal writing steps and stages.

## Introduction

The Proposal Writing for Development Projects Manual was prepared by the American's Development Foundation aiming at providing civil community organizations with more skills and tools in order to help them improve their contributions to the development process. Project's proposal writing is a basic skill of great importance for NGOs as it is closely linked with fund raising and it represents a corner stone in the fund raising process. The manual presents a simple description of the nature and function of the proposal components and what should each component indicate.

This manual also presents some recommendation which should be followed during the proposal writing process. These recommendations are divided into; general writing recommendations and specific proposal writing ones.

### **Purpose of the manual:**

This manual aims at helping NGO staff to improve their project proposal writing skills. While smart writing doesn't guarantee fund raising process, it is still useful and is considered as a very important procedure in fund raising as it represents the best way for indicating the importance of the project for yourself, your organization and the expected donor as this importance is difficult to explain clearly without writing.

This manual also aims at clarifying the proposal development steps after the project is designed until the proposal is submitted to the expected donor.

### **Manual Consideration:-**

The following points were taken into consideration during the preparation of this manual:-

- This manual presents simplified steps within a systematic consequence and in a logically structured and linked frame which in turn helps to design the project in a good manner with the least effort;
- Drawing the attention towards some of the usually ignored concepts which helps in developing a good project proposal such as appendices specially support letters as well as the

- importance of having an outside expert to review the activities of the proposal before its submission; and
- This manual is suitable for improving the NGO's skills in proposal writing in general disregarding whether the proposal would be submitted to ADF (America's Development Foundation) or to any other donor.

**How to use this manual:**

The manual useful for the NGOs which have already designed a project but has not yet started the proposal writing process so, writing should focus on the project design made by the NGO. This indicates the importance of good project design as it makes the proposal writing process easier and the opposite is true.

## First Day – First Session – General Introduction

N.	Subject	Session Plan	Tool	Duration
1	Expectations. Getting acquainted. Training goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introducing attendants (15 minutes.)</li> <li>- Ask the attendants to introduce each other in 5 minutes and present the most three important features of each person.</li> <li>- Introduce the expectations of the attendants.</li> <li>- Present the objectives of the workshop.</li> </ul>	Question & answer.	30 M
2	Project life cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask attendants about their information concerning project life cycle and gather their contributions in cards.</li> <li>- Show the project life cycle overhead transparencies.</li> </ul>	Cards	30 M.
3	Project design. Proposal writing.	Ask the attendants about their information on project design and proposal writing and write their answers on the board.	Question & answer.	
4	Steps and stages of proposal writing for development projects.	Ask the some of the attendants to get out and give each one a pre-prepared card with one of the project steps /stages and ask the attendants to rearrange them after that ask each one to explain his/her step/stage.	The attendants interaction + cards + question & answer	30 M.
5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show overhead transparencies steps/stages of project proposal writing with explanation.</li> <li>- Summarize.</li> </ul>	Lecture + question & answer	

## First Day – Second Session

### Proposal Components for Development Projects

<b>N.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Session Plan</b>	<b>Tool</b>	<b>Duration</b>
1	The basic components of project proposal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants about an open question about the basic components of the project proposal. (10 minutes)</li> <li>- Write down the answers (10 minutes).</li> <li>- Receive questions and comments.</li> </ul>	Question + answer  Flipchart	45 M.
2	Pre-proposal writing steps. (Open discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants about the necessary procedures to get ready before writing the proposal.</li> <li>- Present the points using overhead transparencies with explanation and focus on the project concept paper,</li> </ul>	Question + answer	45 M
3	Description of beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants about who are the most important people/personals interested in the project and write down the answers.</li> <li>- Discuss with the attendants the importance of the beneficiaries/those who are interested in the project participation.</li> </ul>	Question + Answer + flipcharts	20 M
4		Summarize the session	Question + answer	10 M

## First Day – Third Session

### Proposal Components of Development Project (2)

N.	Subject	Session Plan	Tool	Duration
1	Community needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants how to determine the needs and write down the answers on the board.</li> <li>- Present methods and definitions of needs assessment.</li> </ul>	Question + answer  Flipchart + Overhead transparencies	30 M.
2	Problem description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants how to describe the problem and write down the answers on a flip chart.</li> </ul>	Question + answer + previously prepared flipchart + Overhead transparencies	30 M
3	Presenting objectives and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants how to phrase the objectives (write down examples)</li> <li>- Ask the attendants how to write down the activities (write down the answers + examples).</li> </ul>	Question + Answer + flipcharts + overhead transparencies.	20 M
4	Stating the work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants about the shape of the work plan in the project proposal (write down the answers)</li> </ul>	Question + answer + flipcharts + overhead transparencies	20 M
5	Stating monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants about the monitoring and what should be considered concerning monitoring in proposal writing (write down the answers) + show overhead transparencies.</li> </ul>	Question + answer + flipchart + overhead transparencies	20 M
6	Summary and closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review a check list ( √ ) or (x) for the program of the day.</li> </ul>	Question & answer	20 M.

## Second Day – First Session Proposal Components (3)

S.	Subject	Session Plan	Tool	Duration
1	Budget and its importance in the project proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss with the attendants what does budget mean</li> <li>- Ask the attendants about the main items of the budget (write down the answers).</li> <li>- Present the overhead transparency about the budget + evaluation + an example</li> </ul>	<p>Question + answer</p> <p>Flipcharts + Overhead transparencies</p>	30 M.
2	Other components – Appendices types and importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After a quick revision for the steps of proposal writing ask the attendants if there are other important points for the proposal.</li> </ul>	<p>Question + answer + Overhead transparencies</p>	30 M
3	Description of the community, organization and introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the attendants what is meant by description of the community (write down examples)</li> <li>- Show the overhead transparency about the description of the community.</li> <li>- Ask the attendants about the description of the organization – (write down the answers) and present the transparency of the organization description.</li> </ul>	<p>Question + Answer</p>	30 M
4	Cover page and title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- - Ask the attendants about the cover page and its importance in the project proposal.</li> </ul>	<p>Question + answer + overhead transparencies</p>	20 M

## Second Day – Second Session Project Proposal (General Guidelines)

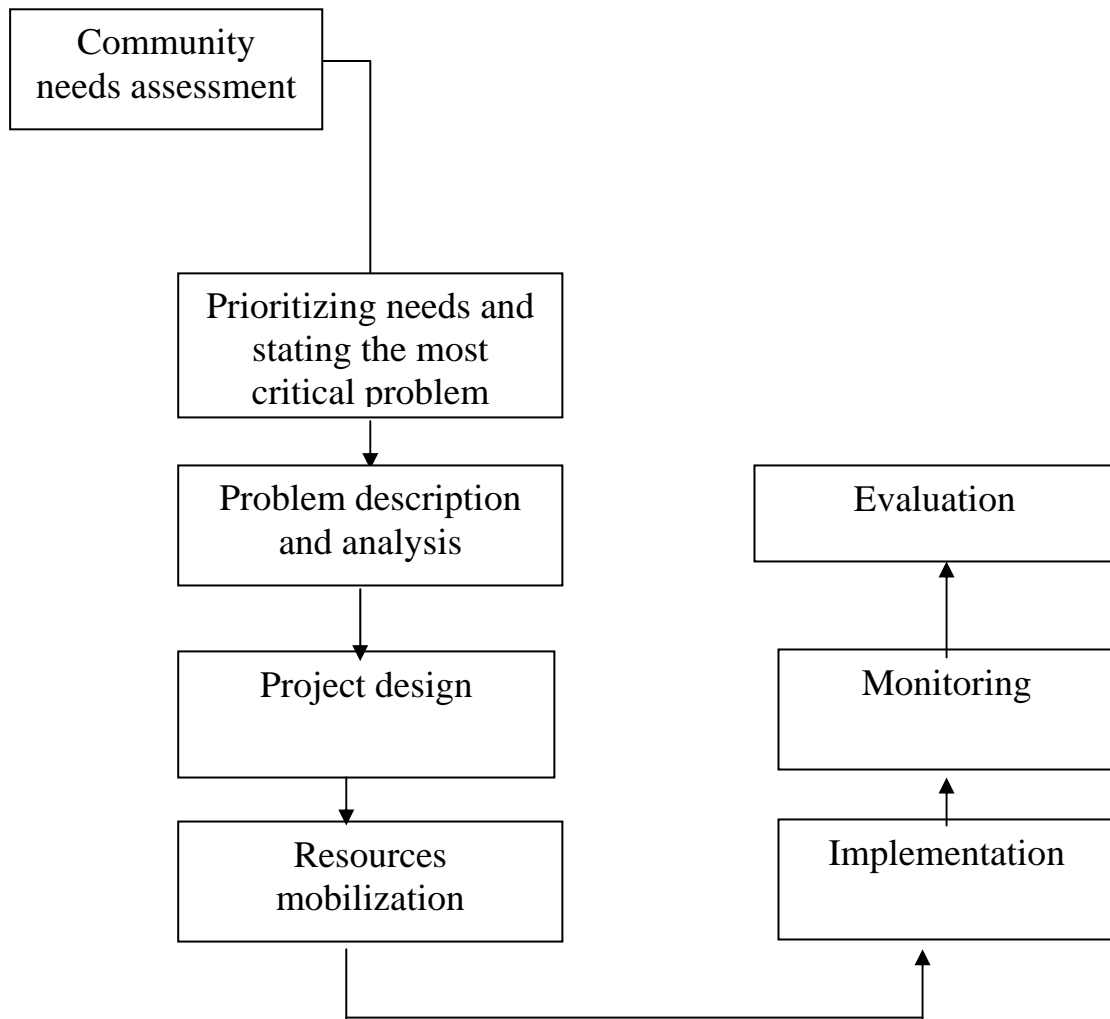
S.	Subject	Session Plan	Tool	Duration
1	The letter into which the proposal is enclosed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the proposal components and ask the attendants about the covering letter.</li> <li>- Show the overhead transparencies for covering letter (example/definition)</li> </ul>	<p>Question + answer</p> <p>Flipchart + Overhead transparencies</p>	15 M.
2	Project proposal executive summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Question: what is the proposal executive summary why should it be done where to include it (write down the answers)</li> <li>- Use the overhead transparency (definition of the executive summary of the project proposal).</li> </ul>	<p>Question + answer + previously prepared flipcharts + Overhead transparencies</p>	20 M
3	Additional components of the project proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show the proposal additional components and receive questions from attendants and give directions</li> </ul>	<p>Lecture Question + Answer + overhead transparencies.</p>	20 M
4	General recommendations for project proposal writing	<p>Show the overhead transparency of the general recommendations for project proposal writing and welcome the comments and questions of the attendants</p>	<p>Lecture Question + Answer + overhead transparencies.</p>	15 M
5	Direction for editing and reviewing the project proposal	<p>Show the overhead transparency of editing and reviewing the project proposal and receive comments</p>	<p>Lecture + overhead transparencies.</p>	20 M

## Second Day – Third Session Project Proposal (Lessons Learned)

<b>N.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Session Plan</b>	<b>Tool</b>	<b>Duration</b>
1	Project proposal reviewing check list	- Using an overhead transparency + explanation + questions and give each of the attendants a copy of the check list	Lecture + overhead transparencies	30 M
2	The common reasons for fund obtaining disapproval	- Ask the attendants why does the donor refuse to finance a certain project – write down the answers on a flipchart	Question + answer + Overhead transparencies	30 M
3	Project proposal development	- Using an overhead transparency, explanation and answers for attendant questions	Lecture Question + Answer + overhead transparencies.	30 M
4	Lessons learned from the training on project proposal writing – summarize these lessons	Ask the attendants about the most important learned lessons from the project proposal writing training	Question + Answer + flipcharts.	15 M
5	General recommendations for project proposal writing	Before you end the training summarize on an overhead transparency the most important recommendations which should be followed during proposal writing	Lecture + question & answer + overhead transparencies.	20 M
6	Summary and Closing Statement	Summarize the training and close	Question & answer + The evaluation form	15 M

# First day – First Session

## General introduction Project Life Cycle



## **Project Proposal Design**

What do we mean by project design?

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What do we mean by project proposal writing?

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.....

Where does the proposal writing step fit?

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## **Fund Raising Steps and Its Relationship with The Project Design stage**

Project proposal writing stage (second stage) comes after project design (third stage) in the sequence of fund raising stages. This stage is followed by post proposal writing stage which includes fund raising required for the project implementation. Each stage includes several steps as follows:-

### **- Project design stage (Preparation):**

- Project concept paper phase;
- Assessing the needs;
- More data collection about the issue;
- Identification of strategies and their desired results;
- Identification of activities and their implementation plan; and
- Identification of the required resources and how to develop them.

### **- Writing stage (implementation):-**

- Write an activity concept paper;
- Get feed back;
- Write a primary draft for the project proposal;
- Get feed back; and
- Develop the project proposal.

### **- Post writing Negotiation stage: -**

- Submit the project proposal to the expected donor;
- Obtain written clarifications (comments) concerning the project proposal;
- Review the project proposal guided by the written comments from the donor; and
- Resubmit the project proposal.

## **First day**

**Second session:** Proposal Contents for the development projects. (1)

**Duration:** two hours

**Time:** 11.30-1.30

**Topics:** The following topics will be covered:

- The basic components of the project proposal;
- Pre-project proposal writing steps; and
- Description of beneficiaries /affected from problem solving.

## **First day**

### **Second session**

#### **Proposal Contents for the Development Projects (1)**

##### **Basic contents of project proposal**

###### **Cover page /title**

It is the first page of the proposal. It includes the following information: "Name of the organization, address, telephone number, fax number, E-mail address (if present), name of liaison officer, name of the project, and submission date.

###### **Executive Summary:**

It is one page introduction for the proposal, through which you can touch the interests of the expected donor. Some proposal writers argue that the summary is the most important part of the proposal contents because by the end of this page, the grant officer might become unconvinced or at least not enthusiastic to look at the other components of the proposal. In other words this page is your opportunity to highlight the importance of your project and the necessity for its implementation.

The proposal summary presents the basic rational for the project implementation. It also describes the project as it provides answers for "what - who – when – why – how...."

Don't hesitate to write a sentence explaining what do you demand in a clear and direct manner. For example "a child care center for street children requires a fund of L.E 10.000 from (x) institution through (y) program" because the grant officer needs to know your exact needs. Even though this was listed as the first mistake according to the book "The Most Common Thirty Mistakes in Fund Raising" which recommended to do every thing except asking for finance.

###### **Needs assessment:**

It specifies the problem which will be solved by the proposed project and determines whether it was social, environmental or else. It also describes the needs to solve the problem according to

which the project was designed but it doesn't describe the civil society organizations needs (such as insufficient funding for activities, or old equipments which need maintenance and renewal .. etc).

### **Activities:**

This part explains clearly how to satisfy the requirements of the specified needs. Out of the most effective methods for writing about the activities, the followings are mentioned:

- Start with a short list of the overall goals;
- Follow that by a longer list for the specific measurable objectives;
- List the major activities or the outputs which will achieve the objectives; and
- Follow that by the project work plan.

### **Work plan:**

It indicates clearly each stage or major component of the project so that the grant officer can know how the project staff and volunteers will implement the project. The work plan includes time line schedule indicating what will be implemented and when. For example you can write:

- *First month:* Forms' design;
- *Second month:* Forms distribution (dissemination);
- *Third month:* Data analysis reporting;
- *Fourth month:* Conduct a meeting with community leaders and officials .....etc

The grant officer will appreciate the realistic proposal program more than another one which gives several unachievable promises. Assuming that your proposal has won the funding grant, consider that the capability of your organizations to accomplish the

specific objectives will enable you to build up credibility with the donor which in turn will result in more support for your project in the future.

### **Evaluation:**

The inclusion of an evaluation plan in your proposal indicates that your organization will use serious professional inputs for the project implementation. In this part describe what you will do to specify the degree of objective goals achievement during project's implementation.

### **Budget:**

The budget presents a detailed list for the expected expenses and the project income. Concerning the expenses, be completely realistic and don't overestimate them. The budget also indicates the different types of contribution by the organization or the beneficiaries if there is any.

### **Appendices:**

You can attach some of fundamental documents which support your proposal unless it is forbidden in accordance to the donor's guidelines. In addition to the supporting letters, you can attach newspapers and magazines which have published articles about your organization, project, targeted problem or similar projects.

All these attachments might not be required for proposal of activity but most of them may be needed as each organization will have their own forms and requirements. There are big differences between the different institutions concerning the grant obtaining procedures. Some of institutions have their own official forms, guidelines, and deadlines which have to be undertaken and followed up by the grant applicant. Some other institutions are more flexible and offer great assistance for grant applicants even if they are unqualified or have no experience.

## **Pre–proposal writing steps**

### **Preparing the proposal:**

- Specify the name of the project;
- Identify the potential/expected donor for whom the proposal will be submitted;
- Get a copy of the guidelines of the expected donor;
- Inquire the donor's deadline;
- Develop a concept paper about the project idea; and
- Develop a primary completed draft of the proposal that includes: executive summary, introduction, problem and needs assessments, overall goals and specific objectives, activities and work plan, monitoring and evaluation, budget, sustainability, and other components, simultaneously start getting the appendices ready.

### **Project concept paper (first draft):**

Disregarding how good the ideas are, you should write them down in the form of activities because ideas don't get funded but activities do. It is very important to clearly and briefly deliver your ideas to the reviewers and your colleagues because their assistance and feedback are essential for the project proposal. The concept paper is an excellent tool for that purpose. Although the concept paper is sometimes not a prerequisite, its writing helps in organizing your thoughts in a certain frame. In addition preparing this paper forces you to think about the whole project in early stages.

There are several donors who assist grant applicants by allowing them to submit a concept paper (one or two pages) before developing the project proposal.

The activity concept paper should cover the following details:

- Brief description of the needs;
- How will the project be implemented?;

- What will be accomplished;
- How to measure the results; and
- The relationship between the proposal and donor's mission.

The concept paper can also be used for several purposes such as:

- A mean to obtain suggestions from others;
- A tool to be used to discover funding probabilities; and
- A mean to reach out for prospective fund agencies before submitting the proposal.

The organizations seeking grants should have a short list for the expected donors in the area of their proposed project to guarantee selecting the most suitable one who is interested in the project.

### **Make the concept paper short:**

The efficient concept paper shouldn't exceed four pages, and two pages is the average which is very common and agreed upon as a concept paper.

### **Write to who will read for you:**

Considering who will read the project activity idea you are preparing, you may need several versions of it. While your colleagues can understand what you want to say, the others who work in other different programs and offices can't understand you. That is why you should avoid developing a concept paper full of technical terminology unless you are sure that it suits who will read it exactly as it suits you if you are reading in your field. Avoid also using mysterious terminology or terms that are understood only by a small category.

If you are planning to send the project concept paper to the program director, try to investigate his/her academic background and put that into consideration while you are writing. If you do not know his /her academic background write considering that he/she is just an educated person in general.

You have to narrow the project frame to the reasonable and controllable volume putting into consideration the following questions:

- What do you know about strengths and weaknesses of the similar studies;
- How much do you know about what was recently published in this field?
- Do you possess the academic qualifications required for the proposed work?

If the answers for the previous questions are satisfactory, then the project idea suits your experiences. At this point you can start thinking about the different stages of the project, (project stages identification) this will help you to be prepared just in case the donor doesn't fully fund the project implementation.

### **How to market your project?**

The proposed activities should be inter-related and justified and to achieve this, ask the following questions:

- What do you want to do?
- What is its importance?
- What methodologies are you going to use?
- What are the resources you need (human - equipment - facilities ..... etc)?

### **Developing project concept paper:**

Developing project idea concept paper is considered as a good preparation for the project proposal. Once again the grant applicant should look at the proposal from the donor's point of view. Both the concept paper of activity and the proposal itself must be brief, clear and attractive.

It is important to know that the donor does not consider releasing the grant as the final destiny but as an intermediate stage as the donor would like to know what the fate of the project is beyond the end of the fund. Will the project be self maintained or will it be used as a model to obtain more funding. It is preferable if the project concept paper be a subject for criticism from experts in the areas of the project and from non-specialized personal as well in order to make sure that it is free from hypothesis. If the donor shows interest in the activity concept paper, in this case ask the donor for suggestions, criticism, and directions before starting to write the final proposal.

**Clear communication:**

This indicates the followings:

- What do you plan to implement and why?
- How will you implement that?
- Why do you consider this the best approach?
- Who will participate and what are his/her qualifications?
- What does your organization need to accomplish this?
- What is the time schedule?
- How will you make sure that the desired results were accomplished?

## **Description of the Beneficiaries/ Affected Group from Problem Solving**

Disregarding what do you use to refer to the target group/groups (beneficiaries, the public ..... etc), you have to submit enough information about these group/groups, focusing on:

- Did you already contact the targeted groups?
- Did you get the beneficiaries' group support to implement the project?
- Did members from the target groups participate in the proposal development?

It is important that the donor sees to what extent the target groups have been involved in the project and proposal development (Sometimes after releasing fund for a project, the project director discovers that the target group doesn't want to participate!! Don't let something like that happen to you).

Several donors prefer the joint efforts which include the local resources (human, materials) as an initiative step which presents working on the local level. In other words the funding from the donor who is responsible for dealing with the problem to which the project will respond consolidates with the existing organization efforts.

It is very effective that the donors see that the local human resources were involved and their participation in the different stages of the project was planned. It is an excellent addition to enclose a supporting letter from the community into the proposal.

**First day**  
**Third Session**  
**Proposal Contents for Development Projects (2)**

**Duration:** Two hours.

**Time:** 2.00-4.00pm

**Topics:** The following topics will be covered during the session

- Needs assessment and problem phrasing;
- Stating goals and activities;
- Work plan; and
- Monitoring evaluation and sustainability guarantees.

## **First day – Third session Development project proposal contents (2)**

### **Needs Assessment**

#### **Needs assessment elements:**

- Describe the problem clearly; and
- Presents proves and supported evidences.

As the needs assessment represents the answer for why implement the project and it presents justification evidence and rational for the proposal, thus it should focus on the problem which the project will deal with or the situation to be changed.

#### **To evaluate the needs assessment we answer the following questions:**

1. Does the needs assessment describe the problem which the project aims to solve?
2. Is the needs assessment reasonable?
  - Does it seem to be accurate description of the situation?
  - Is the donor the appropriate one to adopt this problem?
3. Is the needs assessment convincing?
  - Does the situation or problem have enough implication for the donor to deal with it?
  - Did you document and support your solution with statistics, studies and observations which support your opinion?

One of the factors that help in project fund raising is that you have already taken some steps to start the project before submitting the proposal to the expected donor. A step like needs assessment is one of the best steps that may be taken before requesting finance (surveys – interviews – focus groups ...etc). After that write a short report about needs assessment which you have conducted, attach into the proposal and refer to it inside the proposal.

It is necessary to refer to this chapter (Needs Assessment) when you talk about the methods used for problem handling.

If you have taken further steps rather than needs assessment, this chapter is the suitable place to make the reader start thinking that sustainability is very essential, supposing that what you propose is an ongoing process by its nature and the short term response will lead to a weak effect. This rationalizes why external funding is needed to finance the continuous intervention which you have started.

## Phrasing the problem

This part represents the reason for developing the proposal. It is essential to document the problem upon which the project was based – from the point of view of the beneficiaries.

This documentation should cover what is the critical problem you want to approach and explains how did you know that this is an important problem?

It may be encouraging that this part includes reviews for what was written or published about the problem in addition with reference to previous projects and similar studies to the proposal in order to complete the documentation process which in turn convinces the donor that you know what you are proposing as you are aware with what happened in the past.

One of the most common mistakes that should be avoided is to define the problem as shortage the service or lack of programs. In other words is to mention one of the problem solutions as if it was the problem itself. An example there is no health center in a region suffering of poverty. This is not the problem but the problem is that the poor people in the area need health care which is currently lacked. The problem should have logic dimensions including clear determination for the geographic coverage the affected people and type of affection

It is not preferable that the project deals with more than one problem in order to convince the donor that the problem is real and you are serious in handling it.

It is natural that the donor will ask if you or your organization is capable of the project implementation. (Geographic location, previous experience in the area, good relationship with the beneficiaries .....etc) The issue should phrased in away to reflect that the organization requesting the grant is the most appropriate one to solve the problem owing to their history, skills, and previous achievements

## **Stating Goals and Activities**

### **Overall goals:**

- The overall goal is a statement that describes the desired outputs;
- The overall goal is the desired situation at the end of the project;
- The overall goal is a general statement for which you hope to achieve but it is immeasurable;
- The overall goal is long term goal and general to a large extent;
- The overall goal determines the shape of what you are going to propose;
- The overall goal should focus on the outputs. (How is the situation going to change as a result of the project implementation?);
- The over all goal shouldn't focus on what the project will do (activities); and
- Try to distinguish between the overall goals and the specific objectives and make sure to include both of them in your proposal.

### **Over all goal elements:**

- The affected or target groups;
- The desired effect; and
- How the goal is going to be achieved.

### **Evaluation of the over all goal**

1. Is it long term?
2. Is it general?
3. Does it describe outputs more than it describes activities?
4. Does it represent “vision” for how the change is going to take place as a result of successful project implementation?
5. Is it not linked to time in some situations?

6. Is it not determining a deadline for its achievement?
7. Is it unnecessary to be achievable?
8. Is the phrase of the overall goal appropriate to the mission of the organization?
9. Is the statement of the overall goal emitting from the proposed project?

### **Specific objectives:**

They are measurable objectives which will be achieved in the way to achieve the overall goal. The specific objective is considered as a corner stone in measuring the progress towards the over all goal achievement. The specific objective shouldn't focus on the activity but it should focus on the results. Although the specific objectives represent the base upon which the activities are selected, it also represents the base for project evaluation. The more the specific objectives were measurable, the better for you. It is easier to understand the project proposal as the outputs will become very clear if it describes the specific objectives in a measurable way.

It is known that it is easier to measure the objectives if you are dealing with objects than it is when dealing with people. It is important not to confuse the specific objectives and the implementation methodology.

### **Example**

*The goal shouldn't be specified as follows:*

“Constructing a antenatal care clinic in a town (x)”.

But the goal should be specified as follows

“Reduce the infants mortality rate in a town (x) to (y%) at a certain date”

### **Specifications of the specific objective:**

- Specific;
- Measurable;
- Practical/doable;
- Reasonable; and
- Limited with time.

### **Evaluation of the specific goal writing and phrasing:**

1. Is it specific? Does it determine alone the results desired to be achieved?
2. Is it measurable? How will you know that it was achieved?
3. Is it doable? “Use words such as provide, increase, establish, construct.....etc”
4. Is it reasonable? Can activities be practically designed to accomplish it?
5. Is it short term? Is there a dead line to achieve it?
6. Does the phrase use words such as what and when and doesn't use words to describe why and how?

In general the objectives of the proposal which you will submit should be closely related to the donor's program.

## **Activities**

As the specific objectives are based on the overall goal then the problem, activities are based on the specific objectives. Each specific objective needs a work plan to be implemented and this work plan draws the basic lines for arranging the activities which has been justified.

- The areas of activities are the major parts for the activities included in the project proposal (training, raising awareness, experiences exchange .....etc). Each area may include more than one activity such as raising awareness may include legal, health, social awareness .....etc.
- Selecting activity alternatives is essentially based on the specific objectives of the project. Putting into consideration that achieving a specific objective may take place by more than one alternative. To choose between one alternative and another we should consider several factors beside the specific objectives such as project life time, the actual or expected budget, the technical skills required and the nature of the community and the target group .....etc.

You should be informed that this part of the proposal is your golden opportunity to describe how the problem will be solved or how to change the situation which you have described in the needs assessment.

### **Activities' elements:**

- Describe the proposed project;
- Explains how will the project solve the problem; and
- Explain why the project is the best approach.

### **Activities evaluation:**

1. Do the activities describe the project to be implemented through the grant /finance needed? Can any outside person understand what you are proposing?

2. Do the phrases indicate the relationship between activities and the problems discussed in the needs assessment?
3. Is the proposal the best way to handle the problem?
  - Is it the best of the alternatives?
  - Is it cost effective considering cost /return?
  - Could it be justified for the others?
4. Does the proposed project fulfill the financing guide lines?
  - Are the activities and expenses permitted?
  - Do they agree with the standards and criteria listed in the funding guidelines?

## **Work plan**

In this chapter, you need to present a plan for what should be implemented, how the work is going to be organized, who will do it. This requires a road map or a table for the major lines of the work.

The following steps provide you with the information which you can use to develop the work plan:

- List the specific objectives for the project;
- Write a list with the tasks to be done in order to implement each specific objective;
- Prioritize the tasks;
- Estimate the duration and time required for the schedule;
- Estimate the required resources to implement the activities (as time, money, skills, individuals, logistics, services, and information .....etc);
- Assign different activities for individuals.

### **Work plan elements:**

- What will be done?
- Who is going to implement each step?
- When will this step be done?

**Step:** is a specific task that should be carried out to achieve a specific objective.

### **Work plan evaluation:**

1. Are the steps accurately and clearly prepared?
  - a. Do these steps represent a list of activities that logically achieve the objective?

- b. Does it refer to who will implement each step?
  - c. Are the steps limited with time?
  - d. How long will it take to implement them?
2. Does the implementation of these activities lead to achieving the specific objectives?
3. Are the steps practical?
- a. Was the responsibility of these tasks implementation assigned to the suitable employees?
  - b. Do they possess the required knowledge and skills to accomplish the tasks assigned to them?
  - c. Are the time limits realistic?

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring is considered as one of the management techniques. It provides control on the steps and stages of the project implementation. It is periodical control targeting to assure that work is going according to the established plan. In addition to control on the progress accomplished by the project, it helps in fixing any shortage in the implementation process.

### **Based on that monitoring means:**

An organized and a continuous process to assess the extent of work progress over a certain period of time. Briefly monitoring process aims to assure that the project is going on the right direction towards achieving the goals and objectives determined previously.

Monitoring evaluation is closely related to the information system. Any development project requires a monitoring system that allows providing the needed information accurately as the monitoring process itself is based directly upon data collection and analysis. The availability of good information doesn't depend on good records design only but it also depends on data entry on regular basis and its completeness and updating as well as record keeping using an appropriate method. Records here means:

- Books and records
- Meeting minutes
- Periodical reports
- Reports

### **What do you monitor and follow up?**

#### **Time factor:**

The staff set up time schedule including starting and deadline dates for activities and basic stages of the project.

### **Expenses factor:**

The project staff can evaluate the work performance and assess the achievements by monitoring expenses and sums spent on each activity within a certain period of time.

### **Quality factor:**

Determination of quality control standards requires determination of the shape and form of the output focusing on the quality.

This and monitoring process takes place on several levels:

- *Inside the project:* the qualifications of the project staff (supervisors, project director).
- *Inside the civil society association:* the qualification of the board of directors (members and committees).
- *Outside the civil society association:* other parties (donor and other authorities).

### **A simple monitoring plan may include the followings:**

- What should be implemented?
- Who will implement that?
- When will it be implemented?

### **Monitoring focuses on the following elements:**

#### **The program**

It is an organized set of projects which are concerned with a sector/region /group and all these projects have the same overall goals.

## **The project**

It is a set of related and well planned activities which aims at achieving specific objective/objectives within certain time, using a certain budget and organizational frame.

## **Activity**

The work unit within a project frame.

## **Inputs**

They are the provided resources to practice activities of expected outputs which consequently contribute to achieve project goals: human, logistics, fiscal, information, technologies, moral support and time resources.

## **Operations**

The organized continuous procedures and practices which are carried upon the project inputs: management information system, human resources management, financial resources, management and logistics management.

## **Outputs**

They represent the direct results of management and the utilization of the resources.

## **Results**

It is what is accomplished utilizing the outputs of the project /program.

## **Impact**

It is the impact of the project activities on the target group and the final change in the living standard of the beneficiaries which is achieved partially or completely owing to the project /program.

## **Evaluation**

### **Evaluation can be defined as:**

- It is a process that aims to review the need for the project and its value;
- The process of reversing the goals purposes and the objectives of the project;
- An analysis process for what has been accomplished from the project, how was it accomplished and why;
- A process of measuring the project results; and
- A method for learning and improvement;

### **The purpose of evaluation:**

- Measuring the progress: according to the program objectives;
- Improve monitoring: for better management;
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses: in order to strengthen the program;
- Identifying if the effort is effective: and what difference the program has produced;
- Determining cost return: was it reasonable for the program?
- Data collection: to improve planning and managing the program;
- Efficacy improvement: to harvest greater impact;
- Better planning: to get closer to the individual needs;
- To facilitate decision making for contributors and administrators of the project and help them take the right decision concerning any changes which the project might need
- To provide the relevant autorotation with the results and enable them to use this experiment as a model and evaluate this type of activity currently and in the future; and
- To provide an extent of the information to be shared with other individuals who work in similar projects and look at the possibility of applying it when ever the circumstances allow.

### **Evaluation plan:**

It is a description for how will the project be evaluated.

## **Elements of the evaluation plan:**

- Determine the criteria upon which the progress will be measured;
- Determine who will evaluate the project: and
- Determine the point at which the project is going to be evaluated.

## **Evaluation of the evaluation plan**

1. Is it actually a plan that determines how to evaluate the progress towards objectives accomplishment?
  - Does it tell you - in case of its implementation - whether you have achieved your objectives or not?
  - Does it tell you - in case of its implementation - if you were able to proceed with your work plan or not?
  - If not? Why not?
  - Does it tell you – in case of its implementation – if you have completed your project in the determined time?
  - Is it within the budget limits?
  - Does it tell you – in case of its implementation – if you have made change and how close you are now to achieve the project objectives?
2. Is your plan realistic? Can the evaluator apply it? Do you have the tools you need for data collection?
3. Is your plan appropriate to your project?
  - Does it measure what it was designed for?
  - Is it ambitious or exaggerating for the project?

## **The evaluation process steps:**

- Identify the evaluation goals;

- Select the adequate methods;
- Develop data collection and information gathering plan;
- Educate/train those who will participate in the evaluation;
- Data collection;
- Data analysis;
- Develop results;
- State the results;
- Write the report; and
- Follow up the results.

Encourage the community individuals to participate in the activities of the evaluation process.

## **Indicators**

The indicator is a relationship, it may be similar to the road sign which indicates whether you are going in the right direction or not, how far did you go and how long it will take you to get to your destination (or your goal). The indicators help you recognize the extent of progress and change that have occurred.

### **Availability indicators:**

They indicate the availability of every thing (such as one doctor for each ten families).

### **Adequacy indicators:**

It indicates how adequate is something (an example is using a new type of stoves in one of the woman rural development programs because it consumes less fuel than the older stoves).

### **Accessibility indicators:**

It indicates whether something is accessible for those who actually need it or not?

**Adoption indicators:**

It indicates to what extent something is used for the purpose for which it was prepared.

**Coverage indicators:**

It indicates the ratio/number of those who receive something out of the target group who are in need for it.

**Quality indicators**

It indicates the quality of something (such as water quality might depend on being free of pathogens which cause diseases).

**Effort indicators:**

It indicates type and volume of effort or utilized resources to accomplish the objectives.

**Efficacy indicators:**

It indicates if the resources and activities have been used efficiently to accomplish the objectives.

**Impact indicators**

It indicates the impact resulting from activities or programs (example reduction of measles morbidity rate after the vaccination campaign).

**Sustainability**

The last part of the proposal contents which indicates what is the fate of the program beyond the funding period. This chapter should describe the followings:

- Any earlier commitment to support project success;
- The major efforts which the organization intends to make for fund raising;
- Plans to obtain others funds; and
- The imagination for managing and maintenance of services, infrastructure and equipment.

**Note:**

This part is the most appropriate one to indicate if there will be any income generated by the project in the form of service fees or sold products.

Sustainability of the project is not limited to financial support only but other non- financial guarantees should be considered

such as the guarantees for technical support for the project, organizational support and in some cases political support. The community support for the project is at the top of the guarantees list for project sustainability, therefore the sustainability of the project doesn't mean continuity of financial support but means more than that.

## **Second Day**

**First session:** Development project proposal contents (3).

**Duration** : Two hours.

**Time** : 9:00-11:00 am.

**Topics** : During this session, the following topics will be covered:

- Budget and its importance in project proposal.
- Other component of the project proposal.
  - Appendices: types and importance.
  - Introduction: community and organization description.
- Cover page / title.

**Second Day  
First Session  
Proposal Contents for Development Projects (3)**

**Budget and Its Importance in  
The Project Proposal**

Budget is the plan for spending the fund in the form of a list of expenses and projected income to implement the proposed project. It consists of:

- Direct expenses.
- Indirect expenses.
- Contributions in the cost of the project (cash –assets).
- The expected income resources.

**The major guidelines for developing the budget:**

- It should be realistic, and to assure that let one of your colleagues from the organization revise it.
- It should include the allowed expenses only.
- Each direct or indirect expense should correlate to a line item in the budget.
- The total shouldn't exceed the upper limit of the grant.
- Be careful when developing the list of required equipment as the donor usually tends more to finance personal/individuals than equipment and tends more to finance the target group than finance personnel/individual.
- Do you need a large amount of the fund at the project start up? Some times it is unrealistic to expect releasing a large amount of money and starting the activities during the first few months thus you may ask for a small amount of money from the potential donor to finance the first stage of the project. The proposal should include what you want to accomplish during this stage. In this case you can suggest for the donor to stop financing easily after this stage if the project is not proven successful (if you follow this, you better

- If the project lasts more than one year, there should be a separate budget for each year, in addition to the total budget which may include totals only.
- Check with the donor if there are suggested /requested line items to be included in the budget? If there are no suggested or requested items to be used, you have to organize your budget by including items that satisfy the requirements of your proposed project.
- You should estimate the value of direct and indirect expenses and request the value of the indirect expenses if the rules of the donor approve that. (If there is no fixed percentage for the organization).
- Explain each line item of the budget (where the total of the line item comes from and what will it be used for??). Then put this explanation after the budget.
- Follow the guidelines accurately in developing your budget, make sure that the budget covers all the project expenses because your organization will be obligated to adhere to what was mentioned in the proposal - in case of proposal approval by the donor – this obligation might be in the employees' time sheets or other resources which could exceed financial aspects only.

### **Budget Evaluation:**

1. Is the estimated cost reasonable? “Although the donor doesn't expect the budget to be accurate (by cent), it should be realistic.”
2. To what extent the budget is itemized? Submit enough details to indicate that the fund will be spent in approved items which are directly related to the project.
3. Are all the items listed in the budget justified in the proposal?

4. Was the expenses list included in an appropriate form in the donor's form/forms? If the place for this list is not clear, don't hesitate to contact the donor and inquire about that.
5. Are the mathematical calculations accurate?
6. Do you use in the budget the same amount requested from the donor in other areas of the proposal?

# Appendices

## Types & Importance

Start writing with the assumption that the reader will have short time just enough to read the proposal. Assume that you could attract his attention to read extra information and that's the purpose of appendices so you have to use them carefully. Sometimes the appendices are not read or some donors don't allow appendices, therefore the important topics should be included in the mantle of the proposal and not in the appendices.

### The appendices should:

1. Reflect information about the organization requesting the grant.
2. Reflect the value of the suggested project.
3. The support letters should be issued because those who wrote them belief in your organization and not as a reply upon your request.
4. The support letters should be addressed to the donor instead of being addressed to whom it may concern.
5. Include summary for present and future staffing.
6. Include maps, drawings, statistics, and any other materials which haven't been included in the proposal.
7. It may also include: your organization description, cooperation letters, the latest final budget and others.

The appendices should support the concepts mentioned in the proposal. These are some examples:

### Time Table:

Try to put the time table in the form of organizational charts and don't exaggerate. If this was well done, it will help show the

project feasibility in the appropriate image. The schedule should include and refer clearly to the time frame for each of the project items.

### **The Supporting Letters:**

The donors need to know if there are other parties interested in your project to the degree that makes them issue support letters for the project. Therefore, talk to who you think will issue support letters for your project and discuss with them what they should focus on these letters (try to attract a good reputation group to write support letters for you). Be careful and don't rush in enclosing support letters to the donors and avoid repetition and similarity in these letters as this might weaken your proposal.

The support letters should be real and don't use them unless otherwise.

It is much better if you address the support letters directly to the donor and avoid using letters addressed to "whom it may concern" as this makes it look like if you are submitting this proposal to several donors and are using the same support letter with each of them. Therefore make sure to have a support letter for each of the potential donors.

If the potential donor already knows that you have submitted your project to one or more donors, the letter which is not addressed to the potential donor, gives the impression you are more or less interested in this donor.

This also could give the impression that you don't want to go through this difficulty which could be nothing compared to project implementation.

## Community Description

**Name of the community:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Location and names of the smaller village in its vicinity:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Population:**

.....

**Community characteristic:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Government and civil society organizations:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Income resources:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Services and benefits:**

.....  
.....

**Attached community map (chart):**

.....

## Organization Description

**Organization name:**

.....

**Date of registration, location (illustrated on the map):**

.....  
.....

**Number of board of director members, general assembly (male - female) and organization employees:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Organization activities (project, beneficiaries, budget and its resources)**

.....  
.....

**Training courses for the board of directors:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Future plan for the organization (near annual / strategic):**

.....  
.....

**Number of volunteers and instructors:**

.....  
.....

Indigenous and official community leaders working with the organization:

.....  
.....

The relationship between the organization and society:

.....  
.....

**The willingness of the organization to design and implement projects:**

.....  
.....

**What are the features and advantages of the organization that will convince the donor and make the organization capable of implementing the project:**

.....  
.....

## Introduction

The introduction presents description of the organization requesting the grant as this part presents background about the organization indicating its capability and reliability for implementing the project. This part explains the qualifications and experience of the organization i.e. it presents general idea about the history, mission, objectives, activities and target group of the organization. In addition, to that enclosing some flyers, pamphlets, board members list, professional employees and other appendices is very important to establish what was mentioned about the organization.

Each of the previously mentioned evident strengthen the proposal. Through the introduction, the grant requesting organization tries to send a message to the auditors that funding this project is a good investment for the donor.

Ideally the introduction should range from one to two pages putting into consideration the final volume of the proposal and keeping balance between the different parts of the proposal.

## Cover Page/Title

- Make sure that the donor to whom you will submit the proposal has no specific requirements concerning the cover page (there might be certain forms or instructions).
- **The cover page includes:** name, address, telephone number of the organization. It also includes signature of seniors in your organization (head of department – supervisor - contracts director ..... ) even if the same data are present inside the proposal.
- The cover page should look professional and elegant. However don't waste your time in decorating and don't use expensive ornamenting for the cover page or any other part for fear of giving a wrong impression for the expected donor. Remember that you are trying to convince the donor that you are hardly in need for the fund and not wasting expenses.

- The title should be clear and not mysterious (don't make it incomplete).
- The title should be closely related to the proposal i.e. the wording of the title should reflect what the proposal focuses on (it is preferable, but not necessary).  
This doesn't mean that you use the title as a summary for the project proposal.
- The more important words come first then those with lower importance.

**Note** the following two titles which contain the same words but not in the same order. In the first example the title focuses on a village (x), while the second title focuses on integrated development. This is why it is important to make sure that the words are put in the right order.

**The example:-**

- First title: Village (x) Project for Integrated Development.
- Second title: Integrated Development Project for Village(x).
- Try to omit or skip the un-necessary words from the title. In the following example the first title uses several words while the second title is very clear but using less words.
  - **First title:** "The Local Development Center for Community Culture. "
  - **Second title:** "Community Culture Center".
- Try to use one sentence for the title and try to omit some words if the sentence is long and if it was hard to do that try using a title composed of two separate parts using the punctuation mark (:) but this is only recommended if there is as a final solution.

## **Second Day**

### **Second Session Project Proposal (General Guidelines)**

**Duration:** Two hours.

**Time:** 11:30 am-1:00 pm.

**Topics:** During this session the following topics will be covered:

- Covering letter which into the proposal is attached;
- Project proposal executive summary;
- Additional components of the project proposal;
- General recommendations for project proposal writing; and
- Editing and revising guidelines for project proposal writing.

**Second Day  
Second Session  
Project Proposal (General guidelines)**

**Covering letter (the letter into which the proposal is attached)**

The letter is written on official correspondence papers of the organization who is requesting the fund. It is signed by the highest rank representative of this organization. It is sent to the liaison officer of the donor who is dealing with the organization. This letter should refer to the previous discussion. The letter covers briefly the major needs determined in the proposal. It also reflects the agreement of this proposal with the objectives of the donor and it assures how the project contributes to objective achievement.

**Consider the followings while writing the covering letter:**

- Address your letter to the donor's liaison officer;
- Make sure that the name and title are spelled correctly;
- Indicate why your project and needs fall under the scope and interests of the donor;
- In less than three or four sentences identify your problem and indicate the expected results;
- In less than four of five sentences offer the suggested solutions for the problem and indicate time schedule for implementation;
- In some details indicate how will the community benefit from the project (avoid repetition);
- Refer to evaluation methodology indicating: who will do the evaluation and how ill the reporting is done;
- Refer to the total budget and mention what is needed from the donor.

- Refer to the other parties which had assured their approval to support the project (to build confidence);
- If there was any funding that had been previously approved, mention its value and time;
- End the letter by assuring your willingness to answer any questions;
- Express your willingness and readiness to present your proposal personally; and
- Thank the liaison officer for allowing this opportunity to you.

You can mention additional information about the communication officer in your organization who can be contacted concerning the proposal as the address, fax, title.....etc.

## **Project Proposal Executive Summary**

### **Main points for project proposal summary:**

**It describes your proposed project.** Although the summary is put in the beginning of the proposal, it is the last part written in the proposal components. Start writing the summary after being well informed with all the components of the proposal. Put the summary in the beginning of the proposal then write your covering letter.

### **To evaluate the project proposal consider the followings:**

1. Is it well controlled, not exceeding half a page? (In some occasions).
2. Does it indicate your project for the reviewers?
3. Does it explain what do you intend to do?

Remember that if you don't write an executive summary for your proposal, somebody else from the donor's side will make this summary in order to be submitted for the decision makers. Having somebody else write this summary on your behalf might have its negative impact.

### **To write the project proposal summary, you may follow the followings:**

- Introduce your organization;
- Describe the issue;
- Describe the target groups;
- State the overall and the specific objectives;
- Describe the strategies;
- State the total budget for the project; and
- Mention the available fund you already have and the amount of the fund needed.

## **Additional Contents**

- Background statement;
- Statement of the applicant organization capabilities related to the proposal activity;
- The training plan;
- Indicators;
- Outputs;
- Strategies;
- Resources;
- The relationship between activities and outputs;
- The organizational chart and occupational frame for major positions or all jobs in your organization;
- The reporting system;
- The environmental impact for the project; and
- The other appropriate methods that were not used.

### **Example for one of the additional contents (employees):**

- Use this part to describe the role of your project employees and their job description and importance of each of them.
- Make sure to highlight each important rule for the success of your project and remember that the rules are based on the used methods you describe for the project implementation.
- When talking about the employees mention :
  - Name
  - Title
  - Experience

- Education, qualifications and any other information you think necessary for the project implementation.
- The employees' description should give the impression to the donor that you have excellent staff members who are dedicated to the project, and fully satisfy the requirements of the project implementation.

Remember that in the proposal you don't ask the donor to trust you as the confidence on what you propose is related mainly to the project staff members. The staff members are the ones who gain the trust of the donor to a large extent.

If you are going to use committees, councils or others in the project implementation, this is the appropriate part where you describe how you will organize the work of each group. The committees and councils might be helpful as they mobilize support for the project and link the project with the other available resource therefore it is recommended that you get committee and council members from different organizations and agencies. Make sure to indicate the service duration for the committees and councils members' service. (This enables you to shorten the service period of the non helpful and non productive members and replace them with more efficient members).

## **Guidelines for Proposal Editing and Revision**

The process of editing and revising is considered as quality control. Most people are not well trained on editing and revision as they possess neither a method nor a theory to edit or revise their proposals. Therefore, it will be helpful to provide some editing and revising guidelines to assist you accomplish the editing and revision of your proposal.

### **Editing:**

Editing is the process of observing and identifying writing problems.

### **Revision:**

Revision is the process of changing items according to the rules in order to attain more effective and clear writing.

### **Some guidelines for editing and revising the proposal:**

- Edit and revise each of the followings: technicality, pattern, structure and composition as it is important to check these points.
- Editing and revision should be done separately.
- It is not essential that you know the accurate principles and concepts to do the editing and revision in an effective way, but it is very important that you have an appropriate reference or at least you should have a new edition dictionary and grammar book.

### **Editing and revision to review the technicality:**

This kind of editing and revision is accomplished by going through each word, paying attention to identify the items which are not conforming to spelling rules and language grammar. The purpose of this process is reviewing the accuracy and consistency.

### **In editing and revision for technicality look for the followings:**

- Bullets for both sufficiency and accuracy.
- Spelling.
- The subject appropriation (situation, number, individual, and gender).

- Verb appropriation (tense and number).
- Numbers (accuracy, numbers in writing).

### **Editing and revision to review the pattern:**

This kind of editing and revision is accomplished by reading the expressions and sentences for clearness, harmony, reading ease, consistency and other characteristics which contribute to improve writing process in general. This process aims to get a clear paper, not pretense and solid writing which can be read and understood from first time.

### **During editing and revision process for the pattern check the following:**

1. Accuracy of words.
2. Precision.
3. Missing words.
4. Noun sentence: using the noun while using the verb is better.
5. How technical the used words are for the recipient.
6. Harmony and the level of using official language – consistency.
7. Unneeded words written.
8. Sentence models.
  - Length of the sentences.
9. The commencement of sentences (beginnings).
10. Passive: using passive sentences while using active sentences is better.

### **Editing and revision to review the structure/composition:**

This kind of editing and revision is accomplished by complete reading of the whole document to distinguish the composition and its parts which are related to the topic and look at their relationship with the whole document. The goal behind this process is to review the logical composition and to sense the general directions in the page.

**To accomplish the editing and revision to review the structure or the composition you consider the followings:**

- The general model for the organization and the structure.
- The techniques which are related to the structure such as: titles, punctuation, numbers, underlining, tabs at the begging of the paragraphs, leaving spaces.....etc.
- Parts and sections.
- Easy movement between parts.
- Size of parts.
- Relationship between the idea and its structure.
- Evidence and/or rational/contents justifications.

Always try to remember that someone will review your proposal and you hope to give him a very positive impression about what you have written, therefore you should work hard in writing your proposal to avoid giving this person the chance to say comments such as:

- It is not a good idea.
- Weak relationships.
- Pretense writing.
- Uncertain outputs.
- Lack of adequate experience.
- The problem is not important.
- The proposal does not focus on something specific.
- The project is very general.

**Note:**

If the basic language is weak, this will be out of our discussion here. There is no doubt that the writing mistakes weaken the other eligible indicators for the proposal, but you can ask one of your friends from another field to make sure that the language is easy to read. You can also hire an outside editor. It is meant to say that there are several things which can improve our writings in general, which are not in the scope of interest of this manual.

**Second Day  
Third Session  
Project Proposal (Lesson Learned)**

**Duration:** Two and half hours.

**Time:** 2.00 - 4.30 pm.

**Topics:** During the third session the following topics will be covered:

- Project proposal check list.
- Common reasons for not funding a project proposal.
- Developing the project proposal.
- Lesson learned from the training on how to write a project proposal.
- General recommendation for writing project proposal.
- Summary and closing statement.

**Second Day**  
**Third session**  
**Project Proposal (Lesson learned)**  
**Project Proposal Check List**

**How good and suitable is the idea?**

1. Did you phrase the project proposal in a short and clear writing manner?
2. Is it suitable to the objectives and mission of your organization?
3. Are your colleagues and administrators supporting it?
4. Is it valuable and meaningful? Updated? Innovative? Unique?
5. Did you specify who will benefit from the idea and to what extent there is a need and/or interest?
6. Did you take into consideration the alternative approaches and proved that your approach is the best?

**Can you implement it?**

7. Do you possess the basic skills, or can you identify and get the cooperation of specialists to provide you with the help you might need?
8. Is it possible to be implemented by your organization? If the answer no, what do you need?

**Who will finance it?**

9. Who have already financed similar projects?
10. Who has a special interest in your subject, your location, your methodology, your target group .....etc?
11. Have you communicated with potential donors? Who? And how?
12. Have you made preliminary communication along with a summary? To what extent did you get encouragement?
13. What kind of compensation/return does the potential donor want? Can you provide it to the donor?

14. Who could be also interested?
15. What kind of data you can get about the donors?

**Planning of proposal procedures:**

16. Do you have the donor's guidelines, forms, models and deadlines ..... etc for your project proposal?
17. Did you identify the proposal components required by the donor?
18. Did you re-read the donor's papers specially those concerning his needs and interests?
19. Did you schedule sufficient time for proposal writing?
20. Did you gather all data, references and information which you may need?
21. Did you organize all matters related to writing, drawings and other necessary tools?
22. Did you specify colleagues, participants and administrators who will assist in proposal preparation?
23. Do you know how will you implement the proposal through your organization system?
24. Did any or more of your colleagues read the proposal in a critical manner? And review the content, mechanisms, clearness and effectiveness of communication process?

**Proposal Overview:**

25. Is it prepared in the appropriate form and shape required or expected by donor?
26. Is it easy to read? Does it have a logical sequence?

27. Is the language understood by the non specialized persons?
28. Are the main points been highlighted?
29. Did you use adequately employ the titles, spaces, appendices and drawings?
30. Does it match with the donor's restrictions concerning spaces, fonts and size?
31. Is the proposal convincing?

**What are the hidden and cleared items?**

32. Is the title descriptive, imaginary and appropriate to the indexing process?
33. Does the title/cover page placed in the donor's application, or his form? If the answer is No - did you use your organization's forms?
34. Is the summary complete and short at the same time?
35. Does the summary tempt ate the reviewers to conclude reading the rest of proposal completely?
36. Is the summary can be understood by the ordinary reader?
37. Are all application forms, supporting documents and all other items included?
38. Is there a table of contents? Does this table help the reviewers to find what they want to review easily?
39. Are all appendices and C.Vs.....etc included? Are they accurately referred to inside the proposal?
40. Do you have enough original copies of all pictures, flyers and other non periodical publications for each copy of the proposal?

### **Why should this project be implemented:**

41. Did you express accurate understanding for the problem or the need?
42. Did you exhibit clearly at the beginning what you should focus on?
43. Did you illustrate clearly what you should not focus on "what is outside the focus of the proposal"?
44. What is the current situation concerning the information related to the need for the project? Did you document this - need - by references and/or data?
45. Who needs what the project will offer? How hard is the need?
46. Can the project outputs be generalized and transferred?
47. Is the project based on firm concepts and theories?
48. Can the problem be solved?
49. Does this part of the proposal attract the reviewer to continue reading the rest of it?

### **What are your specific objectives?**

50. Did you brief clearly your specific objectives or assumptions?
51. Do the specific objectives or assumptions come out from the problem phrasing?
52. Does the specific objectives or assumptions describe the potential outputs of the project, and exclude the undesired outputs?
53. Are the outputs measurable? How will they be measured? How accurate? How can another person evaluate it?

## **How will the project be implemented?**

54. Did you set procedures to accomplish each specific objective or assumption?
55. Why do you consider your procedures and methodology suitable for your problem, environment and resources?
56. If your procedures are new or unique, did you present them in a convincing and detailed way to show that they are more capable for success, and more distinguished than the other procedures?
57. Did you present your methodological discussion and details in a manner to match the level of the reviewers' knowledge and experience?
58. Did you state why the used approach is technically acknowledged?
59. Did you use tables, pictures and drawings the best use? Did you avoid overwhelming them with huge amounts of information?
60. Did you describe in a proper way the time limits, project management and job/individual responsibilities for every one in the project?
61. Did you describe accurately and clearly the topics, beneficiaries, resources and other materials related to the project?
62. If you choose some of public topics models, did you explain clearly how and why you have selected these topics have?
63. Did you specify briefly and clearly all the information needed to be collected, the used methods and the accuracy of concluding the results?

64. Did you specify briefly and clearly any analysis you intend to do? Are they theoretically justified?
65. Did you present the desired results, their usefulness and their ability to be generalized?
66. Did you present that you expect some possible problems, and specified how to handle that?
67. Did you describe accurately which role the donor will perform either in the project activities implementation or at the level of decision making?

**Project Evaluation:**

68. Does the evaluation of the operations and outputs represent one of the project components? If the answer is yes, does the budget and the methodology cover that?
  69. Who will conduct the evaluation? How? Why?
  70. Does the used methodology introduce outputs that could be evaluated in light of the mentioned problem?
  71. Is there any need for external data to conduct the evaluation? Who will collect and introduce it?
  72. Who will report the evaluation, to whom and how?
  73. To what extent can the project be evaluated away from the project director?
  74. Will there be a need for an external evaluator?
- How will the results be handled?
75. Why are the results published? For who?
  76. Will the results be published in the form of printed material?
  77. Will the results be shown in meetings for specialists?

78. Does the publication require special preparations or employees?

79. Was the method and cost of publishing clearly stated?

### **Who will do the work?**

80. Did you describe the rules and responsibilities of each member in the project?

81. Did you identify the senior staff by names? Did you specify their abilities and what they currently do to prepare for the project? Did all of them agree to participate in the project?

82. Did you assign all the key jobs and responsibilities to persons?

83. What will you do if the key persons are not available?

84. How will you select the unidentified consultants and individuals?

85. Did you specify the rule and resources of any of the councils?

### **What are the equipments you possess or need?**

86. Where will the project be implemented?

87. Are there particular equipments or tools required for the project?

88. What are the equipments that you expect will be offered or financed by the donor?

89. Are there unique features in the shape or environment which facilitates the project implementation?

### **Set the budget accurately**

90. Does your budget project all the costs as well as their financing resources?

91. Does the budget specify all the expenses which will be covered by the donor?

92. Does the budget specify the source to cover the other expenses and its estimated value?

93. Does the budget respond to the donor's requirements as the details, format, explanation of the expenses which are not covered by the fund and how will you contribute your share in the project?
94. Does the budget show enough importance of the financial sufficiency?
95. Are the contracts and purchases considered on the basis of cost/return?
96. Does the budget reflect awareness with the donor and organizational rules, restrictions and special cases?
97. Were the direct and indirect expenses clearly separated?
98. Did you adequately explain what does the indirect expenses cover?
99. Did you request enough funding for emergencies?
100. Is there enough justification for the extraordinary expenses?
101. Is the budget obviously based on the proposal context?
102. Do you need references and footnotes?
103. Did you estimate the cost of prices increment and inflation specially salary increments?

### **Proposal Delivery**

104. Do you know the deadline for proposal delivery? Are you prepared to satisfy your obligation in that date?
105. Are all the project components ready, certified, organized in the required format in addition to all the other routine?

106. Are there enough copies of the proposal for donor, your organization, revisers and others?
107. How will you deliver the proposal to the donor?
108. Did the project manager and all the key officials of the organization personally sign the proposal?
109. Did you get all the necessary external approvals, support letters and project participation agreements?
110. Did you write an appropriate letter to be sent with the proposal?

### **What is next?**

111. Are aware of the donor's schedule for reviewing the proposal?
112. What do you know about the donor's decisions?
113. Do you know what is officially and unofficially accepted?
114. Do you expect any negotiations concerning the proposal?
115. Did you identify the organization members who can assist in the negotiation process?
116. Did you think about minimizing the project and budget size – in case of necessity? Are you prepared to do that?
117. What should you do about the project starting up, if the donor agrees to finance the project?
118. What is the valuable feedback that you can obtain from the donor to update the proposal in case of denying the project finance and what could be done to attract the attention of other donors?

## Developing the Project Proposal

To develop the project proposal consider the followings:

1. Proposal development process is not limited only to the basic components of the proposal but also includes focusing on the followings: titles – footnote comments – section introductions - underlining – as well as summaries, appendices, maps and drawings.
2. Make the proposal composition clear utilizing several various road signals to direct the reader and refer to the essential points which help the reader predict what is next. Use also visual aids to illustrate the concepts and relationships as the drawings and arrows can assist in tracking the thoughts flow and in indicating the significant points. You have to be careful when using textboxes. If you have to use them, leave the side borders of the boxes open so that they capture the vision of the readers as some of them usually read what is around the boxes and postpone reading what is inside with the intention to read it later after finishing what is around and they occasionally forget.
3. Identify the long sections and subdivide them to paragraphs with headers. If the main and secondary titles are difficult to identify or not arranged in a suitable format, then you have to re-divide the whole text.
4. Make it easy to read through the proposal (clear organization with distinguished road signs, make it easy to move between components and make sure that the road signs are guiding the reader towards the correct meaning so don't let the reader loose the road at the intersections).
5. Write an introductory sentence for each paragraph. If you don't commence the paragraph with a strong sentence then you have to highlight the strong sentence in the paragraph by underlining, using bold, or italic font.
6. Logically arrange the project components and leave blank spaces to distinguish the significant items.
7. Use the frames in a parallel form and put the comparisons side by side – if possible – to make the communication sensible for the reader.
8. Use blank spaces for the readers sight comfort and to surround the text in a preferable way.

9. Don't reduce the side margins and stick to the standard page setup.
10. Use the footnotes/reference signs to refer for previous discussions, logical rational, and selective repetition of significant words and sentences to assure a smooth movement between sections, paragraphs and even words.
11. Some of the professional editors recommend to omit some words and clauses then rearrange what is left – try this by changing some words only.
12. Use simple structure with active verbs. Active verbs clarify the sentence, on the contrary of complex structures and passive verbs which weaken the communication momentum because it leads the reader to a complex language grammar and consequently interrupt his concentration. Therefore change the passive verbs to active verbs.  
Example:  
“The needs were assessed by (x) and the basic needs were found to be ..... “  
This example should be changed to:  
“(x) assessed the needs and found that the basic needs are .....”
13. Simplify the sentences. If paragraphs are big and words are lined up in a stiff form, divide them into sentences. This is done by looking for the lengthy and overlapping sentences and dividing them but maintain the harmonious tone between short and long sentences but don't interrupt the sequence of the writing to avoid fragmentation.
14. Use tangible language (illustrative), exchange the most vaguely words with the daily living ones – unless in case of technical terminology - Example:  
You can replace: “begin to” with “start”  
You can replace: “terminated” with “ended”
15. Transfer enthusiasm and vitality as this indicates how dedicated the proposal writers are. Avoid indefinite language such as: perhaps, possible, could, seems ...Etc.
16. Use summarized lists and tables as possible as you can to categorize the regular text.
17. Don't elaborate in some points and don't ignore it but clarify and support it then move to the next point.

Don't ignore the significant points and related problems to project. It is better that you pause to discuss the steps of how to deal with the anticipated problem instead of ignoring it.

18. Use internal summaries to assist the reader recognize where does he stand and where is he going?
19. Pay attention to moving from one section to another elegantly as this will assist the reader to decide where is he and where is he headed to.
20. Avoid giving promises which are impossible to fulfill and avoid arguing about unsupported topics.
21. Don't assume that the reader will be familiar with the project proposal.
22. Review accurately, correct, proof read, and print preview over and over. Get the others help by asking their opinions as (another opinion). Avoid language grammar, spelling, and calculations', mistakes.
23. Maintain the good pattern for the project keeping harmony and consistency allover the proposal.

## Lessons Learned From Proposal Writing Training

- Participation of others in different stages of proposal writing (design, writing, revising).
- Importance of using activity concept paper.
- Importance of illustrating how to deal with the results (publication).
- Having a linguistic editor to review the first copy of the proposal.
- There should be an answer for each question in the proposal (i.e. you can justify each word mentioned in the proposal).
- Importance of using support letters.
- Considering the donor's guidelines carefully.

**Question:** what tools can be used to build the donor's confidence in the proposal and how?

- Suggestion to include a component titles "Why doesn't the proposal get funded?".
- Suggestion to add another component titled "What would you do if the proposal doesn't get funded?".
- Practicing transparency pre, post and during proposal writing.
- Conducting pre and post testing.
- Determine the section where project attraction will be covered.
- Experts understand in fund raising that you may spend several years to establish a relationship with the donor before obtaining fund. You as a fund raising officer or director in your organization, don't have time to waste, therefore you are recommended to do the followings:

- Start now to collect data about your community needs;
- Develop innovative ideas for new projects;
- Introduce your organization to potential donors; and
- Move with your organization quickly to reach financial support stability.

Funding request is more attractive and logic when funding is required to support the initiation of a new project or to expand an existing one.

**Publication plan of the project results:**

Publication plan is considered a very important item in the project proposal as most of the donors are very interested to see that their financial support will be directed to other beneficiaries (such as brochures, slides, training courses ... etc). The publication plan includes the information received or delivered by the project.

**Writing the statement for the organization capabilities:**

This part establishes your capability to implement a project and describes what distinguishes your organization than others disregarding the other good reasons. Your responsibility here is to assure to the grant officer that your organization has the required management, financial, programming and human resources capabilities to implement the project.

Start with a short statement about the mission and overall goal of your organization. After that add a brief summary describing the programs and projects which are currently under implementation by your organization. You can also add debriefing about your organization history (When was it established? Why?) and add a summary for the organization achievements. To proof that your organization's work is valuable and respectful, mention the other organization which cooperate with yours, in addition to the other donors. You may also refer to (after obtaining a permission) what was said about your organization by all agents, experts and celebrities about your organization.

Make sure to highlight the obvious relationship between your organization capability, experience and proposed activity.

## **General Recommendations for Proposal Writing**

### **Pre-project proposal writing:**

Project proposal is the basic document reviewed by the donor to decide who deserves funding. The first step in proposal writing is to set a clear sketch describing your project. You should prepare this from the point of view of the potential donor. Consider also the questions asked by the grant officer which usually include:

1. What are the needs that the project is aiming to solve? How serious is the need?
2. Who will benefit and how?
3. What are the short and long term results?
4. What are the suggested methods to achieve the results?
5. Is there any other current or future projects being designed to respond for these needs?
6. How is this project different? What is unique about it?
7. How long will it take? Was it scheduled and timed in realistic and practical way?
8. Are the project results measurable?
9. Who will conduct the evaluation? At what point or stage?
10. Are those who prepare the project proposal qualified to implement the project? What is their credibility?
11. Are there any proves/evidences that the target group support the project? Does the community support it?
12. What are the other constitutions that you have recently contacted to fund the project?
13. Will the project attract additional funding?
14. What are the project plans beyond the funding stage?

15. How much money is needed?
16. What kind of funding is required for the project? Is it construction, salaries, equipment, machinery, operational expenses or others?
17. Does the proposal comply with the objectives, resources and other limitations of the donor?

It is essential to have an idea about the possible questions that might arise concerning your proposal before you start writing it down.

### **Start Early:**

Start early in order to be ready when the donor starts receiving grant requests or announces that. This will enable you to utilize the period between the announcement and proposal submission in developing the proposal and gathering the appendices required by the donor's program. If you are going to follow the team work approach, set up a time schedule and identify the team that will help you.

### **Follow the instructions:**

Read the guidelines carefully and follow the instructions mentioned on it such as: the allowed expenses, number of proposal pages, required attachments, required signatures, number of copies and any other instructions. In case you don't follow the basic instructions, sure you will be facing the risk of disapproving the funding request for your proposal along with the other disqualified ones.

### **Put yourself on the grant officer shoes:**

The major task of the grant officer from the funding institution is to select the project proposal which meet the criteria and interests of his institution. For example, submitting an orphans child care proposal in a region (Y) for a donor whose major interest is environmental projects in a region (X) is a waste of your time as well as the this donor's grant officer time. The grant officer wants to discover and support the efficient and qualified organizations which satisfy the donor requirements. Although the grant officer is

not the one who takes the decision for funding - in most cases - he has the upper hand in funding recommendations. Therefore, your mission is to provide the grant officer with all the information he needs to proof how valuable and adequate for a person who possesses the authority in funding process. The proposal should be written in a way to help the grant officer to market it for the decision makers. Take into consideration to give full chance for the grant officer to know what he wants so that he can justify his recommendations for funding. The grant officer wants to know the followings:

- If the proposal matches the donor's interests;
- If the proposal was realistic;
- If the proposal applicants are capable and qualified for project implementation;
- If there is actual need for the requested sums of money;
- Is there any other institutions already implementing this project; and
- If the project can survive without having additional funding in the future.

The project proposal should provide answers for all the previous questions as each donor has his own internal rules and check lists to decide if the proposal is qualified to obtain funding or not? Therefore it is very useful to contact the potential donor and ask for his guidelines which explain his rules, interests and the previously funded projects. The proposal writer can compare the project proposal concept paper with other previously funded projects to make sure that his proposal suits the interests of the donor. For example if most of the previously funded projects had got sums ranging from \$10,000 to 30,000 be positive that your proposal will have better chance for funding if you ask for similar amount than asking for sums ranging from \$30,000 to 70,000.

### **Writing technique:**

Generally, the proposal should be short as most of the grant officers prefer reading few pages. Some government agencies or international organizations may ask keep the proposal within certain number of pages, also they might ask to use certain specific application forms. In any case, it is better to use simple, direct and not ornamented academic language. If you like to be enthusiastic in writing, it is fine but don't exaggerate. If you are not

writing in your native language, it would be very useful to ask the help of a volunteer to edit your writing. Some details may need tangible examples and statistics to explain your points of view, therefore you are recommended to use whatever is suitable to illustrate your point of view. Avoid confirming a lot of information in your proposal as the successful grant officer, Mr. John Pratt, the executive director of the Nonprofit Council at Minnesota suggests “Think about grant obtaining as the art of sentence phrasing and budget itemizing which are characterized by good timing, interlinked relationships and reliability” (The Chronicle Philanthropy, 1994).

### **Make the project proposal easy to read:**

Make sure that the proposal is free of typing mistakes and use more blank spaces to make the text easy to read. Use titles, maps and illustration figures and don't overcrowd the line with words which makes it difficult to read (don't use justified margins i.e. don't justify right in English and don't justify left in Arabic).

The format of the information in the proposal makes it also easy to read, for more explanation:

- Follow the special model of the proposal;
- Provide the required information in according to the instructions;
- Put them in the same order and volume of the proposal request/grant; and
- Don't let the reviewers/ grant officers search for information even if you have to repeat pieces of information or refer to other parts of the proposal.

### **Be careful when dealing with the budget:**

Review the donor's guidelines to make sure that the expenses you have listed in your budget are within their limits. Don't exceed the amount of the fund determined by the donor. Don't include line items in the budget without justification in the mantle of the proposal as the editors don't trust any information or data in the proposal when they find problems in the budget. Don't forget to revise the accounting and tables to make sure that they are free of mistakes.

### **Ask for feedback from others concerning the proposal:**

Check how clear is what you wrote by the help of a friend or a relative who isn't familiar with this topic to read the proposal. If he can understand, the proposal has passed the test and consequently the reviewers will understand it easily. This proof reading should be done in all stages of proposal writing and by more than one person and shouldn't be postponed until the writing is completed. Every time the proposal is reviewed, it might be essential to rethink about the proposal and the way it is presented. Although these revisions are important in the different stages of the proposal to make the proposal clear, one of its risks is that reviewers lose the real excitement every time they read it at the different stages. One way or another try to continue the excitement in the final proposal.

### **Stick to the determined time table:**

Make sure not to delay the proposal submission, as your letter might not be looked at if it gets late to the donor. This is why you have to read the guidelines carefully in order to be sure about the submission deadlines and how it will be submitted. Then plan to proceed with your proposal and allocate enough time to review all the steps putting into consideration that you will deliver the proposal at least two days before the deadline. It is better to send the proposal by ordinary mail and try to get a receipt for your proposal delivery to the donor and its date.

Be acknowledged that a good letter which gets to the office in the appropriate time might be a good start for a strong and long term relationship with the donor. Send your letter directly to the person in charge and you might be informed by the grant officer about the time of the meeting followed by an invitation to submit the complete project proposal. Don't forget to keep a complete copy of the proposal for your files.

The majority think that the most appropriate time for sending the proposal is after meeting with the grant officer who shows interest in the project proposal. If you can't arrange for a meeting with him, send "a short inquiry letter" not exceeding two pages, specify the needs and the proposed solution, (in one

sentence or one paragraph or two at the most), and in addition specify the qualifications of the organization.

**Note:**

There is no fear of the previous recommendations to restrict or change your writing style as when the person reaches maturity in proposal writing, his writing style will be stable to a large extent.