



Tool: How to develop a project proposal

Note: This document is provided for information purposes only. Health professional associations making use of this resource should revise and modify it for use in their specific circumstances.

A project proposal is a document that provides detailed information about a specific initiative and is usually developed for the purpose of seeking the support of potential funders. It is usually more elaborate than a concept paper and includes a more elaborate description of the proposed project's goals, objectives, main activities, expected results and beneficiaries. It may also include information related to how the proposed project will meet the funder's priorities/interests, who will implement the project, who will collaborate in the project's implementation, how the project was developed/designed, the project's detailed budget forecast, etc. Further, the proposal is accompanied by a logical framework or results-based project management tool that essentially summarises the main information of the project in chart form and serves as a tool for monitoring and evaluation. Although much lengthier than concept papers, the proposal's main document should be limited to 20–25 pages, with any additional information being presented in annexes.

A credible proposal should:

- Meet the funder's priorities and/or interests;
- Follow the funder's specific guidelines for proposal content, outline, length, budget, etc.;
- Respect the submission deadline set by the funder;
- Outline the project and its relevant information in a clear, logical and consistent way;
- Ensure that the project management tool (LFA or RBM), budget and other annexed documents are consistent and support the narrative presented in the main proposal;
- Request a budget that is reasonable and credible.

Before you start:

- Enquire about the funder's criteria to ensure that the proposed initiative meets these;
- Enquire if the funder has resources such as templates related to the development of a proposal and, if so, make use of them;
- Plan your work in order to respect the submission deadline, especially when the proposal is being prepared in response to a call for proposals;
- Begin with the development of the project management tool or framework, as this not only makes sense but will save you time in the long run.

Useful resources related to the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) or Rights-based Management (RBM) approach:

AusGuide – a guide to program management. Canberra: AusAID; 2011. Available: <http://www.aisaid.gov.au/ausguide/Pages/home.aspx>

Results-based management. Ottawa: Canadian International Development Agency; 2009. Available: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/rbm>

Jensen, G., The Logical Framework Approach: How to Guide. Bond; 2012. Available: http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/The_logical_framework_approach_How_To_guide_January_2012.pdf

Structure	Comments/Suggestions
Project Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project title should be clear, short and precise. • It should capture what the project is all about.
Executing Agency(ies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the full names (and acronyms) of the main organisations who will be implementing the project. • Provide a brief summary for each of the organisations, including information related to their goals and objectives, vision and mission, number of members, interest in the issue and experience related to the problem that the project proposes to address. • Identify who will be the main executor of the project and provide a brief summary of the association's organisational capacities (at both governance and operational levels) to manage the proposed initiative. • Provide the name and coordinates (i.e. email address and/or telephone number) of the contact person(s).
Introduction: Project Summary/ Purpose/Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a project proposal is very important as it serves to capture the interest of your reader and makes a case for the importance of the initiative. • This section should provide information that will answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the problem or issue to be addressed in the proposed initiative? ○ Why is this issue important? ○ How does the proposed initiative intend to address the issue? ○ What is the geographic scope of the initiative and who will be the main beneficiaries? ○ What is the context or framework within which the proposed initiative will be implemented? ○ How will the project meet the funder's criteria/priorities? ○ How will the proposed initiative support the country's/region's priorities? ○ What is the sustainability of the proposed initiative? • Include a summary of statistical data if it is available and is related to the issue; more specifically, if it is related to the issue within the specific country or region/district the initiative will be implemented. • Provide a summary of previous work in the specific country or region/district of intervention or the results of a needs assessment that informed the development of the proposal.
Goal and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal relates to WHAT the proposed project intends to achieve; objectives relate to HOW the project will reach the intended goal. • Projects usually have one overall goal and a maximum of three to four objectives. • Remember: goals and objectives need to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific). • Remember: the goal and objectives in the narrative section of the project proposal MUST be identical to the ones described in the project matrix or framework.

Beneficiaries (direct and indirect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project can have ‘direct beneficiaries’ that are the individuals, groups or organisations most likely to gain from the intervention, but it can also have ‘indirect beneficiaries’ that are the individuals, groups or organisations who will benefit through their association with the direct beneficiaries. • Number of beneficiaries will vary according to the proposed project, but you should have at least one or two direct beneficiaries and two to four indirect ones. • If possible, provide additional information about the project’s beneficiaries (e.g. number intended to be reached, gender, age and region).
Expected Results (outputs and outcomes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some funders may ask for expected outputs and outcomes. Outputs relate to the direct results of activities completed within the intervention (e.g. number of health professionals trained), while outcomes are linked to the logical consequences of the output results (e.g. improved capacity of health professionals to provide emergency obstetrical care). • These should be consistent with the project goal and objectives and should be measurable. • There should be at least one outcome for each objective. • When selecting your outputs and outcomes, keep in mind that you will need to find indicators to show progress.
Design/Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section should provide information on what informed the design (identified need by the community, needs analysis, stakeholders’ analysis, lessons learned from previous work conducted in the area, alignment with government priorities/strategies, etc.) and the process and strategies to be implemented to reach the intended results. It can also include a summary of the project’s main activities. • It would also be important to add information about the project’s management, including the monitoring and evaluation strategy, if not addressed anywhere else.
Project Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the approximate length of the project, including proposed start and end dates.
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the budget is usually included in the narrative part of the proposal; a detailed budget can be added in the annex. • Remember to ensure that there is a clear link between the proposed budget and the project narrative.
Annexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information that can be included in the annex section of the proposal include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project management tool; ○ The detailed budget; ○ Project schedule; ○ Additional information related to the executing agency (current list of elected officials, current annual narrative and financial reports, etc.)