Project Proposal Writing

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THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe

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Topic Material

Overview

Introduction

Without direct project funding, most non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would not be able to accomplish their goals. Writing clear, thorough and targeted project proposals is therefore essential to an NGO's success.

Mastering the art of proposal writing requires a unified approach to project management. This guide is therefore intended to serve as a basis for delivering training sessions related to the process, as well as the end product of project design.

A **project proposal** is a detailed description of a series of activities aimed at solving a certain problem. The proposal should contain a detailed explanation of the:

- justification of the project;

- activities and implementation timeline;

- methodology; and

- human, material and financial resources required.

The project proposal should be a detailed and directed manifestation of the project design. It is a means of presenting the project to the outside world in a format that is immediately recognised and accepted.

The training sessions on project proposal writing aim to create an understanding of:

- the role of the project proposal and the activities related to each stage;

- how to deal with projects and project proposals from an organisational perspective;

- how project proposals fit into project management; and

- how to structure a good project proposal.

Objective of the Guide

This guide will lead trainers through project proposal writing sessions and exercises. It enables the user to:

- improve participants' skills in developing quality project proposals;

- show them how to manage projects within an organisation; and

- help them to understand a project's value as a tool to achieve and further the organisation's mission.

The challenges that come out of these problem areas can be classified into three groups:

1) Enhancing skills and organisational procedures
- Learning proposal-writing techniques, as well as developing skills in designing and writing successful project proposals, is the objective of most participants

- Establishing systems and standards related to developing projects within the NGOs is also a key objective.

2) Understanding the role of project proposals in project management

- The project proposal is a **tool** — not a goal. It should be followed as closely as possible, and deviations should occur only when necessary.

- Proposal writing is only one of the phases of project management. It is one of the numerous actions that form a logical sequence of events usually referred to as the **project cycle**.

3) Conducting preparatory work prior to proposal writing

A quality project proposal is the final product of a participatory process that involves considerable study, discussion and learning from past experiences (see Figure 1).

Skills to be Developed

The training focuses on developing specific skills related to designing and completing good project proposals.

This guide offers instruction in:

- conducting preparatory work (see Figure 1);

- developing comprehensive and viable project plans by setting realistic goals and determining the resources needed;

FIGURE 1

Before Writing a Proposal

■ **Interview past and prospective beneficiaries.** Though feedback was likely received when the previous project ended, new benefits and conditions may have arisen since that time. Speak to prospective beneficiaries to ensure that what you are planning to offer is desired and needed.

■ **Review past project proposals**. Avoid repeating mistakes and offering to reproduce results that have already been achieved. Donors will be unlikely to provide more funding for something that should already have been done.

■ **Review past project evaluation reports**. Don't count on project members to remember all the mistakes and areas for improvement from previous efforts.

■ **Organise focus groups**. Make sure that the people you need are willing and able to contribute.

■ **Check statistical data**. Don't let others discover gaps and inaccuracies in the data you are relying on.

■ **Consult experts**. Outside opinions will give you ideas and credibility.

■ **Conduct surveys, etc**. Gather as much preliminary information as possible to demonstrate commitment to the project and to refine the objectives.

■ **Hold community meetings or forums**. When the public feels that they have been consulted on an issue, they will be much more likely to cooperate and support the project.

- completing the project proposal package in order to provide funders with all necessary information;

- preparing and following up on project budgets; and

- writing budget reports.

Contents

This guide covers the following topic areas:

- What is and what is not a project?

- What is a project design?

- How are project elements formulated?

- Which methods are best for planning a project?

- What is a project proposal?

- How is a project proposal written? (suggested format covering all the aspects of the project proposal)

It is a good idea for participants to familiarise themselves with the main terms of the proposal writing process found at right.

Delivering the Training

The guide should be used in combination with the activities presented in the training toolkit. Most of the guide's content is designed in a way that can be used as a handout or reader for the participants during the training session. The trainer may, however, adapt it to the specific context and time frame of the training activity.

Project Basics

What is (and what is NOT) a Project

From the perspective of project management, any series of activities that go through the project cycle ARE projects.

The project cycle consists of **project phases**. An organisation should already have a well-defined organisational strategy from which it can begin to assess relevant needs and opportunities in its field. Several ideas will then come to light, from which an organisation may choose. The project phases then follow logically through design, financing, implementation and evaluation stages.

NGOs often perform activities that do not fall into the category of projects. It is also important to recognise that a **project is not:**

- past activities that are repeated in exactly the same way on a periodic basis;

- activities with no clearly defined goals;

- activities which can be repeated or transplanted anywhere at any moment; or

- ongoing (regular) organisational activities (e.g. board meetings).

Main Terms of the Proposal Writing Process

■ **Indicators** — those elements of the project plan that translate the project's purpose and results into measurable units (quantity or quality) and thus provide the basis for measuring the impact

■ **Input** — the investment of resources (human, material or financial) invested in the project

■ **Output** — the results achieved

■ **Activity plan** — a description of the flow, timeline and responsibilities for the project's activities

■ **Resource plan** — a description of how the resources will be used in relation to the activities

■ **Gantt chart** — a specific model for activity plans that illustrates how the activities interconnect

■ **Income** — the funds secured for the project's implementation

FIGURE 2

Considerations for Each Planning Step

Step	Element	Considerations
1	**Identifying the goal, objectives, results expected and target group**	Background of the project Defined goal and objectives The societal vision of the organisation Expected short-term and long-term results Beneficiaries of the project Problems solved by the project
2	**Content of the project**	Theme and main issues to be covered Methods chosen to realise the goal and objectives Activities to be implemented Further needs to continue the project
3	**Project location(s) and time schedule of activities**	Location of different activities Duration of the project Starting and ending dates of the project Schedule for individual activities Summarised timeline of the project
4	**Resources**	Human resources Financial resources Infrastructure
5	**Cost/income sources**	Total budget of the project Detailed budget by activities and cost types Rate and form of own contribution Potential funders and sources of income
6	**Description of the implementing organisation and partners**	Description of the implementing organisation Analysis of capacity and capability Description of cooperative partners Analysis of partners' capacity and capability
7	**Project team and management**	The project coordinator Communication method of the project team Communication strategy and practice with the external environment
8	**Monitoring, evaluation and follow-up**	Success criteria of the project Methods and timing of monitoring and evaluation Further plans and follow up

What is the Project Design?

The project design is one phase of the project cycle. It consists of two elements:

- project planning (formulation of project elements); and

- project proposal writing (converting the plan into a project document).

Project design is a result of both project planning and the project proposal. Both steps are essential to forming a solid project design.

Project Planning — Formulation of Project Elements

Before the project is written, its individual elements need to be developed. Addressing the **planning considerations** helps develop the project elements, as shown in Figure 2.

Another way to break down planning questions is to take into consideration the **project design stage** at which these questions are asked. On the basis of these criteria the project planning questions could be classified as to whether they are made during project planning or proposal writing, as seen in Figure 3.

Regardless of the project planning model presented here, quality proposal writing is not possible without proper planning.

A Model of the Project Cycle with Six Project Phases

- **Phase 1:** Assess relevant research needs and opportunities
- **Phase 2:** Identify the project idea
- **Phase 3:** Design the project
- **Phase 4:** Finance the project
- **Phase 5:** Implement the activities
- **Phase 6:** Evaluate the results

FIGURE 3

Planning Considerations

Issues to be considered at the beginning of project planning

- Beneficiaries of the project
- Project team and cooperative partners
- Success criteria
- Goal and objectives
- Methods chosen to achieve project goal
- Costs and expenditures
- Own contribution
- Potential funders

Elements of the project proposal

- Project title
- Goals and objectives of the project
- Description of project activities
- Description of expected project results
- Project implementation plan
- Beginning of operations
- Resource allocation
- Project personnel
- Detailed project budget (fixed costs, equipment needed)
- Other technical means (e.g. vehicles)
- Division of financial sources (own contribution and other resources)

How to Write a Project Proposal

Once the groundwork has been completed, proposal writing can commence. The key decision to be made at this stage is the structure of the project proposal (including the content and length). The structure is determined by the nature of the project as well as by the funding agency's requirements. In the variety of formats, application forms, project design outlines, and grant application guidelines, it is possible to detect some common elements.

Proposed Format

Title page

A title page should appear on proposals longer than three to four pages. The title page should indicate the project title, the name of the lead organisation (and potential partners, if any), the place and date of project preparation and the name of the donor agency to whom the proposal is addressed.

Project title

The project title should be short, concise, and preferably refer to a certain key project result or the leading project activity. Project titles that are too long or too general fail to give the reader an effective snapshot of what is inside.

Effective and Ineffective Project Titles

Effective project titles

■ Raising Environmental Awareness in the Newly Independent States

■ Citizens Protect Lake Debar

Ineffective titles

■ Environmental Education

■ Protection of the Watershed of Lake Dojran from the Wastewater Flowing Through the River Dragomir Originating from Local Households

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Contents page

If the total project proposal is longer than 10 pages it is helpful to include a table of contents at the start or end of the document. The contents page enables readers to quickly find relevant parts of the document. It should contain the title and beginning page number of each section of the proposal.

Abstract

Many readers lack the time needed to read the whole project proposal. It is therefore useful to insert a short project summary — an abstract. The abstract should include:

• the problem statement;

• the project's objectives;

• implementing organisations;

• key project activities; and

• the total project budget.

Theoretically, the abstract should be compiled after the relevant items already exist in their long form.

For a small project the abstract may not be longer than 10 lines. Bigger projects often provide abstracts as long as two pages.

Context

This part of the project describes the social, economic, political and cultural background from which the project is initiated. It should contain relevant data from research carried out in the project planning phase or collected from other sources. The writer should take into consideration the need for a balance between the length of this item and the size of the overall project proposal. Large amounts of relevant data should be placed in an annex.

Project justification

Rationale should be provided for the project. Due to its importance usually this section is divided into four or more sub-sections.

Problem statement

The problem statement provides a description of the specific problem(s) the project is trying to solve, in order to "make a case" for the project. Furthermore, the project proposal should point out why a certain issue is a problem for the community or society as a whole, i.e. what negative implications affect the target group. There should also be an explanation of the needs of the target group that appear as a direct consequence of the described problem.

Priority needs

The needs of the target group that have arisen as a direct negative impact of the problem should be prioritised. An explanation as to how this decision was reached (i.e. what criteria was used) must also be included. For example, if the problem is stated as *"… poor infrastructure in the community"* the list of **needs** associated with this problem may be:

- improved water supply in quality and quantity;

- better roads; and

- improved solid waste collection.

These three needs would then be given higher or lower priority according to the level of importance for the community, and a description would be given of how that decision was reached (e.g. a poll taken from the local population, costs associated with project intervention, etc.). This procedure provides credibility to the selected intervention.

The proposed approach (type of intervention)

The project proposal should describe the strategy chosen for solving the problem and precisely how it will lead to improvement.

One way to describe the approach related to the need previously stated as *improved water supply* could be: "*intervention to provide basic water supply facilities in the community,*" with some description of the specific features of the solution proposed.

FIGURE 4

Tips for Successfully Presenting an Organisation

■ Never use language that could be perceived as an attack towards any other organisation or institution.

■ Carry out an analysis of your organisation's strengths prior to preparing the proposal and then showcase these strengths.

■ Show that your planning process is participatory and takes into consideration the opinions of the target group.

■ Prepare a short document that presents your past experience (organisational record) and attach it to the project proposal.

The implementing organisation

    This section should describe the capabilities of your organisation by referring to its capacity and previous project record. Describe why exactly your organisation is the most appropriate to run the project, its connection to the local community, the constituency behind the organisation and what kind of expertise the organisation can provide. If other partners are involved in implementation provide some information on their capacity as well.

    See Figure 4 for some tips on presenting an organisation. This list should by no means be considered exhaustive.

Project aims

    The first issue to deal with is naming the objectives. Several other English terms may be used including "project goal/aim," "project purpose," etc. Often one major "goal" is declared and then broken down into various objectives.

    Once this issue has been dealt with, the **hierarchy** between objectives needs to be established, as well as how many levels the hierarchy should present. In reality, an organisation should have already resolved this issue in the project planning phase. Figure 5 displays three typical hierarchic levels.

Project goal (or overall objective)

    This is a general aim that should explain what the core problem is and why the project is important, i.e. what the long-term benefits to the target group are.

FIGURE 5

Hierarchy of Goal, Objectives, Results and Activities
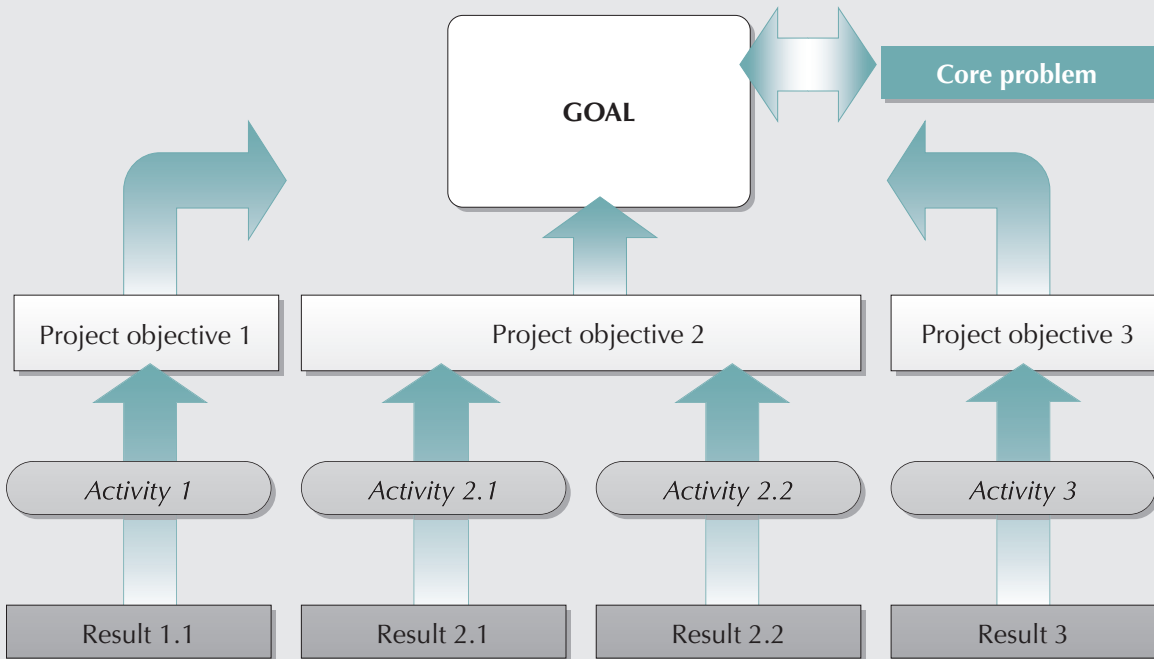
Some examples of a project goal might be:

- raising environmental awareness;

- improving the quality of life in the community; and

- fostering social empowerment among women from deprived rural areas.

Some rules for setting a project goal are shown in the sidebar. If it is difficult to follow these rules then the project itself may have to be redefined or reconsidered.

Project objectives

The objectives should address the core problem in terms of the benefits to be received by the project beneficiaries or target group as a direct result of the project as shown in Figure 6. The objectives from Figure 5 may be defined as:

- improving the water supply in quantity X and quality Y for the population of village Z; and

- reducing by X the rate of acute infections.

Project objectives provide a more detailed breakdown of the project goal. A project will likely have multiple objectives.

Rules for Setting a Project Goal

1. There should be only one goal per project.

2. The goal should be connected to the vision for development.

3. It is difficult or impossible to measure the accomplishment of the goal using measurable indicators, but it should be possible to prove its merit and contribution to the vision.

FIGURE 6

Hierarchy of Objectives with Sample Goal, Project Objectives and Results
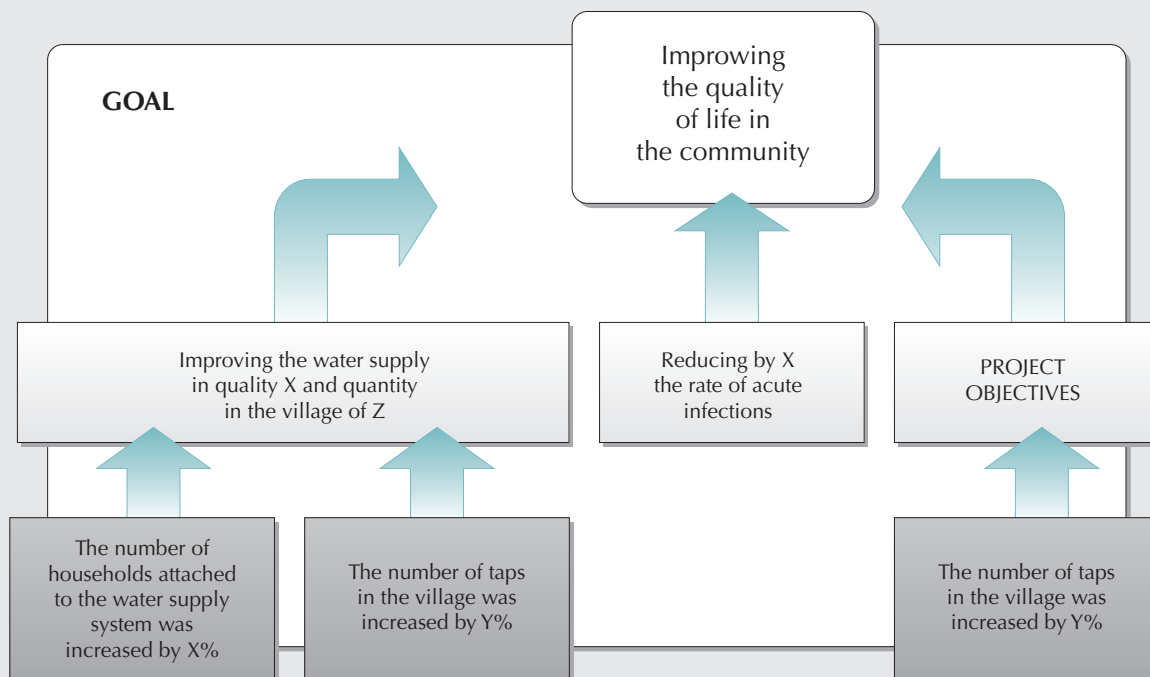
Project results

Results describe the services or products to be delivered to the intended beneficiaries. This is what the project management is promising to deliver. The results are more detailed than the objectives and the goal, and should be possible to measure through the use of objective indicators. Special consideration should therefore be paid to this area.

The results should address the main causes of the problem that the target group faces. To ensure relevant results, project management should have correctly identified the group's needs.

Relating back to the previous example, the results would be written as:

- increased number of households connected to the water supply system; and

- increased number of water taps in the village.

The arrows in Figure 6 show how the results of the project can be tied back to the project's objectives.

Indicators provide the project team with a quantifiable basis on which to judge the project's success in reaching its objectives. The specification of indicators acts as a check on the viability of the results and project objectives. It forms the basis for a project monitoring system. Once the indicators are defined they should be developed to provide details of quantity, quality and time. The sidebar gives a five-step check on how well the indicators have been chosen.

Five Steps to Develop Good Indicators

Project objective: Reduce the rate of acute infections in the community

■ Quality (the nature of the indicator): **Infection rates reduced;**

■ Target Group (Who?): Infection rates reduced among **school children**;

■ Place (Where?): infection rates reduced among children of **Village Z**;

■ Quantity (How Much?): infection rates reduced among children of Village Z **by 45 percent**;

■ Time: infection rates among children of Village Z reduced by 45 percent **by 2004**.

Target group

Define the target group and show how it will benefit from the project. The project should provide a detailed description of the size and characteristics of the target groups, and especially of direct project beneficiaries.

The criteria for target group analysis may be ethnic composition, gender, age, etc. When these analyses are more elaborate, they may be attached as an appendix.

Project implementation

The implementation plan should describe activities and resource allocation in as much detail as possible. It is exceptionally important to provide a good overview of who is going to implement the project's activities, as well as when and where. The implementation plan may be divided into two key elements: the **activity plan** and the **resource plan**.

Activity plan (schedule)

The activity plan should include specific information and explanations of each of the planned project activities. The duration of the project should be clearly stated, with considerable detail on the beginning and the end of the project. Figure 7 breaks down the various steps involved in preparing an activity plan.

In general, two main formats are used to express the activity plan: a simple table and the Gantt chart.

A simple table with columns, as shown in Figure 8, for activities, sub-activities, tasks, timing and responsibility, is a clear, readily understandable format for the activity plan.

The Gantt Chart, a universal format for presenting activities in certain times frames, shows the dependence and sequence for each activity. Figure 9 shows a sample Gantt Chart.

Resource plan

The resource plan should provide information on the means necessary to undertake the project. Cost categories are established at this stage in order to aggregate and summarise the cost information for budgeting.

FIGURE 7

Preparing an Activity Plan

Step	Activity	Considerations
1	List all project activities	Develop a single list of all activities planned.
2	Break activities into manageable tasks and sub-activities	Break activities first into sub-activities and then into tasks. Each task is assigned to an individual who assumes it as a short-term goal. The main consideration is getting the level of detail right. The most common mistake is to break activities into too many details. Planners should stop breaking the activities down any further as soon as they have sufficient detail to estimate the resources required.
3	Clarify sequence and dependence	Relate activates to each other in order to determine their sequence and dependence. Is the activity dependent on the start-up or completion of any other activity? For example, building a house consists of a number of separate, but inter-related actions: first comes digging and laying the foundation, then the walls are erected, etc.
4	Draw up a timeline for each task	Each task should be given a start-up date, a duration and a completion date. The schedule should then be followed as closely as possible.
5	Summarise the scheduling of main activities	Having specified the timing of the individual tasks, the next step is to plan (summarise) the timing of the entire main activity.
6	Use milestones	Milestones are key events that provide a measure of project progress and targets for the project team to aim for.
7	Define expertise	The level and type of expertise needed should be decided for each task separately.
8	Allocate tasks among the team	Distribute responsibilities in consultation with the members of the team.

In the above example, the activity of establishing a staff training programme could require **equipment** and **allowances**. These are the cost categories related to the activity. The next step is to identify **units**, **quantity per period** and **estimated unit cost**. On the basis of these figures, it will be easy to calculate **costs per period** and **total project costs**.

Figure 10 depicts these costs in a typical resource plan as it might look for Activity 1.1 (training programme) from the previous figure. This form of planning enables us to plan and calculate all the costs related to project activities.

FIGURE 8

Activity Plan in a Table

ACTIVITIES/TASKS		IMPLEMENTATION TIME			RESPONSIBILITY
		Start	End	Note	
No.	**Result: More stakeholders involved in the environmental planning board** Activity I. Project kick-off campaign				PIT
1.1	**Preparation of activity leaflets**	June 5, 2000	Jun 25, 2000		Graphic designer
1.2	**Distribution of leaflets**			By July 15	PIT
1.3	**Meetings with community groups**	July 10, 2000	July 25, 2000	By July 15	PC
3.	**Initial EPB meeting**			By Aug. 15	

PIT = Project Implementation Team; PC= Project Coordinator

FIGURE 9

A Gantt Chart

ACTIVITY	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	PA	TA
Result 1: Quality of project management improved					
Activity 1.1: Design and implementation training programme for project management	XXXXX				L L
1.1.1 Conduct needs assessment		XXXXX		L	
1.1.2 Design training modules			XXXXX		
1.1.3 Conduct training					L
Activity 1.2: Improve procedures for project management	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX	L	
1.2.1 Conduct management audit of current procedures		XXXXX		L	
1.3.1. Design and test new procedure			XXXXX		L

PA = Programme adviser; TA= Technical adviser; L- Lead role

Budget

In simple terms, a budget is an itemised summary of an organisation's expected income and expenses over a specified period of time.

Budgeting forms and financial planning procedures vary widely, especially in the non-profit sector. It is nevertheless essential that financial officers comply clearly and punctually with a funding organisation's budgeting and reporting requirements.

The two main elements of any budget are income and expenditures.

Income (sometimes referred to as revenue) is the amount of financial assets and in-kind contribution used as **sources** of support for the project. If the funding source is

FIGURE 10

A Resource Plan for Activity 1.1

ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES	Unit	Quantity per period				Cost per unit	Funding source	Cost per period				Total costs
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
1. Design and implement training programme												
Equipment:												
■ Computer	No.	2				1,000	EU	2,000				2,000
■ Photocopier	No.	1				5,000	EU	5,000				5,000
■ Printer	No.	2				500	EU	1,000				1,000
Salaries and Allowances												
■ Counterpart staff	Nm	6	6	6	6	1,700	CT	10,200	10,200	10,200	10,200	40,800
■ Office staff	Nm	3	3	3	3	900	G	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	10,800

unique, the income side of the budget may not be shown. However, many projects have more than one source of support. The income side should show the share of contribution of each of these sources. Figure 11 shows a sample income form.

Expenditures (also called expenses or costs) are all the costs that are anticipated to occur during the project's implementation. Regardless of the calculation and classification criteria used, the project costs should present a reasonable reflection of the activities presented in the project proposal.

Figure 12 gives a sample of what an expenditure form might look like. The categories presented would then be broken down into greater detail where required.

A projection of the specific amounts of time needed at different phases of project implementation, represents a basis for calculating the spending dynamics at different periods of the project.

Budget categories classify expenditures into smaller groups according to a certain criteria. This is to monitor spending and ensure compliance with the plan.

The two main costs are direct costs and operational costs. **Direct costs** are associated with a certain activity (e.g. organising a workshop). **Operational costs** are related to internal activities of an organisation and are considered fixed costs in the short term (e.g. staff salaries, rent, utilities, etc).

Units, quantity per period and **estimated unit costs** are the three elements that are needed to calculate costs associated with any of these categories.

Monitoring and evaluation

The basis for monitoring is set when the **indicators** for results are set. The project proposal should indicate:

- how and when the project management team will conduct activities to monitor the project's progress;

- which methods will be used to monitor and evaluate; and

- who will do the evaluation.

FIGURE 11	FIGURE 12
Sample Income Form (in EUR)	**Sample Expenditure Form** (in EUR)
Total Budget: 21,345	**Total Budget: 21,345**
Income:	Expenditures:
■ Foundation X 12,345	■ Salaries (6 months X EUR 500) 3,000
■ Contribution from local government 8,000	■ Consultants (3 trainers X 3 days X 3 trainings X EUR 100 per day) 2,700
■ Provided by organisation itself 1,000	■ Office supplies 1,345
Total income: **21,345**	■ Travel and lodging 4,250
	■ Direct costs 8,750
	■ Equipment 3,300
	Total expenditures: **21,345**

Reporting

The schedule of project progress and financial report could be set in the project proposal. Often these obligations are determined by the standard requirements of the donor agency. The project report may be compiled in different versions, with regard to the audience they are targeting.

Management and personnel

A brief description should be given of the project personnel, the individual roles each one has assumed, and the communication mechanisms that exist between them. All the additional information (such as CVs) should be attached to the annexes.

Annexes

The annexes should include all the information that is important, but is too large to be included in the text of the proposal. This information can be created in the identification or planning phase of the project, but often it is produced separately. The usual documentation to be annexed to the project proposal is:

• analysis related to the general context (e.g. a civil society sector assessment);

• policy documents and strategic papers (e.g. a local environmental action plan);

• information on the implementing organisations (e.g. annual reports, success stories, brochures and other publications)

• additional information on the project management structure and personnel (curriculum vitae for the members of the project team);

• maps of the location of the target area; and

• project management procedures and forms (organisational charts, forms, etc).
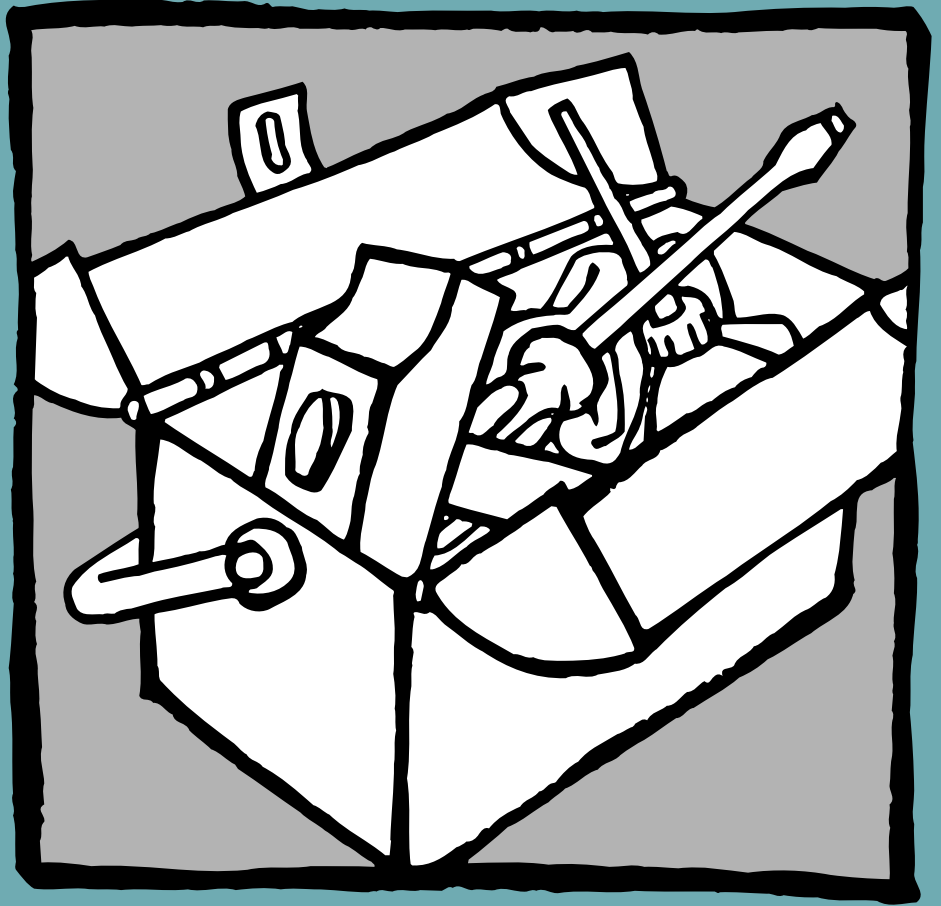
Training Toolkit

Tool 1: Ice Breaker, Introduction Exercise: Little Known Facts

Description: Matching little known facts with participants

Participants: Any number

Duration: 20 minutes

Materials: Index cards

Procedure

1 Distribute index cards to each participant. Ask them to write a little known fact about themselves on the card and not show anyone else. Collect all the cards and set them aside.

2 Ask the participants to stand up, walk around, meet each other, and share two little known facts about themselves. One of these facts should be the one written on the card.

3 After a few minutes, ask the participants to return to their seats. Organise the participants into teams and distribute equal numbers of fact cards to each team.

4 Ask the participants to remove and hide their nametags and then work with their team-mates to match each card with the person who wrote it. They should do this by sharing the information they collected earlier during the walk-around session. (Some cards may belong to the members of the team itself, simplifying this task.)

5 After a suitable pause, randomly select one of the teams to present its report. This team should read their cards, one at a time, and identify the writer. The team earns one point for pointing to the correct writer and one more point for correctly naming the writer. The team loses one point for pointing to an incorrect writer or incorrectly naming the writer. No points are earned or lost if the team confesses its ignorance.

6 Repeat the procedure with each of the remaining teams. The team with the highest score wins the game.

Discussion

Usually, icebreakers of this type do not require any debriefing. However, since there is something intriguing about what facts people choose to reveal about themselves, a quick debriefing is worthwhile using these questions. Although the questions ask about people in general, they are designed to encourage the participants to reflect on their own individual behaviour:

• What facts do people reveal about themselves?

• What facts do they hide from others?

• Why do people choose to reveal some facts and hide others?

- What facts do people reveal to friends, to acquaintances and to strangers?

- Which is easier: to write anonymous statements or to talk about them in a face-to-face situation?

- Would some people distort or make up facts about themselves? Why?

- How would the types of little known facts vary between extroverts and introverts? Between men and women? Between younger and older people?

- Do you think that this icebreaker would produce similar results when used with people from other cultures?

1

Tool 2: **Long Words**

Description: To stress the importance of proactive planning
and anticipating future problems created by present solutions

Duration: 20 minutes
(10 minutes for the activity and 10 for debriefing)

Participants: Groups of five or six

Materials: A set of 15 tiles (index cards cut in half) for each player
with these letters: A, A, E, E, G, I, I, M, N, N, O, P, R, S, T
The handout *Instructions for Playing LONG WORDS*

Procedure

1   **Create a handout.** Use the instructions below in Figure 13 to create the two-part handout that will be used in the training session. You will need to individualise the section called Secret Strategy at the bottom of each instruction sheet (follow the example given). Create four or five different versions so that each contestant receives a different strategy. Use two or three different words from this list for each contestant: generations, germination, greasepaint, impersonate, innermost, insertion, interposing, nominates, migration, omnipresent, presenting, resignation, and separation.

FIGURE 13

Instructions for Playing LONG WORDS

You have 15 letters. Your objective is to create the longest word among the contestants in your group using as many letters as possible.

The judge will tell you when to start. You have 30 seconds to come up with a long word. You cannot use proper nouns (such as names of people or brand names of products).

When the judge announces the end of 30 seconds, give her or him the letters that make up the word.

The judge will determine the winner (or winners) who created the longest word.

The judge will keep the letters and begin the second round.

Play two or more rounds of the game.

- -

Secret Strategy (example)

Remember that you have to play three rounds. The letters that you use in the first round cannot be used in future rounds.

For the first round, give the judge a single-letter word: I. You will lose this round, but you will save 14 of your letters.

During the second round, use the word MANAGERS, an eight-letter word.

During the third round, use the word POINT, a five-letter word. (You will be left with an unused letter, E.)

2

2   **Form groups and assign roles.** Divide players into groups of five or six. In each group, ask players to identify the person with the fanciest digital watch. Assign the role of judge to this player. The remaining players are contestants who compete with one another within their group.

3   **Brief players.** Distribute a copy of Instructions for Playing LONG WORDS to each player. Ask players to read the instructions. If players have any questions, ask them to read the instructions again.

4   **Conduct the first round.** Ask the judge for each group to begin the first round. Ask players to start creating long words. At the end of 30 seconds, ask judges to stop the round and collect the words.

5   **Find winners of the first round.** Ask the judge to identify the winner in each group who created the longest word. If more than one person created words of the same length, they are all declared winners.

6   **Get ready for the next round.** Ask the judges to gather all the letters they received from the contestants and put them away. Emphasise that these letters will not be used in the future rounds. If any contestant protests, refer back to the instruction sheet.

7   **Conduct two more rounds.** Ask the judges to start the round, stop it after 30 seconds and collect the long words created by the contestants. As before, ask the judges to identify the winners.

8   **Find the overall winner.** Ask the judges to identify the contestant who won the most rounds. It is very likely that the contestant who received (and followed) the secret strategy about playing a single-letter word during the first round is the overall winner in each group.

Discussion

First, ask players to reconstruct the winning strategy. Point out that this strategy involved proactively planning a long-term strategy and implementing it.

Then, ask players to reflect on their experience and share their insights. Use suitable questions to help players discover these learning points:

- Today's solutions may create tomorrow's problems. Always anticipate the future consequences of present solutions.

- Do not accept a solution just because you think it is brilliant or other people say it is brilliant.

- Keep asking yourself, "What do I do for an encore?"

- Plan to use all available resources in the most effective and conservative fashion.

Tool 3: **Reservation Revenue**

Description: Preparing an activity plan, a resource plan and a budget

Participants: Groups of four to six

Duration: 40 minutes

Materials: Handout: Green Planet

Procedure

1 Divide participants into large groups

2 Explain that they will use what they have learned by preparing an activity plan, a resource plan and a budget to generate income in order to make improvements to the Jasen nature reserve.

3 Distribute the Green Planet handout.

4 Appoint or request a group leader who will submit the final documents.

5 Give the groups 30 minutes to complete the exercise.

6 Ask the group leader to give a brief summary of their approach.

Discussion

- Is there one best way to approach this activity?
- Which budgets are more realistic?
- Were indirect costs such as administration and overhead included?
- If the funds were distributed on a competitive basis, which group would probably receive the money?
- How do funders perceive these types of costs?
- Would the appearance of the proposal factor into the funder's decision-making or only the content?

HANDOUT

Green Planet

Imagine that you are all members of the environmental association Green Planet. This organisation was established two years ago and so far you have managed to get project funding from foundations on two occasions. You have learned that the foundation In Search of Good Projects has announced an open competition for quality projects that are "community-based actions providing visible environmental benefits." The amount of funding is limited to an equivalent of EUR 80,000.

Your Project is: Management of the Jasen Nature Reserve

The municipal council has assigned your organisation the mandate to manage this small nature reservation situated on the banks of the Thomas River, the surrounding canyon with numerous caves and an artificial lake that is used primarily to produce electrical power but is also a popular picnic site during the summer. You are in possession of a mountaineer house with five rooms and two small cottages that are currently out of use. You plan to set up a natural museum with an exhibition of rare species grown at the site in the first cottage. You plan to rearrange the second cottage as well, turning it into a souvenir shop to sell articles produced by your NGO (T-shirts, coffee cups, etc).

With the income gathered from the museum and the shop, as well as the existing facilities, you plan to place rubbish bins, fences and benches in the reservation, to build ramps for wheelchair access and to perform other infrastructure and maintenance activities. You also want to mark trails for mountaineers and organise educational mountaineer tours for weekend visitors. Another one of your tasks is to manage forestation, so you plan to carry out annual forestation campaigns. You will use the museum to organise regular press conferences, video presentations and other educational activities targeting diverse audiences. You also plan to organise eco-patrols, which will register violations of the laws and regulations, and file complaints with the reservation authorities.

You have numerous and diverse options for introducing and implementing a quality environmental management system in the reservation. The financial support of this foundation may be crucial to commencing implementation of these ideas.

Your Tasks are:

1. to prepare an activity plan based on the model presented in the manual;

2. to prepare a resource plan using the appropriate model presented in the manual; and

3. to compile a budget.

3

Tool 4: **Where Did it Go?**

Description: Setting priorities and time management

Duration: 40-60 minutes

Participants: All participants

Materials: A copy of the Yesterday's Activities handout
for each participant

Procedure

1 Introduce the exercise by telling the participants that they are to recall everything they did yesterday, for the whole 24 hours. Distribute the handout Yesterday's Activities to all participants.

2 Give the participants 10 minutes to think about what they did yesterday and to write it down. What they write down must total 24 hours.

3 After everything has been written down, ask them to prioritise each action. It can be marked as an "A," "B" or "C" priority. An "A" indicates it is linked to a major life goal or a person's top priority. A "B" indicates that it is something that has to be done but is not linked to major life goals. A "C" indicates that it is something that could be put off for a while or perhaps did not need to be done by the person in the first place.

4 After the list has been completed, ask how many people spent time on their "A" priorities. A discussion should follow, highlighting the importance of working on "A" priorities every day and getting rid of most of "C" priorities.

Yesterday's Activities

**TASK TIME PRIORITY**

Total time spent on "A" tasks:

Total time spent on "B" tasks:

Total time spent on "C" tasks:

Discussion

1. Who spent most of their time on "C" priorities?

2. Who spent most of their time on "B" priorities?

3. Who spent most of their time in "A" priorities?

4. How important are each of these groups?

5. Do people have a balance of time between business and personal time?

6. Could people recall everything they did yesterday? If not, is it possible that the time spent was unproductive?

7. Is relaxation time an "A" priority?

4
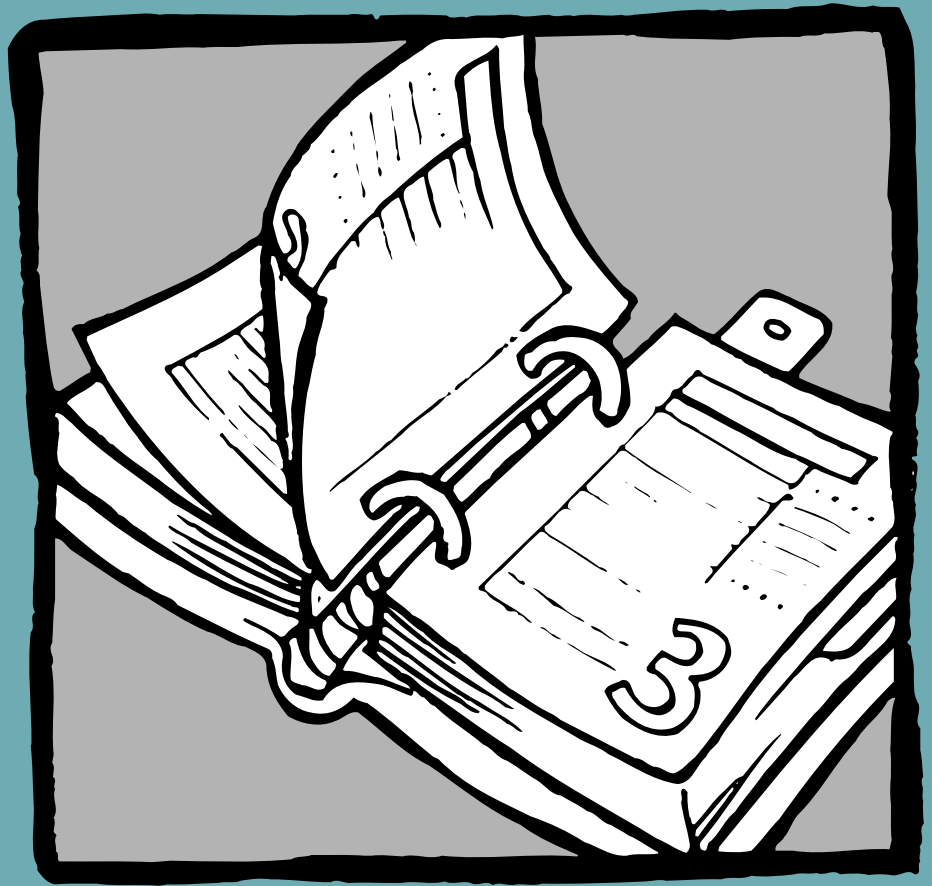
Sample Workshop Agenda

How to Deliver the Training

This sample agenda is intended to further help you tailor a training event on proposal writing using different elements of this manual and toolkit. The exact use of it, in combination with other activities, should be based on what you know about the expectations and experiences of your trainees, as well as on the time available to carry out the training activity. In addition to the training topics, the sample agenda proposes activities that can provide interactive elements to your training event.

Sample Workshop Agenda

Part 1 **Introduction**

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
Introduction	Introduction of participants, getting to know each other	Tool 1 **Little Known Facts**
Agenda review/ Expectations	Go through the agenda and encourage participants to share their expectations for the course	Index cards with expectations and considerations of participants
Introduction to projects	Build understanding of the principles/basis of project	Brainstorming on: *What is a project? What elements does it have? What is a good project?*

Part 2 **Project Design and Proposal Writing**

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
Introduction	Stress the importance of proactive planning and anticipating future problems	Tool 2 **Long Words**
Project design and proposal writing	Provide a framework for the process of proposal writing in the project management context	Presentation
Project design practices	Discuss project design experiences	Group discussion

Part 3 **How to Write a Project Proposal**

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
Introduction	Start the project session from the problem-solving perspective	Lecture/Presentation
Overview of project proposal writing	Outline the format for a project proposal and presentation of its major elements	Presentation
Writing the project	Go through a step-by-step process of writing a project proposal	Tool 3: **Case Study: Work Group Exercise** Presentation of project items followed by small group work
Closing activity	Stress the importance of timing and punctuality in project development and implementation	Tool 4: **Where Did it Go?**

Sample Workshop Agenda continued

Part 4 **Summary and Evaluation**

CATEGORY	PURPOSE	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
Summary	Review course content and test key learning points	Discussion
Evaluation	Evaluate and improve future workshops	Use an evaluation questionnaire and the method(s) you used to express expectations of participants

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Project Proposal Writing