

# *Proposal Writing*



# What is a Proposal?

- A proposal is a request for financial assistance to implement a project
- Funding is sought, in whole or in part, from government funding agencies, charitable foundations, businesses, individuals, and other sources



# Course Context

- Proposal writing is a skill and requires considerable knowledge in many disciplines.
- If you do not have proposal writing skills, your organization will not obtain the funding required to carryout its projects
- These materials will help you identify issues relevant to your proposal



# Course Context

## Elements of effective proposal writing include:

- Proper formatting
- Content development
- Satisfying program criteria
- Demonstrating economic and social benefits
- Addressing funding agency requirements
- Demonstrating the sustainability of the project's output
- Selecting qualified consultants
- Monitoring and evaluation provisions
- Proposal follow up
- Proper referencing of other documentation and other sources of information used in preparing the proposal



# Course Context

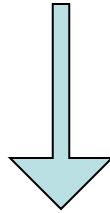
Your proposal should demonstrate that your project will:

- Provide economic benefit to an area or a community
- Have a high probability of success
- Address a strategic priority
- Demonstrate need for financial assistance
- Be economically viable
- Have stakeholder support
- Be consistent with development strategies

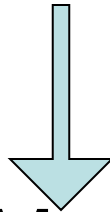


# Course Context

Strategic Planning



Proposal Writing



Project Management



# Planning

- Good proposal writing is absolutely essential for any not-for-profit organization to fulfil its mandate
- Proposals are developed to address a strategic need identified by the organization or to solve a problem.

The goals of good proposals closely match the strategic goals of the organization advancing it

- Proposals also provide organizations with the resources to accomplish these strategic goals



# Linkages to Strategic Planning

- Limited funding encourages intense strategic planning prior to proposal writing

Most organizations recognize there is a limit on the public funding available to a particular region, sector, or organization

- The process of applying for funding forces organizations to pursue the most important and most time sensitive projects first

Organizations must determine which initiatives are truly critical as well as the priority of projects in relation to each other





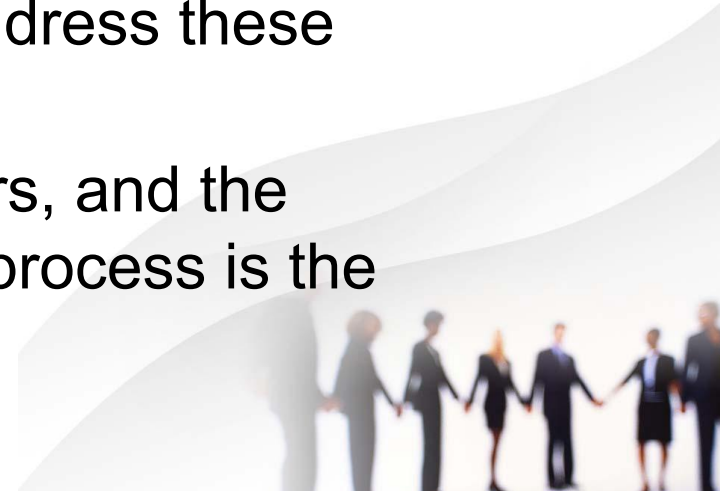
# Proposal Research

- Proposals should be well researched prior to submission
- Proposals are intended to communicate exactly what your group is attempting to accomplish, the problem to be addressed, the resources required, and when activities will be performed
- These elements need to be substantiated through research
- Your decisions must be based on documented facts. Most likely, others have taken on projects similar to yours. You must seek out these individuals and organizations to determine what you can learn from their experiences



# Proposal Research

- Examine the location, the population characteristics of the area, the situation, existing facilities, and anything else required to describe the background of the project
- Funding agencies look for local initiative and the utilization of community resources in funding proposals. They also want the project proposal to indicate that the project will be self-supporting in the long-term. The research you document in your proposal should address these issues
- Involving the community, stakeholders, and the project beneficiaries in the research process is the best way to ensure that it is valid



# Proposal Research

Data comes from primary and secondary information sources

- Primary data is new information collected directly by you. Examples include a survey of area residents, market tests, or interviews with industry experts. Primary data is usually best, but is very time consuming and costly.
- Secondary data is information which already exists. It includes government reports, industry association studies, zone board strategic plans, marketing books, periodical articles, and engineering reports. If available, secondary data is cheaper and easier to use than primary data.



# Funding Program Criteria

It is important to write a proposal which attracts the required funding. You must clearly understand the program requirements and ensure they are addressed in the proposal.

Funding programs differ with respect to

- The funding cap (percentage of funding provided)
- Eligible costs
- Eligible applicants (profit/not-for-profit)
- Eligible sectors (tourism, agriculture, forestry)
- Project location
- Information required



# Funding Program Criteria

- Your project proposal should be an honest "*marketing*" document. It's job is to inform the reader and get them to buy into the project. You have licence to sell your project and your organization
- It should not misrepresent the facts. Making statements you know to be untrue, fabricating research, or citing non-existing sources, is a recipe for disaster
- Proposals should capture the readers interest and draw them to the key points
- Stress the benefits of the proposal and demonstrate the proposal has been well thought through



# Proposal Formatting

Formatting is concerned with the look, style, and layout of the proposal. It is not merely aesthetics.

It is pleasing to the eye but also:

- Adds to the perception that the document is well thought out
- Enhances the credibility and professionalism of your organization
- Is easy to read and understand
- Facilitates the understanding of the proposal content
- Makes it easy for the reader to find the information they are looking for



# Proposal Formatting

## Title Page

The first page/often serves as the cover

It should include: date, project title, project location, name of the organization; and any required information (e.g. proposal reference #)

## Table of Contents

Make it easy for readers to find the information they require

Each heading should be listed with its corresponding page number

Keep it a reasonable length

Too many headings can make it unwieldy



# Proposal Formatting

## Appendices

Use appendices to avoid crowding the body of the proposal and maintain the narrative flow

Typical appendices include: material lists, engineering drawings, and letters of support





# Proposal Formatting

## Length:

The proposal should be focused and concise

The length will usually depend on the number of resources being requested

## Lay out:

The margins, spacing, fonts, headings, and numbering should be consistent throughout the document



# Proposal Formatting

## Writing

Sentence structure, grammar, and spelling should be checked.

## Footnoting & References

Footnote the source of quotes, statistics, and tables. Reference all sources of information used in the preparation of the document.

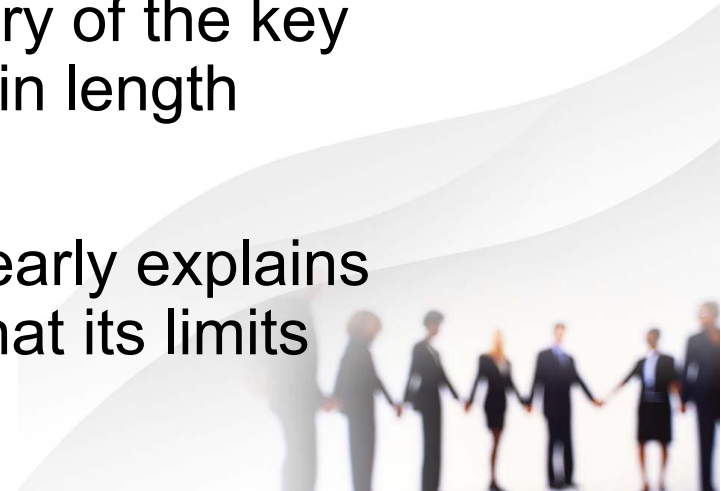


# Proposal Content

The content of the proposal varies depending on the nature of the project and the funding agency(s) involved

## Typical content includes:

- House Keeping Data: Applicant's name, form of organization, and contact information
- Executive Summary: A concise summary of the key points. It should not exceed two pages in length
- Project Description: A narrative that clearly explains to the reader what the project is and what its limits are (what is not part of the project)



# Proposal Content

- **Project Schedule:** It should clearly indicate when the project will start and end. It will describe the sequence of project activities and the duration of these activities
- **Project Background:** Readers need to understand the origin and context of your proposal. The background section of your proposal explains why the project is needed. It should be logically set out and reflect any background work and consultations you have already completed
- **Goals and Objectives:** The goal of your project should be to solve the problem described in the proposal background.
  - Goals are general, long term broad desires
  - Objectives are specific, verifiable outcomes which flow from goals



# Proposal Content

## Partnerships

Good partnerships demonstrate community support. They also provide access to people, skills, funding, and in-kind contributions to help with project planning and implementation.

## Project Management

Describe the organizational and management structures needed to carry out project activities. Demonstrate that your organization has the people and systems to successfully undertake the project

## Resource Allocation

Resources include people, cash, equipment, supplies, etc. Describe what is required, how much, when it is needed, by whom, and where



# Proposal Content

## Marketing Plan

It is required to ensure the long-term viability of projects which require healthy revenues to be self sufficient. You must demonstrate that you understand what your intended customers want, the size of your market, and how to succeed in the market

## Budget

Breakdown costs as much as possible to demonstrate that your budget is comprehensive and well thought out. Ensure that you have not overlooked items

Other Financial Information Requirements will vary depending on the nature of your project, total funding required, and programs applied for. Cash flow projections, revenue statements, and balance sheets may be required.



# Proposal Content

## Economic and Social Benefits

You will need to demonstrate how target groups will benefit from your proposal. Often there are direct and indirect beneficiaries. You should distinguish between them and indicate how each will benefit.

- Economic benefits include: Short-term project employment, long-term employment, skill development, and increased tax revenues.
- Social benefits are non-financial, positive outcomes for target groups.
- Some social benefits include: the preservation of historic resources, increased community confidence, public education, recreational space, and the preservation of wildlife habitat.



# Monitoring & Evaluation

You need to describe how you are going to monitor the project to ensure that it stays on track. Monitoring, control, follow-up, and evaluation should be incorporated throughout your proposal.





# Monitoring & Evaluation

## Four aspects of monitoring and evaluation

1. Project Monitoring: How project costs, quality, schedule, and scope will be monitored, controlled, and corrected if necessary
2. Best Practices: How you plan to capture and record what you learn from your project so it can be applied in the planning and execution of future projects
3. Accounting: The retention and recording of financial information. Accounting is very important to funding agencies. It must be transparent and accurate
4. Project Output: Determining the success of your project's end product. There should be emphasis on reporting the effects of the project on the target group (beneficiaries)



# Monitoring & Evaluation

## M&E activities vary depending on the nature of the project

- For small proposals, the provision of invoices along with a two or three page summary report at the end of the project may suffice
- For larger, long-term projects, a regular detailed narrative report could be required. These reports may include information the extent to which the objectives have been reached, the reasons they were not fully reached, and offer suggestions about changing the objectives if they need to be changed



# Special Challenges

## Applying to Multiple Funding Programs

While accessing funding from several sources, the likelihood of omission increases when a proposal is submitted to multiple funding partners.

- Don't assume that because a proposal satisfies one funding agency it will satisfy others
- Do not overlook the requirements of programs which will make smaller contributions
- Read program criteria closely and reflect those criteria throughout your proposal
- Use the program application(s) as proposal checklists to ensure all the required information is included



# Special Challenges

When projects require the acquisition and use of property several issues arise:

- Ownership: Do you have clear title to the land you are developing? Ensure you have all the legal documentation and the site boundaries are clarified.
- Zoning: Demonstrate that the land's zoning is compatible with the project you intend to undertake. Typical zoning classifications include: Commercial Residential, Resource Management, Industrial General, and Outdoor Assembly.



# Special Challenges

- There may be other land issues which could impact your proposal. These may include issues with site access or public right of ways
- There may be issues with development permits or government applications such as a “Permit to Alter a Body of Water” for projects taking place within 50 meters of a body of water
- Sustainability is an issue for many projects. The project should be self-sustaining after it is completed. You need to explain what your go forward plan is and ensure your plan and assumptions are realistic.



# Special Challenges

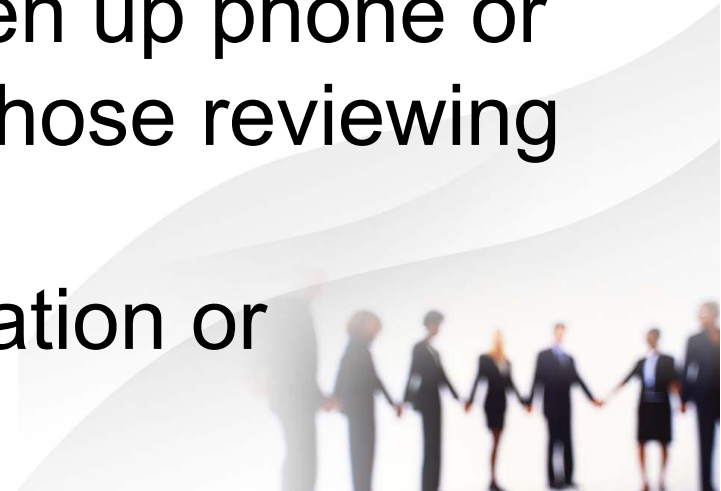
## Terms of Reference

- Many projects require the retention of outside expertise such as engineers, architects, and consultants.
- You will need to specify what work you require these professionals to carry out, how they will be selected, and how you will control the work.
- Any funding proposal for a study or professional services should contain a good draft terms of reference.



# Follow-up

- Sometimes proposals require some clarification. In your proposal cover letter, express a willingness to be interviewed personally by the funding agency
- After submission, try to open up phone or e-mail conversations with those reviewing the proposal and offer to provide any clarification or additional information which may be required



STRATEGY & PLANNING	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS & MANAGEMENT	CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT
Strategic Planning	Community Development	Organizational Governance	Basics of a Co-operative
Proposal Writing	Public Participation	Board Orientation	Co-operatives and the Community Development Process I
Project Management	Alternative Dispute Resolution	Meeting Management	Co-operative and the Community Development Process II
Opportunity Identification	Group Dynamics	Leadership and Motivation	
Opportunity Management		Interpersonal Communications	
		Communications Planning	
		Legal Issues	



# Conclusion and Evaluation

- Review objectives
- Review any additional expectations
- Review Parking Lot
- Point out Certificates of Participation
- Complete evaluation
- Thank you!

