

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

One in a series of briefs for civil society organizations, written from a funder's perspective, and intended to stimulate inquiry, rather than provide rigid instructions.

Budgeting

Tips for preparing a budget with an emphasis on its purpose, steps, and components.

Financial Systems

Tips for establishing an accountable and transparent financial system to build financial sustainability.

Grant Proposal Writing

Tips for developing and writing a proposal, including critical elements to facilitate project success.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Tips for reviewing and assessing progress towards objectives, identifying problems and strategies, and making adjustments to plans.

Project Development

Tips for developing and implementing a project and key questions to ask in the process.

Reporting to Funders

Tips for maintaining and strengthening your relationship with funders following a grant award.

Resource Mobilization

Tips for mobilizing resources closer to home to strengthen organizational capacity and deliver benefits to the community.

PURPOSE OF A PROJECT PLAN

For funders, the heart of a grant proposal is the specific project or set of activities for which you are seeking support, and the budget requirements necessary to successfully complete the work. Here we will look more closely at the key ingredients for developing and implementing a project, and how to articulate these concepts in your proposal. In this brief, the word “project” is used to refer to a specific intervention or activity.

The first step when planning a project is to make sure there is a strong link between your organization’s mission and the initiative you are considering. The project you plan and seek funding for should be part of your overall strategy for addressing the issues. When developing your plan envision the following:

- How does your project relate to your organization’s mission?
- What is the context in which you work and how is this unique?
- How will the project change or improve the

conditions of the community members or beneficiaries?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Funders are particularly interested in results, or how a project will bring positive benefits to a community or a group of stakeholders. Funders also understand that in some cases, results may not be seen in the short term and may include such intangibles as the social capital that has been built. They appreciate a consultative process that engages all stakeholders in the project design, implementation, and evaluation. As a CSO, you are uniquely positioned to determine what strategies are effective in your context. By combining your knowledge of the context and assessing the skills within your organization, you can work to improve or change the situation in your community.

Common Terms

Below are some common terms, their definitions, and key questions for project development. Funders may also ask questions regarding these areas to

determine if the project fits the funder’s priorities, if it is realistic, or if it is likely to make a positive difference in the community.

Goals. Broad and long-range accomplishments toward which the project will contribute. In formulating your goal, ask: What do you want to accomplish with this project? Who will benefit from the project? How will they benefit?

Objectives. Intended impacts (or in some cases, outputs) contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other benefits to a society, community, or group of people via one or more development interventions. In developing objectives, ask: What are specific, measurable desired results of the project? Objectives should be SMART:

- S** Specific statements of what the project will accomplish
- M** Measurable or observable
- A** Answer the questions of who, what, when, where, how
- R** Realistic in recognizing the concrete results a project can actually accomplish
- T** Time bound

Activities. Actions taken or work performed. These activities can be translated into a work plan with a timeline. Ask questions such as: What specific tasks or actions are necessary to implement the objectives?

The views and needs of the **beneficiaries** of the project are important to consider when formulating your goals and objectives and implementing your

**Example of Goal,
Objectives and Activities**

The **goal** of the project is to improve farmers’ access to agricultural public services in the municipality of Sedhiou.

The **objectives** of the project are: to increase by 50% the number of people who can access the services available and to implement a community score card system in 5 villages that will measure the services provided by the agricultural extension agency.

The **activities** over 1 year will include information dissemination on accessing services through radio campaigns and 10 workshops on monitoring and accountability using the community scorecard methodology.

activities. Funders may be concerned with how the beneficiaries were consulted or are involved in the key decisions for the project. In challenging circumstances where your organizations are addressing particular vulnerabilities, describe the **context** for the marginalized population who may not be a part of any community.

When formulating the goals and objectives, you should also keep in mind how you will monitor and evaluate the project. For example, funders may ask how you will know when your results have

been achieved. When communicating your project to funders, you could describe the situation prior to the project which is how your progress can be assessed or comparison made.

You may also be need to consider the **sustainability** of a project and its benefits after the funding or project comes to a close. Refer to the tips on “Resource Mobilization” to help think through ideas for sustainability.

STEP-BY-STEP: Creating an Action Plan

An action plan is the step-by-step process your organization will undertake to achieve the objectives and goals of the project and may not necessarily include the mobilization of funds. The creation of an action plan should be established with stakeholder

participation to ensure their involvement and ownership in the project. Questions that an action plan should address include:

1. What are your **goals and objectives**?
2. What are the **action steps** you will be taking to accomplish the objectives?
3. Who is **responsible** for each of the action steps?
4. **Who else will be involved?** How were they involved in the planning? What are their roles and responsibilities?
5. Who will **benefit** from the project? How were they consulted? How will they benefit?
6. What are your intended results? What **changes** will occur as a result of the project?
7. What are the indicators that will track your progress?



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8. What is the timeline of your action steps? When will the activities take place? Over what period of time?
9. What financial resources will you need to complete the action plan and how will you raise them?
10. What human resources will you need? What are the strengths and gaps of those on your team to accomplish the activities?
11. What partnerships could be created with similar organizations or local authorities to maximize impact, complement your efforts, and learn from each other?

12. What are the potential barriers or **resistance** you may encounter (such as weather or political conditions) and what alternate plans do you have?

The steps above on developing a project help address some of the main questions funders have when reviewing a proposal. A project created through a consultative process, with a clear rationale, set of objectives, and action plan, also serves your organization by creating a strong foundation for success.

For a toolkit on Action Planning, see CIVICUS' website www.civicus.org.



The Social Development Civil Society Fund (CSF) is one of the few global programs of the World Bank that provides direct grants to civil society organizations through the World Bank's Country Offices. CSF seeds and supports activities related to civic engagement that empower and enable citizens to take initiatives to influence development outcomes.

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Tips by Yumi Sera and Susan Beaudry, 2007