Full Proposal

Time	Event	Content
1 hour & 30 min	*Session 16* **From Concept Note to Full Proposal**	• Overview of Day 3 • Objectives of Day 4 • Components of a full proposal and the differences between a concept note and a full proposal • Presentation of project proposal templates • Analysis of successful and unsuccessful proposals: Case studies (Group Discussion)
1 hour	*Session 17* **Logical Frameworks**	• Introduction to Logical Frameworks • Examples and analysis of Logical Frameworks (Group discussion) • Developing your own Logical Framework (Computer)
45 min	*Session 18* **Budget Development**	• Budget categories • Example of a budget • Developing your own project budget (Group discussion, Computer)
1 hour	*Session 19* **Drafting Full Proposals**	• Steps and plan to develop your proposal • Drafting your full proposal (Computer)
1 hour	*Session 20* **Sharing Draft Proposals**	• Overview of Day 4 • Objectives of Day 5 • Presentation and analysis of participants' draft proposals
15 min	**End of Day 4**	• Reflection on Day 4 • Overview of Day 5

Developing a Full Proposal

Objectives

By the end of Day 4 you will:
- be able to describe the components of a full proposal
- be able to list the steps you need to follow to develop a full proposal
- start drafting a full proposal of your own project based on your concept note

Activities

Session 16 - From Concept Note to Full Proposal
Activity 26: Tell the difference between a concept note and a full proposal
Activity 27: Tell the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful proposal

Session 17 – Logical Frameworks
Activity 28: Draft your own 'LogFrame'

Session 18 – Budget Development
Activity 29: Develop your own budget

Session 19 – Drafting the Full Proposal
Activity 30: - Develop a framework for your full proposal

Session 20 – Sharing the Full Proposal

Resources

Handouts:
- Logical Framework Template (DFID)
- Plan for Completing your Proposal
- Proposal Template

Further resources

Proposal Handouts:
- Organizational Proposal Review
- Partner Proposal Review
- Stakeholder Proposal Review
- Proposal Assessment
- Feedback and Revision Guide

Session 16
From Concept Note to Full Proposal

Objectives

By the end of this session you will:
- be able to describe the difference between a concept note and a full proposal
- develop a greater understanding of the elements of a successful proposal through review of real life proposals
- develop an awareness of the information/steps needed to turn a concept note into a full proposal

☑ Activity 26

This is a whole group brainstorming activity on the following questions:
- What more should there be in a full proposal?
- What would be different in a proposal from a concept note?

☑ Activity 27

You are going to work in a small group and screen two proposals. One of them was successful, the other rejected. Your task is to decide which proposal was successful and why.

On a flip chart paper (or computer) say which proposal was successful and then list the reasons why you think it was successful. Select a reporter who will report back to the plenary.

Resources needed:
- Two proposals: one successful and one unsuccessful proposal
- Template for a full project proposal

Session 17
Logical Frameworks

Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:
- an understanding of the project logical framework, and why it is used
- examples of project logical frameworks
- practical experience in developing a draft project logical framework for your own project

Experience has shown that poor results from projects - and, as a consequence, from funding instruments - are principally due to two major weaknesses:
- one or more essential factors, fundamental for the success of the project, were overlooked during the preparation and implementation phase, and/or the
- mechanism to make the right decisions at the right time over the project's life cycle was lacking due to poor planning and management.

In response to this criticism, a lot of effort has been put into developing a practical framework and methodology that would enable project managers to address these weaknesses at the outset - this

resulted in the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). The concept was first used by multilateral donor agencies in disbursing development aid and has been increasingly promoted elsewhere amongst bilateral funding agencies and in particular amongst European Commission's funding instruments.
The Logical Framework Approach is an objective-oriented project planning method to help those who want to prepare and implement projects in planning, assessment, follow-up and evaluation of projects in order to ensure good and long lasting results. LFA is an analytical, presentational and management tool which can help planners and managers to:

- analyse the existing situation during project preparation
- establish a logical hierarchy of means by which objectives will be reached
- identify the potential risks to achieving the objectives, and to sustainable outcomes
- establish how outputs and outcomes might best be monitored and evaluated
- present a summary of the project in a standard format
- monitor and review projects during implementation

The Logical Framework Approach is often is applied by a Logical Framework Matrix (Logframe) which is designed to prompt you on the elements you should be considering and helps set them out in a logical and systematic way as shown in Table 11. As each box is filled in systematically, the relationship between the different components of the project becomes clearer.

An example of a typical Logical Framework Matrix from an EU-Asia proposal format[8] is shown in the following (you can download it from the Project Website). The terminology, however, used in Logical Frameworks requested by different donor agencies is not consistent.

Figure 8. Logical Framework – Relationship between Goal & Outcomes and Objectives & Outputs

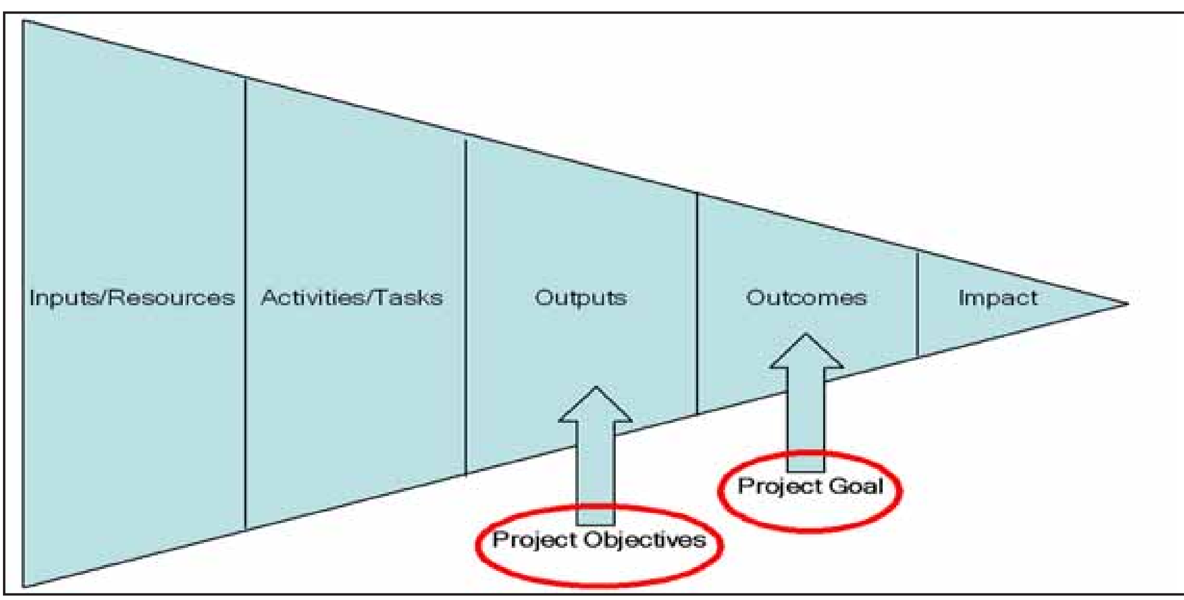

Figure 8 presents the elements of the logical framework in their occurrence sequence. As much as there are inputs and activities by the beginning of the project, outcomes and impacts tend to be less by its end. Achieving the projects outputs leads to fulfilling the planned objectives and reaching the desired outcomes associated with positive impacts lead to fulfilling the project's goal.

[8] EU-Asia Pro Eco II B - Post Tsunami Programme:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-pro-eco2/apply_tsunami.htm (Accessed 14 June 2006)

Table 11. Logical Framework

	Intervention logic	***Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement***	***Sources and means of verification***	***Assumptions***
Overall objectives	*What is the overall broader objective, to which the project will contribute?*	*What are the key indicators Related to the overall objective?*	*What are the sources of information for these indicators?*	
Project purpose	*What are the specific objectives, which the project shall achieve?*	*What are the quantitative or qualitative indicators showing whether and to what extent the projects specific objectives are achieved?*	*What are the sources of information that exist or can be collected? What are the Methods required to get this information?*	*What are the factors and conditions not under the direct control of the project which are necessary to achieve these objectives? What risks have to be considered?*
Expected results	*What are the concrete outputs envisaged to achieve the specific objectives?* *What are the envisaged effects and Benefits of the project* *What improvements and changes will be produced by the project?*	*What are the indicators to Measure whether and to what extent the project achieves the envisaged results and effects?*	*What are the sources of information for these indicators?*	*What external factors and conditions must be realised to obtain the expected outputs and results on schedule?*
Activities	*What are the key activities to be carried out and in what sequence in order to produce the expected resulls?*	***Means:*** *What are the means required to implement these activities, e g. personnel, equipment, training, studies, suppiles, operationa facilities, etc.*	*What are the sources of information about project progress?*	*What pre- conditions are required before the project(s) start(s)* *What conditions outside the projects direct control have to be present for the implementation of the plannea activities?*

Table 12. Comparison of Donor Terminologies for results/Logical Frameworks

	Ultimate Impact	Long-term outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Outputs	Interventions	
CARE terminology[10]	Program Impact		Effects	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
Care lonframe	Program Goal		Intermediate Objectives	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
AusAID[17]	Scheme Goal	Major Development Objectives		Outputs	Activities	Inputs
CIDA[18], GTZ[19]	Overall goal		Project purpose	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
DANIA, DFID[20]	Goal		Purpose	Results/ outputs	Activities	
European Union[21]	Overall objective	Project Purpose	Results	Activities		
FAO[22], UNDP[23], NORAD[24]	Development Objective		Immediate Objectives	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
PC/logFrame[25]	Goal		Purpose	Outputs	Activities	
UNHCR[26]	Sector Objective	Goal	Project Objective	Outputs	Activities	Inputs
USAID Logframe[27]	Final Goal	Strategic Goal Objective	Intermediate results		Activities	202E
USAID Results Framework[28]	Strategic Objective	Intermediate Results		Outputs	Activities	Inputs
World Bank	Long-term Objectives		Short-term Objectives	Outputs		Inputs

18 CARE Impact Guidelines, October 1999.
17 AusAID NGO Package of Information, 1998
18 Gudie foqr the use of Logical Framework Approach in the Management and Evaluation of CIDA's International Projects. Evaluation Division.
19 ZOPP in Steps. 1989.
20 A Guide to Appraisal, Design, monitoring, Management and Impact Assessment of Health & Population Projects. ODA [now DFID]. October 1995.
21 Project Cycle Management: Integrated Approach and Logical Framework, Commission of the European Communities Evaluation Unit Methods and Instruments for Project Cycle Management, No. 1, February 1991.
22 Project Appraisal and the Use of Project Document Formats for FAO Technical cooperation Projects. Pre-Course Activity: Revision of Project Formulation and Assigned Reading. Staff Development Group, Personnel Division, August 1992.
23 UNDP Policy and Proram Manual
24 The Logical Framework Approach (LFA). Handbook for Objectives-oriented Project Planning.
25 PC/LogFrame™ 1988-1992 TEAM technologies, Inc.
26 Project Planning in UNHCR: A Practical Guide on the Use of Objectives, Outputs and Indicators for UNHCR Staff and Implementing Partners, Second Ver. March 2002.
27 The Logical Framework Approach to portfolio Design, Review and Evaluation in A.I.D.: Genesis, Impact, Problems and Opportunities. CDIE, 1987.
28 Results Oriented Assistance Sourcebook, USAID, 1998.

☑ Activity 28

This is an individual activity. You are going to develop a draft project logical framework for your own project based on the demonstrated sample Logical Framework Matrices, and supported by the trainers and resource persons.

Resources needed:

- Two examples of logical project frameworks (provided at the workshop)

Session 18
Budget Development

Objectives

By the end of this session you will:

- have developed a shared understanding of common budget categories
- be able to discuss the importance and practice of non-project contribution and in-kind contribution in budgeting
- have analysed examples of successful project budgets
- be able to explain the importance of using the proposal's budget in financial reporting
- have drafted a budget for your own project

Developing a project budget is one of the most time consuming aspects of preparing a project proposal, because it entails obtaining financial information from all the project partners, estimating costs as much as four to five years before they will be incurred, and if there is more than one executing agency, assembling information generated by different financial reporting systems.

But the time invested in preparing a good, sound budget is worth it, because it can determine whether your organization will receive funding. More than any other component, the budget will highlight the quality of your planning. Your budget should demonstrate a realistic assessment of the financial resources required to implement your project in a cost-effective manner.

Each funding agency has slightly different requirements for how budgets are presented, and applicants must adapt their budget to conform to the format requested by the donor. Fortunately, donors usually provide very specific directions about the kind of information they need in a budget. Many donors will also answer questions from applicants about budget formats or the meaning of particular terms in their guidelines.

This section provides some basic principles for organizing project budget information that are common to many funding agencies. The differences tend to be in the details.

How to research budget information?

When you first begin to develop a budget, there may be quite a few 'unknowns'. Particular costs may be unknown for two reasons:

i) because some key planning has not yet been completed (for example, perhaps the amount of staff time required for training has not yet been estimated) or

ii) because you have not yet obtained the cost of a particular item (for example, travel to certain project locations)

Developing the project activities and the project budget often happens concurrently. Identifying a cost item may require clarifying certain aspects of a project activity, in discussions that involve both project design and budget decisions.

A systematic approach is to review the list of project activities year by year, and determine the cost categories associated with each activity. Some donors require that the budget outlines each year's expenses for the duration of the project, and that the totals for each category are also presented in summary form.

It's useful to deal with the major expenses first. Typically, the most significant part of a project is the costs for people; staffing, consultancies, honoraria, and associated benefits. When you are working with partner organizations, you will need to obtain information about salary ranges for staff who will be engaged with the project. Even though it can sometimes be difficult to obtain this information, it is essential. Unless you have information to the contrary, it is prudent to ask for a salary range for the positions involved, and then use the midpoint of that range for determining staff costs for the budget. If staff salaries tend to increase each year, include this increase as a factor in the budget.

Travel and accommodation can also represent a significant proportion of a budget, especially for a project requiring international travel. This will require obtaining information about current costs for travel between the specific locations, and some predictions about the estimated increase in travel costs over the duration of the project. Travel agencies that regularly serve the project partners are usually able to provide this kind of information.

It is important to keep all of the working documents used to prepare the budget, so that the budget can be readily reviewed and updated if necessary. Computer spreadsheets are useful for organizing and updating budget information.

The next sections review some of the more common organizing categories:

Expense budget

Funding guidelines may require that applicants create two major expense budget segments, one for the costs of project management/administration, and one for the costs of project implementation.

i) Project management and administration costs

Project management and administration costs are the costs directly associated with coordinating the project. Typically these costs include staff time and communications costs for:

a) communication and meetings with project team members and other stakeholders about project management issues
b) overhead costs associated with accounting and record keeping, including utilities and supplies
c) travel related to project management

In many cases, project proponents are asked to contribute to a share of the project cost. In these situations, it is common for project proponents to contribute some or all of the project administration costs, especially if the regular staff of an organization handles project administration. This is sometimes called an in-kind contribution or self-financing part.

ii) Project implementation costs

Project implementation costs include the costs directly associated with the project activities. These would typically include:

a) salary and benefit costs for staff hired especially for the project
b) consultancy fees for project work
c) training costs; for staff involved in the project, for participants in the project, including the costs of instructors, travel, accommodation and supplies
d) costs of production of resource materials or report
e) equipment and supplies required to implement the project. (Many donors place limitations on expenditures for capital equipment for a project)

Note: When the expense budget must be segmented into project management / administration costs and project implementation costs, it sometimes means setting up duplicate categories for some expense items. For example, there might be an expense category for 'travel-management' and an expense category for 'travel-implementation'. If you are required to distinguish between project management and project implementation costs, you will need to refer to the donor's definition of what belongs in each category. You should check with the donor if it is not clear to you where a major budget item belongs.

iii) Capital costs and operating expenses

Capital costs for a project include major equipment, such as vehicles, computers, furniture, etc. Many donors will not cover the cost of acquiring capital, unless it can be demonstrated that acquisition of this capital equipment is essential to the successful operation of the project. For example, if a project involves computer-based training, and the location for the training is not equipped with the necessary hardware and software, equipment acquisition and some facilities upgrades may be essential to the project.
The ongoing expenses required to ensure the sound functioning of the project are sometimes called operating expenses. Definitions of operating expenses vary widely, but may include certain administrative or overhead costs, such as the cost of a telephone line or an internet service provider that is required for the duration of the project. It is important to consult with the donor to determine how to categorise this type of expenditure.

Revenue budget

Project revenue can include:

i) financial contributions from other sources
ii) in-kind contributions (self-financing part) of services or facilities from project partners or others associated with the project
iii) income, such as tuition income from participants in training programmes

The revenue budget should list all confirmed financial contributions from other sources: these serve to indicate broader support for the project. These can include government grants, contributions from corporations, non-government or non-profit organizations.

In-kind contributions (self-financing part), as discussed above, include provision of staff time, use of facilities and equipment by organizations involved in the project. In-kind contributions can also include the donation of services by another organization, for example the use of a long distance phone network at no charge. Values of in-kind contributions/self-financing parts should be calculated as accurately as possible and should be consistent with costs for these services in the expense budget.

If the project is designed to generate income that will be returned to the project, rather than to any of the project partners, this should be shown in the revenue budget. Income may come from interest paid by financial institutions, from sale of products or licensing fees for the use of materials developed by the project, from tuition fees, and so on. If the revenue generated during the project is an indicator of continuing revenue generation after the project is over, this should be highlighted if it points to continued sustainability of the project initiative.

In project proposals developed in response to a donors' announcement that it will provide a certain amount of money for specific types of projects, it is quite acceptable to include this amount in the revenue budget, and to identify it as the donors' contribution. In other situations, the amount requested should simply be designated as 'Requested Funding'.

The revenue budget is less detailed, and shows the major sources of income and amounts.

Budget presentation

The total budget shows both the expense and the revenue side, and, of course, they must balance. The budget should be presented so that it is clear that it follows the pattern of activities listed in the proposal. In addition to the spreadsheet that shows the entire budget, most funding applications also have a section entitled 'notes to accompany budget'. This is where you provide the detailed information.

When presenting background information to the budget, it's important to explain the basis for estimated costs and revenues; prior experience, current costs, reasonable estimates, and so on. As well, the budget presentation should indicate confidence in the information provided. Donors are uneasy with vague budgets or those that include categories that do not really identify expenditures- such as 'contingency', or 'unforeseen expenses'. Unless there is a separate line item in the donor's budget form for contingency expenses, it is better to leave it out, and instead allocate a small additional margin (5% to 10%) to the other expense categories. Although it is reasonable to expect that not everything will go as planned in a project, the budget is not the place to convey this expectation. In many cases, there are provisions in contracts between donors and project proponents to enable a revision of the budget if there is a significant change in circumstances.

In summary, the budget section of your proposal must conform to the requirements of each individual funding application that you complete. Generally speaking, your budget section should meet the following basic requirements:

- Respects all funding agency financial regulations and standard rates
- Uses unit costs based on current prices
- Relates directly to input quantities and scheduling
- Distinguishes programme from management costs

- Reflects a proportionate balance between programme and management costs
- Provides sufficient financial resources to manage the project effectively
- Provides sufficient detail without compromising financial reporting ability
- Presents an attractive cost/benefit package

☑ Activity 29

You are going to develop a draft budget for your own project based on the demonstrated sample budgets, and supported by the trainers and resource persons.

Resources needed:

- Proposal Template - Section 10: Project Budget

■ Session 19
Drafting the Full Proposal

Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:

- an understanding of the process of developing a full proposal especially in regard to timeline and roles and responsibilities
- a plan for developing your own full project proposal with a timeline and names of who will be responsible for each step
- developed the first framework draft of a full proposal based on your own concept note

This session uses a project proposal template that includes the type of information requested in most donor application forms. Specific donors may use slightly different guidelines and forms, so be sure to work directly from the donor's application form when you are writing your own proposal

The background material of this session is divided into two parts. The two parts are related to the two stages you should go through when you write a project proposal. The first stage involves writing a draft, and the second stage involves assessing the proposal with those involved in the project, and then finalising it. Once it is finalised, you will be ready to send your proposal to the donor.

Part One deals with writing the draft project proposal, and Part Two provides some tools to help you assess the project proposal and finalise it.

Part One: Preparing the draft project proposal (Section 1-10)

The sections in Part One match the information categories of the Project Proposal Template handout. They provide some additional directions and ideas about completing each section.

As you work on this unit, keep in mind some basic tips on good presentation and readability of a project proposal:

- Provide a visible frame for the proposal, by introducing each section with a preview of what's in that section and including subtitles that are consistent with the section introduction

- Try to use the simplest words and sentence structures that convey the intended meaning
- If you must use words that are specific to your field, and may not be understood by the reader, provide a simple, one-line explanation of the word the first time you use it
- Try to keep paragraphs short and to the point
- Use a point form structure where there are long lists of sentences or phrases
- Keep your language simple if the readers of your proposal may not be completely familiar with the language of the proposal
- Don't rely on your computer's spell checker to pick up all spelling errors. For example, it won't identify misspelled words that are themselves real words (for example, hour instead of our)
- Use a consistent numbering system to number the pages and paragraphs
- Make the document as attractive and functional as possible. Use a readable font and leave reasonable margins and spaces between paragraphs so the words don't seem crowded on the page

Section 1: Assembling the basic information

Basic information about your organization

The first section of a proposal (and important not to forget!) usually provides the basic information about your organization. This is the 'just the facts' section.

Be sure to mention any factors that may make it difficult to contact your organization in this section (for example, if the e-mail is not always reliable). It is also helpful to indicate your organization's standard working hours, and any time zone differences between your location and that of the funding organization, in case they want to contact you by telephone.

Include the following information:

- Organization Name
- Date established
- Name of contact person
- Contact information: postal and e-mail addresses, phone and fax numbers, website (if applicable)

Basic Information about the proposed project

Select a title for the project

It is very useful to have a clear, succinct title that effectively conveys the essential information about the project. Both project proponents and prospective donors will be using this title in all correspondence and reports for the duration of the project, so the title should be manageable and memorable.

Section 2: Project overview or summary

Some donors indicate they prefer to have an overview of the project as a whole, and then the specific details. Check the donors' guidelines.

The summary may be the only item read by those who conduct the preliminary review of many proposals, so it must include essential proposal information, and a sound rationale that justifies support. In addition, a summary serves to introduce the project, encourage the reader to continue reading the entire proposal and give the reader a framework for understanding the details of the proposal. The summary should also present the project in terms that are most relevant to the donors' stated criteria. For this reason, you may decide to adapt your summary (along with other elements of your proposal) to appeal to specific donors.

Although the summary appears near the beginning of the project proposal, it is best to finalise it after all other elements of the proposal have been completed, when all the information required for the summary has been compiled.

The proposal summary should, in one page or less:

- identify all the project proponents and stakeholders;
- introduce the problem or issue the project is designed to address;
- explain why the project will address this problem effectively;
- outline the project objectives;
- outline in broad terms the project activities and timelines; and
- enlist the expected long-term outcomes of the project.

In short, your overview will explain to the donor why this project is worth doing, and why your project team is ideally placed to do it.

By the time you write the full proposal, you may have already approached a potential donor with a letter of inquiry. If so, the information in your letter of inquiry should be sufficient for the summary.

Section 3: Functions of the proposal

The introductory section of the proposal includes information about the project context, rationale, goals and objectives, and methodology.

The project context or background to the issue/problem

This section describes the issue or problem that the project intends to address. It helps the potential donors to understand why the proposed project is a realistic approach to dealing with the issue. In selecting what contextual information to provide, you should be aware of the donors' expected prior knowledge.

This is also the section in which you briefly describe the project beneficiaries, those who are expected to benefit from the project in some way. You should provide information about both direct and indirect beneficiaries.

In this section, be sure to demonstrate that your proposal is based on sound local research (whether conducted by the proponents or by others), extensive consultation with stakeholders, and, where applicable, on research studies and/or best practice from the field or academic disciplines relevant to the project.

The project context should lead naturally into a project rationale.

The rationale

In a sentence or two, the rationale section outlines why the project is an appropriate way of addressing the issue, and why it is the best fit with the available resources.

The goal(s)

The goal describes in broad terms what the project hopes to achieve. The goal is generally associated with an 'outcome' as indicated earlier in Figure 8. In other words, it describes how the situation will change as a result of your project being implemented.

The project objective(s)

The objectives follow logically from the goal. They describe the benefits of the project in specific, measurable terms. Project objectives should be able to be assessed, even if not all of them lend themselves to quantitative analysis. This is because one element of project evaluation is assessing how well it achieved its stated objectives.

Objectives are generally associated with outputs -- in other words, they describe exactly what you and your partners will do if funded. It is important to invest some time and discussion in developing project objectives that will work over the long term.

As well, project objectives serve as an important reference for all the project proponents for the duration of the project, especially if the project is complex. By questioning which course of action is most likely to support the project objectives, you can facilitate decision making throughout project implementation.

Section 4: Staffing and organizational information

This section explains which organizations will be involved in the project as proponents, partners and stakeholders, and how they will be involved. Proposal applications differ in terms of the location in which they ask for information about those implementing the project, but wherever it is located, it is a key element in establishing the credibility of the project and the proposal.

Information about the project proponents and partners

Donors need basic information about the organizations that will be responsible for implementing the project (these organizations are sometimes called executing agencies). This includes the project proponents and all partners.

Focus on the aspects of these organizations that are relevant to the project and that establish their credibility and experience in related areas. In general, it is important to include:

i) Factual information about each partner organization's mission, size, main activities, the region and population it serves
ii) A brief description of the organizations' particular achievements in fields relevant to the project
iii) An indication of the organizations' capacity to undertake the tasks involved in the project

Donors are also interested in the experience of project partners in working together, and their capacity to share responsibility and communicate effectively.

You should also include the names and responsibilities of staff who will have key roles in the project, including: project managers, team leaders, experts, and consultants. Mention their areas of expertise relevant to the project and previous experience relevant to the project. The full curricula vitae of key project staff can be included as appendices to the proposal.

Information about the project stakeholders

Many donors require that project stakeholders, including beneficiaries, are involved in the project in some way (through consultations or in an advisory role, but not necessarily in its management).

When stakeholders have a role in the project, you should include the following information:

i) A brief profile of each key stakeholder, emphasising aspects relevant to the project. For example, if an agricultural cooperative is a stakeholder, include information about the length of time it has been operating, number of members, achievements, operating structure, and contributions to the development of the project concept
ii) Indicators of stakeholders' capacity to participate in the project; people and resources relevant to the project, documentation of decisions to support the project and to allocate staff and/or volunteer time and resources

Section 5: Methodology

The methodology section describes how your project will be planned and implemented in order to achieve your goals and objectives. It includes the strategies, activities, and timelines for the project. This section also describes what will be done, by whom, and when.

The methodology section deserves special emphasis. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the field by explaining why certain activities were selected.

Strategies

The project strategies provide a broad picture of what will be done to achieve goals, and generally include the main organizational approaches required for both programme management and programme implementation.

For example, if two different components of a project are to be developed, there may be two separate teams (and possibly separate partners) to develop each component. The project would therefore require some means of ensuring communication among all the teams, and there would be a need to ensure overall coordination of programme delivery among the partner institutions.

Project activities and timeframe

Project activities describe the specific actions that will be undertaken to achieve objectives. These may be written in point form or as a work plan that includes these subtitles: Action (to be taken), Responsibility (by whom), Date (by when) as shown in Table 13.

In most cases, it will not be possible to use exact dates for the timelines, because it is usually uncertain when the funding and administrative arrangements will be in place so that the project can start. Timelines should indicate your best estimate of how long it will take to complete the major activities of the project. Timelines can be included in the activities section or they can be described separately, as a list of key dates when activities will be completed, sometimes called milestones.

Although there is a tendency to be optimistic when developing timelines for a project, it is important to be realistic and allow enough flexibility for unforeseen problems. Creating a realistic project timeframe demonstrates to the donor that the project proponents have relevant project experience.

The activity plan in the project proposal will be an outline of the major activities. A more detailed work plan will be needed after the project is approved.

Based on the information you have so far, complete the following activity chart for your project:

Table 13. Activity Chart

Activity	Responsible	By date	Comments
Project administration			
Project management			
Project implementation			
Project monitoring			
Project evaluation			

Responsibility Matrix

When a project entails a number of partners and stakeholders, it is sometimes useful to prepare a responsibility matrix that outlines who is responsible for implementing specific categories of activities, who is kept informed, who will advise, and the timeline for all of these. An example of responsibility matrix is given in details in Table 14.

Table 14. An example of a responsibility matrix

<table>
<tr><th>ACTIVITY</th><th></th><th colspan="6">RESPONSIBILITIES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Partners and Stakeholders</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Project Administration</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Project Management</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Programme Development</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Project Monitoring</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Project Evaluation</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="8">Legend:
R = responsible for the task/activity
D = does/performs the task
A = Approve – people who actually approves a decision
S = Support – people who support the implementation
C = Consult – people who should be consulted about the activity
I = Inform – people who need to be informed</td></tr>
</table>

When you've finished your methodology section, consider whether it meets the following criteria:

- Describes clearly what the project will actually do
- Flows naturally from the rationale and objectives
- Clearly describes programme activities
- States reasons for selection of activities
- Describes sequence, duration and timing of activities
- Includes a realistic timetable for the project activities
- Clearly describes management activities
- Describes staffing of programme
- Describes management organization
- Describes management roles and responsibilities
- Presents a reasonable scope of activities that can be managed by the proponent

Section 6: Project budget

Refer to Session 18

Section 7: Project results

The results section of a project proposal answers the question: what will happen as a result of this project? It is sometimes broken down into project outputs, project outcomes and project impact.

Project Outputs

The outputs are the short-term, or immediate results of the project, and the easiest results to formulate. They indicate whether the partners successfully achieved each objective. Determine how the anticipated results of each completed objective will effect the situation the project addresses.

For example, if your objective is 'to train 8,500 forestry workers in improved logging practices in riparian areas,' then the output would be written as:

'8 500 forestry workers trained in improved logging practices in riparian areas.' See Table 13.

Project Outcome

The outcome of the project addresses how the outputs are expected to change the situation the project addresses. The outcome of the project is therefore reflected in the project goal.

Project Impact

The impact of the project refers to the broader development, research or policy implications that result from the project. For example, how might the project influence policy formulation and implementation? How might it impact development processes at the local, national and regional levels? How might it affect the sustainability of the local economy over the longer term? Could the results be used in other settings? What contribution could they make to existing technical and scientific knowledge?

Note: Many donors indicate that projects must consider the needs of specific target populations, for example, those who are typically under-represented in society, such as, minorities, women, and low-income earners. Results statements should identify how target populations will benefit from the project.

If you have a complex project with several objectives and activities, it may be useful to create a results chart that can be used to organize your results in a logical framework as shown in Table 15.

Section 8: Conditions and risks

This section describes the conditions that are necessary for the project activities to take place, and for them to achieve their intended goals. These conditions should be immediately relevant to the project and fall within the project's scope.

Table 15. An example of result chart

Activities	Expected Results	Performance Indicators	Critical Conditions (Assumptions and Risks)
Development of open and distance training programmes on logging in riparian areas	8500 forestry workers, 85% of the forestry workers in the region, are trained to implement environmentally sound logging practice in riparian areas	– Increased awareness of sound logging practice – Less logging damage to fish habitat – Increased spawning and survival rates of fish over long term	– Government monitors, loggers and former fisheries workers available to both participate in and facilitate training programmes – Employers remain supportive of improved logging practice – Those who complete the programme continue in their occupation
– Development of open and distance training programme on environmental monitoring for government monitors – Development of open and distance training programme on environmental monitoring for government monitors	– 200 full time government monitors trained to determine the viability of fish habitat in freshwater streams and rivers – 1500 short term Environmental trained staff to use water quality assessment tools and restore damaged fish habitat	– Improved monitoring of logging practices and of fish habitat – Restoration of damaged fish habitat	– Those who complete the programme continue in their occupation – Sufficient resources available to continue monitoring and habitat repair activities
	Training programmes serve as templates for worksite training in resource based regions	Development of additional training programmes based on this model	Continued government and employer interest in on the job training
Collaboration among government, employers and educational institutions	Development of collaborative processes for addressing environmental problems	Continued collaboration among all partners to work on other environmental initiatives.	Continued commitment to collaborative approaches among all partners.

By including information about conditions and risks, you indicate to donors that your proposal gives careful consideration to the implications of factors that may be beyond the control of project proponents.

Not all plans proceed as expected, particularly when the project extends several years into the future.

Section 9: Monitoring and evaluation

Project proposals usually include a section on monitoring and evaluation, because they are considered by most donors to be integral to a sound project.

Monitoring enables project partners to assess how well the project is going, for the purposes of adjusting project plans if necessary. These activities are conducted throughout the duration of the project. (This is sometimes also called interim or formative evaluation).

Evaluation enables project partners, stakeholders and donors to determine how well the project met its objectives after the project has been completed. (This is sometimes called summative evaluation).

It is generally expected that both project partners and stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process.

The monitoring and evaluation plan should describe:

i) how the project process itself will be reviewed and adjusted if necessary
ii) how the progress towards project milestones will be assessed, what indicators will be used, who will be involved, and at what points in the project
iii) how the results of project activities will be assessed, what indicators will be used, who will be involved in the evaluation, and what decisions will be affected by these results
iv) how the end point evaluation will be conducted, and how it will determine the project's effectiveness and sustainability

Some donors require external evaluations of projects they support, conducted by people who are not directly involved in the project. The evaluation plan in the project proposal should take into account any external evaluation, but should also describe evaluation strategies that project partners will undertake.

The Project Proposal Template handout provides a Table that you can use to help you organize your monitoring and evaluation plan.

Section 10: Linking the project to organizational goals and funding goals

It is important to know how donors' priorities match the issues addressed by your project. Donors often require a statement that links the proposed project to the goals of your organization, and to goals of the funding organization. This statement can help donors to determine how well the project relates to your organization's priorities and to theirs.

Common priorities of funding organizations are:

1. Broad participation and consultation in project design and implementation
2. A follow-on effect from the project, which means the project extends beyond the immediate project context and timeframe. This is sometimes termed building capacity. An example is a project to train staff that are then able to train others
3. Sustainability, which means that activities undertaken as part of the project will be able to continue after the project is concluded

4. Inclusion of minorities and under-represented groups, such as women, in project design and implementation
5. Respect for human rights in all aspects of project design and implementation, especially research with human subjects
6. Environmental soundness. Even projects that are not directly addressing environmental issues are normally required to demonstrate that the environmental impact has been considered, and if it is determined there will be an environmental impact, steps are included to mitigate any negative effects

Part Two: Assessing and finalising the proposal (Step 1-4)

Part Two provides some basic steps you can follow to assess a proposal to ensure that it is complete, correct and consistent with generally accepted guidelines for proposals.
It's important to provide key people with an opportunity to review the completed proposal before it is finalised. Everyone involved – the project proponents, partners, stakeholders and donors – should have the opportunity to verify that the project proposal is an accurate reflection of their shared understanding of what the project entails.

A good project proposal must meet the following three groups of criteria:

1. it must describe a good project
2. it must address the donor's issues and concerns clearly and completely;
3. it must be presented in a easy to read, straightforward style

There are two possible options for reviewing the proposal for style and clarity:

i) Have an objective reader check the proposal for style, clarity, grammar and spelling. Ideally, the person reviewing it at this point should be a good writer or editor, who can recommend improvements without imposing his or her own style on the document.

ii) Another option is to have someone who is not familiar with the project read the document, and then meet with you and tell you, in their own words, what they think each section says. This person can also be asked to suggest improvements in presentation. This will highlight any issues of clarity, but another reader should also check it for spelling and grammar.

Step 1: Review of the proposal by the relevant organizations

First, indicate how reviewers can provide feedback. This very much depends on your working relationship with the particular reviewer, as well as logistics. In some cases, it may be useful to have written comments, especially if the reviewer does not live or work nearby and most communication is in writing (print or electronic). In other situations, it may be most helpful to have a discussion with the reviewer to talk about each of the issues raised. In any event, a dialogue about the issues, in person, on the phone or in writing, can help to clarify questions and establish a common understanding.

If you suggest how the reviewer's feedback can be discussed, it gives him or her an idea of how extensive you expect the review to be. For example, if you suggest that feedback can be discussed in a one-hour meeting in a week's time, it conveys that a more thorough review is expected than if you suggest a ten-minute phone conversation the day after you give the reviewer the proposal.

Organizational review of the proposal

If your organization has a central role in the project, as the initiator or project manager, there may be several people, representing different parts of the organization, who want to review the proposal, for example, from the perspective of its financial implications, management, and implementation.
It's a good idea to give ample opportunity for discussion of the project proposal after people have reviewed it. Seeing a proposal in 'black and white', in other words, as a completed print document, can trigger questions and realizations that were not previously evident, even for people who are well informed about the project.

The Organizational Proposal Review handout provides some sample assessment questions to ask of a reviewer from your own organization.

Partner review of the proposal

The representatives of each project partner should also have an opportunity to review and comment on the project proposal at this stage. Partners are in a good position to recognize any 'design flaws' in the project, and their comments should be taken seriously. Partners need to know that this is not simply an exercise to include them as a matter of form, and that their comments will be considered appropriately.

Partners may provide feedback on a number of levels: about the project itself, about the specific partner's role in the project, and about the proposal as a document that accurately presents the project.

The assessment questions used to guide the partners' review of the proposal are similar to those for an organizational review, with some small differences. The Partner Proposal Review handout you with a few key sample questions to ask of a project partner.

Stakeholder review of the proposal

Project stakeholders should also have an opportunity to review the project proposal. Stakeholders may have had less direct involvement than project partners in the detailed preparation of the proposal. However, because they are directly or indirectly affected by the project, stakeholders are in an ideal position to assess whether or not the project will meet their needs and concerns. In particular, stakeholders may be in the best position to judge how well the proposal describes the context and issues, and conditions and risks. They can also identify gaps or other issues around the project design and the project proposal.

Stakeholders need to know that their feedback will be taken into account. Because they may have had less opportunity than project partners to provide input at the various planning stages for the project, it is crucial to respond to any concerns at this stage.

You can find some sample questions that can be used to guide a stakeholder's review of the proposal in the Stakeholder Proposal Review handout.

Donor review of the proposal

When assessing a proposal, donors generally distinguish between the three different dimensions:

i. Assessment of the project concept - does the project meet standard criteria or donors' criteria for a quality project?
ii. Assessment of the proposal content - does it provide clear and complete information about the project that is responsive to donors' issues?
iii. Assessment of the proposal's presentation style - is the proposal well written, without ambiguity or jargon?

i. Assessment of the project concept: Is this a good project for the donor to support?

Day 3 sessions on project concept note development provide some general principles that donors look for to determine whether a project is worthwhile to support. In brief, these include:

a) Problem Definition
b) Relevance
c) Scientific and technical merit
d) Capacity building
e) Gender considerations
f) Human and institutional resources
g) Complementarities
h) Sustainability
i) General research soundness
j) Development relevance
k) Ethical considerations
l) Assumptions and risks
m) Environment
n) Monitoring and evaluation

These general principles are a guideline only, and you will have to determine the criteria used by the donor you are approaching when doing your assessment of your project concept.

ii. Assessment of the proposal content: Is this a good proposal?

Generally speaking, if a proposal is well-written and thorough, it should strongly indicate that the project concept and its implementation have been clearly thought out, and that partners and stakeholders have been involved in the process of developing the proposal.

A good proposal clearly presents what the project proponents will do, how they will do it, and why they will do it. The Proposal Assessment handout provides you with a guide for proposal assessment with spaces for you to record your comments.

A donor will assess the content of your proposal based on whether it clearly addresses the criteria identified above, under what constitutes a good project.

iii. Assessment of the proposal's presentation style: Is the proposal presented in a clear, comprehensive and easy to read style?

Part One provided some useful tips on good presentation and readability of a project proposal.

One author on fundraising suggests the following approach for assessing readability of a proposal:

- Does the first sentence of each paragraph introduce the idea?
- If you took the first sentence of each paragraph in a section in sequence, would the resulting paragraph make sense?
- If you took the first and last sentence of each section in sequence, would the resulting be a summary of the proposal?

Step 2: Dealing with Feedback

Despite extensive consultation in the project planning stages, there may still be feedback at the later stages of proposal development that mean that project team must reassess the project design: this process may lead to decisions that require some changes to the proposal. As well, the proposal writing team may receive feedback that indicates that the proposal still needs some rewriting or restructuring.

The final version of the proposal can be strengthened if it addresses the issues raised by those who have reviewed the proposal. This section provides some tools to use feedback constructively to refine the proposal. In most cases, you will receive feedback of two kinds: some that indicates the proposal is fine as it stands, and some that indicates that changes should be made to the project and/or the proposal. Both have their uses.

Positive feedback from an informed reviewer reinforces confidence in the proposal, and serves as a useful point of reference when considering other feedback that suggests changes. Feedback that conveys concerns about the project design or recommends changes to the proposal requires more attention and action. This section addresses this second type of feedback.

Types of feedback

One important distinction to make when working with feedback is determining whether the comment relates to style or to substance. Both are important.

i) Style

Comments about style identify areas that are not sufficiently clear, or are awkwardly phrased, or have grammar or spelling mistakes. Usually, these can be addressed by careful editing. A clearly written proposal makes a good first impression: for a donor, it can determine whether the proposal gets considered seriously.

ii) Substance

Comments about the substance of the proposal can relate either to the project concept itself or to how the project is presented in the proposal document. It is important to distinguish between these types of feedback. Sometimes the two types of issues are so closely connected that they have to be addressed together.

Members of the project team should consider comments about the project design, because they should decide whether to modify the project based on this input, or to provide a better rationale for the project design as it stands.

Be sure to clarify whether the feedback arises from a misinterpretation of the project proposal, which points to a need for more clarity in the proposal, or whether they are pointing out a problem with the way the project is designed. Any comments that are based on a misunderstanding of the proposal should be relayed to the proposal writers so they can clarify the relevant sections of the proposal. We will explore some examples of this type of misinterpretation later on in this section.

If there are differences in interpretation about the project, it's useful to find out now, rather than later on in the project. If a number of different reviewers raise similar concerns about the project, this indicates that the project team should rethink how this part of the project was planned and designed.

The project team should also consider comments about the roles of the various organizations, as they are presented in the proposal. The proposal review process provides an opportunity to clarify the agreement about the different roles, and to affirm each organization's commitment to the project.

The proposal writers should consider the comments about the proposal itself as a document when they revise and edit it.

How to interpret and respond to feedback

Consider which sections of the proposal are the primary focus of the feedback. In general, comments that recommend substantive changes to the early sections of the proposal (rationale, context, issues, goals, objectives) are more likely to be related to the basic principles of the project, the project concept.

For example, comments that suggest that the rationale of the project should be reconsidered raise serious questions that should be discussed carefully by the project partners and stakeholders. (As an aside, if there are challenges to the project rationale at this late stage, by someone close to the project, it raises doubts about whether the initial consultative processes were sufficiently broadly based and comprehensive.)

Comments about project methodology and implementation may suggest useful changes that will improve project results without fundamentally changing the direction. An example is a suggested change in the schedule of a training plan.

You can use the following questions as a guide for analysing feedback. Consider, from the perspective of the person providing the feedback:

- What is seen as the problem?
- Are there suggestions about changes that would address this problem?
- What would be the impact of these changes, if they were implemented, on other aspects of the project, or of the proposal?
- If these changes were implemented, would it make it a better project, or a better proposal?

Let's work through three examples (A-B-C):

Example A: Feedback from a partner, the Adult Education Coordinator, East Island College

'I'm not sure that the project planners have really taken into account that implementing training is much more challenging when it involves changing people's attitudes, and when many of the trainees have limited prior education. This is difficult enough to do in person, but will be even more difficult by distance education. There do not seem to be sufficient resources invested in implementing these training programmes to make them successful.'

Answer the following questions in your file:

- What part of the proposal is this reviewer addressing?
- Would you say these comments relate to the project concept itself or to the proposal document?
- How should these concerns be addressed?

Our analysis is:

In the view of this educator, the problem is that the project's training strategies are not appropriate to the task. Although she has not directly suggested alternatives, the statements that more resources are needed, and that distance education is not a good option imply that the programmes should be provided by face to face training. The educator's criticism appears to be based on a belief that distance education precludes local, personal contact. However, the project design is based on using distance education and a train-the-trainer concept. The train the trainer approach means there will be a great deal of personal contact and on site mentoring as well as distance learning techniques. Each trainer will work with small groups, a context that is conducive to open discussions that can change attitudes, as well as team learning for skills development.

Responses

- The project team decides to meet with this educator to explain the educational rationale behind the choices of strategies and describe how they see these strategies working in practice. At the same time, they will ask for her suggestions about how to enhance the team-building side of the project

- Using input from this meeting, the project proposal team writes a brief explanation of the reasons for choosing these approaches, to be added to the Strategies section. The Activities section will include more information about how the train the trainer approach will be implemented

Example B: Stakeholder feedback, from the President of the Fish workers Association of 'Anduga'

'We originally supported this project when it was presented to us because we support initiatives that help fishers get back to work. We recognize that it is important to address one of the major causes of the decline in the fisheries, by dealing with forestry practice, but this project seems to have lost sight of the real victims, the fishers. We do not see how this project is going to help fishers...it does nothing to help them get back into fishing. The temporary jobs that are proposed for them in environmental monitoring will take them away from their coastal communities and will mean they will have to do a lot of training for two or three years' work' .

Answer the following questions:

- What part of the proposal is this reviewer addressing?
- Would you say these comments relate to the project concept itself or to the proposal document?
- How should these concerns be addressed?

Our analysis is:

The President of the Fish workers Association of Anduga feels that the project does not help fishers very much. Within his own perspective, he is right. He does not directly suggest any changes to the project to address this issue, but there is an implied suggestion that the project should lead to more re-employment of fishers in the short term.

But the project takes in a longer term view: its strategies are designed to help rebuild fish stocks by restoring habitat that is essential for spawning. The project is also designed to fit in with a number of other projects in the same region that do address the shorter term needs of unemployed fishers. The project planners recognized that the total employment needs of fishers would not be addressed by offering some fishers the opportunity to work with environmental monitors on streambed regeneration. But they felt it was an important strategy for establishing a community-wide awareness of the interdependence of the two resource-based occupations.

Responses:

- The project team decides to address the president's concerns by meeting with him to provide more information about the reasoning behind the project design, to present the case for projects that address longer term issues, and to ask him once again for his endorsement of the project

- The proposal writing team will include an explanation of how this project fits with other projects in the Issues section of the project document. In the Issues section, they will also make it clearer that there is a need to raise community awareness of the interconnections among occupations that depend on the same environment. The Goals section will identify this as an additional goal, and in the Activities section, an additional objective will specify what the project will achieve with respect to this goal

Example C: Stakeholder feedback, from the Public Affairs Coordinator, Western Logging Association

‘This project design has made some assumptions about the feasibility of former fisheries workers taking on temporary jobs as environmental monitors. We believe that this is a flawed plan that will potentially lead to serious conflict in the logging areas. Fisheries workers already blame the logging industry for the loss of their incomes. If they are in a position where they are monitoring the work of loggers for potential environmental damage, the situation could threaten the physical safety of both loggers and fishers. We recommend that loggers themselves be assigned to the environmental monitoring programme. This would also be in keeping with our longstanding claim that the logging industry can be self-regulating.’

Answer the following questions:

- What part of the proposal is this reviewer addressing?
- Would you say these comments relate to the project concept itself or to the proposal document?
- How should these concerns be addressed?

Our analysis is:

In the view of the logging association representative, the problem is that the project strategy to train former fishers to work in environmental monitoring could result in conflict in the forestry area. He recommends a basic change to the project design, that loggers, rather than fishers, engage in short term environmental monitoring. The implications of this change are that fishers would no longer have any stake in the project, and that the non-government part of environmental monitoring will be industry-based rather than community-based.

Responses:

- The project team recognizes the concern about potential conflict in the forest, but decide that the logging industry's proposed solution is opposed to a fundamental principle of the project, which is to enhance community awareness of shared responsibility for the shared environment. They decide that the concern should be addressed by including in all of the training programmes a segment on conflict resolution and community building. They reach an understanding with the logging representative that by supporting a cooperative approach, the logging industry will improve its credibility regarding its commitment to resolving environmental issues

- The project proposal team revises the Strategies section of the proposal to explain the inclusion of the conflict resolution component, and revise the Activities section to include a description of how this component will be implemented

In summary, here are some strategies for dealing with feedback on the project concept itself. These are issues for the project team to address:

1. Consider whether the feedback is from someone who has another perspective on how the project should operate. Determine whether this perspective has to be taken into account, and if so, how can this be done?
2. Consider whether the alternative perspective can be integrated into the project design, or whether it is incompatible with the project design.
3. Consider the role of the person providing feedback vis à vis the project. Can this person play a part in helping to resolve the difficulty?

How to deal with conflicting feedback

The examples showed how a project team can deal with feedback by addressing each issue separately. However, sometimes reviewers with different interests in the project will provide conflicting feedback. One person may be very positive about a particular aspect of the project proposal that another person wants to see changed. For example, partners may feel that the role of their organization has not been highlighted sufficiently, or that the importance of a particular element of the project has not been given enough emphasis.

If the conflicting feedback is about the project concept itself, it indicates that further work is needed to resolve conflicting issues among the project partners and stakeholders.

The proposal writing team and project teams (if they are different) need to rely on their own judgement when dealing with differences of opinion about the project proposal document. The following questions can help to assess conflicting feedback about the proposal:

1. Is it based on an accurate reading of the proposal? If not, how can the proposal be clarified?
2. If feedback suggests changes, would these changes improve the proposal's clarity and effectiveness?
3. How can the positive feedback be used, along with the feedback that suggests changes, to produce a well balanced document?

How to deal with feedback from donors

Dealing with feedback from donors is in fact the final stage of proposal writing. All of the effort involved in establishing partnerships and in developing stakeholder support is an investment in a successful project: it is also excellent preparation for building a good connection with the project donors. If your proposal is successful, your donor will essentially become a partner in the project. The initial communication with the donor is the first opportunity to establish this connection. Next, and more crucial, is responding to a donor's feedback on your draft proposal.

The donor's direct feedback on your proposal gives you more information about the donor's perspective and how it is applied when assessing the proposal, especially with respect to:

- their priorities as a donor.
- their assessment of what makes a good project
- consistency with the donor's range of operations

Style and substance

Most likely, the donor's comments will be directed to the substance of the proposal rather than to the presentation style, unless a problem with style means that something is not clear to the donor. The substantive comments will include those related to the project itself, and those related to the proposal as a document.

Relevance to the donor's priorities

If you have followed the donor's information about the types of projects they fund, there is more likelihood that the proposal will match their criteria. Keep in mind that funding priorities do change, and sometimes not all of the donor's criteria are listed in full detail.

When you write a proposal with the donor's priorities in mind, it can be discouraging to receive a response that indicates that a proposal is 'not relevant to our funding priorities at this time'. If this is the only response by the donor, then it is probably not worth pursuing funding from this source any further.

If the donor indicates that there is room for discussion and negotiation, you may still have a chance at being successful.

Consider an example from the case study project, in which the donor says:

'Although our funding priorities are mainly directed towards environmental education, rather than on the job training, we find your proposal interesting because it combines environmental education for two occupational groups sharing the same context. '

The donor has provided an opportunity to discuss the options available. In this type of situation, you can then find out from the donor whether they would reconsider the proposal if the project were changed or if the proposal were changed. (In the example, this would mean either that the training aspects need to be changed, or that the donor will accept the project design as it is, if the proposal adds more information to explain how it does address the donor's priorities.)

Consistency with donor's range of operations

Even though project proposals are prepared with reference to information about the scope and scale of projects the donor will support, the donor may respond that the project does not match their current range of operations. This could be because the donor's situation has changed, or the published information was not up to date.

The donor's response may indicate that the project meets their priorities, but is not a good fit in terms of:

- its region (not the geographical area they fund)
- its size (too big or too small)
- its scope (too short or too long a term, too many or not enough people; a geographical area that is too big or too small).

There is generally very little that can be done if the donor does not support projects in the region, unless they are open to funding projects involving partnerships between two regions, one of which they do fund.

If a project is larger than those the donor normally supports, the options are to reduce the size of the project or ask the donor whether they would be interested in supporting one aspect of the project, if funding can be obtained for the other elements of the project from other sources.

If the project is smaller than those the donor normally supports, the options are to increase the size of the project, (if the partners have sufficient resources to accommodate a larger project), or to consider combining forces with another project with similar goals (if there are resources available to manage a more complex project.) As well, sometimes large donors will support what they call a 'micro-project', a demonstration project that can subsequently be operated on a larger scale. It is worthwhile finding out if this is a possibility.

If a donor indicates that the project's scope exceeds the scope of those it usually funds, it is worth exploring options for funding part of the project. (For example, if the project covers too large a region, you could ask if they would fund a part of the project in a specific district).

Again, the nature and tone of the donor's response provides a good indicator of whether or not it is worth pursuing the matter.

For example, 'We regret that we cannot fund your project because we no longer fund projects related to the environment' is a fairly definite 'no'.

But a response that indicates, 'we are currently focusing on innovative projects, and your project, although very interesting, seems quite similar to one that we funded in Chile five years ago', may leave some options open.

If your communication with the donor indicates they are open to receiving further information about the unique features of your project, you may be able to research the Chile project and demonstrate to the donor that yours is in fact quite different and innovative.

In many of these situations, the donor's feedback is about the project itself, and means that the project team has to reassess the project plan. In all cases, the project team should consider the donor's feedback, whether it is about the project itself or about the proposal: it is an opportunity to learn more about the process of working with donors. The most basic question they need to consider is, 'Are we willing to change the project in order to obtain funding, or should we look for another donor? '

Here are some questions to consider when reviewing a donor's feedback about the project itself:

- Does the feedback relate to the match between the project and the donor's priorities? If so, how can the project be changed to achieve a better fit?
- If some elements of the project must be changed to meet a donor's priorities, are these elements fundamental to the project?
- Can they be changed without jeopardising the goals and intent of the project, or the support of partners and stakeholders?
- If these changes were implemented, would they make it a better project?

The donors' perspective on a good project

If the donor generally feels that the project is a reasonable fit with their priorities and scope, they may direct their comments to the question of whether they feel the project is a good one, based on their experience.

In the 'What makes a good project' handout general principles indicate what donors constitute as a 'good' project. They generally include these features; feasibility, sustainability and reliability.

As well, donors usually have obligations (that are the donor's equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath – do no harm) to the environment, to participants, or to the social, economic and cultural systems that sustain the region.
Donors have extensive and cumulative experience about projects, and their feedback about the project itself can be very helpful. They may raise issues that have not been considered in the project development process, especially if this is a first project for the proponents. When a donor takes the time to point out a difficulty with a project, but also has positive comments, their helpfulness should be acknowledged. It is worth communicating with the donor to explore the basis for their concern and to find out how best to address it.

The donor's feedback on the proposal itself

Donors' feedback on the proposal itself will address several areas. First of all, many donors do not respond well to proposals that are not presented within the proposal format and sequencing they request. Typically, donors review proposals in a committee process, in which several people will consider a group of proposals at one time. This process often entails comparing proposals section by section, i.e. the reviewers will consider Section 1 of Proposals A , B, C and D all at once, and then Section 2 of Proposals A , B, C and D next. If one of the proposals is out of sequence, it takes time to find the appropriate section, and creates frustration for the reviewers. Reviewers may conclude that if the proposal writers have not followed the stated guidelines, it indicates a lack of respect for the donor and a potentially difficult partnership.

As well, if the proposal writers have not provided the information the way it was requested, donors may dismiss the proposal, or, if they see some promise in the project, may request that this information be provided in the appropriate form.

If there are situations in which you cannot meet the donors' requirements for information, it is better to provide an explanation on the proposal form or in a covering letter than to simply fill in not available or not applicable (N/A) on the form.

Donors may also ask for additional information that was not originally requested in the proposal guidelines. For example, they may request financial information for previous projects. These requests for information may need to be discussed with project partners, and follow up information should be provided in as clear and complete a form as possible.

Step 3: Finalise your proposal

Once you have sorted through the all the feedback you have received, outline a plan for addressing each of the issues raised in this feedback. When you have completed this plan, you are ready to prepare the final version of the proposal for submission to the donor.

Step 4: The cover letter

There is just one more item to complete before your proposal is ready to go: the cover letter. The cover letter is written as a conventional business letter to accompany the proposal. It provides basic contact information and a very brief overview of the proposal, in a few sentences.

If you completed Unit 2, you may want to refer back to the original letter of inquiry you completed. Your cover letter for the proposal will not have as much detail, since you now have a full fledged proposal, you may choose to include some of the elements you emphasised in the first letter.

Most importantly, the cover letter is an opportunity to present the project partners as experienced, competent professionals who are capable of making the project a success. Briefly present the most positive and most relevant highlights of the collective experience of the project proponents.

If, in the process of developing the proposal you have been in communication with the donor, it may be appropriate to acknowledge their help. (Of course, you would not do this if you are submitting a proposal in a competitive process.)

Conclude your letter on a hopeful note...without appearing too presumptuous!

☑ Activity 30

This is an individual activity which benefits from sharing your 'work in-progress' with your colleagues.

1. You are going to:
    - develop a framework for your full proposal using a check list of components that will be given to you, The trainers are available to assist you if needed during this exercise
    - identify what additional information or activities you need to undergo to complete the proposal
    - develop a list of activities and a timeline with names of who should be the responsible person using one of the two formats provided or using your own format

2. Join up in pairs or pairs of groups to:
    - swap your framework draft and timeline with each other and review them
    - give feedback on what is good and what could be improved

3. Continue to work on draft proposals and plan of activities and timeline for completion of draft proposals.

Participants from Egypt workshop working on drafting their proposals are shown in Photo 14.

Photo 14. Participants work on their projects proposals in Egypt workshop

Session 20
Sharing the Full Proposal

Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:
- shared your group's draft full proposal
- analyzed, assessed and commented on other group's draft full proposal based as shown in photo 15.

Resources needed:
- Proposal Assessment

Photo 15. Sharing Draft Proposal of a group in Jordan workshop

After you received your grant

This last day provides a short overview of what to expect after a donor has agreed to support the project. The hard work invested in developing a good project proposal has long term benefits, because the project proposal provides a planning framework for the duration of the project. This potential future use of the project proposal, as the basis for project planning and implementation, provides one more perspective for reviewing your proposal.

The information here is not designed to be a comprehensive presentation of project implementation, but it provides a brief introduction to this new phase in the life of a project.

The Donor as a Partner

When a donor agrees to support your project, that donor becomes an important partner in the initiative. Many of the same principles about building project partnerships also apply to building a working relationship with a donor. Over the past two decades, there have been significant changes in the nature of the relationship between donors and organizations carrying out a project. These changes are the result of a shift in the approach to development. An old English expression, 'He who pays the piper calls the tune', describes the previous situation; that the organization providing the money determined how the project was carried out by the organization receiving the money. Now, most funding agencies see the relationship with project executing agencies as one of mutual accountability. This is in keeping with an increased awareness that genuine development requires participatory decision making; including in the process those who are directly affected by changes in their social, economic, cultural and environmental situations.

Throughout each stage of the project, the donor and executing/implementing agency partnership entails certain responsibilities and activities. Here is an outline of the usual sequence of a project, in four stages:

Stage 1: Funding is approved, and the reference to the term project proponent changes
Stage 2: After the funding is approved, but before the project starts
Stage 3: While the project is being carried out (the implementation phase)
Stage 4: At the conclusion of the project

Change from Project Proponent to Executing Agency

When your organization's role changes, so does the terminology for its role: the project proponent becomes the executing agency or implementing agency. These terms simply mean 'the agency that is carrying out the work'.

Activities before launching the project

Say thank you

Once you have received the official news that funding has been approved, one of the most important steps is to say thank you. A short note of thanks directed to the person who is your primary contact at the funding agency can convey the message on behalf of all the project partners.

Develop an operating agreement with the donor

An important element of the partnership approach entails defining responsibilities and clarifying expectations regarding communication and support. This operating agreement between the donor and the executing/implementing agency is generally prepared in written form as a memorandum of understanding or contract. In general, the size and formality of the agreement increases with the size of the organization and the amount of funds involved in the project. Reaching an operating agreement generally entails developing a work plan, an evaluation plan and a reporting schedule and modifying the project budget.

Develop a work plan

The project proposal outlines the major strategies, activities and timelines, and may include a responsibility matrix. These form the core of what is called a work plan for the project. This is a detailed schedule of project activities, with specific information about personnel involved, duration of activities and anticipated milestones (specific achievements at particular points in the project).

For larger projects, the donor may provide the format for the work plan, to ensure that it covers all the required information. The work plan is usually developed in consultation with all the project partners, and the donor may be included in these consultations.

Develop an evaluation plan

Evaluation is a method for maintaining a continuing awareness of the project's progress, achievements and challenges. The evaluation plan prepared for the project proposal will probably require some revision so that it is consistent with the revised work plan. As well, the donor may have specific requirements for evaluation. The evaluation plan should also ensure that ongoing evaluation by the project partners is compatible with any external evaluations that are required by the donor.

Establish the reporting schedule

Donors will have their own requirements about what type of information they need, and at what stages of the project. Larger projects may require different types of reports at different stages, and these may be linked to provision of interim payments. As well, stakeholders and project partners will need regular reports. In general, those closer to the project require more frequent, but briefer reports. A schedule that shows what types of reports are to be produced at specific points should be included in the project work plan.

Modify the project budget

It is very likely that the project budget developed for the proposal will need some changes before it can be used as the actual budget. Many factors can change the financial picture between the time the proposal is written and the time that the project is ready to launch. The amount of funding available may be less than anticipated; changes in exchange rates can affect the cost of goods and services; there may be unexpected increases in expenses for travel, communication or other essential elements.

Budget changes need to be discussed with all project partners at the same time as work plan changes because the budget has to be consistent with the work plan. The donor may have guidelines about the allocation of funds (for example, the proportion of management costs in relation to the total budget) and may also provide direct input into the budget discussion.

Conclude an operating agreement with the donor

The work plan, evaluation plan and the budget usually represent the major portion of an operating agreement. Other elements that are usually included are: provisions for communication between the donor and the executing agencies for the duration of the project; an outline of how changes to the project plan are to be discussed and agreed, and an 'exit clause' that describes what steps are to be taken if either party cannot fulfil its obligations. The people who are named as officially accountable for the project are usually those who sign the operating agreement.

Keep progress notes

When many people are involved in an extensive project, it can be difficult to keep track of all the activities, and even more difficult to recall, after the fact, exactly what happened, when, and why.

For all members of the project team, keeping progress notes is an important part of remaining in touch with the project. Each project team member should keep notes on the aspects of the project for which they are responsible. Brief notes that are kept up to date will be much more useful than very lengthy notes that cannot be maintained consistently. At regular intervals, the project team should exchange and compile information about the project, and produce summaries that are available to all team members. This practice also provides an opportunity to discuss issues or concerns and to maintain good management and accountability.

Progress notes are a useful resource for the project team, for the preparation of regular reports and for project evaluation; both the ongoing evaluation that is part of the project plan, and any external evaluation by donors or stakeholders.

Implement ongoing evaluation

By maintaining progress notes and regular communication, the project team can also support ongoing project evaluation. This type of evaluation enables consistent monitoring and assessment of how the project is coming along. Some evaluation activities involve keeping track of particular indicators (which can be anything from learners' achievements to levels of pollution in a river system). Evaluation also entails watching for indicators of good project management: these include regular communication and discussion, early identification of any problems, and levels of activity and expenses that are consistent with the project plan.

Discuss any changes from anticipated progress

The project work plan and budget outline the generally agreed structure of the project. But, as in many other aspects of life, things do not always work out according to plan. Adverse weather conditions can affect a crucial activity, staff may be reassigned, an essential piece of equipment may not work as expected. Dealing with these situations is part of the day to day responsibility of the project management team. This team usually makes the decision about whether the donor should be informed of a situation. The operating agreement may specify the kinds of situations that should be discussed with the donor. In general, situations that will affect the project's ability to achieve its objectives in the long run should be reviewed with the donor. The project team should be able to foresee whether a particular situation will have a long term and significant impact on the project.

Negotiate any major changes in the project plan

If there are significant factors that appear likely to affect the project's potential to achieve its goals, there will probably need to be some changes to the project plan. These changes should be discussed among project partners and include the donor. The project team should prepare a brief case for major changes. This short report should state the context and issues that have affected the original project plan, and provide a rationale for a proposed alternative strategy and activities. Implications for the work plan, the budget, and any other significant elements of the project should also be presented. When a major change to the project plan has been discussed and agreed among the project partners and the donor, it should be documented for future reference; as part of an interim report, or as part of an amended project plan, or both. This information is then available for evaluators or others who may not otherwise be aware of the change in project plans.

Work with external evaluators as needed

External evaluators may review the project at any stage, but it is more likely that they will be involved towards the end of the project. The project team should support the external evaluation process by providing background information, and, if requested, helping to coordinate meetings, travel, interviews, and data collection.

Consider options for follow up projects

If the project was a pilot, or was the first stage of a series of strategies, and there are good indications that the project will achieve its goals, the late stage of the project is a good time to develop plans for a follow up project.