



Programme Planning and planning the proposal

Proposal writing is very essential for the fund raising process, but it can be intimidating for the beginner. Well prepared proposal provides focus, articulation and credibility to a project. It enables the funding organizations – whether a company, foundation or Government – to understand what the project hopes to achieve, the process and whether the goals can be achieved with the organization's existing skills, track record, man power and other resources. Even banks and financial institutions will not entertain loan applications without a well-written, cogent project proposal.

Following are the steps involved in it.

1. Getting started

Before preparing a proposal for any funding agency, it is important for the voluntary agency to have a clear written mission statement, registration either as a trust, society or section 25 company, as also various available exemptions under the Income Tax Act (refer the online module of NGO registration on our website or CD), have a good track record of credible programmes / services or if new to the filed, credible plans and persons of known integrity behind the organization. The organization should frame out their vision and mission statements.

Vision statement is a sentence where NGO defines its ultimate motivation, its dreams, and its image of desired future. A vision statement describes the ideal situation if the organization could fulfill its utmost wish. A vision statement articulates the future of the organization. The statement should be a meaningful description of what an organization hopes to make happen.

The mission statement is essentially a written summary of the vision of the organizations from which all programmes and services flow. It describes the needs the organization was created to fill and answers the basic question of why the organization exists. A mission statement clarifies what an organization does right now make sure volunteers; staff and board know it by heart. An effective mission statement is concise, to the point, realistic, operational, inspirational, motivational, informative and even emotional. Creating a mission statement is a group effort. Board members, present and past officers, staff, members, volunteers, donors and constituents can provide valuable input during the creative process.

A mission and vision statements are distinctly different. Mission controls, while vision inspires. A vision statement motivates and offers a framework for the mission to grow and change. (Annexure I).

2. Setting priorities

Often, voluntary organizations try to assess a funding organization's priorities and then try to draft a project to fit them this should be discouraged. A voluntary organization must first start with its own needs and then seek funders who will want to help with them.

Useful tips for writing good proposal

- Generally, "home-grown" proposals, even if they are not perfect, are more successful. A very slick proposal with obvious indications of having been written by an outsider or a professional consultant can be a turn-off to discerning funders.
- The proposal must deliver critical ideas quickly and easily. The text should be simple and clear enough for others to understand the project and become enthused by it. Avoid jargon at all costs. It hampers the reviewer's ability to comprehend your thoughts and may, often, be viewed as pretentious.
- When presenting facts, the human element should always be allowed to shine through. Personify the issue. Tell a compelling human story.
- Illuminate your vision so that the funder can share it as well.
- Also, be realistic in presenting the case. Don't overstate the need, the projected outcomes or the basic facts about your organization. Besides, never promise more than you can deliver.



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3. The Package

Proposals written for foundations, trusts or corporations and those for Government grants, usually differ in their final form. Foundations, trusts and corporations often require a brief letter as an initial approach. A full proposal may follow in many situations. Government funding sources almost always require completion of a number of forms, along with a detailed proposal narrative. Therefore, proposals to private and government grant-makers look quite different. The package to a foundation, trust or corporation will usually contain these three elements]

- **The cover letter (Annexure II)**
It briefly describes the programme, and tells the grant-maker how important the grant would be to the community served by the applicant. It should be signed by the President, or Chairperson of the Board of Voluntary organization.
- **The proposal (Annexure III)**
The body of the proposal may be as modest as one page or voluminous. It may be in letter form or a more formal presentation.
- **Additional materials**
Additional material should be limited to those required by the funding source supplemented by only the most important addenda. Reviewers don't grade proposals by the kilogram /pound, so save your postage. :

The proposal package to a Government-funding source usually contains these elements:

- **Letter of Transmittal**
The letter of Transmittal is a brief statement signed by the Head of the organization. It briefly describes the request, the amount asked for, and may indicate the significance and importance of the proposed project.
- **The proposal**
The proposal going to a Government funding source will generally be lengthier than one going to a trust or foundation. Government agency guidelines describe exactly how the proposal will be weighed. Proposals can be deemed inappropriate simply because you failed to follow specific instructions.
- **Additional materials**
Additional materials will generally include those items suggested by the funding source. This usually consists of tax exemption certificates, annual report, financial statement and related documents.

4. Proposal Writing

Following is the basic format for planning all proposals. It should be helpful in enabling any voluntary organization to develop a logical approach to planning and proposal writing.

- **Executive Summary**

This is essentially an umbrella statement of your case and summary of the entire proposal. It provides a snapshot of what is to follow. The summary is probably the first thing that a funding source will read. It therefore should be very clear, concise and specific. It should describe the scope of project, cost and details of the organization. The executive summary enables the funder to determine whether the proposal is within the guidelines and funding policy of the organization. Summary should be no longer than one page or 300 words.

- **Introduction**

In this part of the proposal, you may introduce your organization as an applicant for funds. The introduction is the section where you build your credibility and make the case that your organization should be supported. In terms of getting funded, the credibility you establish in your introduction may be more important than the rest of your proposal. It should cover the details regarding when it came into existence, mission, demonstrate how the subject of the proposal fits within or extends that mission. Describe the organization's structure, programmes and special expertise. Explain briefly, the assistance / service you provide and the community or specific group you serve (e.g. backward classes, the disabled, street children). You can use the introduction to reinforce the connection you see between your interests and those of the funding source.

- **Statement of Need**

The statement of need describes the situation that motivated you to prepare this proposal. It should refer the situations that are outside of your organization (i.e., situations in the life of your community). Demonstrate your own knowledge about the problem highly. Use appropriate statistics for this. If you have to use excessive statistics, save them for an appendix but pull out the key figures in your problem statement. In the problem statement, you need to do the following.

1. Make the logical connection between your organization's background and the problems and the needs with which you propose to work;
2. Clearly define the problem with which you intend to work;
3. Support the existence of the problem by evidence as mentioned above;
4. Be realistic – don't try and solve all the problems in the world in the next six months.



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Programme goals and objectives

1. A well prepared proposal has continuity – a logical flow from one section to another. Goals are broad statements as follows.

- Develop Additional resources to provide AIDS information to bilingual populations.
- Reduce underemployment rates among adults

These are not the same as objectives. Objectives are specific, measurable outcomes of your programme. Objectives are your promised improvements in the situation you describe in the problem statement. Objectives should be specific, estimating the amount of benefit to be expected from a programme. Objectives should be realistic and attainable. If you are having difficulty in defining your objectives try projecting your agency a year or two into the future. What differences would you hope to see between then and now? Process objectives may be very useful, but should only appear in the methods section of your proposal.

• Methods / Project description

There are two basic issues to be dealt with in the methodology section. What combination of activities and strategy have you selected to employ to bring about the desired results? Any why have you selected this particular approach, of all the possible approaches you could have employed? Your methodology section should describe who is doing what to whom, and why it is being done that way. Your approach should appear realistic to the reviewer, and not suggest that so much will be performed by so few that the programme appears unworkable. In this section, you may also devote a few sentences to discussing the number of staff, their qualifications and specific assignments. Details about individual staff member involved in the project can be included either as part of this section or in the appendix, depending on the length and importance of this information.

• Budget

Budgets should be built from the ground up – that is, based upon your goals and objectives and the methodology you have proposed. In the context of your programme, you can begin to itemize such things as the staffing called for, the facilities needed, the equipment required, the supplies necessary, travel costs to be paid and the range of costs for which your agency must be reimbursed. Structure your budget as follows.

Salaries and Wages: List out all full and part-time staff in the proposed programme, giving a statement of their salary and period of involvement. Before stating the amounts, you should obtain information from other local agencies regarding the amount of salaries with the descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities similar to those of the jobs in your agency.

Rental, Lease or Purchase of Equipment: List out all the equipments donated or to be purchased that will be used in the proposed programme. This includes office equipment, desks, duplicating machines word processors etc. Try to obtain as much donated equipments as you can. It shows the funding source that other people are involved in trying to make the programme happen.

Supplies: This generally means desktop supplies such as paper clips, pens, paper and other stationery. This component can also include publications, subscriptions and postage.

Travel: All transportation related expenses are included here. Include staff travel, ground transportation, reimbursement to staff for use of their automobiles, consultant's travel costs, and use of agency vans or automobiles. In addition, most budgets include a line called "overhead" which allows the project to bear a portion of the administrative costs. "Overheads" if included, should be reasonable.

• Evaluation

Your programme can be evaluated in order to determine how effective it is in reaching its stated objectives. This concept of evaluation is aimed at measuring results of your programme (outcome evaluation). Evaluation can also be used as a tool to provide information necessary to make appropriate changes and adjustments in your programme as it proceeds. This is also called process devaluation. Many evaluation plans are subjective in nature. Subjective evaluations tell you how people feel about a programme, but seldom deal with the concrete results of a programme. The evaluation should be built into the project itself. Including an evaluation plan in your proposal indicates that you take your objectives seriously and want to know how well you have achieved them.



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- **Future Funding**

Funding sources want to know how you will continue your programme when their grant runs out. If you are requesting funds to start a new programme, or to expand an existing programme, then how will you maintain it after the grant funds have been spent? Can you generate the funds from the project itself – such as fees for services that will build up over a year or two, subscriptions to publications, etc? The best plan for future funding is the plan that does not require continued grant support.

- **Conclusion**

It is customary for most proposals to have a concluding paragraph or two. This section is the place to make a final appeal for your project. Very briefly, reiterate what your organization wants to do and why it is so very important. Underscore why your organization needs funding to accomplish it. Don't be afraid at this stage to use a bit of emotion to solidify your case.

- **Appendix**

This will involve a variety of documents, many of which will be required routinely by other funding sources. It is a good idea for development officers, programme planners, grant writers, or related personnel to maintain a file of materials which can be accessible to you at all times. Items which are routinely requested by many funding sources include the following

- Audited Financial statements
- Tax exemption certificate
- Registration certificate
- Roster of Board of Directors –don't just list a name without any affiliation. State clearly and concisely their main professional and social involvement
- Letters of support or endorsements

Letters from other organizations and individuals will need to be submitted, as required, by a funding source or on the basis of your organization's decision that such indicators of support would be a good idea.



COMPONENTS OF PROPOSAL WRITING

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Context
- Implementation Strategy
- Outcomes Anticipated
- Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms
- Advocacy
- Data Availability
- Scope of programme for replication
- Administrative roles of stakeholders
- LFT Matrix
- Gantt Chart
- Budget



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Annexure - I

Development of Vision and Mission statement Background and Meaning

Vision and Mission are the two important pillars of organization that continuously guides people associating with organization. Many NGOs and voluntary organizations have started to define their vision and mission statements as a living document of the organization. These statements should be lived by the organizations. Vision and Mission statements have now become an important part of strategy-making exercise and managements are taking keen efforts to frame an effective statement because they form a basis for all tactical decisions in the organizations. These statements have gained considerable significance as they provide direction and the focus for organizations. Vision Statement defines the destination or goal and the mission statement defines the path to achieve that. They are envisaged through a strategic process and thus there is an alignment between the statements and business strategy

- A Definition of Vision in a dictionary is 'An Image of the future we seek to create'. A vision statement describes in graphic terms where the goal-setters want to see themselves in the future. It may describe how they see events unfolding over 10 or 20 years if everything goes exactly as hoped.
- A definition of Mission in a dictionary is purpose, reason for being
- Many people wrongly consider their vision statement as mission statement and either or. They are fundamentally different. Mission statement defines the purpose or broader goal for being in the existence or in the business. It serves as a guide in times of uncertainty, vagueness. It is like guiding light. It has no time frame. The mission can remain the same for decades if crafted correctly. While, vision is more specific, in terms of objective and it also speaks about time frame of its achievement.

Example

Vision statement of FORD :

"We will be one amongst the top three transporters of goods and people in North America by 2010"

Whereas

Mission statement of FORD states that :

"We help transport goods and people efficiently and cost effectively without damaging environment" Ford's brief but powerful slogan, "Quality is Job 1" could also be count as a mission statement.

Construction of Vision and Mission statements :

To make mission statement effective it needs to be aligned with the prevailing culture in that organization. Mission and Values go hand in hand. A lofty mission statement means nothing if it is not in congruence with the values practiced by the organization. A good example of this is Enron.

A mission statement can resemble a vision statement in a few companies, but that can be a grave mistake. It can confuse the people. While a mission statement helps inculcate values in employees, the vision statement has direct bearing on the bottom-line and success of the organization. The vision statement can galvanize the people to achieve defined objectives even if they are stretch objectives provided the vision is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound).

Mahatma Gandhi had a simple vision of getting rid of British rule in India and established a vibrant democracy in India. He had a specific image of post British India in his mind and he talked of that image at every opportunity and to every one who was willing to listen.

The effect of such a powerful vision and articulation of this powerful vision in a simple to understand language was dramatic in the history of India. He and his followers defeated British without using any weapons or any violence. Their mission statement was not to use any violence and to love even the enemy. The 'Satyagraha' was not targeted towards the British people but to unjust, unlawful British imperial rule on India. They could come up with different strategies to achieve their vision while remaining loyal to their mission statement. So the mission and vision both served as a guide.

Nelson Mandela used the same tactics in South Africa later.



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These two examples should be enough to demonstrate the profound impact a powerful vision can have on entire mass of humanity or even on entire generation. Powerful vision statements are very important for any organization to succeed in today's world.

Features of an effective vision statement may include :

- Clarity and lack of ambiguity
- Paint a vivid and clear picture, not ambiguous
- Describing a bright future (hope)
- Memorable and engaging expression
- Realistic aspirations, achievable
- Alignment with organizational values and culture, Rational
- Time bound if it talks of achieving any goal or objective

In order to become really effective, an organizational vision statement must (the theory states) become assimilated into the organization's culture. Leaders have the responsibility of communicating the vision regularly, creating narratives that illustrate the vision, and acting as role-models by embodying the vision, creating short-term objectives compatible with the vision, and encouraging others to craft their own personal vision compatible with the organization's overall vision.

We should be able to explain the following things through our mission and vision statements

1. "What do we do?"
2. "For whom do we do it?"
3. "How do we beat the competition?"

Some examples of Vision & Mission Statements :

(1) Childline India Foundation

Vision statement : To protect the rights of children in need of care and protection

Mission Statement : CHILDLINE aims at responding to the emergency need of every child in need of care and protection throughout the country, ensuring that there is an integrated effort between the government, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, bilateral agencies, corporates and the community in protecting the rights of children. India is home to almost 19% of world's children. More than one third of country's population, around 440 million, is below 18 years. Promoting child protection and child rights for our children is consequently a crucial issue.

(2) Deepalaya

Vision Statement : A society based on legitimate rights, equity, justice, honesty, social sensitivity and culture of service in which all are self-reliant.

Mission Statement : Deepalaya committees ourselves to identify with and work along the economically and socially deprived, the physically and mentally challenged starting with children, so that they become educated, skilled and aware. Enable them to be self-reliant and enjoy a healthy, dignified and sustainable quality of life and to that end, act as a resource to and collaborate with other agencies – governmental and non-governmental, as well as suitably intervene in policy formulation.

(3) Akshara Foundation (Pratham Education Initiative)

Mission statement : Every Child in School and learning well

(4) Bharat Integrated Social Welfare Agency (BISWA)

Mission statement : To make a real and lasting special, financial, psychological and spiritual impact on individuals, help build strong cohesive communities and general substantial employment opportunities by increasing availability of a wider range of services.



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(5) Smile Foundation

Combined Vision & Mission Statement : As a Social Venture Philanthropist, Smile Foundation promotes and catalyses universal education among underprivileged children, create the process to embrace these children into mainstream in a sustained manner, facilitate them to emerge as productive assets, and set the foundation for nation building.

(6) NGO Fundraisers

Vision :

To help all deserving NGOs across India with their requirement for funding.

Mission :

- To develop innovative ways of fundraising for helping NGOs with their funding requirements.
- To approach philanthropic individuals for raising donations for deserving NGOs across the country.
- To work as an organization towards the eradication of unemployment by providing various opportunities to able as well as disabled individuals to earn a living.
- Providing equal opportunity of work to all.
- Work towards the upliftment of one and all that form a part of the communities that exist around us by offering our services and through job creation.
- To positively impact the societies that we work in.



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Annexure II

Cover letter of Project Proposal

The first thing to remember when you are writing a charity or fundraising letter is that these letters are unsolicited letters. So, the reader has to be impressed in the first few lines itself.

It is best to write these letters on a letter-head to make it more impactful. A letter on a plain paper with just a signature with no proof of credentials is less likely to have any impact whatever.

Once your credentials are established, it is best to come to the point rather than beat about the bush.

It is important to address the letter to a particular person rather than a designation or to a group in general.

It is best to be specific about what you are seeking, be it money, time or services.

Remember to outline briefly what your cause is and how the contribution of the reader will be beneficial. Explain how the contribution made by the reader will help. Be specific, do not exaggerate or make sweeping statements.

If you are writing to somebody who has contributed to your cause in the past, be sure to thank him/her in the first place. Also, briefly mention how the previous help has benefitted.

It is good to give specific examples of how your work has helped a person's life. To make an impression give reference of specific people and how you and your organization have helped them. This way, the donor knows that you are dealing with real flesh and blood people rather than some arbitrary cause.

If you are asking for money, try and be specific about the amount you wish to collect. It is also a good idea to give a time frame for response so that the reader also knows you have a deadline.

To get a better response from your donor it is good to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope, so that they can get back to you without any hassles.

At the end it is important to thank the potential donor for the time and effort he/she has spent in going through your letter.

Format of cover letter is as follows.



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Cover letter format I

To
The Secretary
ABC Trust
Address and
PIN Code

Date:

Subject: Submitting project proposal : Elimination of illiteracy in 5 villages of Dodha District of Jammu & Kashmir

I ----- (Name), Executive Director (Suitable designation) submits here the proposal for the project that we wish to undertake in-----
----- (mention geographical area).

----- (Name of NGO) works for adult education in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. We are registered Voluntary organization since -----
----- (date of registration) Organization has successfully implemented 26 projects in the area of education and made 65,212 people literate till the date.

Here, we propose a new project which will eliminate the illiteracy in 5 different districts of -----
----- (name of state). Entire project cycle is divided in to three full financial year commencing from March 2010. Total cost of Project is Rs. 17 Lakh for the entire period.

I, on behalf of ----- (Name of NGO) kindly request you to consider the proposal and do provide funds for the said project.

Hoping for reply

Regards

----- (Name)
Executive Secretary
Name of NGO

Enclosures:

- Annual Report for the year -----
- Audited statement of accounts for the year-----
- Society Registration Certificate
- FCRA Registration Certificate



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Cover letter format II

Bipin Sharma

Relationships Manager
ABC Bank
S. V. Road, Mumbai - 68

Dear Mr. Bipin

Subject: Enclosed herein is the proposal you requested, titled: Funding youth enterprise for growth.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank you, together with other members of your team for the immeasurable efforts you offered in helping me draft this business proposal for our community youth project. I was able to come up with this proposal for business funding out of your kind help and guidance since my skills in the field are inadequate.

Please be at liberty to review the proposal and highlight any necessary adjustments. I will arrange for a meeting next week at your convenience to discuss it further. You can always get in touch with me if there is need for clarification or additional information.

I hope we build a stronger relationship in the future.

Sincerely

Manu Sharma

Youth Coordinator

Name of the Organization



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Model Proposal

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to design a Project Proposal for constructing a water tower to alleviate the water problem in a backward village (name withheld) in India.

Water Tower Project for "K" Village, South India

Summary

This proposal is being submitted for funding a project to construct a water tower to alleviate the water problem in the village 'K' in Tamil Nadu. The project is aimed and designed to fit every aspect of participatory development.

The 'K' Development Society (KDS) is a grass root voluntary agency established in the year 2000 for the socio-economic development and uplift of the village 'K'. The KDS is registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and also enjoys exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. The President of the Society is Mr. O who is _____ . The other Committee Members include Mrs. P who is a _____ and Mr. Q who is _____ etc.

The proposed project of constructing a water tower with the active participation of skilled and semi-skilled workers from the village 'K' will provide clean drinking water on a regular basis to the villagers. Although the total cost of the project works out to a sum of Rs. 2, 18,000/-, the in-kind contribution of the villagers will bring down the total to Rs. 1,93,000/- only.

Introduction

The village 'K' is located in the South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu, South India. South Arcot is considered to be an under-developed district. 'K' is an extremely backward village when compared to the other villages in this district. About 250 families live here in an impoverished state. The name of this village itself has become synonymous with the words "poverty and under-development" in the local language.

The villagers are mostly farmers with very little land or landless labourers. The villagers rely upon the monsoon for agriculture. It is not unusual that in some years, the monsoon fails. Historically, drinking water has been the main problem of the village.

Statement Of Need

The villagers are very concerned about the drinking water problem. Only until 20 years ago, they used to walk three miles in search of water. Now, they are able to tap ground water with an electric pump. But they do not get water regularly due to the infrequent supply of electricity. Sometimes, the electricity-cut lasts for several days and they go without water. An overhead water tank would solve this problem considerably.

Due to the dry and rocky nature of the ground soil, ground water level is below 150 feet. Hence, hand pumps are not applicable in the region.

There is a small lake in the village which provides water to the animals and for washing clothes. The lake is dry for six months in a year.

Objectives

- Provide clean drinking water on a regular basis
- Participate in planting and maintaining trees and kitchen gardens with a regular supply of water during off-monsoon seasons.

Method/Project Description

The project for which the grant is requested from your Foundation is for constructing a water tower- a medium-size water tower with a capacity to hold water to supply the village for two or three days in case of electricity-cuts. The project will be completed in six months.

A deep bore well and electric pumps are already available for the project. However, the pump will have to be upgraded to sufficient horsepower. The project will be undertaken as an all-village-level participatory effort.

Total cost of the project is Rs.2,18,000/-. Amount requested is Rs. 1,93,000/-, since in-kind contribution by the villagers will be about Rs. 25,000/-. They are in the form of free manpower, bar-benders, semi-skilled workers, etc. While most of the villagers are small to landless farmers, there are about 20-30 skilled and semi-skilled workers in the construction field. They have agreed to donate one or two days of their labour per week.

Some of the villagers have agreed to donate some construction materials such as bricks and services like free bullock-cart for transporting the materials, etc. An architect and a civil engineer will be hired for this project.



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Annexure IV

Budget

Budget Materials	Project Cost	Requested
Construction materials (cement, bricks, pipes, iron rods, sand, etc)	Rs.1,50,000.000	Rs. 1,50,000.000
Maintenance tools, electric pump and fixtures	Rs. 30,000.000	Rs. 30,000.000
Personnel		
Architect's fee	Rs. 5,000.000	Rs. 5,000.000
Civil engineer's fee	Rs. 8,000.000	Rs. 8,000.000
10 masons for 20 days @ Rs. 75/- per day	Rs. 15,000.000	_____
10 workers for 20 days @ Rs. 50/- per day	Rs. 15,000.000	_____
	=====	=====
	Rs. 2,18,000.000	Rs. 1,93,000.000
	=====	=====

After the completion of this project, the expenses for water tower maintenance and watchmen/custodian's salary will be borne by the villagers. A water engineer from the nearby township has agreed to provide periodical free consultation to this project during and beyond construction.