



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
FOUNDATION**

POVERTY AND ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE (PEI)

**GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING
TEACHING MANUAL**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

Since 2003, The Government of Tanzania in collaboration with UNDP and UNEP has been implementing the Pro-poor Economic Growth and Environmentally Sustainable Development Programme, PEI programme. The programme aims at improving the contribution of the environment and natural resources to national development goals, particularly poverty reduction, sustainable economic growth and the broader achievement of MDGs at both national and local levels.

Subsequently two studies were conducted in 2014 to identify and understand institutional, legal, budgetary bottlenecks on implementation of PEI initiatives, local best practices, and potential value adding projects in six Districts; that may facilitate mainstreaming (and implementing) environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, gender and climate change issues into development plans and develop better architecture for financing the interventions. The studies provided recommendations to address institutional capacity bottlenecks, and proposed projects that can be scaled-up to catalyse incremental progress of the PEI agenda. This Grant Proposal Writing Teaching Manual has been developed in response to these recommendations.

The manual is a detailed description of a series of activities aimed at equipping users with relevant knowledge in proposal writing. The manual contains a detailed explanation of the:

- justification of the project;
- activities and implementation timeline;
- methodology; and
- Human, material and financial resources required.

The manual on grant proposal writing aims to create an understanding of:

- i the role of the grant proposal and the activities related to each stage;
- ii how to deal with projects and grant proposals from a district council's perspective;
- iii how grant proposals fit into project management; and
- iv how to structure a good grant proposal.

1.2 Objectives of the manual

This manual will lead trainers and users through grant proposal writing sessions and exercises. It enables the user to:

- i. improve participants' skills in developing quality grant proposals;
- ii. show them how to manage projects within a district; and
- iii. help them understand a project's value as a tool to achieve and further the district council's mission.

1.3 Skills to be developed

The training focuses on developing specific skills related to designing and completing good grant proposals. This manual offers instruction in:

- i. Conducting preparatory work; and
- ii. Developing comprehensive and viable project plans by setting realistic goals and determining the resources needed.

2. Before writing a Proposal

Grant proposal writing begins long before you actually have a grant to write. Your tools of the trade are organizational information. Even before you start looking for organizations that might want to fund you, develop an in-depth understanding of the district council's mission and activities and gather easy-to-tap organizational information.

Start by organizing and developing the following information and sources:

2.1 The history and mission of your district

Make sure that you have the latest mission statement, vision statement, and a narrative of the history of the district. Collect organizational charts, a list of previous grants, and a copy of the most recent strategic plan. All of this will help you articulate a description of the district in your grant proposals.

2.2 Interview past and prospective beneficiaries

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

2.3 Review past grant proposals

Avoid repeating mistakes and offering to reproduce results that have already been achieved. Donors will be unlikely to provide more funding for something that has already been done. Do not count on project member to remember all the mistakes and areas for improvement.

2.4 Organize focus groups

Statistics provide tools that you need in order to react intelligently to information available. In this sense, statistics is one of the most important things that you can use to make intelligent decisions. Don't let others discover gaps and inaccuracies in the data you are relying on.

2.5 Check statistical data

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2.6 Consult experts

The experts provide well-informed advice and high-quality information on a variety of topics. For a district council to achieve its long-term goals, it must know the areas that it needs to focus on and why. It needs honest advice and opinion, as well as detailed information, necessary in making well-informed decision.

2.7 Conduct surveys, etc

Conduct surveys to uncover answers to specific, important questions. Your questions should be strategically planned and structured in the best way possible in order to receive the most accurate data. Gather as much preliminary information as possible to demonstrate commitment to the project and to refine the objectives.

2.8 Hold community meetings or forums

Community meetings can provide a reflective and listening space for both district council and community it serves to discuss and highlight needs. They can help generate ideas, roles and help engender meaning, understanding and a sense of safety. When the public feels that they have been consulted on an issue, they will be much more likely to cooperate and support the project.

3. Main Terms of the Proposal Writing Process

It is a good idea for participants to familiarize themselves with the main terms of the proposal writing process.

3.1 Indicators

These are elements of the project plan that translate the project's purpose and results into measurable units (quantity or quality) and thus provide the basis for impact measuring of the project.

3.2 Output

Grant proposals should explain all the expected results that will be achieved by the project. Many proposal formats seek extensive information on results just to ensure that the set objectives are successfully achieved. Outputs are those results which are achieved immediately after implementing an activity.

3.3 Activity plan

Activity plan is a description of the flow, timeline and responsibilities for the project's activities.

3.4 Resource plan

Resource planning entails carefully planning, organizing, motivating and controlling resources to achieve specific goals and meet specific success criteria. It is a description of how the resources will be mobilized and used in relation to project activities.

3.5 Gantt chart

A specific model for activity plans that illustrates how the activities interconnect. A Gantt chart, commonly used in project management, is one of the most popular and useful ways of showing activities (tasks or events) displayed against time. On the left of the chart is a list of the activities and along the top is a suitable time scale. Each activity is represented by a bar; the position and length of the bar reflects the start date, duration and end date of the activity. This allows you to see at a glance:

- What the various activities are
- When each activity begins and ends
- How long each activity is scheduled to last
- Where activities overlap with other activities, and by how much
- The start and end date of the whole project

To summarize, a Gantt chart shows you what has to be done (the activities) and when (the schedule).

3.6 The Budget

The budget for your proposal may be as simple as a one-page statement of projected revenue and expenses. Or your proposal may require a more complex presentation, perhaps including a page on projected support and notes explaining various items of expense or of revenue.

4. Planning a Proposal Writing

Before the project is written, its individual elements need to be developed. Addressing the planning considerations helps develop the project elements. Quality proposal writing is not possible without proper planning.

Considerations for each Planning Step are as follows:

4.1 Gather the following information

Consider the following:

- background of the project results expected and target group;
- defined goal and objectives ;
- the societal vision of the district council;
- expected short-term and long-term results;
- beneficiaries of the project; and
- Problems to be solved by the project.

4.2 Content of the project

Consider the following:

- theme and main issues to be covered;
- methods chosen to realize the goal and objectives; and
- activities to be implemented.

4.3 Project location(s) and time schedule of activities

Establish the following:

- location of different activities;
- duration of the project;
- starting and ending dates of the project;
- Schedule for individual activities; and
- Summarized timeline of the project.

4.4 Resources

Establish the need of the following resources:

- human resources;
- financial resources; and
- Infrastructure.

4.5 Cost/Income Sources

Establish the following:

- total budget of the project;
- detailed budget by activities and cost types;
- rate and form of own contribution; and

- potential funders and sources of income/revenue.

4.6 Project team and management

Plan for the following participants:

- The project coordinator;
- Communication method of the project team; and
- Communication strategy and practice with the external environment.

4.7 Monitoring, evaluation and follow-up

Set up the following:

- Success criteria of the project;
- Methods and timing of monitoring and evaluation; and
- Further plans and follow up.

5. How to write a Project Proposal

Once the groundwork has been completed, proposal writing can commence. The key decision to be made at this stage is the structure of the project proposal (including the content and length). The structure is determined by the nature of the project, its scope and objectives as well as the funding agency. Commonly, the formats include application forms, project design outlines and description, and grant application guidelines.

5.1 Proposed Format

5.1.1 Title page

The title page should indicate the project title which should clearly describe the proposed study, and list the names and full contact information of all researchers (including full address, phone, fax, and email). Other key information to be included in the title page are; the name of the lead organization (and potential partners, if any), the place and date of project preparation and the name of the donor agency to whom the proposal is addressed.

5.1.2 Project title

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

5.1.3 Contents page

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

5.1.4 Abstract

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

- The problem statement;
- The project's objectives;
- Implementing organizations;
- Key project activities; and
- The total project budget.
- How will the project contribute to knowledge and/or practice?
- What are the policy implications of the project (if any)?
- What is the expected outcome?

5.1.5 Context

This part of the project describes the social, economic, political and cultural background from which the project is initiated. It should contain relevant data from research carried out in the project planning phase or collected from other sources. The writer should take into consideration

the need for a balance between the length of this item and the size of the overall project proposal. Large amounts of relevant data should be placed in an annex.

5.2 Project justification

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

5.2.1 Problem statement

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

5.2.2 Priority needs

The needs of the target group that have arisen as a direct negative consequence of the problem should be prioritized. An explanation of the relation between the problem and the negative impact of this problem on the community must also be included. For example, if the problem is stated as "...poor infrastructure in the community" the list of needs associated with this problem may be:

- better roads;
- improved solid waste collection; and
- improved water supply in quality and quantity.

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

5.2.3 Type of intervention

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

5.2.4 The implementing organization

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

5.1 Project aims/goal

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

The project goal must be:

- Clearly identified;

- Clearly written;
- Referred to throughout the proposal;
- Achievable within a specific time frame;
- Working towards furthering organization/community; and
- Measurable in terms of impact and outcome.

5.3.1 Rules for Setting a Project Goal

- There should be only one goal per project; and
- The goal should be connected to the vision for development.

Group Activity: Project Goal

As a brainstorming activity, answer the following questions regarding your project goals.

1. What do you want to accomplish for your community with your project?
2. How will the project impact the environment, waterways, coast or atmosphere when the project is completed?
3. What target population does your project intend to serve?
4. In one or two sentences, state your project's goal. Start with the following text, "The project goal is..." and keep it to a maximum of two sentences.
5. Organizations must stick to the same project goal throughout the proposal. In five words or less, give your project a name. Organizations should have one name that the project is being referred to, in order to

5.1 Project Design Document

The project design document, or PDD, is the central component in the project cycle, and its preparation is a complex task. This subsection entails the information, analysis and procedures required in creating a comprehensive project design document.

The following are essential elements of PDD:

- Description of the project and establish a project boundary;
- Description of the baseline methodology;
- Establishment of the duration and crediting period of the project;
- Description of the environmental impacts of the project;
- Provision of information on the sources of public funding for the project;
- Summary of stakeholder comments;
- Description of the monitoring plan; and
- Setting of out all relevant calculations.

5.2 Project objectives

The objectives should address the core benefits to be received by the project beneficiaries or target group as a direct result of the project.

5.3 Project results

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

5.4 Target group

Define the target group and show how it will benefit from the project. The project should provide a detailed description of the size and characteristics of the target groups, and especially of direct project beneficiaries. The criteria for target group analysis may be ethnic composition, gender, age, etc.

5.5 Project implementation

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

- the activity plan; and
- the resource plan

5.5.1 Activity plan (schedule)

The activity plan should include specific information and explanations of each of the planned project activities. The duration of the project should be clearly stated, with considerable detail on the beginning and the end of the project.

In general, two main formats are used to express the activity plan:

- a simple table and
- The Gantt chart.

5.5.2 Preparing an Activity Plan

Table 1: Features of Activity Plan

Step	Activity	Considerations
1.	List all project activities	Develop a single list of all activities planned
2.	Break activities into manageable tasks	Break activities first into sub-activities and then into tasks. Each task is assigned to an individual who assumes it as a short-term goal. The main consideration is getting the level of detail right.
3.	Clarify sequence and dependence	Relate activities to each other in order to determine their sequence and dependence. Is the activity dependent on the start-up or completion of any other activity?
4.	Draw up a timeline for each task	Each task should be given a start-up date, duration and a completion date. The schedule should then be followed as closely as possible.
5.	Summarize the scheduling of the main activities	Having specified the timing of the individual tasks, the next step is to plan (summarize) the timing of the entire main activity.
6.	Use milestones	Milestones are key events that provide a measure of project progress and targets for the project team to aim for.
7.	Define expertise	The level and type of expertise needed should be decided for each task separately.
8.	Allocate tasks among the team	Distribute responsibilities in consultation with the members of the team.

5.1 Budget

In simple terms, a budget is an itemized summary of a district council's expected income and expenses over a specified period of time. Budgeting forms and financial planning procedures vary widely. It is nevertheless essential that financial officers comply clearly and punctually with a funding organization's budgeting and reporting requirements.

The two main elements of any budget are:

- Income/revenue and
- Expenditures/expenses

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

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

5.3.1 Budget categories

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

The two main costs are:

- direct costs; and
- Operational costs.

Direct costs are associated with a certain activity (e.g. organizing a workshop).

Operational costs are related to internal activities of a district and are considered fixed costs in the short term (e.g. staff salaries, rent, utilities, etc.).

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

Figure 2: Sample of Income/Revenue and Expenditure/Expenses

Sample Income Form	Sample Expenditure Form
Total Budget:	Total Budget:
Income/Revenue: ➤ Contribution from donor A xxxx ➤ Contribution from local government <u>xxxx</u> Total income/Revenue: xxxxx	Expenditures: ➤ Salaries (period x rate) xxxx ➤ Consultants xxxx ➤ Office supplies xxxx ➤ Travel and lodging xxxx ➤ Direct costs xxxx ➤ Equipment xxxx Total Expenditure/Expenses xxxxx

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation

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

- how and when the project management team will conduct activities to monitor the project's progress;
- which methods will be used to monitor and evaluate; and
- who will do the evaluation

5.2 Reporting

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

5.3 Management and personnel

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



Economic and Social Research Foundation

51 Uporoto Street (Off, Ali Hassan Mwinyi Rd.) Ursino Estate
P.O. Box 31226 Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Tel +255 22 2760260, Fax +255 22 2760062
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