Writing grant proposals

Organisations may receive many more applications for funding than they can support. When you are writing an application, you are trying to persuade the funder that they should select your application/proposal above others.

Prepare to write the proposal

- Read the guidelines carefully.
- Ask colleagues for advice to help write a good proposal.
- Look at examples of successful proposals – your colleagues may be able to share these.

Write a clear and detailed application

Submitting a clear and well-organised application will help funders make a good decision!

If your application it is easy to read and contains all the necessary information, it is more likely to be successful.

- Make sure you give plenty of information in answer to the key questions – often a few lines don't give enough information to assess your application.
- Provide background information - explain acronyms and consider adding links to further information, if relevant.
- Show that the activity you are proposing is feasible – that you are likely to achieve it with the funding, time and other resources available.

Comply with the criteria

Read the criteria – and comply with them! Often applications that fail to meet the criteria will be rejected by funders.

For example:

- Make sure that your proposal is within the scope of the grant call. For example, don't propose an e-resources training workshop if the grant call is to develop leadership skills.
- Submit all the documents required.

Provide a detailed budget and show your organisation's commitment

- Submit a realistic and well-considered budget that delivers value:
    - Detail costs clearly
    - Grants may be fixed amounts or may be flexible amounts within a certain range (for example 'up to $2000'). For flexible amounts, it is not advisable to round-up costs in order to reach the top amount of funding available, unless you can clearly justify this.
- Know the scope of the grant – some costs (such as those of IT equipment) may not be covered.

- Show your own commitment:
    - Show what you are contributing. This doesn't have to be financial; it could also be time (for example, time for preparation and follow-up or for employees to attend) or a long-term commitment from your organisation.

Provide supporting documents

Supporting documents can help show you have thought carefully about your proposal. Here are some examples:

- Programme for the activity
- Letter(s) of support for the activity from your institution or consortium and from outside collaborators, if any.
- If you are planning a learning visit: agreement from the host institution or country
- If you are planning to attend a conference: list of the sessions you would like to attend at the conference. This will show that you've looked at the programme and seen that the conference suits your needs/interests. If the programme is not yet available, we suggest looking at ones from past conferences and reviewing your objectives.

Show you have considered the impact of your activity

It is important to show that you have considered the impact of the activity. For example:

- What you will do afterwards to share learning and improve what you do at your institution or within your consortium?
- How will you share the skills or knowledge learnt with others?
- How would the grant support the needs of your consortium or institution?
- How will you evaluate if your activity has been successful?

If you are asked to revise your proposal

In some circumstances, the funding organisation may ask to clarify your application, answer further questions, or provide a revised version of your proposal. If so, respond to each question or request clearly and completely and show how you are following the advice provided by the funders.

If you were awarded a grant:

Remember that receiving funding is only the first step!

- Keep the funder informed, for example if there are delays or unexpected challenges.
- Follow up: Remember to submit any documents you agreed to provide in your contract. Be sure to do so by the deadlines.