

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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These short guidelines, originally formulated for participants in the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) Project Development Workshop for Africa held in Nairobi in 2009, are intended to help project proponents to develop fundable proposals that effectively address taxonomic needs within mainstream frameworks, e.g those provided by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the WTO-SPS agreement and the Millennium Development Goals. The document is divided into two sections: 1.) Actions to take during proposal development; and 2.) Components of a project proposal and a short references section.

Each donor and programme will have its own specific requirements so there can be no one size fits all guide. The exact project development steps to be undertaken will depend on the targeted donor or programme. These guidelines provide an overview of the project development process and are not intended to replace the detailed donor-specific guidelines that usually accompany calls for project proposals.

1. ACTIONS TO TAKE DURING PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Project development is not simply a matter of writing a good proposal. Project development requires a lot of ground work that involves consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including government and non-governmental institutions, project partners, the local community and potential donors.

Submission of proposals often requires national endorsement. Project proponents should make contact with the appropriate authority in their own government. Knowing your own country's priorities will aid the process government endorsement. It will also assist you in designing your project so that it addresses national priorities.

Successful projects are often developed in response to a call for proposals. Eligible projects are determined by national and international priorities which are reflected in those of the donors. Writing a proposal in response to a specific call for proposals focuses thinking and helps to minimise "blank page syndrome". Even if unsuccessful, the production of a proposal for a particular donor is not necessarily a waste of time. If the proponent is given detailed reviewer's comments, it can be reworked to increase its chances of being funded. A failed submission, assuming that it does not need to be radically updated, can be the basis for a reworked proposal that can be produced relatively rapidly in response to an appropriate call. Calls for proposals can often have very tight deadlines so having something already substantially prepared can help the project proponent to meet such deadlines.

1.1 Mainstreaming taxonomy-related projects

Taxonomy, the discovery, naming, distinguishing and classification of organisms, underpins all efforts in that relate to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity which in turn is essential for poverty alleviation and sustainable development. However, the linkages between taxonomy and globally accepted sustainable development targets, as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals must be made explicit by the project proponents. Proposed projects that appear to promote taxonomy for its own sake are unlikely to be funded.

2. COMPONENTS OF A PROJECT PROPOSAL

This section summarises the components of a generic project proposal. Guidelines for specific donors / calls for proposals will have a particular format but this will have a lot in common with the generic format outlined below. The headings used in this section are derived from the project development guidelines produced by AusAid, IDRC (Canada) and the Water Stewardship Fund, Manitoba (see references section for full details).

2.1 Project Overview

- **Project Title:** A short phrase describing the subject of the proposal.
- **Project Description / Executive Summary** (usually about one page): Brief description of background and outline of objectives and activities, partners names and brief description of their role in the project
- **Estimated budget:** Estimate of the total cost of the project, the amount requested from the donors, co-financing in cash and in kind and co-financing sources. The currency or currencies used will depend on the donor.
- **Estimated duration:** Indicate how many months it will take to complete the entire project, including writing and submitting the final reports.
- **Objectives:** Indicate both the general and specific objectives of the project.
- **Donor Priority Areas:** Identify which of the donor priority areas your project falls under, and briefly explain how it addresses these areas. You may choose as many as apply to your project.

2.2 Administrative information

- **Project leader:** Name the person(s) who would have the main responsibility for the technical and administrative coordination of the project. Include the project leader's title, address, work telephone and fax numbers, and email address.
- **Recipient institution:** Name the recipient organisation that will administer the research funds. Include the institution's address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address
- **Collaborating institutions:** Identify any co-submitter of the proposal that will also enter into a contractual relationship with the donor as a recipient institution (co-recipient).
- **Participating institutions:** In some cases, all or part of the work will be carried out in an institution other than the recipient institution administering the funds. Give the names and addresses of any participating institutions.
- **Information about your Organisation and Collaborating Organisations:** Brief description of lead and collaborating organisations, most recent annual report (if available), organisation and contact person responsible for financial management of the project (grant recipient / distributor).
- **Other donor agencies (if any) funding this proposal:** Provide the names and a description of the roles of other agencies and, if known, the amount they will contribute.
- **Other donor agencies (if any) to whom this proposal was submitted for independent funding:** Provide the name(s) of any other agency currently considering this proposal for funding.
- **Supporting administrative documents:** e.g. a letter of formal request for support from the donor when the final proposal is submitted.

- **Government approval:** Many countries require that government approval be obtained for outside funding of projects. This may apply even if that funding is not going to a government institution. Where such clearance is required, the donor cannot fund any project until a copy of the official approval document has been submitted.

2.3 Project Details

This section should normally make up between one-quarter and one-half of the proposal. It should describe the problem that is to be investigated and the questions that will guide the project implementation process. This section should be a brief yet complete. Details which may distract from the flow of the narrative can be summarised in appendices.

Background / Rationale

This section should provide a brief overview of the literature and work undertaken in the field related to the problem, and of the gaps that the proposed project intends to fill.

To show the importance of the problem, this section may discuss such points as:

- How the project relates to the development priorities of the country or countries concerned;
- The scientific importance of the problem;
- How the proposal relates to state of the art research / methodology;
- The magnitude of the problem and how the project's results will contribute to its solution;
- The special importance of the project for vulnerable social groups; and
- The need to build up capacity in the proposed project area.

If the proposal is for the second phase of a project or if the applicant has received funding in the past for similar work, describe the results of the previous work and indicate why additional work is required.

Project Goals and Objectives

The objectives section of a proposal does not have to be long, often only up to a half-page. This is because the rationale for each objective will already have been established in the previous section, while the ways of achieving the objectives should be explained in the work plan section.

- The **General objectives** provide a short statement of the development goal being pursued by the research.
- The **Specific objectives** are operational in nature. They may indicate specific types of knowledge to be produced, certain audiences to be reached, and certain forms of capacity to be reinforced. These are the objectives against which the success of the project will be judged. It is important to distinguish the specific objectives from the means of achieving them, such as pursuing field work, organising a network or a workshop, or publishing a book.

Project Logframe

The bridge between the project goals and objectives and the project work plan is usually provided by the project logical framework (or logframe). The exact detail of the logframe format to be used varies from donor to donor but the essential details are as follows. The logframe takes the form of a table or matrix with four rows and four columns. The four rows are used to describe four different types of events that take place as a project is implemented: the project *Goal* ("the greater why"), *Purpose* ("why?"), *Outputs* ("what?") and *Activities* ("How?"). The four columns provide different types of information about the events in each row. The first column is used to provide a *Narrative*

Description of the event. The second column lists one or more *Objectively Verifiable Indicators* (OVIs) of these events taking place. The third column describes the *Means of Verification* (MoV) where information will be available on the OVIs, and the fourth column lists the *Assumptions*. Assumptions are external factors that it is believed could influence (positively or negatively) the events described in the narrative column. The list of assumptions should include those factors that potentially impact on the success of the project, *but which cannot be directly controlled by the project or program managers*. These may include a *killer assumption*, an assumption which if it does not hold is likely to cause the project to fail. The identification of a killer assumption may necessitate a reformulation of the project or, at worst, its abandonment during the design phase. The logframe structure, together with a brief description of the information it contains is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Logframe Matrix structure (adapted from AusAid, 2003)

Project Description Performance	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal: The broader development impact to which the project contributes – at a national and sectoral level.	Measures of the extent to which a sustainable contribution to the goal has been made. Used during evaluation.	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	
Purpose: The development outcome expected at the end of the project. All components will contribute to this.	Conditions at the end of the project indicating that the Purpose has been achieved and that benefits are sustainable. used for project completion and evaluation.	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	Assumptions concerning the purpose/goal linkage.
Outputs: The direct measurable results (goods and services) of the project which are largely under project management's control	Measures of the quantity and quality of outputs and the timing of their delivery. Used during monitoring and review.	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	Assumptions concerning the output/component objective linkage.
Activities: The tasks carried out to implement the project and deliver the identified outputs.	Implementation/work program targets. Used during monitoring.	Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it.	Assumptions concerning the activity/output linkage.

Project Work Plan

The work plan lists and describes the activities that will be carried out during the project that will ensure that each specific objective is achieved. Proposals need to be clear about what activities are envisaged in the pursuit of each objective, and this must be done before funding is approved. Indeed, it is impossible to define the budgetary needs of the project in the absence of this information. The work plan should provide enough detail to enable an independent assessment of the proposal and should include the following components:

a. Time frame of project

Identify project start date and anticipated completion date.

b. Activities/Timelines

How will the work be carried out? Identify activities/tasks planned to achieve goals and objectives? Include timelines set up to achieve these activities/tasks.

Identify project deliverables that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART objectives).

c. Resources

What materials, supplies and equipment will you use?

Other Key information to include in the Project Details Section

The following might be used as further section headings within the Project Details Section

a. Community involvement

What individuals or groups will participate in the project, and in what way?

To what extent will there be community involvement? How will this be organised?

b. Project management and personnel

Who is responsible for managing the project and the various activities under the project?

Who is responsible for bookkeeping and the disbursement of funds?

Who is your organisation accountable to? What is the accountability process?

c. Target group(s)

Who are the potential clients to be served by the project? Indicate whether the ultimate users of the project outputs were involved in the design of the project and what role they will play in executing the project?

d. Involvement of other Stakeholders

Who are the project's stakeholders? Were they involved in the in the design of the project and what role they will play in executing the project?

e. Communication, dissemination, promotion, education and awareness

How will you communicate information about your project, and the results of your project, to your community? (news releases, public events, articles, etc.)

f. Sustainability

How will your organisation ensure the project's achievements are maintained after the project funding is finished?

g. Project location

Where is your project located?

h. Gender considerations

Do gender considerations constitute an important dimension of the project and how will project activities address them?

i. Ethical considerations

Does the project involve research on human or animal subjects, the collection of private or personal information, or the participation of individuals in experiments? How will the project ensure that it protects the privacy, dignity, and integrity of those who are the subjects of research? How will research findings be reported back to the people concerned?

j. Training

How might the project contribute to the training of staff and other stakeholders, what kinds of training would be most appropriate and how it would be organised?

k. Organisational matters

Are new organisational elements required for the smooth implementation of the project?

l. Collaborative arrangements with developed country institutions

Why is collaboration being sought and how will the collaboration be organised? What will be the division of labour?

m. Intellectual property

Will the projects result in the creation of intellectual property and how will this issue be addressed?

n. Environmental Impact

Is there any potential for an adverse impact on the environment as a result of the project and what measures will be undertaken to minimise or mitigate these impacts?

o. Regulatory Approvals

Are there any regulatory requirements for your project? If so, do you have (or are you in the process of getting) the necessary approvals from the appropriate authorities?

2.4 Detailed Project Budget

A detailed budget needs to be provided according to donor guidelines. The budget may be divided between columns that refer to funding requested from the donor and cash and in-kind funding from partner institutions. Budget estimates are usually computed on an annual basis (a 12 month period). A typical budget table is shown below.

Table 2. Example of a typical budget table (From the Water Stewardship Fund, Manitoba)

Expense Category	Partner Funding		Funding re- quested from do- nor	Budget to- tal
	Cash	In-kind		
Project Personnel Costs - <i>list wages and employee benefits for each employee</i>				
Management/Professional Fees - <i>total costs for each of the following:</i>				
<i>Accounting</i>				
<i>Audit</i>				
<i>Legal</i>				
<i>Technical</i>				
<i>Contractor</i>				
<i>Consultant</i>				
<i>Other</i>				
Materials/Supplies - <i>give a detailed list of all materials and supplies to be used and their total costs (a separate sheet may be attached to this one)</i>				
Equipment - <i>list the types of equipment and their cost</i>				
Office Costs - <i>specify what the money will be used for</i>				
Transportation Costs				
<i>National</i>				
<i>International</i>				
Other - please identify and be specific				
TOTAL				

2.5 Monitoring & Evaluation¹

Provide a brief plan describing how you will monitor and evaluate your project's success, based on its objectives and the activities undertaken. Your monitoring and evaluation plan should include what information you will collect, how the information will be gathered and who will carry out the evaluation.

2.6 Acronyms

List all acronyms and abbreviations used in the proposal that could be unfamiliar to the reader. Common abbreviations, for example, U.S.A., EU and cm do not need to be listed.

2.7 References

List references of relevance to the proposal background and that relate the proposal to state of the art expertise / methodology in the field. Your proposal might be sent to a reviewer whose is cited in the references section so make sure that you cite relevant and not peripheral literature. If you omit a key reference you might be criticised for your lack of background knowledge and if you cite peripheral literature your proposal might be reviewed by somebody who does not fully understand it.

2.8 Appendices

Attach any supporting documents such as maps, the resumes of personnel, or bibliographies.

3. REFERENCES

1. AusAid (2003). Ausguidelines - The Logical Framework Approach. URL: <http://portals.wi.wur.nl/files/docs/ppme/ausguidelines-logical%20framework%20approach.pdf>
2. Project Planning in UNHCR – A Practical Guide on the use of Objectives, Outputs and Indicators. URL: <http://www.the-ecentre.net/.../doc/Project%20Planning%20in%20UNHCR.pdf>
3. IDRC. Guidelines for Writing a Project Proposal. URL: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-57070-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
4. Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity United Nations Environment Programme (2006). Catalogue of Funding Sources. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/guidelines/fin-sources.pdf>
The Water Stewardship Fund, Manitoba. Project Proposal Guidelines. URL: http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/water_info/wsf/wsf_project_proposal_guidelines.pdf

¹ Continuous monitoring provides indications of progress in achievement of results. Monitoring generally addresses activities and outputs, but always with an eye on higher level outcomes. Periodic evaluation objectively assesses progress towards the achievement of outcomes.