

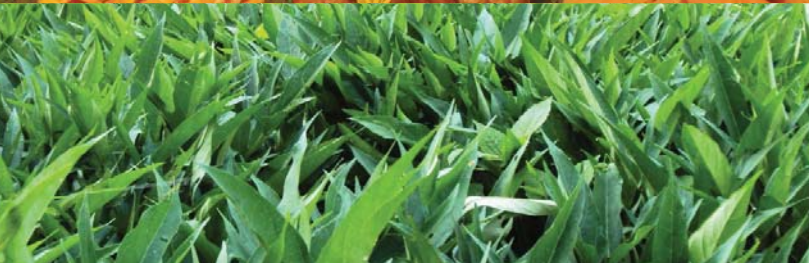
Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

A LEARNING KIT



VOLUME 3

Writing Full Proposals



ZENETE FRANÇA AND ASSOCIATES
CONSULTANTS IN LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

R E A C H I N G A G E N T S O F C H A N G E (R A C)

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation: A Learning Kit

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A Learning Kit

Volumes 1–5

- Volume 1. Introduction. A Comprehensive Implementation Plan
- Volume 2. Concept Notes, Proposals and Logframe
- Volume 3. Writing Full Proposals
- Volume 4. Project Implementation and M&E
- Volume 5. Workshop Evaluation, PAPA and Annexes

**Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Project
CIP, Nairobi, Kenya
2014**

*A Learning Kit adapted from the Learning Module re-designed in November 2012 by the
Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Team, International Potato Center (CIP),
Nairobi, Kenya, April 2014*

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

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**Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato
Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring
and Evaluation**

A Learning Kit

Volume 3

Introduction

Writing Full Proposals

How to Write Proposal Budgets

Preparing Executive Summary, Submitting, etc.

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Preface

In 2009, the International Potato Center (CIP) and its partners launched the Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative (SPHI), aiming to improve the lives of 10 million African households in 10 years through effective production and expanded use of sweetpotato.

SPHI contributes to reducing child malnutrition and improving smallholder incomes.

The Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Project advocates for increased investment in orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) to combat Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD) among young children and women of reproductive age. RAC also builds institutional capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive projects to ensure wide access and utilization of OFSP in Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso and Ghana.

To build institutional capacity in three African countries, in 2012 RAC team designed a six-day Learning Module on ‘Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, and M&E’, by adapting and complementing the contents and processes from learning plans developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)/the International Services for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR)/the Agricultural Research and Development Support Facility (ARDSF) to respond to the needs of RAC stakeholders. The RAC team tailored the IFPRI/ISNAR/ARDSF materials to make them relevant to the RAC agenda. This involved adding sections and sessions on mainstreaming gender in project design, project budgets, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and including the theory of change.

This learning kit maximizes the use of the RAC learning module by redesigning it into a publication comprising five volumes on ‘Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, and M&E’. The learning kit was designed in this new format: (i) to guide the prospective learning facilitators to implement workshops which are composed of sessions based on the needs of the users in a less formal six-day workshop; and (ii) to facilitate wider distribution of the learning plan which was developed and implemented successfully during six-day workshops in Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tanzania. This was to support RAC strategic objective 2 which states: *building capacity of implementing agencies to design and implement technically strong and cost-effective interventions that drive uptake of OFSP*. This objective stresses that capacity must include gender sensitivity in OFSP projects.

The learning kit concentrates on Project planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation to promote the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills on: (a) identifying project areas and objectives, and leading project teams; (b) preparing project proposals; (c) reviewing project proposals; (d) approving projects and committing resources; and (e) implementing projects, monitoring and evaluation, that includes theory of change.

The learning kit provides a thorough plan to support the implementation of 14 sessions of a workshop — *at the best time of the users* — to provide the learning facilitators with the sequential information to strengthen capacity of event participants to undertake each phase of the project cycle management, which includes planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of identified OFSP-related priority projects.

The learning kit includes instructions to guide learning facilitators to implement events to multiply learning among other professionals in the country, a summary of PowerPoint presentations, brief descriptive presentations and a range of exercises designed for building teams to work together during and after the workshops. The learning module also

provides instruments to collect daily feedback, to record the Participant Action Plan Approach (PAPA) and undertake evaluation.

It is expected that by *implementing each step* of all phases of the project cycle management this learning kit will inspire and motivate participants to use it to plan and lead new workshops or events to promote learning and capacity building to strengthen the quality of OFSP project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This will not only attract financial support to reduce child malnutrition and improve smallholder incomes, but also ensure that OFSP projects are moving in the right direction towards obtaining effective results.

In preparing to transform the six-day workshop plan into this learning kit, the RAC team, under the leadership of Dr. Adiel Mbabu, RAC Project Manager, and Dr. Zenete Peixoto França, specialist in Learning and Capacity Building, have adapted the contents and design of IFPRI/ISNAR/ARDSF learning modules, and added new sections to better align it with agricultural research for development (AR4D) approach.

Dr. Adiel Mbabu
Regional Director, Sub-Saharan Africa &
Project Manager, Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Project
CIP, Nairobi

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which has enabled the International Potato Center (CIP) to create the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Project: Catalyzing African Advocacy and Development Efforts to Achieve Broad Impact with Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato to reach out to five African countries: Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

Special thanks go to Dr. Jan Low, Program Leader for Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative (SPHI), for support and commitment to the RAC agenda.

We owe a very special thank you to the RAC Team, Dr. Hilda Munyua, Mr. Godfrey Mulongo, and Mr. Frank Ojwang, for sharing the delivery of sessions in three workshops, which took place in April and May 2013 in Tanzania, Mozambique and Nigeria. In Mozambique, we thank Mr. Elias Munda for his participation as a RAC team member.

This special thank you is extended to the Helen Keller International (HKI) team, Dr. Sonii David and Dr. Adekeye Marion (who participated in the Nigeria workshop) and to Mr. Dercio Matala and Ms. Gabriela Teixeira (who participated in the Mozambique workshop). In addition, RAC is grateful to Mr. Frank Ojwang and other colleagues from the three countries for providing necessary logistics for the workshops.

We are pleased to express a deep thank you to all participants of the workshops in Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania, whose names are listed in the respective workshop reports for each country. The workshops were carried out during six consecutive days following the learning module, which was specifically designed to adapt the contents to reflect the RAC objectives and the felt needs of the respective partners in the collaborating African countries.

The commitment and interest of the participants in providing feedback on the high value of the learning module triggered the decision to transform this learning plan into this publication, comprising five volumes, to promote higher distribution and increase its impact among needy communities.

This learning kit is expected to contribute to equipping professionals to access financial support for their orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) projects.

We are grateful to Dr. Zenete Peixoto França of Zenete França & Associates for joining the RAC team to transform the learning module design into this learning kit. RAC wanted to ensure that this new publication guarantees effective learning by maintaining guidance for the ideal sequence and details to implement the sessions, which follow the principles of adult learning as defined in the previous learning plan. We are also grateful to Mr. Stephen Parker for his support in designing the covers and CD-ROM for this publication.

Volume 3: Introduction

Volume 3 of this learning kit is composed of three sessions which guide the user on writing proposals and proposal budgets, preparing the Executive Summary, and submitting and following up on proposals.

Volume 3 presents a comprehensive plan to implement the following three sessions:

Session 8. Writing full proposals

This session presents how to proceed from a well prepared concept note that has been approved by an internal committee to a full proposal. It also assists the participants in learning possible basic proposal format for organizations and identifies factors that contribute to improving the quality of convincing proposals such as objectives and activities sections, impact evaluation and milestones, etc. This session presents exercises to be implemented during the session to facilitate learning among participants through practicing how to develop related skills.

Session 9. How to write proposal budgets

This session introduces tips on preparing good proposal budgets, including budget formats and guidelines, and emphasizes qualities of a good budget. Participants will carry out practical exercises to make sure that knowledge is increased and skills are developed.

Session 10. Preparing Executive Summary. Submitting, following up, etc.

This is a very important session to guide the workshop participants on how to package their full proposal document. It emphasizes the importance of preparing a good covering letter and a strong Executive Summary for a proposal. This session also assists the participants in getting acquainted with mechanisms to track the proposal, the value of a donor relations office, the importance of negotiating with donors, the value of monitoring and evaluating projects and the elements that constitute a good report to donors. The participants will practice exercises to master these important aspects of packaging and following up a proposal to donors.

While implementing Volume 3, it is recommended that the leading facilitators carry out the following activities:

1. Pre-session. To review the previous sessions' activities through the identified participants (see Volume 1, Pre-Workshop Plan section, item 4) to assess the progress of the workshop. At the same time, the facilitator should summarize and present the results of the participants' feedback received the previous day to the audience.
2. This learning plan suggests a time frame for all sessions of this learning kit. It aims to facilitate the implementation of activities by the learning facilitators. Remember to consider the suggestions of time frame in the plan of respective sessions.
3. The learning plan recommends including 15 minutes – during the morning and afternoon sessions – for the participants to have tea/coffee breaks, which promotes socialization and consequently a great atmosphere for learning.
4. In addition, the learning plan strongly recommends that the participants undertake PAPA and Feedback exercises daily, at the end of the sessions. The total amount of 15 minutes will be enough to complete the two forms to carry out this exercise. This learning kit provides specific forms to complete PAPA and Feedback, at the end of each Volume.

SESSION 8

Writing full proposals

Instructions to Learning Facilitators

PRE-SESSION

Opening of the Session's Activities: 30 minutes

- Review of the previous sessions' activities
- Summary of the evaluation of the previous sessions
- Overview of the previous session activities

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the pre-session, the participants will be able to do the following:

- Assess the progress of the workshop (10 minutes).
- Summarize the evaluation of the previous sessions (10 minutes).
- Present the objectives and describe the agenda for the sessions' activities (10 minutes).

Use the PowerPoint to present the objectives of the session. Distribute handouts from 3.8.1 to 3.8.4.

TIME FRAME

Presentation and Exercise: 3 hours 30 minutes

Coffee/Tea Break: 15 minutes (morning and afternoon)

PROCEDURE

Learning strategies or facilitation techniques: interdisciplinary group work, plenary discussion.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

- Explain when to proceed to a full proposal.
- Identify a possible basic proposal format for organization.
- Discuss the qualities of a convincing proposal.
- Discuss the nine steps involved in writing a proposal.
- Identify ways of reviewing and improving key sections, such as the objectives and activities sections.
- Discuss the concepts of impact evaluation and milestones.
- Identify milestones for a specific project.

Use the PowerPoint to present the session objectives. Distribute Handouts 3.8.1 and 3.8.2 before you begin your presentation.

PRESENTATION

(experience) Give a brief presentation on the key steps for writing proposals. Use PowerPoint to support the presentation. At the end of the presentation, ask if clarification is needed. (15 minutes).

EXERCISES 8a & 8b

Transforming your concept note into a full proposal.
(This session is composed of Exercises 8a and 8b. Exercise 8b is divided into Part A and Part B). **Total time 3 hours 15 minutes.**

EXERCISE 8a

Exercise 8a. Practicing skills on writing objectives, outputs, activities and work plan (1 hour 30 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (60 minutes)

(*experience*) Invite participants to go over Exercise 8a, and make sure they understand its steps. Also ask them to form the interdisciplinary groups and elect a rapporteur.

(*experience, process*) Ask the participants to follow the guidance of Exercise 8a. They should read steps 1–4 of handout 3.8.4 regarding **objective, outputs, activities and work plan**, discuss these issues with their group members and decide how you could refine these components of the Concept Notes to make them more effective as part of a **full project proposal**. Remind them to use handouts 3.8.8 and 3.8.9 during this exercise.

(*process, generalization*) Ask the rapporteurs to compile the groups' responses on flipcharts or on PowerPoint to present to the audience.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (30 minutes)

(*process, generalization*) Ask the rapporteurs to present the group results and promote discussion. At the end ask a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and make transition to the next exercise.

EXERCISE 8b

Exercise 8b. Part A & Part B. Practicing skills on writing impacts and milestones (1 hour 15 minutes — including Reporting phase)

Part A: Writing impacts (45 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work

(*experience*) Invite participants to go over Exercise 8b (Parts A & B), and make sure they understand its steps. Also ask them to continue forming the same interdisciplinary groups and elect a rapporteur.

(*experience, process*) Ask the participants to read the information in steps 4 and 5 of handout 3.8.4 regarding

beneficiaries and impacts, discuss these issues with their group members and decide how they could refine these components of their Concept Note to make them more effective as part of a **full project proposal**.

Make sure they use worksheet, handout 3.8.8 to record their responses to prepare the first Draft Proposal to take home.

(process, generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to compile the groups' responses on flipcharts or PowerPoint to present to the audience.

EXERCISE 8b

Part B: Writing milestones (60 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (20 minutes)

(experience, process) Invite the groups to read the information (step 8 handout 3.8.4) and examples on writing milestones provided in handout 3.8.7, then analyze, discuss, and compare with some experience in the past regarding this before undertaking their task.

(process, generalization) Encourage the groups to prepare **milestones for their project proposal**. Remember that the groups will have to make some big assumptions in designing the milestones *because the project proposals are not fully thought through*.

(generalization) The rapporteurs should compile the groups' inputs on worksheet 3.8.8 and write the results on the flipchart or PowerPoint to present to the audience.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (35 minutes)

(generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to present the results of the groups' discussions to the audience. Each rapporteur has five minutes to report. Then encourage brief discussion.

(generalization) At the end, the facilitator asks volunteers to provide feedback, summarizes a few lessons learned and comments on the contents, and provides feedback on this exercise.

CLOSURE

Closure (5 minutes)

(application) Ask the participants, 'What might you do differently in your job as a result of what you have learned?' Ask volunteers to give examples.

Make a transition to the next session.

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Volume 3 – Sessions Overview

Objectives

By the end of this Volume 3, the participants will be able to do the following:

- Explain when to proceed to a full proposal.
- Identify a possible basic proposal format for their organizations.
- Discuss the qualities of a convincing proposal.
- Discuss the nine steps involved in writing a proposal.
- Identify ways of reviewing and improving key sections, such as the objectives and activities sections.
- Discuss the concepts of impact evaluation and milestones.
- Identify milestones for a specific project.
- Discuss tips on preparing good proposal budgets.
- Identify budget formats.
- Discuss budget guidelines.
- Describe the qualities of a good budget.
- Prepare the Executive Summary of a proposal.
- Prepare a good covering letter.
- Design mechanisms to track the proposal.
- Discuss how and when to start the project.
- Explain the value of a donor relations office.
- Discuss the importance of negotiating with donors.
- Explain the importance of monitoring and evaluating projects.
- Identify the elements of a good report to donors.
- Plan actions for future activities related to writing convincing proposals.
- Evaluate and provide feedback on the workshop.

Handouts

- 3.8.1 Volume 3 — Sessions overview
- 3.8.2 Volume 3 — Sessions time frame
- 3.8.3 PowerPoint presentation
- 3.8.4 Summary of presentation. Writing full proposals
- 3.8.5 Exercise 8a. Transforming a concept note into a full proposal
- 3.8.6 Exercise 8b. Practicing skills on writing impact and milestones
- 3.8.7 Exercise reading. Examples of milestones
- 3.8.8 Worksheet Form. First draft of your full proposal
- 3.8.9 Exercise 8. Worksheet personal notes
- 3.9.1 PowerPoint presentation
- 3.9.2 Summary of presentation. How to prepare proposal budgets

- 3.9.3 Exercise 9. Analyzing and improving a proposal budget
- 3.9.4 Exercise 9. Worksheet. Pink Land Project
- 3.9.5 Exercise 9. Worksheet form
- 3.10.1 PowerPoint presentation
- 3.10.2 Summary of presentation. Preparing the Executive Summary
- 3.10.3 Summary of presentation. Submitting and following up on project proposals
- 3.10.4 Summary of presentation. How to maintain good donor relations
- 3.10.5 Exercise 10. Overall guidance for Exercises 10a, 10b, 10c. Writing Executive Summary
- 3.10.6 Exercise 10a. Worksheet for writing Executive Summary
- 3.10.7 Example of good covering letter
- 3.10.8 Exercise 10b. Worksheet for Part A- number elements on covering letter
- 3.10.9 Exercise 10b. Worksheet for Part B - organization's strengths and weaknesses
- 3.10.10 Exercise 10c. Worksheet. Group insights on negotiation, M&E, report
- 3.10.11 Personal Notes Form
- 3.10.12 Form. Feedback of the day's sessions
- 3.10.13 PAPA

Note on the figures

Figures are membered as in the original documents

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Volume 3 — Sessions Time Frame

Opening of the Day's Activities: 30 minutes

Session 8. Writing full proposal: 3 hours 30 minutes

(Presentation and Exercise 8)

Session 9. How to write proposal budgets: 2 hours 30 minutes

(Presentation and Exercise 9)

Tea/Coffee Break: 15 minutes (morning and afternoon)

**Session 10. Preparing Executive Summary, submitting and following up on project
proposal, and maintaining good donor relations: 4 hours 15
minutes**

(Presentation and Exercise 10)

Feedback on the day's sessions and PAPA: 15 minutes

Session 8

PowerPoint Presentation

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, M&E

Volume 3 - Session Eight Writing a Full Proposal

3.8.1

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Objectives

Volume 3 - Session Eight

- Explain when to proceed from a concept note to a full proposal.
- Identify a possible basic proposal format for the organizations
- Discuss the qualities of a convincing proposal.
- Discuss the nine steps involved in writing a proposal.

Refer to the time frame for the session in the binder

3.8.2

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Objectives of Session Eight (cont'd)

- Identify ways of reviewing and improving key sections, such as the objectives and activities sections.
- Discuss the concepts of evaluation and milestones.
- Identify milestones for a specific project.

3.8.3

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Concept Note to Proposal

- A good concept note is the basis for preparing a convincing proposal
- Some sections will need to be expanded
- Provide additional details to persuade your organization and/or the funding agency you are ready to start work

3.8.4

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Concept Note to Proposal

- Strengthen linkages with partners
- Update your design in light of changing internal and external realities
- Rethink different aspects of the project (e.g. sites, scope of activities, inclusion of different elements)

3.8.5

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Preparing the Full Proposal

- Organizations might have their format. Look for it
- Many funders have a preferred format and guidelines on how to submit proposals
- Compare the two formats and note similarities and differences

3.8.6

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Preparing the Full Proposal

- If an organization or funding agencies do not have a preferred format and special rules, use the format and method described in this session
- Reassemble the concept note design team plus partners, and have a meeting to plan the preparation of the proposal

3.8.7

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Preparing the Full Proposal

- When you have a first draft of the full proposal, have it discussed internally and at a public proposal review

3.8.8

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Qualities of a Winning Proposal

All good proposals convey the following message:

- Something important needs doing right away!
- By doing it, many currently underprivileged people will be better off. If it is not done, these people are going to continue suffering

3.8.9

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Qualities of a Winning Proposal

All good proposals convey the following message:

- Here is a sensible and cost-effective way of doing it
- The proposing partners are well staffed, equipped, and eager to do the job!
- All that is necessary is to have financial support to proceed with your project!

3.8.10

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Very Important Note

In addition to *good development logic and important goals and objectives*, a convincing proposal needs **PASSION**

3.8.11

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Basic Proposal Format (submit your proposal in this order)

- I. Summary (What is the proposal about?)
- II. Background (Why should the project be implemented?)
- III. Objective (Purpose: What do you hope to achieve?)
- IV. Outputs (What will the project deliver?)
- V. Activities (What will you do?)
- VI. Work Plan (How will you achieve your objectives?)
- VII. Impacts (Who will be better off at the end of the project, and why?)
- VIII. Monitoring and evaluation (How can you test if the project is working?)
- IX. Budget (How much will it cost?)

3.8.12

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

But Write the Proposal in This Order

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 1. Objective | 7. Background |
| 2. Outputs | 8. Evaluation |
| 3. Activities | 9. Summary |
| 4. Work plan | 10. Review and editing |
| 5. Impacts | 11. Cover letter |
| 6. Budget | |

3.8.13

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 1: Objective (Purpose)

- Review the objective from the concept note:
 - does it still express what you want to achieve?
 - consider suggestions from the Institute Review and/or potential donor
 - is the objective easily measurable?
- Set aside quality time (1 hour) to brainstorm the substance and the wording of the proposal objective
- Incorporate gender and HIV/AIDS as necessary

3.8.14

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 2: Outputs

- Review the outputs in the concept note
- Remember to incorporate gender and HIV/AIDS issues
- Stretch your imagination, brainstorm with colleagues
- Organize your outputs by categories
 - One approach is to show outputs by each group of people (development domain)
 - Another approach is to show outputs by site and relate to pertinent activities by using a numbering system

3.8.15

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 3: Activities

- This section needs considerable expansion
- For all major elements of the project define exactly who will do what, when, where, and for how long
- Use the active voice and write short, clear sentences to convey the urgency of the problem and your passionate desire to start work right away
- Remember gender and HIV/AIDS

3.8.16

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 4: Work or Management Plan

- Spend considerable time preparing this section
- Explain what combination of inputs will be needed, when, and in what quantities to achieve the desired outputs
- You will need a section on project management arrangements and one on inputs
- You will also need a time line for the project
- You may also need:
 - level of effort (person days)
 - site selection
 - learning and capacity building plan
 - working plan
 - equipment funding plan

3.8.17

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 5: Expected Impacts

- Review the expected impacts in the concept note
- Remember to incorporate gender and HIV/AIDS issues
- Stretch your imagination, brainstorm with colleagues
- Organize your impacts by categories
 - You can show the effect on each group of people (development domain), site or project component

3.8.18

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 6: Budget

- Much more needs to be done
- Get help from finance office
- Check budget needs of partners
- Be realistic, but not greedy

3.8.19

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 7: Background

- Add any sections you think will strengthen your appeal to the Institute management and donors
 - what is your comparative advantage for implementing the project?
 - what do the partners bring to the project?
- Use a soft approach – do not oversell or overpraise yourself
- Keep this section short, sharp, and readable (2-3 pages in a short proposal)
- Use subheadings to break up the material

3.8.20

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 8: Evaluation and Milestones

- Consider having a separate activity and budget line item in your proposal
- In the evaluation section, describe how the project managers will monitor the project
- A milestone is an intermediate output. Milestones are useful for tracking a project as it evolves
- Include milestones for the end of each middle year of a project

3.8.21

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 9: Summary

- The most important part of the proposal – the only part that some people will read
- Always write this section last
- Take care with the wording
- Refer to all other sections of the proposal

3.8.22

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 9: Summary

- Be brief – one page or less (10% rule)
- Do not avoid the request for funds if proposal is for submission to a donor

3.8.23

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Proposal Step 10: Review and Editing

- ☑ Before sending the proposal for review, *sleep on it*
- ☑ Re-read it critically
- ☑ Eliminate errors, repetitions, and inconsistencies
- ☑ Edit to shorten the proposal, making it crisp, clear, punchy, and appealing
- ☑ Do not omit this step, and learn to do it yourself!
 - ☑ Hands-on. Write your proposal
 - ☑ Thank you!

3.8.24

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR_ARDSF

Writing full proposals¹ (Summary of Presentation)

When to proceed to a proposal

Preparing a concept note takes a fraction of the time needed to prepare a good proposal. Proceed to the development of a full-blown proposal if you have: a) internal support, b) enthusiastic partners and beneficiaries, and c) some indication of funding agency support. Without these elements, you may have to abandon your project idea, or redesign.

Preparing the full proposal

Once your institute, partners and funders have indicated some interest in a project idea, further elaboration of the idea will be needed. If the project has multiple partners, ensure that the proposal is prepared in a collegial and collaborative fashion by involving representatives from all groups in all decisions concerning the design. Once finished, the proposal should be discussed at a proposal review meeting.

Qualities of a convincing proposal

All good proposals convey that:

- Something important needs doing right away.
- If we implement it, many currently underprivileged people will be much better off; if we do not, these people are going to suffer.
- We have a sensible and cost-effective way of doing this project; we (with our partners) are staffed, equipped, and eager to do the job.
- All we need is your support.

Proposal formats

Your organization will need a basic proposal format for internal projects and when the donor does not provide a preferred format. The following is a basic format you might find useful.

Basic proposal format

- I. Summary** (What is this proposal all about?)
- II. Background** (Why should this proposal be implemented?)
- III. Objective** (What do you hope to achieve?)
- IV. Outputs** (What will the project deliver?)
- V. Activities** (What will you do?)
- VI. Work Plan** (How will you achieve your objectives?)
- VII. Impacts** (What outputs will the project deliver and who will be better off at the end of the project, and why?)
- VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation** (How can you test if the project is working?)
- IX. Budget** (How much will it cost?)

¹ From Marian Fuchs-Carsch. *Capacity-building learning module on How to Write Convincing Proposals*. The Hague. The Netherlands. ISNAR. 1999/2000.

This is what the final proposal should look like. When writing a proposal, however, the following order is recommended.

Proposal preparation order

Prepare proposals in the following order:

1. Objective
2. Activities
3. Work plan
4. Outputs and impacts
5. Budget
6. Background
7. Evaluation and milestones
8. Summary
9. Review and editing
10. Cover letter

Concept note to a proposal

A good concept note is *the ideal basis* for preparing a convincing proposal. However, some sections need to be considerably expanded. Essentially, you are now providing additional details to persuade your institute, partners and funding agencies that you know what you want to do—that you can hit the ground running as soon as you receive their support, including funds.

You also have the opportunity to rethink different aspects of the project (e.g. sites, scope of activities, inclusion of different elements), and to strengthen linkages with partners. You can also update your design to take into account changing internal and external realities—it will have taken some time between having the first project idea and proceeding to the proposal stage.

Proposal step 1: objective

Review the objective as expressed in the concept note. Does it still express what you hope to achieve? Have suggestions in the concept review given you ideas on how to improve the objective? Is the objective easily measurable? If not, can you reformulate it to make future evaluation easier?

Try to set aside at least an hour to brainstorm for one final time the substance and wording of the proposal objective.

Proposal step 2: outputs

Review what you have already written in the concept note, and seek to strengthen this section; remember that outputs are what sell the project to the donor.

You need to organize your outputs by categories. One approach is to show the outputs for each group of people involved in the sector in which you are working. Another is to show outputs by site, or by project component. Whichever way they are presented, outputs

should be seen to be adequate to achieve relevant objectives. A logical results framework will help to bring clarity on this.

Proposal step 3: activities

You will need to expand the activities section of the concept note considerably. For all the major elements of the project, spell out exactly **who** will do **what**, **when**, and **where**? Remember to use the active voice and to write short, clear sentences. Such sentences convey the urgency of the problem and hence your passionate desire to start work right away.

You should review what you have already done, and seek improvements. Here are two examples to show you how.

Example 1: ‘Then we plan to introduce the pesticide on half the fields.’

What is wrong with this active sentence? Answer: You should never use ‘we’ in a proposal, because it is so vague. Who is ‘we’? Which particular person? A group of NARS staff? Farmers? Project partners? Always be specific about who is doing the action. Also, the form is rather too informal for most full proposals. Additionally, ‘then’ is rather vague when specifying time.

An improved version would be: ‘The RAC agronomist and the 15 women farmers participating in the project will introduce the pesticide on half the fields during the first month of the project.’

Example 2: ‘Sixteen workshops will be held, four each in Eastern Highlands, East New Britain, Milne Bay and Morobe Provinces.’

What’s wrong? Answer: This sentence uses the passive (‘will be held’), which is vague. Who will do the action? There is also nothing on the timing of the activity.

An improved version would be: ‘The project manager, together with provincial station leaders from Eastern Highlands, East New Britain, Milne Bay and Morobe Provinces, will prepare and implement four workshops in each of the provinces; one each in years 1 and 2, and two in year 3 of the project.’

Proposal step 4: work plan

You will need to spend considerable time preparing this section, since it has only been lightly sketched in the concept note. In this section you are explaining what combination of inputs will be needed, when, and in what quantities, to achieve the desired outputs.

You will need a section on project management arrangements, which explains which party will do what, when, and where. Be sure to include the roles and responsibilities of all project personnel, including, as appropriate, NARS staff, people from NGOs, government agencies, farmers’ groups, universities, etc.

Ideally this section should be prepared with partners, and should answer questions like: Who will lead the project? What other positions will be involved? From which organizations will the positions be filled? Will there be project meetings? When? Who will attend? How will beneficiaries be involved?

You will also need to list your inputs and level of effort, perhaps in a short table. Here's a small example:

Personnel inputs

Dept. of Horticulture agronomist	6 person-months/year — total 18 person months
Dept. of Horticulture fruit specialist	2 p.m. in years 2 and 3 — total 4 person months
University of Goroka research assistant	9 person months/year — total 27 person months
Project secretary/Logistics assistant	Full time — total 36 person months

You will need to include a time plan showing when activities will be undertaken. The best way is to use a flow chart or other graphic device.

In this section you should also include a brief reporting plan, explaining how often you will report back to the donor. If the donor or your institute management has not specified the reporting requirements, suggest an annual report, and a final report.

Depending on your project you may also need to write sections to cover:

- Site selection
- Learning and capacity building plans
- Workshop plans
- Computer purchase plans, etc.

Use graphs, charts, boxes, and maps to the fullest extent. The more details you provide, the more the donor or your management will feel you have thought the project through, are competent to implement it, and are indeed ready and eager to begin, needing only the funding to get going.

Proposal step 5: impacts

Review what you have already written in the concept note, and seek to strengthen this section; remember that outputs and especially impact are what sell the project to the donor.

You may wish to invite a complete outsider or group of outsiders to help you brainstorm once more on all the likely outcomes of your project, if it is implemented. Really stretch your imagination! Then write it all down in clear, simple language.

You need to organize your impacts by categories. One approach is to show the effects on each group of people involved in the sector in which you are working. Another is to show impacts by site, or by project component. These impacts should echo project objective and goal. A logical results framework will help to bring clarity on this.

Proposal step 6: budget

Here, a lot more work will need to be done, and you may need to get the help of the finance office. You will also need to be sure that you and your partners are happy with the proposed allocation of funds.

Preparing the budget section of proposals is probably the single most important task in moving from the concept note to the proposal stage.

Your finance office should be able to help you with budget *guidelines* to ensure that everyone who designs projects is following the same assumptions and charge rates for inputs.

In your budgeting, be realistic, but not greedy. Session 9 provides information on how to prepare a good proposal budget.

Back-up budgets

In complex projects involving multiple partners, you may also need *back-up budgets* such as:

- budgets by partners
- budgets by site or country
- budgets by activities

Unless project partners have considerable experience in collaborating on projects, it is always advisable to have separate budgets for each partner, agreed and approved by each organization, before the proposal is submitted to the donor or institute management.

Proposal step 7: background

In the concept note you will have written only on ‘The problem and why it is urgent,’ and ‘What has already been done.’ In the full proposal, you have the opportunity to add any sections you think will strengthen your appeal to the donor or your management for funds. Two that would be useful are:

- What are your comparative advantages and special qualifications for implementing the project?
- What do the partners bring to the project?

Use a soft approach—do not oversell or over-praise yourselves!

In terms of presentation, this section comes early in the proposal—if you write too much, you may turn your reader off. So keep this section as short, sharp, and readable as possible. Two to three pages in a short proposal, three to five in a major proposal are good limits. For many donors, everything else should go in an annex, or be left out altogether.

Use sub-headings to break up the material.

Proposal step 8: monitoring, evaluation and milestones

In this section you describe how the project’s managers will monitor the project to ensure that it is working as planned and is likely to achieve the desired outputs and impacts. Include a brief description here of how projects are usually monitored and evaluated in your organization.

An evaluation device donors look for nowadays is the use of *milestones*, key project achievements that allow you, your partners, and donors to ensure that progress is being made towards attaining outputs and impacts at regular intervals in the project’s life.

A milestone may be thought of as an intermediate output; something you expect to achieve at a certain moment during the life of the project.

You should specify ‘milestones’ for all projects over 18 months in duration. The ideal milestone is something worthwhile and tangible. A good milestone early in the project helps to keep donors, beneficiaries, and project staff enthusiastic and on track. Explain that you will consider project redesign if milestones are not regularly achieved.

If in doubt, design specific milestones for the end of each year of the project. The final year milestones are the project outputs.

Proposal step 9: summary

This section tells what the proposal is all about. It is a vital selling tool for the project, since it comes first in presentation and may be the only part that some people read.

- Always write this section last!
- Take great care with the wording.
- Refer to all other sections of the proposal.
- Be very brief. Two pages is the absolute maximum—one page is better.
- Highlight any known donor interests.
- Write simply and in a straightforward way.

Sample summary

If you use the following outline, and fill in the blanks, you will have a good proposal summary.

This proposal requests ... (donor) to provide \$... to institution and ... (partners) to ... (project objectives summarized) in ... (country, site). The proposed project will take ... years and involve ... person years or months of the institution's and ... (partner's) time.

The need for this project is pressing (tell why in one or two sentences). The interested parties (name them) are anxious to achieve the desired outputs and impacts as soon as possible; ... (tell what the various partners will do in the project in one or two sentences).

The project will benefit ... (tell who) by ... (tell what.) As a result, impact on ... (tell which goal) ... is expected in ... (site? nation? region? sector?) by... (date – tell how soon after the project is over).

This project builds on previous work by your organization and others that ... (tell what has already been done). You and your partners are ideally suited to conduct the follow-on activities because ... (tell why).

Proposal step 10: review and editing

- Before sending the proposal on for a formal proposal review, sleep over the proposal.
- Re-read it critically.
- Share it with someone who has never read it before.
- Read to eliminate errors, repetitions, and inconsistencies.

- Edit to substantially *shorten* the proposal, making it crisp, clear, punchy, appealing.
- Do not omit this step!

Do not expect someone else to do this for you—learn to do it for yourself!

Proposal step 11: how to prepare a good covering letter

Here are some tips about writing a good covering letter:

- As with all letters, write with the reader in mind.
- Refer to your institute and/or funder's interests and related projects. If possible, show how the proposed project builds on work that has produced positive results.
- Highlight the importance and urgency of the problem.
- Explain how eager the institute personnel, the partners, and the beneficiaries are to have the project start soon.
- Conclude with a follow-up comment (*hook*) that opens the door for you to call to find out what is happening. Example: 'If we have not heard from you by next month, we propose to contact you by phone to get your impressions and suggestions on how the proposal could be improved.'

Exercise 8a. Transforming your concept note into a full proposal: practicing skills on writing objectives, activities and work plan (Interdisciplinary group work)

A good concept note is the ideal basis for preparing a convincing proposal. The aim of this exercise is to invite the groups to 'exercise' transforming the concept notes into a full proposal taking into account the eleven steps presented in Handout 3.8.4.

1. Form the same interdisciplinary groups and elect a rapporteur. The groups will have a **total of 1 hour 30 minutes** to work on this exercise



Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (60 minutes)

2. Read the explanation of steps 1–4 of Handout 3.8.4 regarding **objectives; outputs; activities and work plan**. Discuss these issues with your group members and decide how you could refine these components of your Concept Note to make them more effective as part of a **full project proposal**.
3. Use the Worksheet, Handout 3.8.8 to record your responses, preparing your first draft proposal to take home.
4. This session also includes a Handout 3.8.9 titled 'Personal Notes or To do list' for you to take note (or make a list) of any kind of information and other issues related to this exercise that you need to look for when you go back to your organization. Remember that this exercise brought them to your attention.
5. Remember that this exercise is the beginning of many others which you will carry out in the near future to make your organization more efficient and effective to achieve the goal, purpose and program objectives.
6. The rapporteurs compile the groups' responses on flipcharts or PowerPoint to present to the audience during the next phase.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (30 minutes)

7. The facilitator invites the rapporteurs to present the group results and promotes discussion.
8. At the end, the facilitator asks a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, solicits and provides feedback, and closes the session.

Exercise 8b. Practicing skills on writing impacts and milestones

(Interdisciplinary group work)

*This exercise is composed of two parts: in part A you will work on proposal impacts (step 5 of handout 3.8.4) and in part B you will work on proposal – milestones (step 8 of handout 3.8.4 and handout 3.8.7). Your group has **1 hour 45 minutes** to complete this Exercise 8b.*

Part A. Working on proposal impacts - step 5

1. Form the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.



Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (45 minutes)

2. Read the explanation of step 5 of Handout 3.8.4 regarding impacts. Discuss these issues with your group members and decide how you could refine these components of your Concept Note to make them more effective as part of a **full project proposal**.
3. Use the worksheet, Handout 3.8.8, to record your responses, preparing your first draft proposal to take home.
4. The rapporteurs compile the groups' inputs on worksheets and write the results on the flipchart or PowerPoint to present to the audience later.
5. The facilitator asks participants to proceed to Part B.

Part B. Working on proposal step 8 — writing milestones (total 60 minutes)

Phase 2. Interdisciplinary group work (30 minutes)

6. The groups read the information on step 8 (handout 3.8.4) and examples on writing milestones provided by handout 3.8.7 and then analyze, discuss, and compare this with some experience in the past before preparing milestones for their project proposal.
7. The groups then **prepare milestones for their project proposal**. Remember that the groups will have to make some big assumptions in designing the milestones because the project proposals are not fully thought through.

8. The rapporteurs compile the groups' inputs on worksheets and write the results on flipchart or PowerPoint to present to the audience.

Phase 3. Presentation and discussion (30 minutes)

9. The rapporteur presents the results of the groups' discussions to the audience. Each rapporteur has five minutes to report. Then the facilitator encourages a brief discussion, ask.
10. At the end, the facilitator asks volunteers to provide feedback, to summarize a few lessons learned and some actions to be taken when they return to the office and to make comments on the contents, and provides feedback to this exercise.

Writing milestones

(Examples to support Part B of Exercise 8b)

Remember that **all** projects longer than about 18 months need to have milestones built into their design. *Milestones are mid-project achievements for which you will be aiming as you implement your project.*

Here are some examples.

In a three-year Learning and Capacity Building (L&CB) project, you might aim to have built the capacity of at least 100 participants every 6 months. Your milestones might therefore be:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Minimum Milestone</u>
End of Year 1	200 with capacity built
End of Year 2	400 with capacity built
End of Year 3	600 with capacity built

If only 130 people have had capacity built by the end of year 1, you will need to explain to your donor and management why you have not achieved the proposal target. There may be very good reasons for this, and you may well not be to blame. But missing a milestone always needs to be explained in the interest of long-term donor and client relations. It also means you may need to catch up in the following period by taking on more participants than originally planned.

In a two-year, multi-country project designed to identify, analyze and share the results of successful strategies used by sweetpotato farmers in Nigeria, you might use the following milestones to help you monitor progress and ensure you can finish in time.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Minimum Milestone</u>
End of Month 6	one team of researchers subcontracted in each of seven states, all beginning to work, some already producing draft reports.
End of Month 12	four final reports and three draft reports received, with a minimum of 20 case studies each.
End of Month 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – two workshops held to discuss results and share case studies. – all reports received, approved and submitted to the publisher. – arrangements for end-of-project conference finished, invitations issued.
End of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – seven reports published in French and English, available at the final conference. – conference held for 300 participants from seven states, (predominantly sweetpotato farmers with some 30 specially invited donor, NGO and government observers).

With these examples to guide you, prepare milestones for the project proposal your group has been working on. Because the project outline is very incipient, you will have to make some big assumptions in designing your milestones.

FORM

Writing a first draft of your full proposal

(To take back as an example of your learning process)

- 1. Project title**
- 2. Background** (Why should this proposal be implemented?)
- 3. Objective** (What do you hope to achieve?)
- 4. Outputs** (What outputs will the project deliver?)
- 5. Activities** (What will you do?)
- 6. Work Plan** (How will you achieve your objectives?)
- 7. Impacts** (Who will be better off at the end of the project, and why?)
- 8. Monitoring and Evaluation** (How can you test if the project is working?)
- 9. Budget** (How much will it cost?) ***Note that you will learn to develop Budget during Session 9 of this workshop.***

SESSION 9

How to prepare proposal budgets

Instructions to Learning Facilitators

TIME FRAME

Presentation and Exercise: 2 hours 30 minutes

Tea/Coffee break: 15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, the participants will be able to do the following:

- Discuss tips on preparing good proposal budgets.
- Identify budget formats.
- Discuss budget guidelines.
- Describe the qualities of a good budget.

Use PowerPoint 3.9.1 to present this session's objectives.

PROCEDURE

Learning strategies or facilitation techniques:
interdisciplinary group work, plenary discussion.

PRESENTATION

(experience) Distribute handouts below for Session 9 before your presentation. Give a brief presentation on how to prepare proposal budgets. Use the PowerPoint to facilitate your work. At the end of the presentation, ask if clarification is needed (*15 minutes*).

EXERCISE 9

Exercise 9. Analyzing and improving a proposal budget (*2 hours 15 minutes*).

1. *(experience)* Invite a participant to read Exercise 9 (Handout 3.9.3) which gives clear instructions for the exercise. Go over the instructions with the participants step by step. Ask if any clarifications are needed. Emphasize and remind the participants about the time (*5 minutes*).

Phase 1. Group work (*1 hour 30 minutes*)

2. Divide the participants into three groups and ask each group to elect a rapporteur (*5 minutes*).
3. *(experience, process)* The groups browse, discuss some issues and refer to item 9 (minimum budget requirements) of handout 3.9.2 to do this exercise. They also discuss sample summary budgets and respond to the questions. The rapporteurs summarize the results on Handout 3.9.5.
4. *(experience)* As the groups work, circulate from group to group to check progress. Also clarify any concerns they may have while working. Be sure to keep the group aware of the time remaining for this exercise.
5. *(experience)* When the time comes, invite the rapporteurs to write down the group results on a flipchart or PowerPoint to present to the participants

during Phase 2 of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (35 minutes)

6. (*process, generalize*) Invite the rapporteurs to share the results. At the end of all rapporteurs' presentations encourage a brief discussion, including strengths and weaknesses of this exercise.
7. At the end of the exercise, synthesize the key points raised in the discussion about preparing a good proposal budget.

CLOSURE

Closure (5 minutes)

1. (*application*) Ask the participants, 'What might you do differently in your job as a result of what you have learned?' Ask volunteers to give examples.
2. Make a transition to the next session.

SESSION 9

PowerPoint Presentation

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, M&E

Volume 3 - Session Nine
How to Prepare Proposal Budgets

3.9.1 Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Objectives
Volume 3 - Session Nine

- ➔ Discuss tips on preparing good proposal budgets
- ➔ Identify budget formats
- ➔ Discuss budget guidelines
- ➔ Describe the qualities of a good budget

3.9.2 Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Tips on Preparing Good Proposal Budgets (1)

- Use a consistent budget format in all proposals, except for those where the donor has a preferred budget outline
- Prepare *Budget Guidelines* to ensure that everyone in your organization is preparing budgets under the same financial assumptions, and that the same costs are offered to all donors in all proposals

3.9.3 Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Tips on Preparing Good Proposal Budgets (1) (cont')

- Budgets should be clear, transparent, and easy to read
- Every line item in a budget should be footnoted with unit costs
- In general, budgets should be shown in figures rounded to the nearest \$'000

3.9.4 Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Tips on Preparing Good Proposal Budgets (2)

- Budgets should be realistic, but not greedy
- Avoid under-budgeting
- Bay windows can help in budget negotiations
- Indirect costs are legitimate costs and should be included in all budgets

3.9.5 Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Tips on Preparing Good Proposal Budgets (2)

- Every proposal, no matter how small, should have a summary budget; larger projects may require additional budgets, by partner, by site or by activity

3.9.6 Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Budget Formats

Every organization has a different budget format

Example: Illustrative Budget Format

- I. Personnel
- II. Travel
- III. Supplies and Services
- IV. Institutional Development
- V. Evaluation
- VI. Capital and Related Costs
- VII. Indirect Costs
- VIII. Contract Research
- IX. Inflation
- X. Contingency



Grand Total

3.9.7

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Budget Guidelines

- Ensure consistency by issuing **Proposal Budget Guidelines (PBG)**
- PBG will give guidance to proposal writers on such things as how to price key inputs such as:
 - personnel, communications, equipment, supplies and service, workshops, training courses, indirect costs etc.

3.9.8

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Budget Guidelines (cont')

- PBG will most likely be prepared by your finance office, approved by your director and, if necessary, your board

3.9.9

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Qualities of a Good Budget

- ✓ A good budget should be clear, transparent, and easy to read
- ✓ Anyone should pick up your budget and understand it, without you having to be there to explain your cost assumptions



3.9.10

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Footnote - Example

These footnotes show exactly how you achieved your line item totals

Line Item	Year 1	Year 2	Total (US\$ '000)
Personnel (1)	15	20	35
Travel (2)	5	10	15
Equipment (3)	70	10	80
Subtotal	90	40	130
Indirect Costs (4)	18	8	26
Total	108	48	156

- (1) Three person-months senior agronomist @ \$5,000/month in both years, plus one month of an economist @ \$5,000/month in Year 2
- (2) One round trip airfare and per diem from Site A in Australia @ \$3,000 in both years, plus \$2,000 for in-country travel and vehicle maintenance in both years, plus \$5,000 for participant travel to Site A for five participants @ \$1,000 each in year 2
- (3) Purchase \$10,000 worth of seedlings in year 1, \$20,000 worth of fertilizer, and \$30,000 worth of hand tools and wheelbarrows for the participating farmers. \$10,000 will be spent in both years to pay for the rental of well-digging equipment.
- (4) Indirect cost recovery rate of 20% on personnel, travel and equipment costs, but not on contract research.

3.9.11

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Rounding to the Nearest 000's

Item of Expense	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1 ('000)	Year 2 ('000)
Personnel				
Lecturer	42,580	42,580	43	43
Laborer	24,500	24,500	24	24
Honoraria	17,000	17,550	17	19
Operating Costs				
Supplies and services	15,525	16,750	16	17
Stoodries	2,000	2,000	2	2
Administrative				
Fee	12,352	12,202	12	12
Contingency	3,103	2,920	3	3

Set A

Set B

➡ Set B is easier to read than Set A!

3.9.12

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Rules of Good Budget Preparation

- An under-budgeted project is frustrating
 - If you lack the funds to do a good job, you and your partners, and your beneficiaries are all going to be disappointed
 - Do not promise too much for the money available
 - If your organization cuts your budget, cut the objectives and activities accordingly, and be sure your donor understands that fewer outputs will be delivered.
 - A padded, greedy budget will turn off your donor completely
 - Do not be tempted to inflate salaries or travel costs
- Offer a moderate, realistic budget within which you are convinced you can deliver the promised outputs

3.9.13

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF

Bay Windows

- ❑ A bay window in a new house is an "extra" – something nice but not essential
- ❑ A bay window in your project is something that would improve your project, but you can do without it if necessary
- ❑ A bay window is something you can give away during budget negotiations, or eliminate if your budget is suddenly cut

3.9.14

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF

Bay Windows (cont'd)

- ❑ It is useful to include one or two bay windows in all proposal budgets
- ❑ Some examples include
 - an additional project site
 - an extra workshop
 - a further year of field trials
 - a second training program, etc.

3.9.15

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF

Indirect Costs

- All projects have direct costs (personnel, travel, equipment, etc)
- In addition, a project has indirect costs (rent, electricity in your office, the library in your institute, services of your finance office, supervision by your Director)

3.9.16

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF

Indirect Costs (cont'd)

- These indirect cost items are needed to implement the project
- It is difficult to say exactly how much of each is needed for each project, so a fixed rate is used
- Your organization will have calculated the rate you should use in your proposal

3.9.17

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF

Indirect Costs Recovery Rate

- The *Indirect Cost Recovery Rate* is obtained by dividing all the costs not directly attributable to all projects (including cost of the board, secretaries, gardeners, motor pool, etc.) by the total direct costs of all projects

3.9.18

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF

Indirect Costs Recovery Rate (Cont'd)

- This rate is usually audited by professionals each year, and approved by your board
- Indirect cost recovery rates vary greatly, depending on the type of organization
- Rates of 20% are fairly common

3.9.19

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Indirect Costs Recovery Rate (Cont'd)

- Donors will not be put off by the inclusion of an indirect cost line item in your budget if:
 - (a) you include this in all your proposals to all donors
 - (b) if the rate is properly derived and audited

3.9.20

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Indirect Costs Recovery Rate (Cont'd)

- Some donors will ask to see your organization's financial books before approving the indirect cost line item
- Once a donor has paid this line item in one project, it is very likely that it will be approved in all subsequent projects.

3.9.21

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

Minimum Budget Requirements

- ☑ A title
- ☑ Currency denomination
- ☑ Degree of rounding
- ☑ Totals for each year and each line item
- ☑ A grand total
- ☑ Footnotes for each line item
- ☑ Inclusion of all costs, including those of partners, and any contributions (including in-kind contributions) that will not be requested from the donor

Thank you!

3.9.22

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDGF

How to write proposal budgets²

(Summary of Presentation)

Introduction

A proposal budget needs far more detail than the financial detail required for a concept note. *Preparing the budget section of the proposal is probably the single biggest job in moving from the concept note to the proposal stage.* The proposal budget is one of its most important sections; many readers will look only at the summary, the objectives, and the budget, and may base their accept-or-reject decision on only those sections. So it is very important to get your proposal budget right.

Annex E provides you with more information on Project Financing and Budget.

Tips on preparing good proposal budgets:

- Organizations should use a consistent budget format in all proposals, except for those where the donor has a preferred budget outline.
- Organizations should issue *budget guidelines* to ensure that everyone in the organization is preparing budgets under the same financial assumptions, and that the same costs are offered to all donors in all proposals.
- Budgets should be clear, transparent, and easy to read.
- Every line item in a budget should be footnoted with unit costs.
- Budgets should be shown in figures rounded to the nearest 000.
- Budgets should be realistic, but not greedy.
- Under budgeting should always be avoided.
- Bay windows (described later) can help in budget negotiations.
- Indirect costs are legitimate costs and should be included in all budgets.
- Every proposal, no matter how small, should have a summary budget; larger projects may require additional budgets, by partner, by site, or by activity.

These tips are elaborated below.

1. Budget formats

Every organization has a slightly different budget format. Some donors prefer certain formats, others will accept whatever is usual for the grantee. Here is a fairly typical format:

Whichever outline or format you use, be sure to use the same format for all proposals that come from your organization to ensure consistency in internal financial management, and to allow a consistent budget image to develop for your organization.

² From Marian Fuchs-Carsch. *Capacity-building learning module on How to Write Convincing Proposals. The Hague. The Netherlands. ISNAR. 1999/2000.*

Illustrative budget format

- I. **Personnel** (staff, partners, consultants)
- II. **Travel** (international, national, per diem, etc.)
- III. **Supplies and Services** (expendable supplies, research stations support, communications)
- IV. **Institutional Development** (L&CB, workshops, support for partners)
- V. **Evaluation** (if separately costed)
- VI. **Equipment** (purchase or rental and maintenance of vehicles, equipment, office space, etc.)
- VII. **Indirect Costs**
- VIII. **Contract Research** (include also all pass-through funds)
- IX. **Inflation** (charge on second and subsequent years)
- X. **Contingency**

Grand Total

2. Budget guidelines

If your organization is going to have a steady stream of proposals being submitted to different donors, you will need to ensure consistency in issuing corporate *proposal budget guidelines*. This document will give guidance to proposal writers on such things as how to price key inputs such as: personnel, communications, equipment, supplies and services, workshops, L&CB courses, indirect costs, etc. These guidelines will most likely be prepared by your finance office and approved by your director and, if necessary, your board.

3. Qualities of a good budget

A good budget should be clear, transparent, and easy to read. This means that anyone can pick up your budget and understand it without you having to be there to explain your cost assumptions. The following sections will provide you with tips on how to make your budget a good one.

4. Footnote every line item

A transparent budget shows exactly how you achieved your line item totals. You do this by footnoting each line item to show the unit costs. Here are some examples.

Line Item	<u>Costs in US\$ 000s</u>		
	Year 1	Year 2	
Total			
Personnel (1)	15	20	
35			
Travel (2)	5	10	
15			
Equipment (3)	70	10	
80			
Subtotal	90	40	130
Indirect Costs (4)	18	8	26
<u>Total</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>156</u>

Notes:

- (1) Three person-months of a senior agronomist @ \$5,000/month in both years, plus one month of an economist @ \$5,000/month in Year 2.
- (2) One round trip airfare and per diem from site A to Australia @ \$3000 in both years, plus \$2,000 for in-country travel and vehicle maintenance in both years, plus \$5,000 for participant travel to Site A for five participants @ \$1,000 each.
- (3) In Year 1 the project will need to purchase \$10,000 worth of seedlings, \$20,000 worth of fertilizers, and \$30,000 worth of hand tools and wheelbarrows for the participating farmers. \$10,000 will be spent in both years to pay for the rental of well-digging equipment.
- (4) Organization X has a board-approved indirect cost recovery rate of 20 percent. The rate is charged on personnel, travel, and equipment costs, but not on contract research.

5. Rounding to the nearest 000s

Look at the following two sets of numbers and say which is easier to read:

Set A:

Item of Expense	Year 1	Year 2
Personnel		
Lecturer	42,580	42,580
Laborer	24,500	24,500
Honoraria	17,000	17,550
Operating Costs		
Supplies and services	15,525	16,750
Sundries	2,000	2,000
Administrative		
Fee	12,352	12,202
Contingency	3,103	2,920

Set B:

Item of Expense	Year 1	Year 2
<u>Personnel</u>		
Lecturer	43	43
Laborer	24	24
Honoraria	17	18
Operating Costs		
Supplies and services	16	17
Sundries	2	2
Administrative		
Fee	12	12
Contingency	3	3

Any reader would find the figures in set B easier to read than in set A. Notice, however, that neither of these sets has unit prices footnoted, nor do they have a title or denominated currency. Set B needs all those elements if it is to become a good proposal budget.

6. The ‘ethics’ of budgets

Nothing is so frustrating as an under budgeted project. If you lack the funds to do a good job, you and your partners, your donors, and your beneficiaries are all going to be disappointed. So resist the temptation to promise too much for the money available. If a donor cuts your budget, be sure to cut the objectives and activities accordingly, and be sure your donor understands that fewer outputs will be delivered.

At the same time, a padded, greedy budget will turn off your donor completely. Do not be tempted to inflate salaries or travel costs. There is going to be some eagle-eyed finance person in the donor agency who is going to catch any and all inflated unit prices.

In sum, offer a moderate, realistic budget within which you are convinced you can deliver the promised outputs.

7. Bay windows

A bay window in a new house is an ‘extra’—something nice but not essential. A bay window in your project is the same thing—something that would improve your project, but something that you can do without if necessary.

A bay window is therefore something you can give away during budget negotiations, or eliminate if your budget is suddenly cut.

It is useful to include one or two bay windows in all proposal budgets. Some examples include:

- an additional project site
- an extra workshop
- a further year of field trials
- a second L&CB program.

8. Indirect costs

All projects have direct costs. These are the inputs to the project and include personnel costs, travel costs, equipment costs, etc. In addition, a project has indirect costs. These are the costs of such things as rent and lighting in your office, the library in your institute, the services of your finance office, and the supervision by your DG. You need these items to implement the project, but only a little bit of each, and it is very difficult to say exactly how much of each will be needed for each project. To spare you the time and effort involved in calculating how much of these items you will need for each project, your organization will have calculated an amount for all these things for each project. That amount is called an *indirect cost recovery rate*. The rate is obtained by dividing all the costs not directly attributable to a project (including the costs of the board, the secretaries, the gardeners, the motor pool, etc.) by the number of activities and projects. This rate is usually audited by professionals each year, and approved by your board.

Indirect cost recovery rates vary greatly, depending on the type of organization. In the business of agricultural research, rates of anything from 5 percent to 35 percent are fairly common.

Donors will not be put off by the inclusion of an indirect cost line item in your budget if (a) you include this in all your proposals to all donors, and (b) if the rate is properly derived and audited. Some donors will ask to see your institute’s financial books before approving the indirect cost line item. Once a donor has paid this line item in one project, it is very likely that it will be approved in all subsequent projects.

9. Minimum budget requirements

Every project, no matter how small, must have at least one, summary budget. This will include the following elements:

- a title
- currency denomination
- degree of rounding
- totals for each year and each line item
- a grand total
- footnotes for each line item
- inclusion of all costs, including those of partners, and including any contributions (including in-kind contributions) that will not be requested from the donor

This last point needs to be clear. The proposal should include a budget summarizing the entire cost of all the inputs to the project, even if you are only asking the donor to fund certain items.

There are several reasons for this. First, you, your supervisor, your partner, and your donor all want to know the ‘true’ cost of the project. This means costing out all the inputs, such as the volunteer time of the farmers and your own time inputs, even if these are paid by your institute or ministry. Second, all donors like to think that they are getting a bargain. If some of the inputs are being paid for by another source, they will be pleased, and find the project more attractive. Third, you need to put a proper value on the ‘hidden’ costs of low-profile people in the project like farmers, women, youth, laborers, university students, etc.

In a relatively simple project, a single summary budget may be all you will need. But in some larger projects, you may need to have back-up budgets, breaking down the costs by site or country, for example, or by activity, or by partner organization.

10. A good summary proposal budget

The sample summary budget below shows all the elements of a good proposal budget. It is clear, transparent, and easy to read. It has a title, denominated currency, footnotes for all line items, the inclusion of indirect costs, figures rounded to the nearest 000, and totals for all line items and years. You may use this as a sample of a good budget in all future project development. (Note, by the way, that when you refer to the bottom line of this budget in a sentence, you would present it as \$2.465 million, or you might round it to ‘just under \$2.5 million.’)

Sample summary budget

	Line Item	US \$ ('000s)			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
I	Personnel ³				
	– Project leader/biologist	150	150	150	450
	– Virologist	100	100	50	250
	– Economist	35	35	150	220
	– Site project managers	60	60	60	180
	– Site field workers	30	30	30	90
II	Travel ⁴	100	120	100	320
III	Supplies and services ⁵	35	40	45	120
IV	Institutional development ⁶	55	50	45	150
V	Evaluation ⁷	10		15	25
VI	Capital costs ⁸	100	15	20	135
	Subtotal	675	600	665	1,940
VII	Indirect costs ⁹	160	145	110	415
VIII	Contract research ¹⁰	25	10	10	45
	Subtotal	860	755	785	2,400
IX	Inflation and contingency ¹¹		35	30	65
	GRAND TOTAL	860	790	815	2,465

³ IARCA will supply the project manager, virologist and economist. Salary and benefit costs are at IARCA's normal rate of \$150k per annum. The NARS partner will supply the other staff; site managers will be remunerated at the rate of \$25k per year; field workers at \$100/month.

⁴ Includes regional air travel for the project manager and economist, and in-country air and car travel for all staff.

⁵ Includes communication costs estimated at \$20k per year, and research station support at \$2k per year.

⁶ Includes \$10k for workshops and \$15k/year for NARS L&CB courses.

⁷ Funds will be used to hire an NGO to survey local farmers' views at the beginning of the project and a local consulting firm or an NGO to conduct an evaluation at the end of the project.

⁸ Three motorbikes will be purchased at the beginning of the project and allocated to the site project managers. Portable computers will be purchased for NARS personnel in all sites.

⁹ IARCA's board-approved indirect cost recovery rate for off-station research is 24%; NARS rate is 20% in country 1 and 15% in the other two countries.

¹⁰ IARCA will contract with a local university to conduct an assessment of the impact of the project; work will begin in Year 1 to gather baseline data.

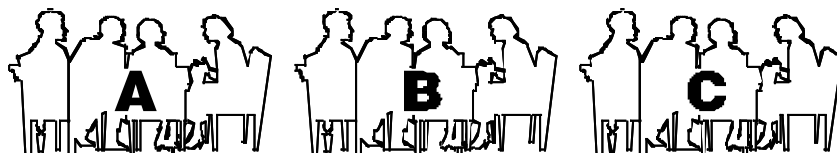
¹¹ According to *The Economist*, inflation in country 1 is currently running at 10% per annum, and in countries 2 and 3 at over 14% per annum. About 25% of the costs of the project will be in local currency; IARCA therefore believes inflation charges of 4.5% in Years 2 and 3 are reasonable.

Exercise 9. Analyzing and improving a proposal budget

(Group Work)

Please refer back to the tips for writing good proposal budgets, and remind yourself of the elements that you need to include. With this information in mind, you are going to judge and improve the Pink Land Proposal budget in the following exercise.

1. Form three groups, each group electing a rapporteur. The group has **2 hours 15 minutes** to complete this exercise.



Phase 1. Group work (1 hour 30 minutes)

2. Group members browse handout 3.9.2 and then refer to item 9 (minimum budget requirements) to analyze and improve the Pink Land proposal budget (Handout 3.9.4).
3. Each group discusses the proposal budget. The sample summary budget presented at the end of Handout 3.9.2 could also be an excellent source of information for this exercise. Then proceed to the following:
 - *List strengths and weaknesses of the proposal budget.*
 - *List all additional improvements that will be needed to make it a good proposal budget. Number your list.*
4. The rapporteurs use Handout 3.9.5 to record the numbered list and will write the results of this exercise on the flipchart or on PowerPoint to present to the participants during the next phase of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (40 minutes)

8. The facilitator invites the rapporteurs to present the results and facilitates a brief discussion, including the strengths and weaknesses of this exercise.
9. At the end of the discussion, the facilitator identifies the group that has caught the most missing elements in the proposal budget.
10. The facilitator invites a few volunteers to provide feedback to this session, summarizes the results, and highlights the aspects of preparing a good proposal budget.
11. In addition, the facilitator invites few volunteers to share actions to be taken by them to improve the proposal budgets in the organizations after returning.
12. The facilitator provides feedback on this exercise and closes the session.

Pink Land Proposal

PART I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

1. **Project title:** Certified potato seed tuber production
2. **Project proponent:** Institute of Plant Breeding
Cellular and Molecular Plant Biology (CMPB) Laboratory
3. **Coop. agencies:** State University
Farmers' Seeds Association (FSA) through its President,
Mr. GP, and Bureau of Plant Industry
4. **Total cost:** 512,655.00 for 2 years
 - a. Requested from research trust fund
 - b. Proponent's Counterpart: 50,000.00/annum

5. **Summary:**

Duration of the project: 2 years

Estimated starting date: 1 March 2000–

Brief description of the project and plan of work:

The project involves packaging of technology for certified potato seed tuber production. The scheme consists of four stages, namely:

Stage 0 - multiplication of disease-free shoots *in vitro*;

Stage 1 - production of microtubers (breeders' seeds) by *in vitro* tuberization (technique adopted from Rasco and Barba 1990). This is a key step in the proposed scheme;

Stage 2 - production of minitubers (foundation seeds) in the greenhouse and/or field;

Stage 3 - production of seed tubers (certified seeds) in the greenhouse and/or field.

Stages 0 and 1 will be conducted at the Cellular and Molecular Plant Biology (CMPB) Laboratory, while stages 2 and 3 will be conducted at State University, at the FSA Farms, and at the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Seed Farm. The certified seed tubers will be the ones distributed to the farmers for further multiplication of seed tubers or production of table tubers.

The varieties to be used are Banahaw, a lowland-adapted variety developed by IPB and by the National Seed Board in June, 1989 and clone 84-15 (ASN 69-1), a highland-adapted clone.

This pilot project aims to develop a viable system of producing high-quality disease-free seed tubers in large quantities.

6. **Objectives of the project:**

General:

To package a technology for producing disease-free seed tubers of potato cv Banahaw and clone 84-15 (ASN 69-1).

Specific:

- a. To undertake a pilot project for production of certified seed tubers of potato Banahaw and clone 84-15 (ASN 69-1).
- b. To make available to the farmers disease-free planting materials of potato and thus limit the importation of seed tubers.
- c. To determine the cost of producing potato seed tubers using the proposed technology.
- d. To develop a system for the continuous operation of the project.

7. Significance of the study:

The most serious problem that limits the development and expansion of the potato industry in this country is the unavailability of quality and disease-free seed tubers. The conventional technique for propagating disease-free potato tubers is ineffective and the yearly requirement for clean seed tubers is not satisfied; hence the country resorts to importation. Of the yearly seed-tuber requirement 15 percent (maximum allowed) is imported and thus the major portion of the remaining 85 percent comes from the farmers' previous crops, which are invariably virus-infected. The use of these virus-infected seed tubers results in 40–60 percent yield loss. This problem may be solved by evolving a system for production of disease-free seed tubers as proposed in this project.

8. Present status of the proposed project:

In the proposed scheme, stages 0 and 1 have been conducted and results have been obtained (Rasco and Barba 1990). These stages are also ongoing in preparation for stages 2 and 3 that are planned to be conducted this year and next year.

9. Review of literature:

Techniques similar to the ones being proposed are seen in China (Qin et al. 1989) and Korea (Joung 1990). It is reported that when using the *in vitro* tuberization technique, the efficiency is 50 times higher than when using other reported tissue-culture techniques and that good quality and large quantity of normal tubers are produced (Joung 1990). Also, when this technique was used in Guangdong, a province in China, it was possible to produce 5 million tubers during 1988 and 1989 and to export large quantities of potatoes to Hong Kong (Qin et al. 1990). It is the aim of this project to improve this country's existing techniques of producing disease-free seed tubers as a source of certified materials for further increase of tuber-seed pieces for planting, and to reduce importation of certified seed tubers to satisfy the yearly seed requirement of the farmers.

10. Procedure/methodology:

The project consists of two studies:

Study 1 - This study consists of stages 0 and 1 of the proposed scheme and will be conducted at the CMPB Laboratory. The technique to be used is the one adopted from Rasco and Barba (1990). Disease-free shoots will be multiplied (stage 0) from which 1,500 microtubers will be produced (stage 1) of 'Banahaw' and 500 microtubers of ASN 69-1.

Study 2 - This study consists of stages 2 and 3 of the proposed project and will be conducted at the FSA Seed Farm and the BPI Seed Farm. The 2,000 microtubers from stage 1 will be planted for production of minitubers (stage 2). The minitubers that are produced will be planted during year 2 planting season.

A preliminary study of production of certified seed tubers (stage 3) will be conducted during the first year, using minitubers that were produced in 1990. A replicated trial of stage 3 will be conducted during year 2, using minitubers produced this year. The target production is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Target production of potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) cv ‘Banahaw’ and clone ASN 69-1 at 3:1 ratio

Production stage	Initial planning stage	Quantity	Area needed (square meters)	Expected output
0	<i>In vitro</i> shoots	250	–	<i>In vitro</i> shoots
1	<i>In vitro</i> shoots	1,000	–	Microtubers
2	Microtubers	2,000	20	Minitubers
3	Minitubers	10,000	100	Certified seed tubers

Part II. Schedule of Activities

Table 4.2: Schedule of activities for the two-year period

Phase	Description of Activity	Duration in weeks	Remarks
Year 1			
Study 1	Stage 0—Shoot multiplication <i>in vitro</i>	52	Ongoing
Study 2	Stage 1—Microtuber production	26	Q1 and Q2, Yr1
Study 3	Stage 2—Minituber production	26	Q3 and Q4, Yr1
Study 4	Stage 3—Certified tuber seed production	15	Q4, Yr1, and Q1, Yr2
Year 2	Schedule is similar to Year 1		

11. Financial plan:

Table 4.3: Summary of budgetary requirements for two years

Item of expense	Total cost	From trust fund	Counterpart fund
Personnel services	312,655	312,655	-
Maintenance and operating expenses	200,000	150,000	50,000
Total	512,655	462,655	50,000

12. Personnel requirement:

Principal investigator: RCB (Ph.D.)

Graduate research assistant: SR (B.S.)

Technical consultants: LFP (M.S.) and ECA (M.S.)

13. Budgetary Requirement

Details	CY 200_	CY 200_
Personnel		
1. Salaries		
– Principal investigator's fee (P5,000/mo) + 10 percent in Year 2	60,000	66,000
– Graduate research assistant (P3,540/mo) + 10 percent in Year 2	42,480	46,728
– Technical consultants without compensation		
2. Wages		
– Contractual laborer/technician (P2,473/mo) + 10T in Year 2	29,676	32,644
3. Incentives		
– 13 th month pay	11,013	12,114
– P1,000 bonus/personnel	3,000	3,000
– P1,000 clothing allowance personnel	3,000	3,000
<i>Total for PS</i>	<i>149,169</i>	<i>163,486</i>
Maintenance and other operating costs (MOOE)		
– Supplies and materials	55,000	50,000
– Travelling and expenses	35,000	40,000
– Sundry expenses	10,000	10,000
<i>Total for MOOE</i>	<i>100,000</i>	<i>100,000</i>
Summary		
– Total for PS	149,169	163,486
– Total for MOOE	100,000	100,000
GRAND TOTAL	249,169	263,486

Note: Marian Fuchs-Carsh has created this proposal to support this exercise

Literature cited:

- Joung, H. 1990. High-efficiency production of potato microtubers. *Agricell Report* 15(2): 13. Ed. E.B. Herman.
- Qin, L.B., Z. Miao Chang, L.X. Jin, W. Jun and S. Bofu. 1989. Large-scale production of *in vitro* potato tubers. An example. CIP Region VIII Working Paper no. 89-19: 130.
- Rasco, S.M. and R.C. Barba. 1990. Studies on media components for the improvement in *in vitro* tuberization of potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) cv 'Banahaw'. Thesis research of the senior author conducted at IPB, College, 63 pp.

[illegible]

SESSION 10

Preparing the Executive Summary. Submitting and following up on project proposals & how to maintain good donor relations

Instructions to Learning Facilitators

TIME FRAME

Presentation and Exercise: 4 hour 15 minutes

Tea/Coffee break: 15 minutes (morning and afternoon)

Feedback of the day and PAPA: 15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, the participants will be able to do the following:

- Prepare the Executive Summary of a proposal.
- Prepare a good covering letter.
- Design mechanisms to track the proposal.
- Discuss how and when to start the project.
- Explain the value of a donor relations office.
- Discuss the importance of negotiating with donors.
- Explain the importance of monitoring and evaluating projects.
- Identify the elements of a good report to donors.

Use PowerPoint 3.10.2 to present the objectives.

PROCEDURE

Learning strategies or facilitation techniques:
presentation, group work and plenary exercise.

PRESENTATION

(experience) Distribute the summary of PowerPoints and texts related to the presentation of the three topics of this session. They are handouts 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 3.10.3 and 3.10.4 respectively. Give a brief presentation. Use the PowerPoint to facilitate your work. At the end of the presentation, ask if clarification is needed (15 minutes).

*Note: Remember to inform the participants that this **Session 10** will be composed of 3 Exercises: **10a, 10b and 10c** to cover these three important topics related to finalizing the process of writing proposals. The participants will have **4 hours** to work on these three exercises.*

EXERCISE 10a

Preparing an Executive Summary (1 hour 30 minutes)

(experience) Distribute handout of Exercise 10 (handout 3.10.5 that gives clear instructions for the three-part exercise. Go over the instructions with the participants step by step. Ask if clarification is needed. (5 minutes).

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (45 minutes)

(experience) Ask the participants to form the interdisciplinary groups and elect a rapporteur.

(experience, process) Ask the participants to follow the guidance of Exercise 10 Part A. They should browse handout 3.10.2 regarding Executive Summary to discuss the issues with their group members to be prepared to write an Executive Summary for the Pink Land Proposal – presented in the previous session. Use the Worksheet to read the summary while presenting to the audience the next phase of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (40 minutes)

(process, generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to present the group results and facilitate discussion. At the end ask a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and *make transition to the next Exercise 10b which is composed of 2 parts.*

EXERCISE 10b - Part A

Submitting and Following up on project proposals

(1 hour 30 minutes).

Exercise 10b. Part A. Analyzing a covering letter

(45 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (20 minutes)

(experience) Ask the participants to maintain the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.

(experience, process) Ask the participants to follow the guidance of Exercise 10b. They should browse Handout 3.10.3 regarding Submitting and Following up on the project proposals to discuss the issues with their group members to be prepared to undertake this exercise. Remind the participants to read the ‘Example of a Good Covering Letter’, Handout 3.10.7 to complete Part A of this exercise.

(process generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to use the Worksheet 3.10.8 to record and read the exercise results while presenting to the audience the next phase of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (25 minutes)

(process, generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to present

the group results and promote discussion. At the end ask a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and make transition to the next Part B of Exercise 10b.

EXERCISE 10b - Part B

Submitting and Following up on project proposals (Cont'd).

Exercise 10b. PART B. Assessing the organization's capacity in submission and follow-up (45 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (20 minutes)

(experience) Ask the participants to maintain the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.

(experience, process) Ask the participants to follow the guidance of Exercise 10b – Part B. They should browse Handout 3.10.3 specifically regarding ‘*Tracking the proposal, starting the project, the value of a project development office*’ to discuss the issues with their group members about how prepared their organizations are to go through the process of submitting and follow up of project proposals to donors. Remind the participants to use Worksheet Handout 3.10.9 to complete Part B of this exercise.

(process generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to use the Worksheet 3.10.9 to record and read the exercise results while presenting to the audience the next phase of this exercise

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (40 minutes)

(process, generalization) Ask the rapporteurs to present the group results and promote discussion. At the end ask a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and make transition to the 10c exercise of this session.

EXERCISE 10c

Exercise 10c. How to maintain good donor relations (60 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (30 minutes)

(experience) Ask the participants to maintain the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.

(experience, process) Ask the participants to follow the guidance of Exercise 10c. They should browse handout 3.10.4 which provides useful insights on donor relations to respond to this exercise. The group should come up with some responses on how to negotiate with donors, the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and how to write a good report.

Remind the participants to use Worksheet Handout

3.10.10 to complete this exercise.

Phase 2. Brainstorming and discussion in plenary session (25 minutes)

(experience process) The facilitator leads a brainstorming session in plenary, to maximize learning on the issues related to donor relations.

(process, generalization) Ask the participants to share the responses they have given to the three issues, one by one. Stress the differences and similarities between their responses and promote discussion. At the end ask a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and make transition.

(process, generalization) At the end, ask the participants questions such as ‘How did you feel doing this exercise?’ and ‘What did you learn?’ in order to stimulate discussion of the process.

CLOSURE

Closure (5 minutes)

1. *(application)* Ask the participants to tell one of their neighbors two things they might do differently as a result of what they learned. Choose some volunteers to give examples to close this session.
2. Make a transition to the last session of the day.

FEEDBACK AND PAPA

Feedback on the previous sessions’ activities and PAPA: 15 minutes

By the end of this session participants will be able to do the following:

Provide feedback on the day’s activities.

- Consider possible actions they would like to take in their own organizations.

Individual exercise using the attached handouts at the end of this session.

(generalization, application) Ask the participants (1) to take some time to jot down some action ideas they may have as a result of today’s activities (PAPA) and (2) reflect on the day’s activities to provide feedback i.e. strengths, weaknesses and how to improve the day.

- Make transition for the next sessions and close the workshop volume three.

SESSION 10

PowerPoint Presentation

Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project Planning, Implementation, M&E

Volume 3 - Session Ten

- Part A. Preparing Executive Summary
- Part B. Submitting & Following up on Project Proposals and
- Part C. Maintain Good Donor Relations
- Part D. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

3.10.1

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Objectives Volume 3 – Session Ten

1. Prepare an executive summary for a proposal
2. Prepare a good cover letter
3. Design mechanisms to track the proposal
4. Discuss how and when to start the project
5. Explain the value of a donor relations office
6. Discuss the importance of negotiating with donors

3.10.2

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Objectives of Session Ten (cont'd)

7. Explain the importance of monitoring and evaluating projects
7. Learn how to write a good project report to donors
9. Plan actions for future activities related to Writing convincing proposal
10. Evaluate and provide feedback on the workshop

Refer to the Schedule of the Day in the binder

3.10.3

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Part A. Preparing Executive Summary or Introductory Paragraph

- ❑ Use an executive summary for any proposal (or report) longer than about 7-10 pages
- ❑ In shorter proposals or reports, an introductory paragraph is enough
- ❑ In concept notes, use a set of introductory bullets

3.10.4

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

The Importance of the Executive Summary

- It is the first section of the proposal
- It is short and should be easy to read
- It may be the only section some readers ever look at

3.10.5

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Tips for Preparing a Good Summary

- Always write this section last!
- Take great care with the wording
- Refer to all other sections of the proposal
- Be very brief—two pages are the absolute maximum

3.10.6

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Tips for Preparing a Good Summary

- Highlight any known donor interests
- Write simply and directly
- Do not be afraid to ask for money in the first sentence

3.10.7

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARCSF

Part B Submitting & Following up on Project Proposals

When writing the covering letter:

- ☑ Refer to donor interests and, if appropriate, to related donor projects
- ☑ Show how project builds on previous work funded by donor

3.10.8

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARCSF

Part B Submitting & Following up on Project Proposals

When writing the covering letter:

- ☑ Refer to donor interests and, if appropriate, to related donor projects
- ☑ Show how project builds on previous work funded by donor

3.10.8

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARCSF

The Covering Letter (cont'd)

Conclude with a follow-up event such as:

"If we have not heard from you by next month, we propose to contact you by phone to get your impressions and suggestions on how the proposal could be improved"

3.10.10

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARCSF

You Must Be Patient!

- ⊗ Many people will read and comment on your proposal
- ⊗ Some donors have fixed dates on which proposals are approved
- ⊗ It takes on average 12-18 months from project idea to receipt of grant
- ⊗ Funds may not arrive until weeks or months after a signed grant agreement

3.10.11

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARCSF

Negotiations and Revisions Are Likely

- Donors may ask for changes in substance and in budget
- Try to accommodate donor interests
- Try to accept donor as full project partner
- Involve partners in any redesign work
- Use *Negotiation Tips* from "good donor relations"

3.10.12

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARCSF

When Can You Start the Work?

- With a known, reliable donor, you can risk starting work on a verbal agreement
- With many donors, a signed contract agreement will always be honored
- With bilateral donors whose host countries may have strong political views, it is wise to wait until their money is received

3.10.13

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Why Have a Special Donor Relations Office?

- If your institute is going to have a steady stream of proposals submitted to many different donors, this effort needs to be coordinated
- The director and other senior staff have too much to do to add project development and donor relations tasks
- The office can provide support to both scientists and administrators

3.10.14

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

What Does a Donor Relations Office Do?

- ☑ Gather, record, and disseminate donor intelligence
- ☑ Keep files on all projects from idea to signed grant agreement
- ☑ Track proposals with donors
- ☑ Convey and record the outcomes of concept and proposal reviews

3.10.15

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

What Does a Donor Relations Office Do?

- ☑ Inform staff of new donor opportunities, personnel changes, etc.
- ☑ Help staff with project development, presentations to donors, etc.

3.10.16

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Part C.

How to Maintain Good Donor Relations? Negotiating with Donors



3.10.17

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Ensure That the Organization Speaks with One Voice

- ☐ Make sure everyone knows the "party line" on a project
- ☐ This is best done at the concept or proposal reviews
- ☐ Keep colleagues informed of all conversations with donors

3.10.18

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDSF

Designate a Negotiating Team

- ✓ Consider who in the donor agency you will be meeting and take the appropriate counterparts
- ✓ Usually, include one person on substance and one senior enough to make financial decisions



3.10.19

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Designate a Negotiating Team (cont'd)

- ✓ Always include the project parent—the one who cares most about the project
- ✓ If one person satisfied all these requirements, have a one-person team



3.10.20

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Prepare for Negotiating Team

- Collect donor intelligence
- Recall details of donor interests, previous donor grants
- Decide in advance who will say what
- Decide in advance which elements of the project can be sacrificed (ideally these are the design "bay windows")

3.10.21

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Adopt Good Negotiating Skills

- ✓ Listen more than you speak
- ✓ Observe and read body language
- ✓ Be flexible and look for compromises
- ✓ Try for consensus
- ✓ Be prepared to say no

3.10.22

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

After You Receive the Grant (1)

Part D. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

3.10.23

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

Tips on Monitoring Projects

- ✓ Do not cover up any deviations from the project plan
- ✓ Acknowledge changes, and explain them as well as you can
- ✓ Do not be tempted to blame everything on circumstances outside your control—everyone makes mistakes, even you and your donor!

3.10.24

Adapted from IFPRI-IGNAR-ARDSF

More Tips on Monitoring Projects

- ✓ If you need to redesign your project, get donor permission before proceeding
- ✓ It is relatively easy to get a *no-cost extension* or *flexibility between line items*, but you should not ask for granted

3.10.25

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-AROSF

More Tips on Monitoring Projects

- ✓ It is much more difficult to get extra funds
- ✓ Donors also do not like to get money back, especially small amounts at the end of the project

3.10.26

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-AROSF

More Tips on Monitoring Projects

- ✓ Do not worry too much if it looks as if your experiment is yielding negative results — failure can be as informative as success!
- ✓ The most important thing about project monitoring is to be open and transparent and to share results, even if they are other than expected

3.10.27

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-AROSF

More Tips on Monitoring Projects

- ✓ If a donor knows you tell the truth, that donor will respect you and learn to trust you
- ✓ A donor who trusts and respects you is a donor who will fund you again!

3.10.28

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-AROSF

After You Receive the Grant (2)

How to Write a Good Report



3.10.29

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-AROSF

Remember the Three Most Important Things about Writing

- ☐ Know as much as possible about your reader; think about your reader as you write
- ☐ Use the simplest words and sentences; make your writing as easy to read as possible
- ☐ Before you write, make a plan



3.10.30

Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-AROSF

<div><h3>Use the Generic Outline (unless your donor has a special format)</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">● Covering letter (or memo)● Title● Summary (for reports over 7 pages)● Purpose (or terms of reference)● Methodology procedure● Findings● Conclusions● Recommendations (if necessary)● Annexes<p>3.10.31 <small>Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF</small></p></div>	<p>...</p>	<div><h3>Be Sure to...</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ specify what sort of report it is (annual, final, special, etc.)✓ write a clear and inclusive summary✓ share all findings✓ refer to milestones in the grant agreement/proposal<p>3.10.32 <small>Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF</small></p></div>
<div><h3>Be Sure to...</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ ask for donor permission before implementing design changes✓ attach a financial report prepared by the Finance Office, if required✓ not put all the blame for poor performance on others✓ be honest and reap the rewards of future trust<p>3.10.33 <small>Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF</small></p></div>	<p>...</p>	<div><h3>Your Report Should Be as Short as Possible to...</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">✎ save your reader's time✎ save your time✎ put your points simply and directly✎ save trees!<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Thank you!</i></p><p>3.10.34 <small>Adapted from IFPRI-ISNAR-ARDGF</small></p></div>

Preparing the Executive Summary¹²

(Summary of Presentation)

The Executive Summary outlines what the proposal is all about. It is a vital selling tool for the project, since it comes first in the presentation. It may also be the only part that some people ever read. Although it comes first, it cannot be written until all the other sections of the proposal are complete.

You need an Executive Summary for all proposals (or reports or other forms of writing) that are longer than, say, 7–10 pages. For shorter proposals and reports, a brief introductory paragraph or set of bullets (as for example in the format for concept notes) is all that you need.

Some tips for preparing a good summary

- Always write this section last!
- Take great care with the wording.
- Refer to all other sections of the proposal.
- Be very brief. Two pages are the absolute maximum, one page is better.
- Highlight any known donor interests.
- Write simply and directly, and include the request for funds.
- Do not be afraid to ask for money in the first sentence.

Below you can find an outline of an Executive Summary for just about any type of proposal. If you use this outline, and fill in the blanks with the details of your project, you should have a simple, direct, and inclusive proposal summary. Try not to leave any blanks, except where the sentence really does not fit your project.

Until you become proficient at writing summaries of your own, you may wish to continue using this outline for proposals to donors who do not have specific proposal formats of their own.

Sample outline for a proposal summary

This proposal requests ... (donor) to provide \$..... to (your organization) and (your partners) to (project objectives summarized) in (country, site). The proposed project will take years and involve person years or months of (your) and ... (partners) time.

The need for this project is pressing; (tell why in one or two sentences. If possible refer to related donor projects.) The interested parties (name them) are anxious to achieve the desired outputs and impacts as soon as possible. To achieve these outputs and impacts, (tell what the various partners will do in the project in one or two sentences.)

This project builds on previous work by (your organization, others) that (tell what has already been done.) (your

¹² From Marian Fuchs-Carsch. *Capacity-building learning module on How to Write Convincing Proposals. The Hague. The Netherlands. ISNAR. 1999/2000.*

organization and your partners) are ideally suited to conduct the follow-on activities because (tell why).

Submission and follow-up¹³

(Summary of Presentation)

Introduction

This session has two sections. The first will help you to write a good covering letter for your proposal. The second will present information about how to track what is happening to your proposal after it has been sent to the donor.

1. How to prepare a good covering letter

Here are some tips about writing a good covering letter:

- As with all letters, write with the reader in mind.
- Refer to your donor's interests and related projects. If possible, show how the proposed project builds on work that has been funded by the donor.
- Refer to any previous interaction with the person to whom you are writing.
- Highlight the importance and urgency of the problem.
- Explain how eager the scientists, their partners, and the beneficiaries are to have the project start soon.
- Conclude with a follow-up comment that opens the door for you to call to find out what is happening. Example: 'If we have not heard from you by next month, we propose to contact you by phone to get your impressions and suggestions on how the proposal could be improved.'

2. Tracking the proposal, starting the project, the value of a project development office

The need for patience

Once your proposal has been submitted, you need to have plenty of patience, because it will certainly take weeks, if not months, until you hear anything. If, as suggested, you leave a 'hook' in your cover letter, you may have an opportunity to call your donor to find out what is happening. To call once, or perhaps even twice, is acceptable, but do not keep pestering your contact. Most likely the proposal is being read by several people, and is scheduled for a formal review at a specific time. Some donors have competitive grant programs with set dates for the review of proposals. This may be up to three times per year.

Time horizons

It is hard to generalize, but on average it takes about 12–18 months from having a project idea to receiving a grant, if your proposal is successful. If you are lucky, and your project is fairly small, you may be funded on the strength of a concept note only. In this case, a grant agreement may be in your hands as quickly as six months from the project idea. But even then you may have to wait for the money to be disbursed. All donors have finance offices, which work at their own speeds, in their own cycles. The money may arrive several months after the grant agreement.

¹³ From Marian Fuchs-Carsch. *Capacity-building learning module on How to Write Convincing Proposals*. The Hague. The Netherlands. ISNAR. 1999/2000.

Likelihood of negotiations and revisions

Nearly all donor budgets are shrinking. They are all trying to support as many projects as before with less and less money. Proposal budgets are therefore more and more carefully scrutinized. So, you should not be surprised if your proposal is approved in principle, but the donor asks you to reformulate your design for a lower amount. You may have asked for \$350,000 over 3 years, for instance, and the donor may offer \$250,000. The first part of the following session will provide tips on how to conduct these budget negotiations. Here, it is important to note that a sizable reduction like this is going to require a major redesign of your project. You need to reassemble your design group, inform your partners, and have a meeting to see whether you can still do something meaningful with the available funds.

Sometimes the negotiations are not about budget, but about substance. Some donors are more ‘interventionist’ than others. If you can, do try to accommodate the interest of your donor. Do not be haughty, or feel superior to the donor people. Try to see the donor agency as more than just a source of funds. Make the donor into a project partner. The donor agency will have talented and experienced people on its staff who can strengthen the quality of your work by bringing new perspectives and outside ideas. Your reward will be a donor who understands you and your work in greater and greater detail, who ‘buys into’ your work emotionally. This may prove a highly useful longer-term source of revenue as you seek grants for future research.

How soon can you start work?

Once you have agreement on the substance and budget, you will receive a grant agreement from the donor. You will need to have your most senior official sign this, and return it to the donor agency. Does this mean you can now start the project? As you gain more experience with working with various donors, you will better be able to plan how to schedule your work. With some highly reliable donors, you can start planning as soon as you have verbal approval, with others it is as well to wait until their money is in your institute’s bank account. Many donors are subject to sudden shifts of policy. Perhaps there will be a coup in your country, with a military government being installed—donor X might freeze all grants, while the politicians in country X decide what to do about it. Until you are familiar with specific individuals and specific donor agencies, it is wise to be cautious.

The value of a donor relations office

All this tracking and negotiating and revising is time consuming. If your institute is going to be heavily involved in seeking external funding through proposals, it will certainly pay to have a specially constituted office to coordinate this effort. This office may be called a Project Development Office or a Donor Relations Office, or some variant. Its tasks will include seeking, recording, and disseminating donor intelligence, tracking all projects through the development cycle, keeping files on each project under development, recording the outcomes of concept and proposal reviews, advising scientists and administrators of donor opportunities, changes, and information. Experience from international agricultural research centers suggests that a good office of this type can easily pay for itself.

How to maintain good donor relations¹⁴

(Summary of Presentation)

Introduction

Ideally, you do not want just one grant from a donor, but a continuing relationship, in which the donor learns more and more about your work and becomes a steady, long-term supporter, providing multiple grants and perhaps travel funds to attend conferences, funding for further education, etc. Achieving this highly desirable aim requires constant attention to the relationship. It requires time, effort, and imagination to maintain good donor relations.

The most important thing to recognize is that the relationship does not end with the submission of the proposal. This, in fact, is where the relationship really begins!

The first step may come as you negotiate changes to bring your interests in line. It will be important to conduct these negotiations in a friendly and open manner, recognizing the limitations under which the donor is operating and trying to see matters from both points of view. A satisfactory negotiation on the substance or budget of your first proposal to a donor is a fine basis for a future relationship.

Once you have a signed grant agreement, the onus is on you to deliver on your promises. You have promised to deliver certain outputs and to contribute to certain goals. The donor has 'bought' your research proposal, but is now absolutely entitled to see if he gets what he bought into. It is now your job to keep the donor regularly informed about how you are spending their money and whether your research is turning out according to the mutually agreed proposal plan. To keep your donors informed, you need to carefully monitor and evaluate your work, and then write it up in a carefully worded and presented report.

This session provides you with tips and suggestions on how to conduct good negotiations, how to put emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, and how to write a good project report.

Remembering that it takes from 12–18 months to get a new grant, you need to think well ahead about whether you are going to need a follow-on grant to the one you now have. Suppose you have a three-year grant from donor X; about the middle of year 2 you need to start thinking about a follow-on grant. If you have been talking regularly to your donor — inviting him to visit the project site, sending good reports, and otherwise treating him/her as a full project partner — you are in good shape. There should be no difficulty in asking if donor X would be willing to fund a second phase of your work. If he says yes, you are probably looking at a further three years of funding and can plan well ahead. If he says no (perhaps due to lack of funds, or a change in agency policy), you still have time to find an alternative donor, and donor X might well help you do this.

Maintaining good donor relations is in everyone's interest.

1. Negotiating with donors

Few proposals are funded without the need for some changes. This involves negotiations with the donor and can seriously delay the receipt of funds. In fact, it can try your patience to the extreme.

¹⁴ From Marian Fuchs-Carsch. *Capacity-building learning module on How to Write Convincing Proposals*. The Hague. The Netherlands. ISNAR. 1999/2000.

Here are some tips and suggestions for successful negotiations with donors.

a) Ensure that the organization always speaks with one voice

Nothing is more irritating and sure to cause delays than having different people in an organization telling different stories. If a donor is likely to meet with several different people in a NARS on various occasions, all those people need to know the ‘party line’ on each project. All too often a scientist will go ahead and make an agreement with a donor without informing others in his or her organization. This can lead to acrimony and anger on the part of superiors as well as delay grant receipt.

The ideal way of ensuring that everyone in the organization speaks with the same voice is to have the proposals reviewed in an open process, with outcomes noted in a memo with wide circulation.

Another way is to follow the next tip:

b) Designate a group for each project negotiation; ensure that each person plays his/her role

A typical negotiation group will include one person to speak about substance, another to speak about money. Clearly, the best person to negotiate changes in the design of a project is its primary author, the mother or father of the project. If this person is also a senior staff person who can make decisions without referring to a superior, an additional negotiator may not be needed. However, if the project parent does not hold a senior position, or is not authorized to agree to budget changes in meetings, a second staff person, with such authorization, needs to be present. Members of the group should stick to their own expertise and not speak to the topic of the other.

You need to know who in the donor agency you will be meeting. If you know a finance person will be present, you will want to take someone from your Finance Office to the negotiations. If the donor group is going to consist of relatively junior program officers, you should not include the organization’s CEO in the negotiating group. It is therefore important to gather as much intelligence about any negotiation before it begins.

c) Prepare for negotiation meetings

You also need intelligence about the current interests of the donor you are about to meet. Before planning what you will say, gather as much information as possible about the individuals you will see and their organizational likes and dislikes.

Preparation for negotiation meetings should include discussion between the negotiating groups of possible future positions, of who will say what, and under what circumstances the group might request some time out to confer together.

Decide in advance which elements of the project can be dropped without threatening the integrity and success of the entire project. In thinking about this, remember that the donor is likely to have some favorite components (e.g. role of women, evaluation) that they will be most reluctant to see dropped.

You will be in a good position to enter negotiation if, as recommended in Session 17, you have included in your project design some *bay windows*—i.e. extra elements in your project design that you can afford to negotiate out if the donor complains about the bottom line. These ‘extras’ should be genuine project elements, not financial padding. But they are elements you can sacrifice without jeopardizing the whole research effort, such as an additional project site, an extra workshop, an additional staff person, etc.

d) At the meeting, try to adopt good negotiating skills:

- **Listen more than you speak**

What changes is the donor asking for? Why are these changes requested? As you listen, try to figure out the motives behind the negotiations. You cannot please your donor if you do not listen hard whenever he or she is speaking.

- **Observe and read body language**

Is the donor sitting up and looking interested? Are some faces closed and lips tight? Does the body language of the people you are meeting match their words? Try to learn the message of body language; the way your donors look at you and each other, the way they sit, their facial expressions, and the way they hold their bodies, may tell you as much as, if not more than, words.

- **Be flexible and look for compromises**

Perhaps the donor is getting annoyed at the scope of your project and complaining that the budget looks greedy. Maybe the real problem is that although the topic is of interest, the donor just does not have enough money to cover your request. You might suggest phasing the project, or starting with a much cheaper, initial pilot phase to demonstrate that the approach can be successful. The donor might like this very much, but you should not agree to this too fast, since a pilot project will not provide you with enough funding to achieve your aims. Try to negotiate a deal whereby the donor funds the pilot project now and promises that, if it is successful, every effort will be made next year to fund a much larger follow-on phase. If the donor is agreeable to the idea, try to get the promise in writing.

- **Try for consensus**

A former chairman of the CGIAR, Ismael Serageldin, defined consensus as something all parties can live with, even if they do not like it very much. A consensus that maximizes the interests of all the partners and minimizes their losses is the ideal compromise position. By striving for something everyone can live with, you can bring your negotiations with a donor to a reasonably speedy conclusion.

- **Be prepared to say no**

Sometimes the changes requested by the donor will be too much for you to accept. These changes may be budget cuts or substantive changes. In either case, be prepared to walk away from the negotiations with nothing if you feel that the changes would make it impossible for you to deliver the outputs and impacts or to achieve your personal and organizational objectives.

It is hard to walk away from any offer of money, but you will gain the respect of the donor if you are prepared to say no, and that respect may one day turn into a future grant, even if you have to sacrifice the current funding on offer.

Your reputation as a person and organization of integrity and seriousness may be far more valuable with the entire donor community than the value of a single grant.

2. The Importance of monitoring and evaluation

Donor agencies are always under scrutiny from their own treasuries to justify how their money has been spent. They need to evaluate their projects, and to show that their money has been wisely spent, contributing to the goals of their agency. When they give you a grant, therefore, they are going to have to justify it in their reporting to their own funding source. They will rely on your project reports to help them to do this.

For this reason, as well as for your own internal planning and control, you need to carefully monitor and evaluate your own work.

Since donors are always interested in monitoring and evaluation, you should always consider having a special monitoring activity as part of your project design. Donors will usually be happy to accept this as a separate budget line item.

Evaluation is quite a specialized topic, and there are people who spend much of their lives on this work. *You will find monitoring much easier if you have built milestones into your project design.* How to do this has been explained in Session 16.

Essentially, what you need to do is look carefully at your entire project at regular intervals (once a year, or once every six months), and see how you are doing on all aspects of the project. You go to the field and ask yourself a series of questions. These questions will depend on what your project is all about. For instance:

- Are all the sites fully operational? If not, why not?
- Are all the farmers cooperating? If not, why not?
- Do you have all the supplies and equipment you need, where you need them? If not, why not?
- Are the results coming as fast as you expected? If not, why not?
- Are the results what you expected? If not, why not?
- Are you spending your money at the rate you anticipated? If not, why not?
- Are you achieving the milestones included in your project design? If not, why not?

The answers to these questions are what you need to write in your report to the donor.

Here are some useful tips to use when monitoring and evaluating your own project.

- **Do not be concerned if your project is not proceeding as planned in the project proposal**

The proposal was probably written many months or years ago. Many things will have changed since then. The donor will not expect you to have perfect vision of the future. You may have had poor rains, or a change of local government, or a new import tax on

fertilizer, or power cuts in your region, or any number of extraneous factors that may affect the outcome of your work.

- **The important thing is to (a) acknowledge all changes, and (b) explain them as best you can.**

In other words, if something is not going as planned, say why not.

- **If the deviations from the project proposal or grant agreement are significant, you may need to redesign the project. If so, you need to notify your donor and get permission before proceeding.**

The most common form of redesign involves extending the project. It is quite likely that you will have been rather optimistic in your project design about the enthusiasm of the farmers, or of the government officials, or of others needed to implement your work. You may also have omitted to factor in the difficulties and long lead time needed to arrange and hold conferences or workshops. If so, you will find that everything is going much more slowly than expected and you are not drawing down your grant as fast as you had hoped.

A project delay will probably not be a problem for anyone concerned, but you need to notify your donor and you need to get formal agreement to any prolongation of the work. What you are asking for is a ***no-cost extension*** for six months to a year. The donor needs to know about this, because he needs to adjust his own draw-down expectations. But in general, you can get a no-cost extension whenever you ask for one.

Another common difficulty arises when you have under-budgeted a given line item in your budget. Perhaps you need to travel to the field more often because you are having unexpected trouble setting up in one site. You see that at the current rate of expenditure you will have spent all your travel money by the end of year 1 and will have nothing left for years 2 and 3. At the same time, you are not spending as much on another line item because of your slow start-up in one site. What you are asking for here is ***flexibility among line items***. Providing that the amounts are not significant, moving money from one line item to another may not be a problem. Some donors allow a little of this (say up to 15 percent) without the need to get permission. But you should always check if in doubt.

If you spend a donor's money on something other than what you promised in the grant agreement, you are potentially doing something fraudulent. You want to maintain good donor relations, so be sure you are working within your donor's rules.

- **Don't be concerned if it looks as if your experiment is yielding negative results. Failure can be as informative as success.**

Consider the White Land project, which is trying to revive the essential oils industry by testing cultivation of six essences under coconut. Supposing all nine trials come out negative, and it turns out that none of the essences can be inter-cropped with coconut. The researchers will be most surprised, and need to understand why not. These essences grew in White Land in the past. Why not now? As they think about their research results they may well come up with a completely new project design that will prove far more effective.

In both instances, *providing that lessons have been learned*, the donor will not be upset that the projects they funded have ‘failed’. They will recognize that a negative result is a key element in the scientific process, and most likely be willing to continue the search for the real answer to the problem under study.

- **The most important thing in monitoring and evaluating your project is to be open and transparent, and share results even if they are other than expected.**

3. How to write a good report

The word ‘report’ has many meanings, most associated with the idea of ‘carrying back’ information. The sorts of reports you will be writing may be defined as the delivery of information in response to an instruction or for a particular purpose. Everyone who works on projects has to write reports. You may have to report on an experiment to a supervisor. You may have to report to a donor on the progress of spending the project grant and getting project outputs and impacts.

If you hold an administrative position, you know already that a great deal of your time is going to be spent in report writing. As you get more and more senior, you will be reading more and more reports, too. It will be useful to know how to write good reports, so that you can tell those who report to you what you expect from them.

All the general writing tips given before can be used to great advantage in writing reports. This section will provide specific guidance on report writing.

Remember the three most important things about writing:

- 1. Know as much about your reader as possible before you put pen to paper; keep thinking about your reader all the time you are writing.**
- 2. Bearing your reader in mind, use the simplest words and sentences to express what you mean clearly. In other words, spoon-feed your reader. Make your writing as easy to read as possible.**
- 3. Before you begin a paper, write a plan.**

In report-writing the key to success is planning — that is, writing a good outline. A good outline will enable you to structure and organize your thoughts in a logical way that will make it easy for your reader to absorb your information.

A generic report outline

Some donors may have forms they want you to use when reporting on grant agreements. In cases where there is no preferred donor format, the following generic report outline should prove useful. It can also be used for a variety of other reports that you may be called on to prepare in the course of your career.

The generic report format below can be used for all sorts of reports, not just for reporting to donors. When reporting to donors, it is useful to identify what type of report you are writing. For instance, it might be an annual report, a final report, a semi-annual report, or a special report.

Generic report format

Covering Letter/Memo

Report Title

Summary (may be omitted in short reports)

Terms of Reference (or purpose of the report)

Monitoring procedure

Findings

Conclusions

Recommendations

Annexes

Covering letter: This is where you address the person most interested in the report. Following the most important thing about writing, the more you know about this person, the better your covering letter will be. If possible, have that person in mind as you write.

Your covering letter will summarize the reason for the report and its content, and provide an opportunity to highlight any sections or recommendations that you think will be of particular interest, or on which you especially wish to receive feedback. You should mention if the report is annual, final, special, or other.

In signing the covering letter, you (or your Director) are taking full responsibility for the content of the report.

Report title: The title should leave the reader in no doubt as to the subject of the report. If necessary, use a subtitle. **Improving rice-based farming systems in West Africa: First annual report** is a better title than **Report on West African rice project**.

Summary: As with a proposal, the summary of a report is often the most important section, because it is likely to be the only part that most readers look at. You need a summary for all reports longer than, say, five to seven pages.

The summary will *briefly* mention all the most interesting points in the report, as well as the report's purpose and main conclusions and recommendations.

A summary may contain subheadings to make it easier to read.

Be careful not to waffle in a summary — make every word count. Don't say: **Conclusions about the success of the field trials are drawn.** Instead, repeat the specific conclusion: **Unexpectedly, the millet in the unfertilized fields grew almost as tall (on average 95 percent) as in the fields that received the maximum N applications.**

Because the summary makes reference to all the other sections of the report, it must be written after the other sections are complete. ***A report summary must always be written last.***

Because the summary is all that most readers (including the most important) will ever read, it requires time to get it right. ***Allow enough time to write the best summary you can, and then re-read and edit it.***

The summary should be as short as it possibly can be. President Ronald Reagan required his staff to give him a one-page summary of world activities every morning. They had to work all night to squeeze information on many, often momentous, events into a single page. They learned it could be done.

If you really want a guideline, use the rule of 10. The summary should be no longer than 10 percent of the length of the final report. In a 10-page report, the summary can be a single page.

Terms of reference or purpose of the report: This is easy to write, and should take no more than a single paragraph. Here are some of the reasons you might be writing to a donor:

- The purpose of this report is to summarize progress on Project X from March 1999 to March 2000.
- This is the final report on Project X, which has been underway in India and Nepal since 1997.
- This is the second annual report on Project X; significant delays outside the control of the project mean that organization X is hereby applying for a no-cost extension. If this request is granted, the project, now slated to end in June 2001, will be extended for completion in January 2002.

Monitoring procedure: This section describes the steps taken to collect the information. As in the summary, avoid vague statements. Instead of **a number of farmers were interviewed**, use **twenty female farmers from each site in Region A were interviewed by NARS scientists at a Farmers' Association meeting held in January 2000 in Kaduma**.

If you are reporting to donors on a specific grant, use the grant agreement and/or the project proposal to structure your report, and make specific reference to milestones if they are part of the project design.

In this section you may want to refer to the project management arrangements. For instance, you may report that two project management meetings were held during the reporting period, which were attended by farmers' representatives and all partners. Such meetings, as well as any workshops or training sessions, might be important milestones for your project and should be mentioned in the monitoring procedure part of your report.

Findings: In this section you present all the information you gathered without interpretation. To the extent possible, use graphs, charts, diagrams, and other aids to help your readers to understand the data as quickly and easily as possible.

Conclusions: Here is where you present your interpretation of the findings. You may wish to use the same headings as in the Findings section.

As noted in the discussion on monitoring, there is no shame in reporting failure if lessons have been learned. If things are going wrong with your project, do not be tempted to blame everything on others, or events outside your control. Sometimes the fault is yours or that of your colleagues. If so, tell the truth, apologize, and move on. Donors are human. They will respect your honesty and learn to trust you more.

Recommendations: These are the steps you think should be taken, or not taken, based on the conclusions in the previous section. You can write recommendations using ‘should’. However, you may want to make some recommendations more strongly than others. In this case you can use ‘it is suggested that’ for the less strong, and ‘it is recommended that’ for those points you feel more strongly about. Good recommendations are not just your own opinion, but those logically based on the findings and conclusions.

Attaching a financial report

Most reports to donors, and certainly all annual and final reports, need to be accompanied by a financial report that shows accurately how money has been spent in the intervening period.

It is recommended that these reports be prepared by the Finance Office, and then reviewed with the project manager before being sent for final approval to the DG or whoever will sign the report cover letter. It is very important that the financial information be correctly and clearly presented in the usual format of the organization. For this reason it is not recommended that the project manager prepares the financial report him- or herself, although the project manager will be responsible for supplying the Finance Office with full and clear information about all project expenditures.

If all is going well with your project, you may not need a recommendations section, or your recommendation may be to continue to implement the project as designed.

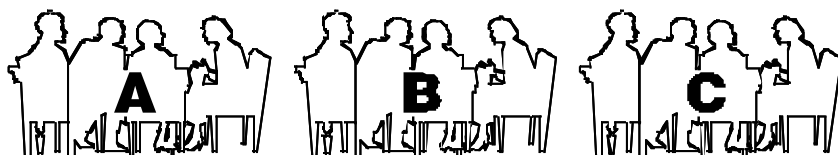
If, however, implementation is not following the plan envisaged in the grant agreement and proposal, you may wish to recommend a redesign. As noted earlier, this might involve a request for a no-cost extension, or for flexibility among line items. You may also wish to eliminate one site, accelerate the project, add another partner, or redirect your attention to a related area.

Annexes: This is the place for details that you cannot bear to leave out, but which the reader will not need to follow the logic of your report. Annexes are where to put references, lists of people interviewed, etc.

How long should a report be? As short as possible. Spare your time, your reader’s time, and the trees. The most effective reports are crisp, clear, open, honest, and short.

Exercise 10. Preparing an Executive Summary, Submitting and following up on project proposals, and maintaining good donor relations

1. Form three groups, each group electing a rapporteur (5 minutes). This Exercise 10 will be composed of Exercises 10a, 10b, and 10c. Exercise 10b will be composed of 2 parts. The group has a total of **4 hours** to complete this exercise.



Exercise 10a. Preparing an Executive Summary (1 hour 30 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (45 minutes)

1. Based on the facilitator's presentation, the groups browse Handout 3.10.2 which presents the topic related to Executive Summary. Discuss the issues with their group members to be prepared to write an Executive Summary for the Pink Land Proposal — presented in Session 9, handout 3.9.4.
2. Use the worksheet handout 3.10.6 to practice writing the Executive Summary for the Pink Land Proposal. You will use this worksheet to read out loud the results of your group work during the next phase of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (40 minutes)

3. The rapporteurs present the group results. Facilitator promotes discussion.
4. At the end the facilitator asks a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and *make transition to Exercise 10b which is composed of 2 parts.*

Exercise 10b. Submitting and following up on project proposals (1 hour 30 minutes)

PART A. Exercise 10b. Analyzing a covering letter (45 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (20 minutes)

5. Participants are invited by the facilitator to maintain the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.
6. Based on the facilitator's presentation, participants browse Handout 3.10.3 which presents the topic on Submitting and Following up on the project proposals. Discuss the issues with their group members to be prepared to undertake this exercise.

7. The task is the following: use the Worksheet 3.10.8 to write a number to show where each of the elements shown below is found in the covering letter. You must read the 'Example of a Good Covering Letter' (Handout 3.10.7) before you complete Part A of the exercise.
8. The elements that you need to find out are:
 - (1) Evidence that the writer had the reader in mind
 - (2) Reference to the donor's interests and/or related projects
 - (3) Reference to previous projects on which the proposed new project builds
 - (4) Reference to previous interactions with the donor
 - (5) Emphasis on the urgency of the problem
 - (6) Mention of the number of people who might potentially benefit
 - (7) Mention of partners and participants, and their eagerness to start the project soon
 - (8) A closing 'hook' on which you hang your tracking of the proposal after submission
9. Discuss and decide on two suggestions that might improve the cover letter and why. Be prepared to present these suggestions to the audience.
10. Rapporteurs use the Worksheet 3.10.8 to record the results of the exercise. They read the results to the audience in the next phase of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (25 minutes)

11. The facilitator invites the rapporteurs to present the group results and promotes discussion. At the end, he/she asks a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise, provide feedback and make transition to the next Part B of the exercise.

PART B. Assessing the organization's capacity in submission and follow-up (45 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (20 minutes)

12. The facilitator invites participants to maintain the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.
13. Based on the facilitator's presentation, the participants are invited to browse Handout 3.10.3 specifically regarding '*Tracking the proposal, starting the project, the value of a project development office*' to discuss the issues with their group members about how prepared their organizations are to go through this process of submitting and following up project proposals to donors.

14. Participants use Worksheet Handout 3.10.9 to complete Part B of this exercise and read the exercise results to the audience during next phase of this exercise.

Phase 2. Presentation and discussion (40 minutes)

15. The facilitator asks the rapporteurs to present the group results and promotes discussion. At the end, he/she will ask a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned during this exercise.
16. The facilitator provides feedback and makes transition to the 10c exercise of this session.

Exercise 10c. How to maintain good donor relations (60 minutes)

Phase 1. Interdisciplinary group work (30 minutes)

17. The facilitator invites the participants to maintain the same interdisciplinary group and elect a rapporteur.
18. Based on the facilitator's presentation, the participants should browse Handout 3.10.4 which provides useful insights on donor relations to respond to this exercise.
19. The group should come out with some responses (a) on how to negotiate with donors; (b) justify the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and (c) how to write a good report.
20. The participants are guided to use Worksheet Handout 3.10.10 to complete this exercise.

Phase 2. Brainstorming and discussion in plenary session (30 minutes)

21. The facilitator leads a brainstorming session in plenary, to maximize learning on the issues related to donor relations.
22. The facilitator asks the participants to share the responses they have given to the three issues, one by one. He/she stresses the differences and similarities between their responses and promotes discussion.
23. At the end, the facilitator asks a few volunteers to summarize the lessons learned and actions that they will take after returning to their organization as result of this session learning. The facilitator asks and provides feedback and closes the session.

Proposal Executive Summary

[illegible]

Example of a good covering letter¹⁵

Here is an example of a good covering letter, sent by one of the CGIAR Directors General to a Head of Unit in the European Commission. As you read this letter, try to identify the elements that make it such a good covering letter.

Dear Martin:

It was a pleasure to meet with you during my visit to the EC offices in July, and I look forward to meeting you again in Washington this October.

We are pleased to enclose two concept notes that have been modeled closely on the guidelines that we received from your office. We hope you will find them of interest. Attached to both concept notes are letters of support from our partners expressing their eagerness to begin work on the projects soon. In line with your funding limits, both proposals envisage support of less than 2 million ECU over five years.

The first note is a three-country proposal on arresting soil degradation. The project is designed to have a positive impact on the agricultural productivity of India, Myanmar, and Vietnam. The impact of the project will be felt by up to 130 million poor farmers, most of them women. The research will have direct benefits on the conservation and sound management of farmers' soil resources throughout the semi-arid areas of Asia. It will build on a number of projects involving farmer participation in watersheds already in place in India.

The second note is a proposal to reduce yield losses in groundnut production in sub-Saharan Africa caused by the rosette disease. Annual losses are estimated at over \$155 million. We believe that the potential yield gains from the crop improvement strategies proposed in the project could be over \$120 million. The project is directed at two of the major groundnut-producing countries in the region: Malawi and Nigeria. A positive outcome of the project will increase the agricultural income and nutrition of small-holder farmers, most of whom are women.

Martin, these two proposals are completely in line with EC priorities and follow your previous interests in crop and natural resources research to benefit the poor of Asia and Africa. We will look forward to hearing your reactions to these concept notes when we see you in Washington next month.

Thank you for your continued support for our work. Best wishes,

¹⁵ From Marian Fuchs-Carsch. *Capacity-building learning module on How to Write Convincing Proposals*. The Hague. The Netherlands. ISNAR. 1999/2000.

Exercise 10b. Worksheet for Part A to respond to the exercise

Dear Martin:

It was a pleasure to meet with you during my visit to the EC offices in July, and I look forward to meeting you again in Washington this October.

We are pleased to enclose two concept notes that have been modeled closely on the guidelines that we received from your office. We hope you will find them of interest. Attached to both concept notes are letters of support from our partners expressing their eagerness to begin work on the projects soon. In line with your funding limits, both proposals envisage support of less than 2 million ECU over five years.

The first note is a three-country proposal on arresting soil degradation. The project is designed to have a positive impact on the agricultural productivity of India, Myanmar, and Vietnam. The impact of the project will be felt by up to 130 million poor farmers, most of them women. The research will have direct benefits on the conservation and sound management of farmers' soil resources throughout the semi-arid areas of Asia. It will build on a number of projects involving farmer participation in watersheds already in place in India.

The second note is a proposal to reduce yield losses in groundnut production in sub-Saharan Africa caused by the rosette disease. Annual losses are estimated at over \$155 million. We believe that the potential yield gains from the crop improvement strategies proposed in the project could be over \$120 million. The project is directed at two of the major groundnut-producing countries in the region: Malawi and Nigeria. A positive outcome of the project will increase the agricultural income and nutrition of smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.

Martin, these two proposals are completely in line with EC priorities and follow your previous interests in crop and natural resources research to benefit the poor of Asia and Africa. We will look forward to hearing your reactions to these concept notes when we see you in Washington next month.

Thank you for your continued support for our work.

Best wishes,

Exercise 10b. Worksheet for Part B

Strengths	The organization's Weaknesses	Actions to improve the situation
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.

Groups' insights on (a) negotiation, (b) the importance of M&E, and (c) to write a good report and others

[illegible]

[illegible]

Strengths and suggestions for improvement

List up to three things you liked about the sessions of volume 3.

1.
2.
3.

List up to three suggestions to improve the sessions of volume 3

1.
2.
3.

Guidelines to provide feedback on the workshop

1. The module

Content

- usefulness/relevance
- amount of information

Structure

- sequence
- duration
- balance between Facilitators' and Participants' contributions
- instruction to Facilitators
- visual aids
- handouts
- extra readings
- PAPA
- evaluation

2. Process: L&CB techniques and direction

- usefulness/relevance/effectiveness
- group interaction
- clarity of questions, exercises, instructions
- opening and closure of the days

3. Facilitators' and participants' performance

- presentation/communication skills
- interaction/effective participation
- punctuality/interest/commitment/willingness to facilitate learning/willingness to participate
- other attitudes

4. Logistical support

- organization
- accuracy
- punctuality
- willingness to assist participants, services provided in general

5. Workshop environment

- physical (L&CB facilities, L&CB material, hotel facilities in general)
- psychological (personal feelings such as self-motivation, interest, satisfaction, self-achievement), social (development of friendships, relaxed, comfortable among participants, etc.)

6. Workshop results/outputs

- personal and professional assessment
- recommendations

7. General comments

FIRST STAGE

PAPA—Ideas for Action Items

Workshop title : **Engendered OFSP Project Planning, Implementation, M&E**

Date/venue :

Name :

Organization : _____

Ideas I would like to try when I return to work at my organization, based on what I have learned in this L&CB workshop.

[illegible]

Note: You can use the workshop objectives, what you learn during the workshop, the handouts, conversations with participants and facilitators, etc., to come up with ideas.

