

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

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## **Session 7. Writing a Full Proposal**

# Objectives of Session Seven

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- 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 schedule of the day in the binder*

# Objectives of Session Seven (cont'd)

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- 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.

# Concept Note to Proposal

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- 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

# Concept Note to Proposal

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- 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)

# Preparing the Full Proposal

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- 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

# Preparing the Full Proposal

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- 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

# Preparing the Full Proposal

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



# Qualities of a Winning Proposal

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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

# Qualities of a Winning Proposal

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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!

# Very Important Note

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

# Basic Proposal Format

## (submit your proposal in this order)

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- 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?)

# But Write the Proposal in This Order

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

# Proposal Step 1: Objective (Purpose)

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- 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

# Proposal Step 2: Outputs

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- 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

# Proposal Step 3: Activities

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- 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



# Proposal Step 4: Work or Management Plan

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- 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

# Proposal Step 5: Expected Impacts

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- 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

# Proposal Step 6: Budget

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

# Proposal Step 7: Background

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- 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

# Proposal Step 8: Evaluation and Milestones

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- 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

# Proposal Step 9: Summary

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- 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

# Proposal Step 9: Summary

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

# Proposal Step 10: Review and Editing

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- ✓ 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!