



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
OFFICE OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
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CONCEPT NOTE OUTLINE

1. OVERVIEW

- ★ Can stand alone as a description of your proposal
- ★ Relatively short (2-3 pages)
- ★ Should parallel the sections of the proposal narrative
- ★ Include at least one sentence on objectives
- ★ Include at least one sentence on methods
- ★ Include total cost, funds already obtained and amount requested in the proposal
- ★ Goes at the beginning of the proposal
- ★ Developing it at the start helps you to think through what the rest of the proposal should look like
- ★ It's the last thing that you write
- ★ Will be the first thing that is read by potential funder.

2. RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

a. **Provide a general presentation and analysis of the problem(s) to be addressed by the project and how each problem is linked to the other.**

- ★ *A project is a coherent set of discrete activities that will achieve clearly defined objectives, with tangible results to be achieved within a specific pre-determined timeframe, identifying the means and resources required*
- ★ *Funders look for projects that solve a (specific) problem*
- ★ *It is important to accurately identify the problem; without doing this, you will formulate or design an inaccurate proposal. Correctly analysing the situation and defining the problem will lead you to formulating clear objectives and defining tangible results*
- ★ *The problem is written as a negative statement*
- ★ *Always ask yourself (1) whom or what does the problem affect? (2) Determine the scope of the problem-how big is it? (3) How do we know what the problem is?*

b. **Identify clearly specific problems to be addressed by the project.**

- ★ *The problem you address must be clearly related to your goal*
- ★ *It should focus on those people you serve, rather than your organization's needs*

- ★ *It should be well supported with evidence such as statistical facts, expert views, and trends*
- ★ *It must be directly connected to, and substantiate, your organization's ability to respond to that need*
- ★ *It must be easily clear and concise. Avoid jargon and make it easy for the reader to get what you are saying.*

c. Include a brief description of the target groups and final beneficiaries.

- ★ **Target Group:** *These are the people, groups, institutions that the actions of the project will directly 'speak' (and who maybe the final beneficiaries in some cases)*
- ★ **Final Beneficiaries:** *the wider communities, institutions, countries that the target group is immersed in and who will benefit from the long-run because the target group has received the actions from this project.*

d. Demonstrate the relevance of the proposal to the needs and constraints in general of the target and final beneficiary groups.

- ★ *State what the need is and why this need has developed and should be addressed*
- ★ *What is currently being done to solve this problem (by self or others) and show what issues have constrained the solution of this problem so far.*

e. Demonstrate the relevance of the proposal to the objectives and priorities and requirements of the Funder

- ★ *Know your Funder very well*
- ★ *What is their raison d'être?*
- ★ *What areas do they support/what areas do they not support, what have they supported in the past, do they give in the amount that you are hoping to secure ?*
- ★ *Does your Country or Organisation qualify?*
- ★ *Strong and clear alignment to Funder's strategic goal(s)*
- ★ *Strong argument that the Funder's money is being well-spent/invested.*

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

a. Provide a description of the proposed project including, where relevant, background information that led to the presentation of this proposal. This should include:

b. Description of the goal and objectives of the project, duration, expected results

- ★ **Goal or AIM:**
 - *Long term may not be fulfilled in project life*
 - *Overarching*
 - *Broad*
 - *A broad, future oriented statement of what you would like to achieve*
 - *Are about the final impact or outcome that you wish to bring about*
 - *General outline of the long term, far reaching effect of your proposed project*
 - *Intangible, and abstract*
 - *Project generally should have only one goal, with many objectives supporting the accomplishment of that goal*
 - *Brief: ideally goal should be only one sentence, clear and concise*
 - *Goal statements would normally identify the specific target group and provide the "what" information rather than the "how" the goal will be achieved or when it will come about*
 - *Important that goals are linked back to need statement*

- Use words such as "To" decrease, increase, deliver, develop, establish, improve, produce, provide. Avoid indefinite terms such as to support, promote and create awareness.
- ★ Objectives:
 - Short term – must be accomplished in project life
 - Provide guidelines for how the goal can be accomplished
 - (Project generally should have only one goal, with many objectives supporting the accomplishment of that goal).
- ★ SMART Objectives:
 - Specific: State exactly what you wish to achieve – 5 Ws who, what, when, where, and why (see Activities below)
 - Measurable: Apply numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, etc. Can you measure what you have achieved. Figure out at this stage how you will measure the change projected from each result by implementing the activity(ies). If there is no way to measure your objective, it needs to be changed. What cannot be measured cannot be monitored
 - Attainable: Ensure that your objective is attainable with the available resources, time, etc? Think about the bureaucracy!
 - Realistic and Relevant: Must be relevant and aligned to your overall aim
 - Timebound: Set a definite target date for completion and/or frequencies (e.g. every quarter) for specific action steps. State precisely when this objective should be accomplished? Incorporate specific dates, calendar milestones, or timeframes that are relative to the achievement of another result; Ensure that it can be accomplished in the project duration.
- ★ Process Objectives: e.g. Recruit a person, acquire a piece of equipment
- ★ Impact Objectives: e.g. this objective will see at least an 10% increase in...

c. Description of the proposed activities and their effectiveness

- ★ Activities: (This level of detail is not required in the Concept Note but in the full application form) Describe the specific activities that will take place to achieve the objectives.
 - How: Describe in detail, what will occur from the time the project begins until it ends.
 - When: Present the order and timing for the tasks. Use a spreadsheet or Gantt chart to clarify sequencing, show milestones, etc.
 - Why: Strengthen your case; defend your chosen methods, use expert evidence/reports to show that your methods can work.
 - Who: Explain who will be responsible for each task/activity.

d. Involvement of any implementing partners, their role and relationship to the applicant, if applicable

- ★ Ask the following questions:
 - Who are the best partners?
 - What is expected of each?
- ★ How is the project designed to monitor their role(s)-site coordinators, etc.
- ★ Budgeting for them
- ★ Who will be partners, associates, etc?

- e. **Other possible stakeholders (national, local government, private sector, etc.), their anticipated role and/or potential attitudes towards the project**

4. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

- a. **Provide an initial risk analysis and possible contingency plans. This should include at least a list of risks associated with each main activity proposed accompanied by relevant corrective measures to mitigate such risks. A good risk analysis would include a range of risk types including physical, environmental, political, economic and social risks.**

- ★ *Do you plan to have the project continue after the funding period?*
- ★ *Does your sustainability plan consider plans for funding after the funding period?*
- ★ *What project sustainability means: Maintaining the outcomes, outputs and goals; institutionalizing the process*
- ★ *What project sustainability doesn't mean: Maintaining project staff positions; Maintaining all activities; Depending solely on grant funding.*

- b. **Give the main preconditions and assumptions during and after the implementation phase.**

- c. **Explain how sustainability will be secured after completion of the project. This can include aspects of necessary measures and strategies built into the action, follow-up activities, ownership by target groups etc.**

- ★ *Provide the assurance that you have designed a project whose impact will last after the project funds have been exhausted.*
- ★ *Show that you have considered all risks (Risk Analysis)-known 'unknowns' and have catered for them*
- ★ *Consider all assumptions*
- ★ *State built-in measures that will support sustainability of the project's impact*
- ★ *Financial sustainability, operational sustainability, etc.*