Community Capacity Building Project

Introduction to Proposal Writing Module

Table of Contents

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

Module Overview

Module Description

"Introduction to Proposal Writing" is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of proposal writing. The module will examine the elements of effective proposal writing including proper formatting, content development, satisfying program criteria, demonstrating economic and social benefits, addressing funding agency requirements, demonstrating the sustainability of the project's output, consultant selection, monitoring and evaluation, and proposal follow up. The module will also examine how to reference other documentation and other sources of information used in preparing the proposal. It will help you identify issues relevant to your proposal which you will need to consider further.

Materials contained in this proposal are from various sources including a previous "Proposal Writing" module developed by George E. Parsons and Joseph Whiffen as well as government publications and interviews with those responsible for reviewing proposals.

Using the Module

As we move through the material, you will find that many of the topics clearly apply to proposals you are working on while other materials may not have an immediate or obvious linkage. This will depend, to some extent, on the size and nature of the proposal as well as intended funding sources. You would not, for example, be required to submit three year cash flow forecasts or balance sheets as part of a proposal to host a conference.

You must take the information provided, listen to what others are saying, and make it relevant to you, your proposals, and your organization. Ask questions to build on the basic elements provided to make the course better fit your needs.

Note to Facilitators

There are three delivery options with different durations for the Introduction to Proposal Writing Module:

- 1 Day (Basic)
- 1 ½ Days (Intermediate)
- 2 Days (Advanced)

The more time allocated for the training, the more in depth the facilitator can enter in to the subject matter. Prior to delivery of the module, facilitators will determine the interests and requirements of the group. The facilitator will also identify the funding sources the group will

4

be applying to and familiarize her / himself with the program applications and criteria. They will then modify the module content and instructional methods used based on the identified needs of the group (as well as the duration specified, i.e. introduction, intermediate, or advanced). Typically, a facilitator will, vary the slides in the PowerPoint presentation, exercises used, and the time spent on various topics for each session they deliver. For each topic discussed, facilitators will reference the corresponding pages in the notes so participants can read further.

Why Proposal Writing is Important

Proposal writing is a skill. If you do not have it your organization will not obtain the funding it needs to hire staff, purchase equipment, rent facilities, develop capital projects, or retain consultants. Proposal writing requires considerable knowledge in many disciplines. A proposal must justify each item on the list of things you want. Funding agencies will then decide which items it can support. If you can not describe your project, communicate exactly what you require, and explain why you need it, you will not get the resources you need.

Funding agencies have limited resources and usually screen proposals to ensure only the best receive a portion of the limited funds available. In some cases, proposals are reviewed on a directly competitive basis. In these situations a funding agency will publically express a willingness to fund a particular type of initiative and several groups will compete. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, for example, sometimes issue calls for proposals to deliver employment outreach services. Whether you are responding to a request for proposals or advancing your own unsolicited project, you will not receive funding without a good proposal.

Linkages to Strategic Planning

| Strategic Planning | → | Proposal Writing | → | Project Management |
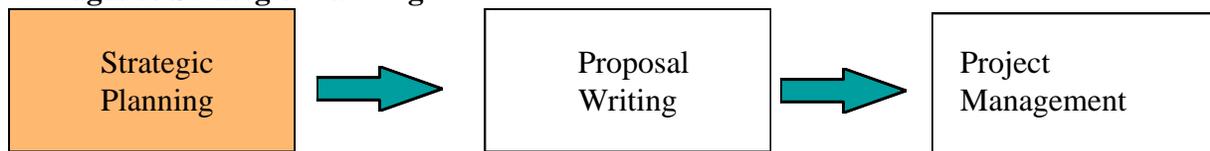
Why are you developing the proposal you are working on? It was not chosen on a random whim. Proposals are developed to address a strategic need identified by the organization or to solve a problem. Good proposal writing is absolutely essential for a not-for-profit organization to fulfil its mandate. The goals of good proposals closely match the strategic goals of the organization advancing it. Proposals also provide organizations with the resources to accomplish these strategic goals. For example, your group may feel there is a need for specific research to assist local farmers with identifying weather resistant crops suitable for your area. This may involve hiring experts, and developing test growing sites which require significant funds that you do not have. A good proposal can source the funds required to carry out the project.

Proposals are also linked to strategic planning in that they force organization to define their

5

priorities. Your zone board, municipality, or community group may have many things you want to do to improve social and economic conditions in your area or the province as a whole. You must, however, develop a proposal which is very specific; limited to a single desired solution for your highest priority problem(s). You would not, for example, submit a proposal to develop a walking trail when your organization has identified a higher priority initiative such as the development of a tourist attraction which would significantly increase visitation to the region. You must select proposals based on their strategic priority as determined through your strategic planning process.

Like strategic planning, proposal writing should engage all relevant community stakeholders. When developing a proposal for submission, call a meeting and provide an update to those concerned; perhaps a verbal presentation with a written overview.   Make sure that the people who are supposed to benefit, should the proposal receive funding, feel that this is their project, for their benefit, and that they want to contribute to make it happen.

Linkages to Project Management

| Strategic Planning | → | Proposal Writing | → | Project Management |
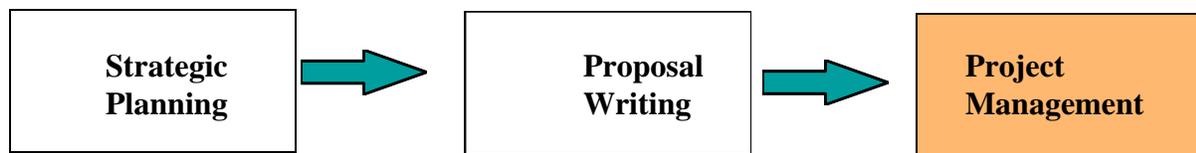
Project management and proposal writing are closely linked. Much of your initial project planning occurs during proposal development. When developing your proposal you start to work through the major elements of your project, what you have to accomplish and the resources and skills required. A good proposal helps lay a solid foundation from which to manage your project.

Funding agencies will want to know how the project will be managed should funding be approved. There is usually a "Project Management" section contained within the content section of the proposal. For example, if you are proposing to renovate a heritage structure for use as a tea room, funding agencies will want to see that your organization has the knowledge of heritage guidelines and the skills to complete the project according to these guidelines. They will want to know that you have the where-with-all to run a tea house and that the demand for a tea house exists.

Accountability is important. Funding agencies will hold you accountable for the various claims you make in your proposal. If you say you are building a tea room you can't build a bed and breakfast! The scope of the project, the project timeline, and budget are set out in the proposal. This forms the basis for the funding contract (sometimes called the "Letter of Offer"). Failure to meet the commitments outlined in the contract can result in the cancellation of funding or at the very least damage your organization's relationship with the funding agency.

6

Introduction to Proposal Writing

A proposal is a request for financial assistance to implement a project. Funding is sought, in whole or in part, from government sponsored funding agencies, charitable foundations, and other sources. In general, the success in gaining funding is enhanced when you are seeking multiple sources of funding. Unfortunately, more funding partners usually requires additional effort (additional applications, different program criteria, multiple deadlines, etc.)

Typically, your project should:
•   Provide economic benefit to an area or a community
•   Have a high probability of success
•   Address a strategic priority
•   Demonstrate need for financial assistance
•   Be economically viable
•   Have stakeholder support
•   Be consistent with development strategies

Stakeholder Engagement

What stakeholders need to be engaged in the formulation of your proposal?   Try to identify who will be required to contribute resources to the project, who will be impacted (positively or negatively) if the proposal is funded, and who will benefit from the final product of the project. Not involving the right people in formulating the proposal can result in a lack of community support, overlooked details, and the rejection of your proposal.

Some stakeholders usually involved in proposal formation are:

1.   Board Members
2.   Other Community Groups
3.   Area Businesses
4.   Organizational Staff
5.   Government Funding Agencies such as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Heritage Canada, etc.
6.   Municipalities
7.   Labour Unions
8.   Industry Associations
9.   Provincial Line Departments (Tourism, Fisheries, Agriculture, etc)

Bring stakeholders together to discuss the proposal and provide an overview of the project. Does everyone agree that the proposal should be submitted? Do they clearly understand what you are trying to accomplish and what your goals are? If possible, discuss the project with stakeholders

as a group so everyone can benefit from hearing the perspectives of others.
Brainstorming and the nominal group technique can help ensure that stakeholder meetings are productive. Without allowing criticism, ask group members to contribute, using the nominal group process to identify the problem and help them understand the proposal's goals.   Help the group generate objectives from the general goal. Identify resources and constraints, then, generate several alternative solutions, choosing the most viable. Other documents are available to explain the brainstorming process in more detail (See appendix E: Brainstorming and the Nominal Group Process)

Proposal Research

Proposals should be well researched prior to submission. Your project proposal is intended to communicate exactly what your group will be attempting to accomplish, the problem to be addressed, the resources required, and when activities will be performed.   These elements need to be substantiated through research. You can not simply make decisions or lay out a plan of action based on your opinions. Your decisions must be based on documented facts. Most likely, others have taken on projects similar to yours. You must seek out these individuals and organizations to determine what you can learn from their experiences. For example, if you are seeking funding for a tourism festival, you would want to talk to other groups who have organized similar festivals. They would have information on attendance and costs against which you can compare your own projections.

When conducting research, you must ensure that:

•   Your methodology is accepted by funding agencies; and
•   The data you collect supports your proposal.

Typical research would examine the location, the population characteristics of the area, the situation, existing facilities, and anything else required to objectively describe the background of the project. Involving the community, stakeholders, and the beneficiaries in the research process is the best way to ensure that it is valid.

It is also necessary to find out what funding sources and programs are available. There are several funding sources; government funding agencies, corporate donations, private foundations, municipalities, and fund-raising activities. Your research should identify what is realistic. Most funding agencies look for a degree of local initiative in project proposals, and would like to see the utilization of resources from within the community. They also want the project proposal to indicate that the project will be self-supporting once the initial funding has been spent. The research you document in your proposal should address these issues.
Research must also be cost effective and timely. Many funding programs have fixed application deadlines which can not be missed: delaying your proposal beyond this date to gather information is pointless. If your proposal is incomplete, you may have no choice but to defer it. If, however, you have sufficient detail to proceed, you must cut off your research. In addition,

there is a point beyond which gathering additional information becomes very costly. Costs associated with conducting surveys, travel, and the purchase of specialized resources, can be significant. It would make little sense, for example, to spend $5000 on a survey to justify the need for a $10,000 proposal.

Data comes from both primary and secondary information sources.

1.   Primary data is new information colleted directly by you. Examples could include a survey of area residents, market tests, or interviews with industry experts. Primary data is usually the best but is very time consuming and costly.

2.   Secondary data is information which already exists. Typical sources include government reports, industry association studies, zone board strategic plans, marketing books, periodical articles, engineering reports, etc. If it is available, secondary data is cheaper and easier to use than primary data.

Data can be classified as qualitative or quantitative.

1   Qualitative data is usually derived from small samples and produces information which is not easily quantifiable. It is not meant to be scientific and its results can not be used for statistical analysis. (You can not draw conclusions about the population as a whole). An example might be a focus group of eight people who play sports to gather their thoughts regarding the development of a new recreation centre. This data may be very useful in providing insights into the project but you could not extrapolate what they say to the entire population. For example, two of the eight may suggest that the facility offer aerobics; this does not mean 25% of area residents want aerobics. Qualitative data is often used to guide future quantitative research. For example, a focus group may be used to develop a list of possible solutions.

2   Quantitative data provides information which can be used for statistical analysis. The results are meant to accurately represent the current situation. Market surveys and public opinion polls are two common quantitative research techniques. Quantitative research techniques are often used to narrow choices or select between choices. It answers questions such as which option area residents prefer. A municipality may, for example, survey 200 residents and ask them if a piece of land should be converted into a park or sold to a developer. The survey results can be extrapolated to apply, to some extent, to the entire population.

It is a good idea to develop a research plan. There are usually six stages to developing most research plans:

1.   Determine what question(s) you want the research to answer. What is the point of the

9

research?

2.   Identify existing information that is readily available such as reports, surveys, strategies, and studies. You should also determine what data sources exist which you can tap into for additional help. Are there groups you know of that have undertaken similar projects? There may also be expertise which you can consult such as government departments and industry associations.

3   Layout a research plan. Decide which information sources you will consult and set a research schedule and budget (if appropriate).

4.   Collect Data   Consult information sources, carry out the required surveys, etc. Compile data relating to the questions you want to answer.

5.   Analyze the Data. Determine what the data tells you about your situation. Look for trends and variances.

6.   Review data and incorporate data into the proposal. Have someone double check your findings. Once checked, you can integrate the information into your proposal to support and substantiate your conclusions.

Proposal as Marketing Tool

Your project proposal should be an honest *"marketing"* document. Its job is to inform the reader and get them to buy into the project. It should not, however, misrepresent the facts. Making statements you know to be untrue, fabricating research, or citing non-existing sources, is a recipe for disaster.

Any successful initiative will require effective partnerships which are based on trust. Intentionally misleading funding partners or others will destroy this trust. It will eliminate any potential for future partnerships. It can also have serious legal implications. Funding applications require you to sign a statement that the information that you are providing is true and accurate. Intentionally misleading them is FRAUD!

"I certify that the information given is, to the best of my knowledge and ability, complete, true and correct and this will also apply to all information given in the future in connection with the implementation of the project and the program."

Portion of Business Development Program Application Consent Section

Within the realm of what is true, you have license to sell and promote your initiative and your organization.   Proposals should be neat and tidy; preferably typewritten, and without any extraneous or unnecessary information. They should capture the readers' interest and draw them

to the key points which you want to emphasize. Stress the benefits of the proposal and clearly demonstrate that the proposal has been well thought through

The proposal should be professional looking and written in convincing language. If you do not sound like you believe in your project it is unlikely that others will believe.

Understanding Funding Program Criteria

While it is important to carefully formulate and design your proposal, it is equally important to write a proposal which will attract the required funding. You must clearly understand the program requirements and ensure they are addressed in the proposal. Too often, proposals are submitted to funding agencies without taking time to consider how the proposal will be received. Funding programs differ with respect to

- The funding cap (percentage of funding provided)
- Eligible costs.
- Eligible applicants (profit / not-for-profit)
- Eligible sectors (tourism, agriculture, forestry)
- Project location
- Information Required

You must understand the funding program criteria and ensure they are addressed in the proposal. It is good to a have person who has not been involved in the drafting of the proposal to review the program guidelines, read the proposal, and provide feedback. If you are unable to satisfy the criteria of the program you are applying for, you will have to rethink your proposal or seek other funding sources.

Your project should be practical, not too costly in relation to its benefits, and have the potential for being repeated in other situations. Almost all government agencies, foundations, and private voluntary agencies, have their own proposal format that they will want you to follow. If you are not in contact with a local or regional agency representative, consider writing a letter requesting information about proper procedures, application format, and funding requirements. While proposal formats vary, similar information is required by most funding agencies and foundations.

There may be times which are better than others to apply. Some programs, for example, receive funding at the beginning of the fiscal year (April 1). These programs may be tapped out in January. You should also find out the budgeting cycle of the agency and time your proposal accordingly. Funding cycles may be multi year, whether annually, quarterly, or ongoing. You should also check to see if there is a closing date for application. A list of potential funding sources can be found in appendix D.

Proposal Format

Formatting is concerned with the look, style, and layout of the proposal. It is not merely aesthetics. A properly formatted proposal is pleasing to the eye but it also:

- Adds to the perception that the document is well thought out.
- Enhances the credibility and professionalism of your organization.
- Is easy to read and understand.
- Facilitates the understanding of the proposal content.
- Makes it easy for the reader to find the information they are looking for.

Title Page

This is the first page of the proposal. It is a single page and is often serves as the cover of the document. It should include:

- Date;
- Project title;
- Locations of the project;
- Name of the organization; and
- Any other required information such as a Request for Proposals reference number...

When the title page serves as the cover of the document, it is recommended that you incorporate some color to make it stand out. Many experienced proposal writers suggest that a relevant photo also be included but there is no hard and fast rule. Where the proposal is bound with a non-transparent cover, such as a binder, it is suggested that a title page inside the cover be used in case the document is copied. The information that is on the title page also needs to be included on the bound cover so others will know what the document is at a glance.

Table of Contents

Account managers and other proposal readers are busy. Sometimes they may have to read or refer to several proposals in a single day. Make it easy for them to find the information they require. Each content heading should be listed along with its corresponding page number. Try to keep the table of contents a reasonable length. Too may headings can make it unwieldy.

Word processing software packages like MS Word and word perfect have features which allow you to bookmark section headings in the table of contents. This feature ensures that page numbers change as the heading move with the addition or removal of information. If you do not know how to use this feature, it is worthwhile to take the time to learn.

Length

It is difficult to balance the reader's need for information with the need to keep the proposal focused and concise. How elaborate your proposal is usually depends on the amount of resources being requested, how big the total project is, and the funding sources applied to. The person reviewing your proposal will not be as familiar with your project as you are. You need to include sufficient details to ensure the proposal is clear, accurate, and complete. There is no hard and fast rule about proposal length, however, it is usually a given that the greater the level of funding applied for, the more detail that is required.

Layout

Ensure proposals are typed if at all possible and use a font size that is easy to see. Usually the font size 12 is good. If the proposal must be handwritten, ensure the handwriting is legible. Do not use pencil. It is too light to read and in some cases funding agencies will not accept applications or proposals unless they are written in ink. Handwritten proposals should use black or blue ink; red can also be very difficult to read.

Single or double spacing is fine and is usually a matter of personal preference. The same is true of one-sided or two-sided printing; both are acceptable. Be sure not to crowd the page. Leave spaces between paragraphs and ensure paragraphs are indented. Where possible, maintain standard margins of 2.5 cm for the top, bottom, and side margins. This will make it easier to copy your proposal and bind the document. Margins also provide the reader with a place to record notes or questions about the proposal contents.

The formatting and numbering of headings and subheadings should be consistent throughout the document. Many proposal writers use different font sizes, types, or characteristics to make headings stand out. This makes the proposal easier to follow and allows the reader to quickly reference relevant sections.

Be sure to number the pages of your proposal. It will make the proposal easier to follow. It will also help ensure your proposal remains intact. Proposals are often copied or faxed. It is easy for some of the pages to be lost or placed in the wrong order. Headers and Footers can also help ensure that pages of the proposal do not go missing while giving your proposal a professional look. Most word processing packages have features which can help.

Sequence

The proposal should tell a story. It should be easy to follow and lead the reader through what is to be accomplished, how it is to be done, and why it is important. Do not fall into the trap of matching sequence of the application form. The headings in the application form can be used as a check list to ensure required elements have not been overlooked; however, they should not simply be replicated. As one account manager said, "You have to take control of the application."

Ensure that the proposal is properly organized into appropriate sections.   Then make sure that you put the right content in the right section. Sections do not need to be in any particular order but they must relate in specific ways to the other sections as well as the proposal as a whole.

There are some general rules of thumb:

• Start with a Title Page
• Executive Summary should be the first thing to follow the Table of Contents
• The project description should proceed the project budget
• Appendixes should come at the end of the document

Writing Style

If not entertaining, your proposal should at least be easy to read. Each sentence should contain only one major idea to prevent confusion. Avoid wordy sentences. Your objective is to clearly and concisely convey your ideas. Make sure your sentences are not overly complex and check for unnecessary words. Use clear concise and simple language that states exactly what is meant.

Example of Unnecessary Wording

"In view of the preceding information, we feel it is required and necessary for an improved, enhanced museum is built."
May be changed to:

"Therefore, a new museum is required."

Vary the length of your sentences as well as how they start; it makes the document more interesting. Ensure proper punctuation and grammar is used. Where possible, you should use active verbs to give your proposal more energy. If grammar and language are not your strong points, it is very important that you have someone proof read your work.

Also, consider the tone of your proposal and how the reader will interpret what is said. Conveying the need for your project and instilling a sense of urgency in the reader is desirable. Coming across as adversarial to the reader is not. Your tone should be friendly and cooperative. If the reader finds your statements offensive or threatening, it is likely he or she will spend considerable time documenting your encounters and reasons why your proposal should not be supported.

Visual Aids

The appropriate use of visuals makes the proposal look professional and well thought out.

Where possible, use diagrams, charts, or pictures to illustrate key points. Typical visual aids would include maps, site photos, clip art, flow charts, text boxes, drawings, building plans, organizational charts, graphs, and tables. Visuals communicate ideas faster than print; a picture is worth a thousand words! Visuals can help explain complicated ideas and reinforce key points. Flow charts are useful for illustrating the linkages of ideas or the sequence of events. When using visuals, make sure the images you select are relevant. You should not include them in the proposal simply because you have them.

This is particularly true of clipart; a bank of stock of images. These tend not to add any real value to your proposal.

Statistics, in particular, lend themselves to interpretation through pie charts and graphs. Using the example of a community recreation centre, residents' primary interests might be: 54% swimming, 17% arobics, 16% Basket Ball, and 13% volleyball.

Some images may require additional information such as explanatory notes or a key. People need to know what they are looking at and how it links to the proposal. You should also be careful not to clutter your graphs with unnecessary information. Rank data items from largest to smallest and use different colors for each item. Spread visuals throughout the proposal inter-disbursed with text. Your proposal should not look like a picture album.

Sample Visual Aid.

Resident Preferences

Community Recreation Survey

Swimming · Aerobics · Basket Ball · Volleyball
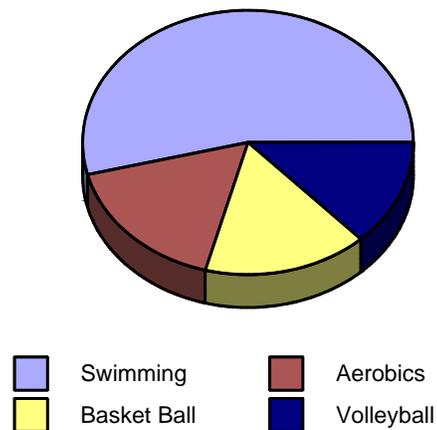
Account managers appreciate photos. They are particularly helpful when evaluating proposals for capital projects. Photos can help describe the project location or state of any existing structure (such as a wharf or building). Photos are good for providing account managers with a quick appreciation of the situation and give meaning to the accompanying text. For example, if your proposal is seeking funding to renovate a craft shop in the local museum, you could include photos of the existing layout. This would help the account manager get a better understanding of the changes you are proposing.

Maps are also helpful with capital projects. You can not expect those reviewing your application to be as familiar with your area as you are. Beyond clarifying project location, maps can also be used to show that you have thought through land ownership and access issues. Structural and conceptual drawings help readers visualize what you are proposing. If, for example, your proposal refers to a 2000 sq. ft. community museum, different readers may have different ideas of what the facility will look like and how it will fit in to its surroundings. Conceptual drawings ensure everyone shares a common vision of what is being proposed.

15

Footnoting

Footnotes are numbers that follow the specific facts you use in your proposal. These numbers correspond to the information about the source of your facts at the bottom of the page. You can choose to list the information sources at the end of the document instead of the bottom of the page. This is called end noting. Either is acceptable provided the source of the information is cited.

Footnoting or endnoting does several things:

- It adds credibility to the information you use
- Forces you to think about the quantity and quality of information you have
- Gives credit to those whose information, quotes, or ideas you are using
- Avoids plagiarism
- Gives the document a professional look

When you are quoting someone or using statistics in your proposal, be sure to footnote the source. Likewise, when you are borrowing tables, graphs, or pictures from other sources, you must footnote these as well.

Sample Footnote

In 2005, the region experienced a 15% increase in visitation.[1]

[1] Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Year-End Regional Tourism Performance 2005.

References

The reference section of the proposal lists all the sources of information (people, documents, websites, etc) consulted in the preparation of the document. References are listed in a separate section of the document. All information sources are listed in alphabetical order by the author or editors last name. If the authors name is not known (which is commonly the case with government publications) the first word of the title is used.

Appendices

Use appendices to avoid crowding the body of the proposal while maintaining the flow of the narrative. The text of your proposal should form a clear, complete, and concise argument running from beginning to end of your proposal. Appendices help make the proposal reader friendly. There are many important details which need to be included in the proposal. If you included all these details in the main body of the document, you will make the text too convoluted and

difficult to follow. The reader will not be able to see the forest through the trees!

Appendices can include any material that will allow account managers to make a favorable funding decision. The purpose of the appendices is to retain important details outside of the main body of your document. They keep the proposal smooth and flowing without diminishing your argument. They tuck away detail which might be useful to the reader in making a decision. Typical of documents to put in appendices are:

- Material Lists;
- Engineering Drawings;
- Letters of Support;
- Budget Details;
- Job Descriptions;
- Media Articles;
- Copies of Promotional Documents;
- Meeting Minutes;
- Other detailed documents which are important but too long to be included in the body of the proposal.

It is suggested you take the following steps:

1. After you have written your first draft of the project proposal, go through it and look for any descriptions or details in your text that may draw the reader away from the smooth flow of the argument.

2. Move the data to the appendices section of your proposal, and replace with a brief note referring the reader to the appendix for the details. For example, you can state that there are many complementary service providers in the immediate area and provide the actual listing in an appendix.

3. Read the document again. With those details moved to an appendix, does the flow of argument become smoother without weakening the proposal? If yes, you have accomplished what you set out to do. If not, re-read your proposal and start again.

Proposal Sign-off

There have been several instances where proposals have reached funding agencies without having the approval of the applicant itself. Sometimes staff overstep their boundaries. In other cases there are internal miscommunications.   Submitting proposals which are incomplete or which were not intended to be submitted makes organizations look very disorganized. Having formal sign-off within the proposal is a safeguard that prevents this from happening.

Your organization requires a process to ensure your proposal is approved by those with the

authority to do so. In most organizations this would be the Executive Director or Board of Directors.   The inclusion of a signature plate at the end of the document is one safe guard you can use. Organizations that normally require two signatures for activities like banking must ensure both have signed off on the proposal. If your organization has a corporate seal, include this as well.

Common Formatting Errors

Insensitive language: Sometimes proposals contain language which others would consider racist, sexist, or inappropriate. Keep this in mind when writing and reviewing your proposal. Try not to over use male pronouns such as he or him. Provide some balance. Also ensure gender neutral wording. This would require you to use words like chairperson or foreperson instead of chairman or foreman. Stereotypical thinking is particularly offensive to some. Saying things like, "We plan to hire two women to work in the kitchen," or "We will permit delegates to bring their wives to the closing dinner," is clearly inappropriate.

Using slang: Slang can diminish the professionalism of your proposal. Some slang may also be offensive to some. Slang can also have several connotations and its use may not be interpreted the same by all.

Spelling Errors: There is no excuse for not checking the spelling of your document. All word processing packages have some sort of spell check function.   Additionally, your proposal should pass though several drafts which are reviewed by several people who should pick up these errors. Spelling errors make your document look unprofessional.

Improper use of Acronyms: Be sure all acronyms are spelled out prior to use. Remember that your document will be reviewed by many readers. Some of these readers will not be familiar with acronyms. You should spell them out periodically throughout the document.

Rushing the writing of the proposal: With all the pressures competing for your time and attention, it is easy to fall into a "just get it done" mind set when writing a proposal. This results in poor composition which can detract from your message. Allocate sufficient time for you and your staff to get it right. Good writing usually involves several steps which take time. Steps in writing a typical proposal may include:

- Preparing to write: Thinking about your audience, your message, and the reaction you want. Pulling together some of the information you want to include, etc.
- Idea draft: Getting some of the key points down on paper with loose wording
- Reading and editing: Reviewing what you have written and reworking
- Rough draft: Producing a proposal for review by others.
- Proof reading and editing: Checking sentence structure, word selection, punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.
- Final Report: Producing a document which can be submitted to funding agencies and

18

other stakeholders.

If you rush or skip steps the proposal will not be as effective as it might have been.

Proposal Content

The content of all proposals varies depending on the nature of the project and the funding agency(s) involved. It is not possible to provide comprehensive descriptions of what to write for your particular proposal. It is possible, however, to outline a process for determining what content to include.   If you are responsible for writing the proposal, it is usually because you are the *"expert"*; either in writing proposals or the subject matter of the project.   If you are the lead proposal writer, then you should know what you want to achieve and the best way to achieve it.

Regardless of your experience in writing proposals or your background with similar projects, you should not write the proposal by yourself. Ask for help from colleagues, stakeholder groups, your manager, staff, and those who can assist you refine concepts or develop proposal content. Think of preparing a proposal as an ongoing process in which each successive draft is a continuation of the process.

Review proposal content with those who are helping you with the proposal. It is best to do this in a group setting, if possible. Walk participants through content headings and describe what is usually included under each heading. Your objective at this point is to provide a good overview of content.

House Keeping

There is some basic information which all funding agencies require. This information includes what is referred to as "Tombstone Data." It includes the applicant's name, form of organization (incorporated / unincorporated / cooperative, for profit / not-for-profit/charitable status), contact names, phone numbers, mailing address, and e-mail address.   This information is often captured on the funding application (if there is one) but should be included in the proposal regardless.

In addition, general organizational information is often required.   This information varies by funding agency but often includes contact information for your bank, accountant, engineering firm, lawyer, and other professionals who play key roles. This section can also include information about your organization's staff (names and titles), board of directors, or years in existence.

Executive Summary

The executive summary is usually found in the front of the document but it is the last thing you write. Do not write, or even contemplate, the executive summary until all other sections are written. Potential funding agencies will read the executive summary and quickly form an opinion on your proposal.   You must ensure they take it seriously and think about what you want to stay.

Do not use the executive summary as an introduction. It should be concise and summarize the key points. It should be written for busy account managers who read many proposals in the run of the day.   They may not, initially, read anything more than the executive summary for each proposed project.

After the proposal is drafted, take a minute to think over the key aspects of the proposal. Brainstorm with others who have read the proposal to ensure that major points are not overlooked. The purpose of the summary is to provide the reader with a quick overview of the project and emphasize the proposals selling points.   Examples could include:

- Summary of the problem
- Brief description of the solution
- Expected economic benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Community support

The executive summary should not exceed two pages in length. Any longer and it is in danger of not being read. You have to focus on what is important. After you finish it, re-read it and see if can be trimmed.

Project Description

The project description is a narrative that clearly explains to the reader what the project is. You should also spell out the limits of your project (what your project is not!)   The project description for an Information Technology session might be similar to the one follows:

Project Description - Information Technology Session

The session will take place at the Gander Hotel on Tuesday, September 21st. It will be four hours in duration starting at 9:00 am and ending at 1:00 pm. The session will consist of three expert presenters allocated 50 minutes each for their topics. The presenters will be followed by a light lunch and networking opportunity.

Presenters and presentation topics will be:

1.   Mr. John Smith, President of Web Page Consulting Inc. - Developing your own web page.
2.   Ms. Tina Jones, V.P. of IT Solutions Inc. - Customer database management
3.   Mr. Tom Roberts, Industry, Trade and Rural Development - E-commerce Opportunities

The event will be promoted with public service announcements and by direct invitations to area businesses via mail. The applicant will handle all meeting logistics including: printing of conference materials, room set-up, and post-conference evaluation.   As part of the evaluation, companies will be asked to indicate their level of interest in pursuing IT partnerships with other area businesses.

The applicant will not be responsible for the travel and accommodation arrangements or costs. The organization will also set-up display tables in the networking session where local IT companies can promote their products.

Project Schedule

Depending on the size of your proposal, the project schedule may be integrated into the project description or detailed as a separate section. Your project schedule should clearly indicate when the project will start and end. It will describe the sequence of activities involved in your project and the duration of these activities. If you can be so specific, provide dates. If not, try to give as accurate an estimate as possible. If your project is large it may have to be completed in phases. You will need to explain when the stages will start and end. You will also explain how one stage of the project leads to the next.

You may wish to use a diagram or bar chart (sometimes called a Gantt Chart) to mark out the calendar of activities. This is not usually required at the proposal stage. You should consult with your account manager before you include a schedule chart in your proposal. Some account managers prefer to have maximum flexibility and feel that an overly descriptive schedule will cause problems with monitoring and evaluation.

Task	Sample Project Gantt Chart for a Heritage Tea Room																			
	May				June				July				August				September			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Website Development													X	X	X	X				
Promotional Brochure Development													X	X	X	X				

Production of Working Drawings	X	X																		
Drawing Approval			X																	
Exterior Restoration				X	X	X	X	X												
Exterior Painting									X	X										
Interior Restoration									X	X	X	X	X							
Interior Painting														X	X					
Electrical				X	X															
Rough Landscaping & Parking Lot									X	X										
Final Landscaping											X	X								
Directional Signage													X	X						

Background

It is not enough to write a letter stating your request. Readers need to understand the origin and context of your proposal. If you think of your project description as the "what," then the background section of your proposal is the "why." Remember that there are many organizations and individuals competing for funding. Background information should be logically set out to bring the reader to the conclusion that the project is required. It should reflect any background work and consultations you have already completed.

The background answers the question "Why is your project needed? You will want to give a description of the situation that has spurred your proposal. Focus on key factors which prompted its formulation. You also need to explain how the need for the project was identified and who was involved in developing the proposal (see section of partnerships).

The first thing the background does is to identify the problem. It must clearly describe the problem in terms the readers will understand. It should indicate the target group the proposal is to help (often referred to as beneficiaries). It should also specify the industry sector, the magnitude of the problem, the location, and other actors who are working to solve that problem. It also indicates the extent to which the problem has been solved by the other actors, and what

has been accomplished by your group to date.

Project Background - Information Technology Session

The Bully Coast Development Association represents communities and businesses between the communities of Wood Cove and Farmington.   The BCDA was incorporated in 1984 and, since that time, has successfully undertaken many area development projects.

The promotion of the application of information technology as a means to enhanced competitiveness was first identified as priority of the Zone board during their fall strategic planning process. In the spring of year, the BCDA conducted a survey of the awareness and use of IT by area businesses. Within the economic zone, 85 small businesses (less than 20 employees) were contacted and interviews were held with 79 of them; an astonishing response rate! The survey found that less than 10% of local businesses use the internet to buy services, market their product, or direct sell. Only 4% had their own website. The survey found the greatest barriers to the adoption of IT were:

1.   Low awareness of the benefits of IT, and
2.   Concerns over the cost using IT solutions.

To address these issues, the applicant will host information sessions to raise awareness of the benefits of IT and encourage the development of IT partnerships and alliances as a low cost way of utilizing IT tools.

While describing the problem(s) to be addressed, several questions should be answered.

•   What is the condition of the target group (proposal beneficiaries)? Do they have resources or options? Is the problem temporary? Is it severe?

•   What things are happening in your community and how does this proposal fit in? Has the community been involved in developing a solution?

•   What is the background of your group? Have you successfully initiated or managed other projects? Have you been in existence very long?   How are you involved?

The background should be concise. Long, overly descriptive histories could detract from the proposal. Keep the focus on spelling out the reasons for making the proposal. Things like the circumstances leading up to the proposal, factors causing the problem, how the project intends to solve them, and broader plans or strategies of which compliment the project. If your project is not new, the background should explain the progress you have made to date. Everything in the background should provide justification for proposal approval.

Goals and Objectives

Some people include the goals and objectives of the project with the project description or project background. It does not matter if they are included on a stand alone section or elsewhere in the document; but they must be included. You need to be clear about what your project is trying to accomplish. Funding agencies are looking for integrated approaches to development projects. This means that you will want to see to what extent your project supports and supplements existing activities, and is designed to overcome identified problems. These linkages should be made explicit.

The goal of your project should be to solve the problem or problems described in the proposal background. You need a set general goals as well as specific objectives. Start with *"goals"* which are general, long term broad desires. From those goals, generate specific *"objectives"* which are verifiable, measurable, finite, and have specific dates of achievement. For example: A literacy project may have "to raise literacy levels" as a goal whereas "to teach basic literacy skills to 20 clients by March 2" is an objective.

Project Goals and Objectives - Information Technology Session

Goals
- To promote the use of information technology by area businesses
- To provide an opportunity for local IT companies to promote their services
- To facilitate the development of strategic cooperatives and partnerships by area businesses

Objectives
- To attract representatives from not less than 30 regional businesses to the September 21 information session.
- To display promotional materials from five or more local IT companies at the session.
- To identify four companies interested in pursuing IT partnerships or alliances. These companies must commit to follow-up discussions and complete forms indicating their area(s) of interest.

You will want to be as specific as possible in stating the objectives of your project. They should be written in terms of the end results you expect in the project, not how you will achieve these results. These results must be verifiable (i.e. you can clearly show that they have been achieved, and they can be confirmed by outside observers).

When selecting the goals and objectives for the project, remember the mandate of the funding agencies. Are your goals compatible with their goals? Point out what conditions, or changes in conditions, are envisaged upon successful completion of the project and draw the linkages to program criteria.

In addition, Funding agencies do not want to contribute to projects which create dependency. They are not interested in funding purely charitable services which may create future pressure or obligation. These agencies know from experience that once they fund an initiative, there is often a community expectation to continue to support the program. Most funding agencies are not simply a source of funds for carrying out routine *"operations."* Supporting activities which meet the needs of the most vulnerable and distressed are admirable but not sufficient. Goals should address self reliance and economic development.

Partnerships

Proposal partnerships are sometimes included with the proposal background or in a separate section. Funding agencies want to see that there is strong community support and consensus around the proposal. Good partnerships demonstrate this support and offer many advantages such as:

- Access to people and skills outside your organization to assist with planning and implementation.
- Better definition of the problem and solution using *"participatory research"* with project stakeholders.
- Confirmation that the problem identified is the correct one and addressing it is a priority for those affected.
- Financial contributions
- Commitments of in-kind resources
- Greater community support.

Partnerships can exist at many levels. They can assist with planning, implementing, or evaluating the project. They can commit financial and in-kind resources in anticipation of the proposal approval. Funding agencies often refer to this as "leverage" and it is highly desirable in funding proposals (see leverage section under financial). As one account manager said, "The Letter of Support is only as good as the cheque attached." Commitments of resources from community partners are particularly valuable considering that some funding programs require minimum contributions from non-government sources.

Partnerships outlined in your proposal must be confirmed prior to its submission. If you list a partnership which a funding agency discovers does not exist then your project is dead. Your partners will vary depending on the nature of your proposal. They typically include municipalities, community groups, arms length government boards (school, healthcare, library, etc.), labour groups, industry associations, corporate sponsors, private businesses involved in implementation, and your economic zone board.

Project Partners - Information Technology Session

Partnerships which the Bully Cove Development Association might identify could include:

- The Zone Board: Letter of Support outlining the linkages of the proposal to their strategic plan and commitment of staff to assist with registration the morning of the event.
- Local IT companies: Sponsoring nutrition breaks.
- The Bully Cove Chamber of Commerce: A donation of $500 toward project costs as well as a commitment to write their members to encourage their attendance at the session.
- The Newfoundland Alliance of Technical Industries: Assistance with event planning and provision of a professional moderator at no cost.
- College: Use in audio visual equipment at no cost. Use of college facilities for follow-up partnership sessions.

Project Management

Funding agencies want to ensure that projects are well run and accomplish their objectives. They are also very concerned with proper record keeping and accountability. It is not enough to accomplish what you set out to do. You must also show that all funds received were spent on what they were intended for. Some funding agencies subscribe to the concept it is better to spend $10.00 on controls than to have $1.00 misspent. While this may be extreme, you must demonstrate to the funding agencies that you have the people and procedures to successfully complete the project while complying with sound management practices and funding conditions.

The project management section of the proposal describes the organizational and management structure(s) needed to carry out the activities described in the product description. Be specific about your experience in working with problems of a similar nature. Demonstrate that your organization has the capabilities and resources to successfully undertake the project.

The abilities and experience of your organization's members (human resources) may well be your greatest asset. Indicate the kind of assistance your organization expects to receive from possible collaborating agencies (see partnerships). Attach additional management information in appendixes if it is of value (annual reports, strategic plans, etc.).

Ask yourself the questions the reader will want answered. Who runs the project? Who is in charge of the overall organization? Who is responsible for its overall implementation? Who is responsible for monitoring the project and taking corrective action to address problems? Who guides the various actors and agencies at the different locations? These can be spelled out in the proposal. The project management section should indicate:

- Who is ultimately responsible for the project? This will include who is the project manager, who serves on the project steering committee, how often they will meet, etc.

- Who will direct and manage the implementation of the project (who makes sure things get done)? Different people are responsible for different aspects of the project. You should specify things like what the reporting relationships are, if there is a foreperson on site, and who provides the day to day direction.

- How will change be controlled? This includes, who can approve changes, what extent of change they can approve without going back to the project steering committee, and what paperwork or processes are required to authorize change?

- Who will *do what?* This includes what will be performed by contractors, partners, organizational employees, and volunteers. The contribution of volunteers, in particular, is often overlooked   Do not forget to describe the activities they will perform.   Although they might not be paid staff, they are resources, and contribute resources to the project.

- How will expenditures be controlled? Who can authorize expenditures, how will they be tracked?

- How will administration be handled (payroll, record keeping, routine correspondence, banking, etc.)?

- By what methods will supplies and materials be obtained (where and how)?

Resource Allocation

Resource allocation is about determining what is required, how much, when it is needed, by whom, and where. Effective resource allocation requires that:

1   Resources are allocated to achieve the objectives you set out in your proposal.

2   Resources are used as efficiently as possible (no waste!)

This section of your proposal identifies the inputs your project requires to be successful, i.e. what

resources (cash, personnel, and actions) will be put into your project. Remember that there are many paths to your desired destination. Start by examining possible strategies to reach the goals and objectives you have identified.

The best project proposal lists several different strategies you reviewed but selects one as superior. You should explain your rationale for opting for the strategy you choose. Answer the question, "Given the objectives and strategies, what activities must be implemented or started to reach my objectives?"

Project Strategies - Information Technology Session

There may be several ways of accomplishing the projects goals and objectives such as:

1.   The Bully Cove Development Association could host a series of conference calls on a series of IT topics. This, however, would not provide local IT companies an opportunity to promote themselves. It may also not have provided the desired networking opportunities.

2.   The BCDA could hire an events planning company to handle everything instead of using its staff. This option may have been rejected because of cost issues.

Once you have selected your strategy, you need to determine what is required to implement it. Indicate what kinds of jobs have to be done as part of the project. You should place key job descriptions in an appendix. Even the activities of the support staff must be detailed (clerical, accounting). Likewise, the responsibilities of operational staff should be described. Sometimes it is helpful to list who is responsible for what actions in a table. This makes it easy for everyone to follow what will happen.

Sample Responsibility Table - Information Technology Session

Task/Personnel	When
Distribute Invitations (BCDA Support Staff and Bully Cove Chamber of Commerce)	Three weeks prior to September 21. Follow-up one week prior
Confirmation of Presenters (BCDA Executive Director)	Six weeks in advance
Registration Table (Zone Board Support Staff)	7:00 am -11:30 am
Audio Visual Set-up and breakdown (College Staff)	7:30 am & 12:00 pm
Session Facilitator (NATI)	8:00 am -2:00 pm
Questionnaire Distribution (BCDA Support Staff)	12:00 pm - 12:30 pm
Questionnaire Evaluation and Follow-up	Within two weeks of event
Coffee, Meals and Reception (Hotel Staff)	10:15 am - 10:30 am 12:00pm - 2:00 pm

Marketing

Marketing is a very important component of many projects such as conferences, festivals, tourism attractions, and industry promotion initiatives. It is also required to ensure the long-term viability of capital projects, such as museums, which require healthy revenues to be self sufficient. Without an effective marketing strategy most ventures will fail. Marketing needs to be addressed in your proposal.

Too often, proposals require funding agencies to take a total leap of faith. Many groups have taken the approach "If we build it and then customers will come." Funding agencies know from experience that this philosophy will not work. You must demonstrate that you understand what your intended customers want, the size of your market, and how to succeed in the market. This

requires research and planning (see proposal research).

Look at macro (big picture) trends and take these into consideration. For example, if the demand for family vacations is declining across North America, then it will be more difficult for you to justify a new initiative in pursuing this market. Also consider what has happened or is happening locally. Is there market need for what you are proposing? Avoid making unrealistic claims in your proposal. For example, if you are projecting 200 visitors to a conference which last year only attracted 40 then you are not being realistic with your funding partners or yourself.

Pricing is also a component of marketing which requires research. If your proposal involves an undertaking which will require users to pay then you must demonstrate to funding agencies that you are aware of the prices charged for similar products and services.

Once you have defined your market you will need to describe how you will reach your target audience and what you want to say to them. Many businesses, for example, receive invitations to many conferences and trade shows in the run of the year. What will you say to these businesses to make them want to attend your conference? How is your event different than others (fun, inexpensive, informative, guest speakers, etc.)? Once you know what you want to say, you must decide how you will reach them.

There are four general types of tools to reach your audience:

1   Advertising which includes paid communication such as TV commercials, radio spots, print ads, mail, brochures, etc. If you plan to use any of these tools they must be costed and included in the proposal budget. You should explain why you believe the tools you select to be effective.

2   Personal selling which uses personal communication and persuasion. This would include things like having the staff at a nearby visitor interpretation centre promote your heritage tea room and having tearoom staff promote the sales of souvenir gift bags. Personal selling is often overlooked by groups in the preparation of proposals. Be sure to specify any sales training or customer service training you will be providing to staff. Also mention any incentives you will provide to encourage staff to sell more (prizes, bonuses, etc.).

3   Public relations which includes non-paid communications. Many not-for-profit groups rely heavily on public relations to promote events. Sending press releases to media outlets, calling open line shows, writing letters to the editor, availing of public speaking opportunities, and having the local TV station broadcast the weather from your event are

all examples of public relation activities. Be sure to detail your plans with respect to these.

4   Promotional activities include special events like sales and contests as well as things like volume discounts or rebates. If you were promoting a conference, for example, you might offer to let businesses send a 2nd person at a reduced cost or you might announce that a trip to Florida will be drawn at the session.

Consider your audience and determine the best tools to reach them.

Financial

The financial information required in your proposal will vary depending on the nature of your project, total funding required, and programs applied for. This could include things like budgets, cash flow projections, revenue statements, and balance sheets.

Budget: Any proposal to a funding agency must include a proposed project budget. Breakdown costs as much as possible to demonstrate that your budget is comprehensive and well thought out. Your detailed budget should have the total costs (sub-totals) for each budget segment.

The budget line items should be grouped into similar kinds of costs (i.e. salaries, travel, communications, accommodations, marketing, building materials, transportation). Compare the budget to the project description and ensure that nothing has been overlooked. Nothing erodes confidence in your proposal than overlooked costs. For example, if you say that you are going to promote a new community museum with a brochure and roadside signage, then the budget should list and cost these items.

Cost Identification Exercise: It is good to consult with others when determining project costs.

1.   As individuals, take five minutes to identify the costs involved in sponsoring a craft show for local craft producers.

2.   After the five minutes is up, break into groups and brainstorm to identify the costs associated with the craft show.

How many costs did individuals identify? How many did the group identify?

The detailed line-by-line budget should be put in an appendix as should detailed cost quotes and price lists provided by suppliers. Each line on your detailed budget should have the total costs

for one budget category.

Museum Repair and Marketing Materials

Website Development	$5,000
<u>Brochure Photos and Production</u>	<u>$5,000</u>
Sub-Total Marketing Costs	**$10,000**
Wood Shingles and Cement	$20,000
Clapboard, Tyvek, and Nails	$8,000
Glass and materials for interpretive display cases	$20,000
Paint & Plaster (Exterior & Interior)	$2,000
Labour	$15,000
Foundation Cement	$2,000
New Electrical Service	$5,000
Washroom Construction	$8,000
<u>Septic System Installation</u>	<u>$10,000</u>
Sub-Total Repair Costs	**$90,000**
Total Project Costs	$100,000

You should distinguish capital expenditures (i.e. non expendable items that can be used again later such as equipment and tools) and consumables (i.e. supplies that get used up). Be sure that budget items are attributed to one or the other but not both. You do not want to double count.

It is best to use a table or spreadsheet for your detailed budget. Establish major categories and their sub-sections. Allow for as much detail as possible with unit prices and extensions. Indicate the possible sources for funds including any in-kind contributions that might be part of the overall cost.

Budget Example Using Major Categories

Cost/Expense	Details	Comments	Unit Cost	Extension	Subtotals
Salaries	Researcher	26 weeks	$600.00	$15,600.00	

	Data	20 weeks	$550.00	$11,000.00	
	Administrator	20 weeks @ 10 hrs	$200.00	$40,000.00	
	Admin Support			$4,000.00	
Accommodations	Office 12x12	6 months @350.00			
	Office 10x12	5 months @300.00			

Leverage: Where possible, try to apply for funds from several sources. This prevents your organization from becoming too dependent on a single funding agency. Funding agencies prefer to match grants, or assist with part of the total budget rather than give the entire sum. Therefore, it is suggested that you show the total budget when applying, and indicate where you expect to get other funding assistance required. The list of funding sources and how they will be applied is often called the "Sources and Applications of Funds." Below is a source and application of funds for a Museum Repair and Marketing Materials project.

Museum Repair and Marketing Materials		
Funding Source	**Application of Funds**	**Contribution**
ACOA	Contribution to Overall Project.	$30,000 Capital $5,000 Marketing
Heritage Association Structure Grant	50% of repairs and renovations up to $10,000	$10,000 Capital
Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces Program	Contribution to Construction	$20,000 Capital
HRSDC	Project Labour	$15,000 Capital
ITRD Community Development Fund	Contribution to Marketing	$10,000 Capital $5,000 Marketing
HST Rebate (50% of HST paid)	Contribution to Overall Project.	$5,000 Capital
Total Project Costs		**100,000**

Leverage also strengthens the proposal from the perspective of the funding agency in several ways:

- It reduces the total required from any one funding agency allowing their program funds to be spread further.
- It demonstrates project partnerships.
- Funding agencies often consider levered funds as an economic benefit.
- It helps ensure funding requests remain within program limits.

Funding Caps: Many funding organizations have funding caps which proposals can not exceed. These caps are usually expressed in terms of ratios (i.e. the program will fund projects to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs). Sometimes caps are expressed in dollar terms (i.e. total funding for any one initiative shall not exceed $50,000.) Be sure you understand funding caps prior to developing your proposal.

Eligible Costs: It is important that you clarify eligible costs up front prior to submitting a proposal. Most programs will not cover the purchase of an existing business or land. Other programs will fund labour but only a small percentage of materials. Restrictions on eligible costs often impact conference and trade show type projects which typically have costs which funding agencies will not cover. Many programs, for example, will not cover the cost of liquor, meals, entertainment or accommodations for participants. Therefore, if you are planning a conference you will have to assume 100% of these costs. It is recommended that you have a preliminary discussion with funding agencies to determine what is, and what is not eligible.

HST Rebates: Many funding agencies factor HST rebates into their determination of your project's financial need. Know the rules, determine if your organization is eligible for a HST rebate, and factor it into your proposal budget. Charities, qualifying not-for-profits, and municipalities are all eligible to have a portion of their HST refunded. Organizations should check the Canada Customs and Revenue website to determine if they qualify for a rebate. Demonstrating an understanding of the rebate will add to the perception of your organization as professional and your proposal as well thought out.

In-kind Contributions: Non cash contributions made to the project by your organization or community partners should be listed in your proposal but clearly marked as in-kind. A dollar value for these items should be estimated; as closely as possible. Specify physical facilities that will be made available at no cost, current staff that will work on the project, existing equipment that will be provided free-of-charge, and anything else which will be provided to the project.

Also include contributed inputs which might not be so obvious (office supplies, telephone, vehicle use, etc.).

Financial Projections: Beyond the project budget, you must develop a realistic estimate of all the costs involved in operating the finished project as well as its revenues. If possible, demonstrate the potential for eventual self support.   Much like the proposal budget estimates of cost projections should be broken down into logical categories *(line items)* such as: salaries; supplies and materials; equipment; travel and per diem; rent; telephone. Projections will not be required for all projects. You would not be asked, for example, to provide three year cash flow projections for a one-time I.T conference.

There are several types of financial statements which may be included as part of your proposal. These include:

Balance sheet - Shows financial resources of the project or the organization at a particular point of time. It lists the assets (resources), liabilities (debts), and net worth (value) of the project at a particular point of time. Assets and liabilities are grouped as:

1   Current Assets are readily convertible into cash. It typically includes cash, inventory, and money owed by others (like tax refunds).

2   Fixed Assets are tangible property. It includes, land, buildings, and equipment.

3   Current Liabilities are debts which must be paid within one year. It includes loan payments and interest owed which is due within the year, accrued taxes, and accrued wages.

4   Long-term liabilities are debts not due within one year; money the organization borrowed which is repayable in future years.

The balance sheet always balances using the formula:

Assets *less* **Liabilities** *equal* **Net Worth**

Balance sheets may be required for larger projects such as museums, farms, and other significant community assets; particularly if some of the projects resources are financed with borrowed funds.

Income Statement (sometimes called Profit /Loss statement) - indicates the anticipated progress the initiative has made over the preceding year. It tells the reader how profitable you expect

your venture to be and what costs you incurred. By starting with gross sales and reducing by the cost of goods sold, your selling costs, and administrative costs, you are left with profit. Income statements are usually only required for projects where a portion of the financing is repayable or where there are concerns with future viability.

Cash Flow Statement - indicates the month by month cash situation of your venture. It shows all cash coming in and all cash going out. It will alert you to situations where your project may not have sufficient funds to pay bills. Ideally, your proposal will show that your project will meet its immediate obligations and have enough funds remaining to address long-term maintenance issues.

Economic and Social Benefits

You will need to demonstrate how the target groups described in your proposal's goals and objectives will benefit from your proposal. Often there are direct and indirect beneficiaries. You should distinguish between them and indicate how each will benefit. For example, the primary beneficiaries of an Information Technology conference would be local businesses which will experience enhanced competitiveness as a result of integrating IT into their procurement and marketing. Secondary beneficiaries might be local IT businesses which will get an opportunity to promote their services at the conference and local tourism businesses which will benefit from increased visitor traffic.

Before outlining the proposals benefits, ask yourself some questions to put things in perspective:

•   What are the specific outputs of the project?

•   Who will benefit from this proposal?

•   How do they benefit?

•   Do the benefits provide justifications for the project?

•   What is the average total cost per beneficiary?

•   Will value of benefits exceed costs of inputs (or vice versa)? If so, by how much?

Most funding agencies will be more supportive to your project if you can demonstrate the beneficiaries have participated in the choice and design of the project. For example, regional businesses may determine they can be more efficient using information technology but they lack awareness and training to use it. They might suggest an information session as an initial step and strongly support the conference concept. Their buy-in to the solution makes the IT conference more attractive to funding agencies. You can use an appendix to detail stakeholder engagement and buy-in. You can list meetings with beneficiaries, including details such as: dates, locations, times, topics discussed, speakers, and lists of group members who attended. You can also list the specifics of any survey data you have compiled which measures public support. This could

include information on the size of the sample, how it was selected, when the survey was conducted, a copy of the questionnaire, etc. ..Benefits are often difficult to quantify. Where possible give specifics

Some economic benefits include:

- Employment: Short-term employment (usually employment created during the project) and long-term Employment (any incremental employment which will result after the project completion). Many funding agencies do not put a lot of weight in short-term employment
- Building Critical Mass: In some sectors, businesses benefit from having several related businesses in close proximity. This is particularly true in the tourism sector where providing a range of activities and accommodations helps to establish an area as a destination.
- Skill Development and Transfer: Some projects build capacity in organizations and communities to pursue new development opportunities. A good example is the community capacity building program which transfers a range of skills to participants.

Other economic benefits are more difficult to quantify because they are difficult to calculate or hard to measure. Funding agencies often have information on their websites or resource publications which can help. ACOA's "Determining Event Scale & Impact: An Economic Development Perspective," for example, is a good tool to assist with defining the benefits of tourism projects.

- Increased Tax Revenues: Projects often generate tax revenues for governments. These include HST, incremental personal income tax, payroll tax and municipal taxes.
- Increased Provincial Gross Domestic Product: Some projects result in incremental expenditures by out-of-province visitors or the export of local products. These initiatives increase the value of goods and services produced in the province.
- Enhanced competitiveness: Some projects help businesses become more competitive

Social benefits are non-financial, positive outcomes that result for target groups as a result of your proposal. Some social benefits include:

- The preservation of historic resources
- Increased community confidence
- Public education
- Creation of recreational space

37

- Preservation of wildlife habitat

There may also be some negatives or costs associated with your proposal. These costs are not the same thing as a line by line budget with numbers indicating amounts of money. Costs can be opportunity costs. For example, if you convert a heritage structure into a museum, it will not be available o the private sector for conversion into a bed and breakfast. There can also be negative consequences for some groups while others benefit. For example, if a saw mill lay down area is developed next to a wharf, the local sawmill may benefit but local fishers may have to suffer restricted access. Do not dwell on the negative consequences of your proposal. Demonstrate that the stakeholders are aware of the consequences, have thought them through, and agree on the course of action.

The section on costs and benefits should be narrative and analytical. If possible, you should try to include a simple cost benefit analysis. Relate the benefits which will result once your objectives are reached to the total costs. Calculate a per unit cost if possible (e.g. the total cost divided by the number *of children taught literacy will be the per unit cost of teaching literacy).* When the objectives are very different from each other (i.e. number of reading clubs formed and the number of children receiving literacy training), then some arbitrary but reasonable division of "per unit" cost should be calculated.

Special Challenges

Addressing Multiple Program Requirements

It can be difficult to include everything in your proposal that funding agencies require. Read program criteria closely and reflect those criteria throughout your proposal. Use the program application(s) as proposal checklists to ensure all the required information is included. The likelihood of an omission increases when a proposal is submitted to multiple partners. Don't assume that because a proposal satisfies ACOA that it will also satisfy Canadian Heritage. For example, heritage programs may require structural drawings, photos and the details of the structures history will beyond what other funding programs require. When proposals are destined for multiple funding partners it is often the requirements of some of the programs making smaller contributions that get over looked. Do not take these for granted.

Land Issues

Ownership: When your project involves the acquisition and use of property many issues arise which must be addressed. The first is ownership. Do you own the site you are proposing to develop? If so, do you have all the legal documentation? Has the site been surveyed and are the

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

boundaries clear? If you do not already own the land, are you in the process of acquiring it? Who owns it now (Crown land, private interest, municipality, etc.) and what are the conditions of transfer? In most cases, funding agencies will place clear title of the land as a condition on funding. In some circumstances, the funding agencies may accept a lease which covers the useful life of the property. You should discuss this with your funding partners prior to submitting your proposal.

Zoning: The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs zones land (usually based on the recommendation a municipality). Typical classifications include Commercial Residential, Resource Management, Industrial General, and Outdoor Assembly. You should check to see if the land's zoning is compatible with the project you intend to undertake.

The re-zoning process often requires the municipality to retain a planning consultant to develop a new land use plan which supports the recommended zoning changes. This involves public consultation on the plan.   The Town will then present its revised plan to the province where the province may seek modifications based on provincial interests. Notice of the registration will then be made in the newspaper as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Gazette; finalizing the re-zoning. You should consult with your municipality and the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs when developing your proposal.

Other Restrictions: Once ownership and zoning have been addressed, there may be other land issues which could impact your proposal: Do you require permission from another land owner to access the property by preferred route? Is there a public right of way through your land?   Will your project take place within 50 meters of a body of water? If so, you will need to make application to the Department of Environment and Conservation for a "Permit to Alter a Body of Water." These issues should be researched and addressed in your proposal.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a big issue for capital projects such as interpretation centres and wharves.   It is also a big issue for programs which are continued in the long-term such as education initiatives. Often groups include one sentence that says they will assume responsibility for the project when completed but they do not explain how. You need to explain what your go forward plan is. Remember that capital projects like museums, greenhouses, and wharves all have costs beyond straight operating costs. Some of these costs include:

- Marketing: There is usually a cost to promoting there structures such as brochures or websites. (See marketing).

- Maintenance: These structures require routine maintenance. Furnaces must be serviced, interiors painted, roofs patched, etc.

- Depreciation: You must also consider that capital structures depreciate. Structures age and will eventually require work beyond routine maintenance. New furniture is needed, clapboard replaced, floors refinished, decks resurfaced, etc.

- Staff Training: There is usually re-occurrent training required to operate most ventures. Customer service and sales training, mandatory workplace safety courses, first aid training, etc. must all be budgeted.

- Certifications and Memberships: Many projects require memberships in professional organizations such as the Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, or Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. These memberships must be renewed on a yearly basis.

Do not fall into the trap of simply inserting cash flow projections to fit the project. Matching cash flows to the project break-even is not substantiation. Your plan and assumptions must be realistic. For example, if other community museums are drawing 1000 - 2000 visitors per year paying on average between $3:00 - $5:00 per visit then you can not simply say that you expect 4000 visitors paying $9.00 each. You should support your marketing plan and costs with documented research.

Developing a Terms of Reference

Many projects require the retention of outside expertise engineer, architects, consultants, etc. You will need to specify what work you require these professionals to carry out, how they will be selected, and how you will control the work. This is usually laid out in a Terms of Reference which serves as the basis of your contract with these professional companies or individuals.

A good Terms of Reference is essential for study, design, and research projects. Any proposal seeking funding for a study or professional services should contain a good draft terms of reference. In cases where the cost of these services can not be known with any degree of certainty, you may actually have to issue a Request for Proposals to establish costs prior to submitting your proposal. (See Appendix B).

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is not enough to have a well planned project. You need to decide how you are going to

monitor the project to ensure that it stays on track. Monitoring, control, follow-up, and evaluation should be incorporated throughout your proposal. In most proposals, you will need to comment on four aspects of monitoring and evaluation:

1   Project Monitoring: How project costs, quality, schedule, and scope will be monitored, controlled, and corrected if necessary.   The tracking and reporting of achieved results, compared to those planned, is essential. For example, project management and funding partners will require regular budget reports detailing financial outcomes and explaining deviations in costs. No one wants to be surprised at the end of the project with cost overruns or uncompleted work.   How you plan to control this may be detailed in the project management section of your proposal. You do not need to repeat it but you should reference where it is found.

2   Best Practices: How you plan to capture and record what you learn from your project so it can be applied in the planning and execution of future projects. A good project should be replicable; it should be possible to implement a similar project in another community. In just about every project you work on, you will learn new things which will smooth the way for future projects (better cost estimates, suppliers to avoid, etc.) You should communicate that, in the development of your proposal, you considered the best practices identified in previous projects. You should also note that, if your proposal is approved, you will evaluate the project's successes and failures during the project and after its completion. This information will be recorded and used in the development of future proposals. Usually a "final project report" is produced which includes the final results in your selected performance areas; indicating the impact of the project on the target beneficiaries. It will also include a "future considerations" section which will detail what worked well and what should be done differently in future projects. If you plan to share this final report with other groups, you should reference this in your proposal.

3   Accounting: The retention and recording of financial information. Accounting is very important to funding agencies. It must be transparent and accurate. Many programs require that the organization's financial statements for the 3-5 years previous be included with your proposal. If approved, funding agencies will also require the submission of expense documentation prior to the issue of progress payments. In addition, financial documentation (records of payments, copies of invoices, etc.) will need to be retained for several years after the completion of the project. You may also be required to produce audited, yearly financial statements after project completion. In your proposal you need to assure funding agencies that you understand these requirements and will meet them.

4   Project output: Determining the success of your project's end product. There should be emphasis on reporting the effects of the project on the target group (beneficiaries).   For example, did the project create the long-term employment you projected?   Was there an

41

incremental increase in visitation?

Monitoring and evaluating your project while it is under way will help you and the funding agencies see your progress and accomplishments. It will also help you make informed choices. Careful reporting of your project in progress is an invaluable resource for others who attempt projects of a similar nature. In some cases your monitoring and evaluation provisions may need to be integrated into ongoing community planning and programming; part of a larger initiative. Your organization should review funding agency requirements. You will need to determine:

1   What objects will be set? The proposal should include measurable objectives which you and those reviewing the proposal will use to determine if the project has been a success. Funding agencies will want to know that you have thought this aspect of the project through.   As the keepers of public funds, these agencies place great emphasis on accountability.

2   How will progress be measured? For effective monitoring and evaluation, you will have to set targets. Try to use simple, measurable indicators. Conferences and events, for example, may set attendance targets and use an exit survey to determine participant satisfaction.   You will also need to specify what will be monitored, who is responsible for monitoring, and what will be done with the information.

3   How will progress be reported? Progress reports to funding agencies must be included in your project proposal. To be useful, these reports should contain the information funding agencies require in a format they can easily use. Your reporting procedures should describe: "how often, to whom, and what" you will report. You may want to discuss this with the prospective funding agency since reporting and evaluation requirements vary among agencies. They also vary dependent upon type of project.

Your proposal should indicate what reports are to be submitted, with what frequency and content, and to whom. Typically, this will include regular progress reports as well as final report. Reports should indicate the results of project activities, an evaluation of how far the objectives were reached, reasons why they were not, and the impact or effect on the goals and objectives. Reports should be prepared and submitted monthly, if necessary. They should be concise; containing the required information and nothing else. They should be honest, self critical, and analytical.   Financial reports, for example, should include what moneys were received and what moneys were expended by budget category. Line by line deviations should be noted along with the reasons for over or under spending, as well as an assessment of how well the expenditures contributed to reaching the stated objectives of the proposal

The extent of your monitoring and evaluation activities described in your proposal will vary

depending on the nature of the project. For small proposals (such as for conferences) the provision of invoices along with a two or three page summary report may suffice. For larger, long-term projects, a regular detailed narrative report could be required. These may include how far each of the objectives has been reached, the reasons they were not fully reached, and offer suggestions about changing the objectives if they need to be changed. The report can include information about events and inputs (what actions were undertaken), but should emphasize outputs (the results of those actions in so much as they lead to achieving the stated objectives). Attention should be paid to the number and location of beneficiaries. The monthly report would best be organized into sections corresponding to the sections of your proposal.

Submitting Your Proposal

Prior to submitting your proposal it is a good idea to take another look to ensure nothing has been overlooked. Some things you should check include:

Have you included a **signed** application form with your proposal?

Is your contact information (phone number, e-mail, mailing address) included in your cover letter?

Have you checked to ensure all pages of the proposal are included?

Was the proposal proof read and spell checked?

Were the budget calculations double checked?

Did you check the proposal against program criteria to ensure nothing was missing?

If relevant:

Have you included your letters of support?

Have you included supporting documentation such as cost quotes, letters of intent, community surveys, confirmation of other funding, etc.?

43

Have you included job descriptions and resumes for key people?

Have you included copies of marketing materials such as brochures, print ads or newspaper clippings?

Have you made application for all the required municipal, provincial, and federal permits and approvals?

Have you included site photos, maps, site plans, or building plans?

Have you included up-to-date financial statements from your organization?

Have you included your organization's by-laws?

Proposal Follow-up

Although you will tailor your proposal to the agency approached, the agency may require some clarification. In your proposal cover letter, express a willingness to be interviewed personally by the funding agency once they receive and read your proposal request**.** A week after you submit your proposal, try to open up phone or e-mail conversations with those reviewing the proposal. You need to ensure that your proposal was received and determine if there were any obvious omissions at first glance. You should try to determine when the proposal will be reviewed and offer to provide any clarification or additional information which may be required. Approach funding agencies as partners and do not adopt an adversarial tone.

Keep records of your contact with funding agencies (acknowledgment letters, phone conversations, etc.) If you are asked for additional information which you do not have on hand, be sure to obtain what they require and respond as promptly as you can.   Where possible, try to clarify small issues over the phone. This is much quicker than trying to rectify with official correspondence.

If you come into possession of new information which would strengthen your proposal, such as letters of support or the findings of new reports or strategies, these should be forwarded to the funding agency with a cover letter explaining the relevance of the attachments. All correspondence with funding agencies should reference your proposals name, date submitted and funding agency file number.

If there has been a major change in your organization or the proposed project, request a meeting with the funding agency to work through it. If, for example, a better project location has become available since you originally submitted your proposal, you may want to amend your original proposal.

Proposal Writing Tips and Suggestions

Think About the Big Picture: The most likely projects to be funded will be rapid, sustainable, small scale, low budget interventions for the most pressing needs identified by the communities... Often proposals will be evaluated as to how they will contribute to wider, integrated sustainable development of the geographical area.

Be Gender Inclusive: The active participation of women in the identification, implementation and monitoring of your project should be noted in your proposal. It should also outline if and how women will benefit from the project.

Address Sustainability: Projects which are developmental, promote self reliance, and are ultimately locally sustainable have a higher chance of being funded. Your estimate of when the project could be self sustaining should be indicated in your proposal. (See Special Changes - Sustainability).

Engage the Community: The success of proposal requires the co-operation of all stakeholders. There must be a sense of community "ownership" of the proposal. It is their project. This requires meaningful consultation, active participation in decisions concerning the proposed project, and the mobilization of the community behind the project goals. Your proposal should stress the active participation of the various stakeholders in identification, assessment and implementation of the project.

Don't Overlook Community Resources: Many of their resources can be hidden. Pay particular attention to the beneficiaries of your proposal. What can they bring to the table? The hidden resources of your target group usually include skills, wisdom, enthusiasm, and surprisingly many material resources, both capital and supplies. Your proposal should help mobilize resources, stimulate initiative, reducing dependencies, and increase self reliance.

Substantiate Your Claims: Many proposals claim that project benefits which they can not substantiate. Reference the research you have conducted in preparing your proposal (literature reviewed, surveys, etc.) Where hard data is not available, provide the information you do have. This might include anecdotal information based on the opinions of stakeholders.

Research Your Market(s): Most groups do not adequately explain the marketing and promotion elements of their proposals. Lack of market research is a common problem. Many tourism proposals, for example, base projected attendance on the project's break-even. They do not examine the visitation of comparable attractions elsewhere or offer an adequate explanation of how the visitation projections were arrived at.

Consult Relevant Departments and Agencies: Proponents often do not consult with the relevant departments or regulations prior to submitting their proposals. These groups have information which could be used to strengthen your proposal. It is important to remember that funding agencies will seek the opinions of these groups as part of their assessment process. A phone call to them early could save you a lot of time later.

Appendix A: Proposal Development Checklist

Prior to submitting your proposal it is a good idea to take another look to ensure nothing has been overlooked. Some things you should check for include:

Cover Letter: It should be signed by your chairperson, dated, and reference the name of your proposal.

Title Page: Should have title and location of project, name of applying organization, and date.

Housekeeping Information: Applicant's name, form of organization (incorporated / unincorporated / cooperative, for profit / not-for-profit/charitable status), contact names, phone numbers, mailing address, and e-mail address.

Table of Contents: Check to ensure page numbers still match headings.

Executive Summary: Make sure it does not exceed two pages and hits key points.

Project Description: Spell out in detail what you plan to do and what actions you will take. Make sure you do not overlook elements.

Goals and Objectives: List the things you want to accomplish (general and specific).

Background: Project background and organizational history. Explanation of why the project is needed.

Partnerships: Have you identified those who support the initiative and will work to plan, implement, and control it.

Project Management: Describe how you will make sure things get done and who will be responsible.

Project Schedule: Detail when project activities are to take place and when various elements will be completed.

Budget: Check for completeness. Re-read your project description and budget to determine if there are any costs you have overlooked.

Funding Sources: List all the organizations and individuals who are contributing to the project.

Financial Projections: Income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements (if required).

Marketing: Describe who your customers and how you plan to promote the project's output.

Economic Benefits: List the financial benefits accruing to target beneficiaries, the community, region, or province as a whole.

Social Benefits: List the non-financial benefits accruing to target beneficiaries, the community, region, or province as a whole.

References: Ensure all your sources of information are listed

Proposal Sign-Off: Ensure the proposal has received your organization's approval prior to submission. The proposal, or cover letter, should be signed by someone in your organization with the authority to do so.

Appendices: Ensure all your proposal appendixes are included: Make sure you have included copies of your letters of support, site drawings, draft promotional materials, etc.

Application: Make sure the funding application is attached.

Contents are checked for relevance: Don't clutter the proposal with unnecessary information. Go back and remove anything that does not add value.

Spell checking: Ensure you have subjected your proposal to proof reading and spell checking prior to final printing.

Appendix B: Sample Financial Statements

Sample Balance Sheet (Museum)	2006	2007	2008	December 31 Year End	2006	2007	2008
ASSETS				LIABILITIES & OWNERS' EQUITY			
Current Assets				Current Liabilities			
Cash and cash equivalents	$12,000.00	$19,400.00	$26,800.00	Current portion long-term debt payable	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00
Craft Inventory	$5,000.00	$5,000.00	$5,000.00				
Total Current Assets	**$17,000.00**	**$24,400.00**	**$31,800.00**	**Total current liabilities**	**$2,000.00**	**$2,000.00**	**$2,000.00**
Fixed Assets				Other liabilities			
Museum Structure	$75,000.00	$75,000.00	$75,000.00	ACOA Loan	$13,000.00	$11,000.00	$9,000.00
Less accumulated depreciation	-$3,000.00	-$6,000.00	-$9,000.00				
Furniture, fixtures, office equipment (class 8)	$20,000.00	$20,000.00	$20,000.00				
Less accumulated depreciation	-$4,000.00	-$8,000.00	-$12,000.00	**Total Long-term Debt**	**$13,000.00**	**$11,000.00**	**$9,000.00**
Land	$40,000.00	$40,000.00	$40,000.00				
Total Fixed Assets	**$128,000.00**	**$121,000.00**	**$114,000.00**	**Total Debt**	**$15,000.00**	**$13,000.00**	**$11,000.00**
Total Assets	**$145,000.00**	**$145,400.00**	**$145,800.00**	**Total Equity**	**$130,000.00**	**$132,400.00**	**$134,800.00**

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

Sample Cash Flow (Museum)

Inflows	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	2006 total
Museum Admission Fees	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,500.00	$2,400.00	$2,400.00	$2,400.00	$1,500.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$10,200.00
Craft Sop Sales	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$3,500.00	$5,500.00	$5,500.00	$5,500.00	$3,500.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$23,500.00
Fundraising	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$2,400.00
Provincial Grant	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$2,000.00	$0.00	$2,000.00
HRSDC Student Wage Subsidies	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$6,000.00
Total Inflows	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$5,200.00	$10,100.00	$10,100.00	$10,100.00	$5,200.00	$200.00	$2,200.00	$200.00	$44,100.00
Outflows													
Municipal Taxes	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$100.00	$1,200.00
Credit Card Fees	$7.00	$7.00	$7.00	$7.00	$59.50	$91.00	$91.00	$91.00	$59.50	$7.00	$77.00	$7.00	$511.00
Wages Regular Employee	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$8,000.00
Wages Student Employees	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$6,000.00
Workers Compensation	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$69.20	$121.00	$121.00	$121.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$432.20
Mandatory Employer Related Costs	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$233.60	$467.20	$467.20	$467.20	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,635.20
ACOA Loan Payments	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$400.00	$400.00	$400.00	$400.00	$400.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$2,000.00
Training	$250.00	$250.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$500.00
Promotional Expenditure	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$500.00	$500.00	$500.00	$500.00	$500.00	$500.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$3,000.00
Electricity	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,000.00
Phone & Internet Connection	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$55.00	$660.00
Insurance	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$150.00	$1,800.00
Interac Fees	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$360.00
Bank Fees	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$35.00	$35.00	$35.00	$35.00	$35.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$175.00
Accounting Fees	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00
Cleaning Supplies	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$250.00
Office Supplies	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$250.00
Miscellaneous	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$200.00	$2,400.00
Total Outflows	$792.00	$792.00	$542.00	$1,042.00	$4,132.30	$6,449.20	$6,449.20	$6,449.20	$1,829.50	$542.00	$612.00	$2,042.00	$31,673.40
Cashflow Per Month	-$592.00	-$592.00	-$342.00	-$842.00	$1,067.70	$3,650.80	$3,650.80	$3,650.80	$3,370.50	-$342.00	$1,588.00	-$1,842.00	$12,426.60

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

Sample Income Statement (Museum)	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Sales Revenue	$33,700.00	$33,700.00	$38,000.00
Cost of Sales	$520.00	$520.00	$700.00
Gross Profit	$33,180.00	$33,180.00	$37,300.00
Operational / Administrative Expenses			
Advertising	$3,000.00	$3,000.00	$3,200.00
Wages & Benefits	$16,100.00	$16,100.00	$17,000.00
Supplies	$2,900.00	$2,900.00	$3,000.00
Utilities	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,800.00
Financial Fees	$1,935.00	$1,935.00	$2,000.00
Insurance	$1,800.00	$1,800.00	$1,800.00
Training Fees	$500.00	$500.00	$1,000.00
Municipal Taxes	$1,200.00	$1,200.00	$1,200.00
Depreciation	$7,000.00	$7,000.00	$7,000.00
Total Operational / Administrative Expenses	$36,135.00	$36,135.00	$38,000.00
Subtotal	-$2,955.00	-$2,955.00	-$700.00
Other Revenue			
Fundraising	$2,400.00	$2,400.00	$3,000.00
Provincial Grant	$2,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,500.00
HRSDC Wage Subsidies	$6,000.00	$6,000.00	$6,000.00
Total Other Revenue	$10,400.00	$10,400.00	$11,500.00
Net Profit	**$7,445.00**	**$7,445.00**	**$10,800.00**

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

SAMPLE BUDGET TEMPLATE				
Item	**Category**	**Description**	**Unit**	**Extension**
1	_**Wages**_	• Researcher *($1307.69 biweekly x 26 weeks)* • Senior Researcher - Planner *($1384.61 biweekly x 26 weeks)* • Merc @ 8%	$33,999.94 $35,999.86 $ 5,599.98	 **$75,599.78**
2	_**Capital Costs**_	• Equipment *(2 quotes included – Computer, Monitor, Keyboard)* • Furniture *(2 quotes included – Chair)*	$ 1,500.00 $ 200.00	 **$ 1,700.00**

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

3	_Project Overhead_	• Travel _(500 km/month x 12 months x 0.395 cents/km x people)_	$ 4,740.00	
		• Insurance _(Liability)_	$ 1,000.00	
		• Conferences and Workshops	$ 3,000.00	
		• Specific Upgrading Training	$ 3,000.00	
		• Office Rent (M-RON Inc.) _(12 months x $250.00/month x 2 offices 12 x 12_	$ 6,000.00	
		• Janitorial _(12 months x $50.00/month x 2 offices)_	$ 1,200.00	
		• Office Supplies _($150.00/month x 12 months)_	$ 1,800.00	
		• Communication _(HS Internet - $29.00/month x 12 months x 2 people Telephone - $50.00/month x 12 months x 2 people)_	$ 2,396.00	
		• Printing, Faxing, Photocopying	$ 600.00	
		• *Supervision and IT Support	$ 3,000.00	
		• Bank Charges / Audit	$ 120.00	
		• Travel _(4 trips to St. John's x $150.00/trip,_	$ 2,000.00	
		• _1 trip to Bay Rose x $50.00 /trip,_		
		• _1 trip to the cove x $25.00/trip 25people x $10.95/meal x 6 meals)_		
		• Administrative Support _($300.00/month x 12 months)_	$ 3,600.00	**$ 34,773.50**
4	_Totals_	**Total Cost**		$112,073.28
		Less In-Kind (details)		**$ 6,000.00**
		Total Requested		_$106,073.28_

Appendix C: Components of a Terms of Reference

Background of the organization issuing the terms of reference. Not all potential bidders will be familiar with your organization. This background will help them put the required work in context.

Project Background (sometimes referred to as a synopsis). This gives an overview of the problem to be addressed.

Project Objectives. What the work will accomplish.

Description of the Tasks to be Performed (sometimes referred to as the statement of work). Sometimes the work required is broken down into compulsory and optional (activities where there may be some flexibility). The key issues to be addressed are often listed in this section.

Consultations Required. The organizations and individuals the consultants will need to speak to in carrying out the work. This is usually expressed as "not limited to" meaning the consultant should identify others to consult if they feel it necessary.

Secondary Sources: These are reports, strategies, and other documents which must be referred to in carrying out the work. Consultants should be encouraged to identify other secondary sources they will also consult.

Project Deliverables: What the selected consultants must provide. This may include five hard copies of an interim report, five hard copies and one electronic copy (CD ROM) of the final report, and a PowerPoint overview of the final report; also on CD.

Qualifications of the Consulting Team: The organization issuing the terms of reference can specify that the consultant(s) should have some combination of background, education, experience, and expertise in the specific areas to be considered. All responding consultants should be required to list the individuals who are to work on the project, an overview of their qualifications, and / or detailed resumes.

Time lines: Specify the expected date of completion as well as the dates of any interim products (sometimes called milestones) such as interim reports, minutes of consultations, etc.

Bid Requirements: The organization issuing the terms of reference must specify the where, when, and specifics of the bid. For example, "The bidders/consultants (at their own expense) must provide two hard copies (one bound and one unbound) and one electronic copy (CD ROM)

copy of their response in a sealed envelope to the address below no later than February 28 200X." Some agencies outline a maximum proposal length. For example, 20 double sided pages. You should state that "Late, incomplete, or partial proposals, including those sent by fax or e-mail, will not without exception or under any circumstances, be accepted."

Communications: This will usually specify contact information for the person handling the RFP process as well as how requests for clarification or additional information will be handled. Many organizations insist that the information requested by one bidder will be forwarded to all who have expressed an interest in bidding.

Administration: There is usually a statement that the organization will be responsible for all stages of the bidding process, selection of the successful bidder/consultant or consultant team, the award of the contract, and successful completion of the contract, including all deliverables.

Conditions: These vary based on the nature of the RFP but may include:

- A maximum project cost.

- The organization reserves the right to negotiate contract details prior to the award of the contract.

- All written and electronic notes, presentations, reports, photos, drawings, plans, and minutes collected, reported or produced during the course of the initiative shall be the property of the organization. No information will be shared, published, or distributed without the organization's written consent.

Proposal Requirements: You should specify what you will require in your proposal. It can include things like:

- A covering letter addressed to your agency's contact person.

- The cost breakdown for components (e.g. Consultations two days at $400 per day, literature review one day at $450, etc.)

- List of individuals who will be working on the project (You can ask for the rates for each person if you choose).

- Company profile

- Client References

- Description of Methodology (How the consultant will do the work, approach, time allocated to each task, etc.)

- Budget breakdown by expenditure category professional fees, HST, travel, per diem, copying, etc.

- Payment requirements (How the consultants want to be paid). For example, 20% upon

58

award of the contract, 40% after submission of the draft report, and 40% upon acceptance of the final report.

- Any difficulties envisioned in completing the tasks stated in this Terms of Reference. If there are difficulties, provide suggestions on any topics that you feel should be addressed.

Selection Criteria

You should include the statement that the organization is not bound to accept the lowest priced bid and may exercise its right not to select any of the bids submitted under the RFP. You can set the criteria evaluation but it is up to you if you want to indicate the weighting you will give each. Typical criteria include:

- Experience of the consulting team in preparing similar strategies and plans.
- The expertise and professional qualifications of the individuals proposed to conduct the work.
- The clarity and completeness of the proposal as well as the demonstrated understanding of the work to be performed.
- Experience working with volunteer or economic development organizations or municipalities.
- Experience working with similar projects.
- Presentation of Proposal. This is not always used. If requested, the Consultant(s) must give a presentation of their proposal to the selection committee.

Evaluation Matrix

Sometimes an evaluation sheet or matrix can be used to help you access a large number of proposals. Criteria are scored 1 - 10 with 10 being high. Any bid with a rating below 5 for any criteria will disqualify the bid.

Sample RFP Evaluation Sheet

Consultant:_____   Cost of Bid:_____

Criteria	Rate X (1-10)	Weight =	Total	Strengths and Weaknesses
Experience of the consultant: Key personnel experience and training related to project scope.		3		
References		1		
Experience of consultant in managing similar projects		2		
Proposed Methodology / Demonstrated understanding of project requirements Clarity of tasks and responsibilities. Creativity.		3		
Sufficient Human Resources and commitment of time.		1		
Total Score		**10**		

<u>Appendix</u> <u>D:</u> <u>Case</u> <u>Study</u>

Community Capacity Building Program   Proposal Writing Module

Below are sections of a proposal to ACOA to support an information I.T session. Review this information from the perspective of funding agency analysts. List any obvious strengths or weaknesses and think about how the proposal could be reworked.

Proposal Name: Information Technology Session

Applicant Name: Bully Cove Development Association

Submitted To: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Date: June 15, 200X

Contact Information

Mr. John Brown

I.T Information Officer

Bully Cove Development Association

P.O. Box 8532, Bully Cove, NL

A1Q 7S8

Project Description - Information Technology Session

The session will take place at the Gander Hotel on Tuesday, September the 21st. It will be four hours in duration starting at 9:00 am and ending at 1:00 pm. The session will consist of three expert presenters allocated 50 minutes each for their topics. The presenters will be followed by a light lunch and networking opportunity for participants.

Presenters and presentation topics will include:

1.   Mr. John Smith, President of Web Page Consulting Inc. - Developing your own web page.
2.   Ms. Tina Jones, V.P. of IT Solutions Inc. - Customer database management
3.   Mr. Tom Roberts, Industry, Trade and Rural Development - E-commerce Opportunities

The event will be promoted with public service announcements, print advertising, and by direct invitations to area businesses via mail. The applicant will handle all meeting logistics including: printing of conference materials, room set-up, and post-conference evaluation.   As part of the evaluation, companies will be asked to indicate their level of interest in pursuing IT partnerships with other area businesses.

The applicant will not be responsible for the travel and accommodation arrangements or costs. The organization will also set-up display tables in the networking session where local IT companies can promote their products.

Goals
•   To promote the use of information technology by area businesses
•   To provide an opportunity for local IT companies to promote their services
•   To facilitate the development of strategic cooperatives and partnerships by area businesses

Objectives
•   To attract representatives from not less than 30 regional businesses to the September 21 information session.
•   To display promotional materials from five or more local IT companies at the session.
•   To identify four companies interested in pursuing IT partnerships or alliances. These companies must commit to follow-up discussions and complete forms indicating their area(s) of interest.

Project Background - Information Technology Session

The Bully Coast Development Association represents communities and businesses between the communities of Wood Cove and Farmington.   The BCDA was incorporated in 1984 and, since that time, has successfully undertaken many area development projects.

The promotion of the application of information technology as a means to enhanced competitiveness was first identified as priority of the Zone board during their fall strategic planning process. In the spring of year, the BCDA conducted a survey of the awareness and use of IT by area businesses. Within the economic zone, 85 small businesses (less than 20 employees) were contacted and interviews were held with 79 of them; an astonishing response rate! The survey found that less than 10% of local businesses use the internet to buy services, market their product, or direct sell. Only 4% had their own website. The survey found the greatest barriers to the adoption of IT were:

1.   Low awareness of the benefits of IT, and

2.   Concerns over the cost using IT solutions.

The BCDA identified several options to address these issues.

1.   The Bully Cove Development Association could host a series of conference calls on a variety of IT topics. There was concern, however, that phone discussions would not be as effective as presentations with visuals. The phone option would not provide networking opportunities for local businesses; an important first step in the building of partnerships and alliances. It would also not provide local IT companies an opportunity to promote their services.

2.   The BCDA could hire an events planning company to organize an IT session with the selected firm handling everything instead of BCDA staff. After review, this option was rejected because of cost. Event planning companies contacted by phone advised that they would charge fees of over $3,000. This would increase the cost of the conference by 50%!

3.   After review, the BDCA opted to address these issues by hosting an information session to raise awareness of the benefits of IT and encourage the development of IT partnerships and alliances as a low cost way of utilizing IT tools. The BCDA would use internal staff, in consultation with stakeholders, to plan and execute the project.

Project Partners: The Bully Cove Development Association has formed several partnerships which will greatly enhance the project. These include:

•   The Zone Board which has provided a Letter of Support outlining the linkages of the proposal to their strategic plan. They have also committed two staff to assist with registration the morning of the event.

•   Three local IT companies have agreed to provide $300 each to cover the cost of lunch and the coffee break.

•   The Bully Cove Chamber of Commerce has agreed to contribute $600 toward project costs. They have also agreed to write their membership to encourage their attendance at the session.

•   The Newfoundland Alliance of Technical Industries has agreed to assist with event planning, serve on the project's steering committee, and provide a professional moderator at no cost.

•   The College of the North Atlantic will provide audio visual equipment for the session at no cost. The college will also provide facilities for follow-up sessions with businesses that express an interest in pursuing I.T. partnerships.

Case Study Areas of Improvement

The above proposal is typical of those submitted to funding agencies. While it is not bad given the level of funding requested, there are a number of areas which could be improved significantly. Some of the more obvious omissions include:

Contact Information: Does not include an e-mail address or phone and fax numbers. Without this information the funding agency will have to contact you by mail; slowing the process considerably.

Project Description: There should be a note about how the guest speakers were selected. For example, "All guest speakers were selected based on their expertise and speaking styles after extensive consultations with the Newfoundland Alliance of Technical Industries."

Project Background: The applicant could have provided some specific examples of other projects they had completed; especially if they where similar in nature.

Project Management: The proposal does not say who is ultimately responsible for the project. It does not say who is responsible for making sure everything (including volunteer staff) is on site when needed. The project manager should be identified and her/his qualifications noted. The project steering committee is also not listed. The proposal references that NATI has agreed to sit on the project steering committee.

Financial: There are several weaknesses with the financial information in the proposal. These include:

1   The budget is incomplete. It does not reflect the full cost of the initiative; ignoring the cost of the nutrition break and lunch ($900 referenced under partnerships).

2   The budget does not provide a breakdown of project costs. Without this, funding agencies can not determine if your request is reasonable. A revised budget could be something like:

Speaker Fees   (3 x $500) $1,500[1]

_____
[1]The Bully Cove Development Association consulted with several organizations that have used guest

Hotel Rental   (Meeting facilities and three break out rooms) $1,000[2]

Print Advertising (2 ads x 1/4 page) $1,500

Printing of Conference Kits $2,000

Nutrition Break $150

Lunch $750

Postage (Invitations and mail-outs) $50

Miscellaneous (Identification tags, stationary, etc.) $50

Total   **$7,000**

3.   Funding request was presented as a range. Most likely, the BCDA did not know the exact cost of the project because they did not breakdown the costs.

1   Sources of Funds: Should be made clear. For example:

Bully Cove I.T Information Session		
Funding Source	**Application of Funds**	**Contribution**
ACOA	Contribution to Overall Project.	$5,500
Local I.T Companies	Nutrition Break and Lunch	$900
Bully Cove Chamber of Commerce	Contribution to overall event	$600
Total Project		**$7,000**

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speakers. The rates paid ranged between $400 and $700 per presentation.

[2]Does not include any hotel rooms for participants.

5. In-Kind Contributions are not noted. The BCDA should have assigned a dollar value to its contributions as well as its partners. For example:

Bully Cove I.T Information Session		
In-kind Contribution	**Details**	**Value**
Bully Cove Development Association (Project Management/Administration)	Project Manager (50 hours at $20.00 per hour) Administrative Assistant (10 Hours @ $10.00 per hour)	$1,100
Bully Cove Chamber of Commerce (Marketing Support)	Membership Mail-out (70 x $1.00)	$70
Newfoundland Alliance of Technical Industries (Event Support)	Professional Moderator (5 hours @ $20 per hour)	$100
Zone Board (Event Support)	Registration staff (two staff for 3 hours each at $8 per hour)	$48
College of the North Atlantic (Equipment and Facilities)	LCD and Laptop Computer (1 x $100) Meeting Rooms (2 Nights x $150 per night)	$400
Total In-Kind Support		**$1,718**

Monitoring and Evaluation: This is lacking in the proposal and a number of points should be made:

1   Copies of all expenditure receipts will accompany invoices to ACOA and originals will be maintained with the project files.

2   Participant survey data will be tabulated after the session and shared with the BCDA's partner groups.

3   The BCDA will hold a "lessons learned" meeting within one week of the conference to examine what went well, what did not, and what could have been done better. This information will be used by the group when planning and executing projects in the future.

4   A final report on the information session will be provided to ACOA which details the extent to which project objectives were achieved, provides final expenditure / revenue information, contains a copy of the participant survey data, and identified "lessons

learned."

Economic Benefits: The economic benefit of the project is eluded to in the project description and background but it should be spelled out. Benefits include:

1   The enhanced competitiveness of local business resulting from the application of information technology in their operations. The applicant could do some research to try to quantify the benefit. They could refer to government studies or surveys by business groups like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business which have measured these impacts. You may also be able to include some anecdotal information such as the opinions of business owners who have adopted IT in their operations. Because this information session is a 1st step, it is hard to define the direct impact.

2   Creation of a marketing opportunity for local IT businesses. The fact they are willing to contribute funds (three providing $300 each) to the project speaks to the value they feel the initiative has.

3   Direct and indirect local expenditures. While $1,500 of the project costs are going to speakers from outside the region, the majority of the project expenditures will occur locally on printing, hotels, etc. In addition to the direct project expenditures, those who attend the conference (anticipated to exceed 30) will also make expenditures locally. Many participants, for example, will have breakfast in the hotel the day of the event. Those traveling some distance may stay overnight at the hotel, purchase gas, etc.

Proposal Sign-off: There should be a cover letter with the proposal signed by an executive accompanying the proposal or signature plate within the document itself.

Appendixes: A letter of support from the zone board is referenced but not attached.

Appendix E: Common Funding Sources

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: ACOA provides funding to non-profit organizations engaged in economic development activities, building community capacity, or providing support to the business. To be eligible, groups must provide economic benefit to an area or a community, demonstrate a need for financial assistance, be economically viable, and be consistent with economic development plans and objectives.

Department of Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development: ITRD provides financial support for the development and implementation of economic initiatives targeted toward sector and regional priorities. To be eligible, projects enhance development, improve the environment for business development, or develop infrastructure which demonstrates regional economic benefit.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: HRSDC provides funding to provide eligible participants with opportunities to maintain or enhance job skills. With many initiatives, you can provide these opportunities within your project; allowing you to access project labour. To be eligible, your project must provide participants with recent work experience to add to their resumes, provide them with potential employment contacts, and increase their chances of successfully finding long-term employment.

Canadian Heritage: Canadian Heritage provides funding to increase access for Canadians to performing arts, visual arts, media arts, and to museum collections and heritage displays. They support the improvement, renovation and construction of arts and heritage facilities, the acquisition of specialized equipment, and feasibility studies.

Appendix F: Brain Storming & the Nominal Group Process

Brainstorming: Creativity and innovation are key to the long-term competitive success of many organizations. Brainstorming is a fantastic way to encourage creative problem solving. Some tips to maximize the effectiveness of your brainstorming sessions are:

1   Preparation: Make sure you have a room big enough for the group. Arrange for someone to take notes. Ensure you have white boards, flip charts, markers, tape, and anything else you need to get the creative juices flowing.

2   Diversity: Having a room full of people "cut from the same cloth" does a disservice to your organization. It is important to involve people with different backgrounds and attitudes. This will allow you to examine your options from different perspectives and provide a wider range of ideas to choose from.

3   Good Facilitation. This is key! A good facilitator will ensure that all those participating in the process are heard and that no one individual dominates the discussion. She or he also keeps the group focused. We have all been at meetings where someone has taken the group completely off topic.

4   Open Discussion: Participants must be encouraged to advance any idea no matter how "off the wall" it may seem. These suggestions may have merit which is not immediately obvious. Even if an idea is completely impractical, it may trigger a solid idea from someone else.

5   Restrain Criticism: Don't critically evaluate an idea until the group have developed a full list of options. If participants feel their ideas will be immediately challenged they may hold back. A good idea may never reach the table as a result.

6   Devils Advocate: When you begin to consider your options, appoint someone to find flaws. This will encourage others to express any concerns or reservations they may have. It also helps participants not to take any criticism of their ideas personally as the "advocate" is just doing his or her job.

7   Have Fun: Opportunities to be creative in the workplace are often few and far between. Make sure participants get the most out of the experience. Brainstorming should be a joy, not another reason to squeeze the stress ball.

Nominal Group Process: The Nominal Group is useful for focusing participants. It is

particularly effective in situations where not everyone is willing to contribute or where there is a risk one or two people will dominate the discussion. There are six steps in the process. These include:

1   Identify the problem or issue you want people to focus on. You need to be specific as you can.

2   Ask **everyone** to write down three or more thoughts relating to the identified problem (why it exists, possible solutions, etc.) Tell them they must complete this task on their own without talking to anyone else.

3   One person at a time, ask everyone to tell you one idea they wrote down. Keep going around the room until everyone's list of ideas is exhausted. As people offer their ideas, record them on a flip chart or whiteboard. Do not allow any discussion or criticism of these ideas until the every idea has been captured.

4   Brainstorm and discuss the value of the ideas offered. There may be more ideas that come forth during this process, record these as well.

5   If consensus on a solution is not reached, ask everyone to write down three of the ideas listed which they feel hold the most promise. They should do this without consulting with each other. Go around the room again and ask people the three they listed. Use this information to cull the list of solutions to the four most popular.

6   Brainstorm on these four options to arrive at a solution. (Repeat the process if required).

Appendix G: Frequently Asked Questions

1.   Where can I get additional information to help me prepare my proposal?

Answer: There are many sources of information available which can assist you in preparing your proposal. There are many government departments and agencies which can assist. For example, Strategis is Industry Canada's business website (www.strategis.ic.gc.ca). It contains a range of statistics which can be useful in researching your proposal. It also contains information on subjects like finance, marketing, and incorporation. The Canada Newfoundland and Labrador Business Service Centre (www.cbsc.org) also has information which can help such as sector studies, business statistics, linkages to industry associations and business groups, and an interactive business planner which can help you identify issues.

2.   What do I do when advised that my proposal has been rejected?

Answer: Find out why! If your proposal was not approved because program funding was exhausted you have several options:

•   Submit the proposal to other funding agencies

•   Defer the proposal until the next fiscal year

•   Periodically revisit the funding agency to determine if there is any program slippage (savings due to other projects not proceeding or coming in under budget) which can be used for your project.

If your project was rejected because it did not did not fit program criteria you can:

•   Seek out other funding programs which are more compatible with your objectives

•   Rework your proposal so it fits program criteria. This will require you to sit down with the funding agencies involved to determine what is possible.

If your proposal was rejected because it did not contain the all the required information, you should determine specifically where your proposal was deficient. You can then carry out the additional research and rewrite your proposal. Prior to resubmitting, speak to funding agency representatives and ask if they will give it a quick look over before you put it the system.