

ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES

TIP SHEETS: RESPONDING TO FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

OCTOBER 2018











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Funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), this publication was produced by Advancing Partners & Communities (APC), a cooperative agreement under agreement no. AID-OAA-A-I2-00047, beginning October I, 2012. The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

This document was produced by FHI 360 under the Local Capacity Initiative (LCI) Technical Assistance program, a buy-in under APC.

Suggested Citation:

Advancing Partners & Communities (APC). Tip Sheets: Responding to Funding Opportunities. Durham, NC, USA: FHI 360; 2018.

ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES
JSI RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE, INC.
1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Phone: 703-528-7474

Fax: 703-528-7480



INTRODUCTION

The resource that follows is a collection of tip sheets on responding to funding opportunities. It was inspired by a training that FHI 360 conducted for local organizations in Papua New Guinea through the Local Capacity Initiative (LCI). After the training, participating organizations requested that the information be made available in the form of a reference document. *Tip Sheets: Responding to Funding Opportunities* was born of this request and was based on training materials and input from key stakeholders.

The tip sheets cover the process of preparing for, reviewing, and responding to funding opportunities released by donors. Each tip sheet focuses on a different aspect of the proposal development process, from reviewing a funding opportunity, to the factors involved in determining whether to apply, to understanding the various components of the proposal document, to recommendations for preparatory actions and systems to ensure that you will be ready to respond to a funding announcement.

This document is intended for organizations with limited experience in proposal development, especially with respect to designing a full proposal for an international donor in the role of prime partner. (Tips for subpartners are also included, where applicable.) It is not meant to be a training curriculum or a comprehensive how-to guide, but rather a set of informative tips on selected key aspects of applying for a funding opportunity.

How to Use This Document

The 10 tip sheets are arranged as steps an organization might take to respond to a funding opportunity and develop a proposal. Nonetheless, the process is typically more iterative than sequential. For example, capture planning is a step that should ideally happen prior to the announcement of a funding opportunity, but the tip sheet on capture planning appears toward the end of the tip sheets so as to build on the information presented in previous tip sheets. You may find that going back and forth between the various tip sheets will provide the most comprehensive understanding of proposal development.

In each tip sheet, you will find a glossary, the words that appear in the glossary in **bold font** in the text, a series of questions and answers on the topic addressed in the tip sheet, and a box labeled "Resources" with additional external resources on relevant topics. Some tip sheets also contain sample templates that you can adapt to suit your needs.

The 10 tip sheets consist of the following:

Tip Sheet I: What to Look for in a Funding Announcement

This tip sheet covers the key information that is important to locate in the announcement and suggestions for how to organize this information in a reference sheet or compliance matrix. An example reference sheet is provided.

Tip Sheet 2: How to Decide whether to Apply for Funding — the "Go/No-Go" Decision

The second tip sheet discusses the factors and process involved in deciding whether to move forward with a funding application.

Tip Sheet 3: Partnering for Proposals

In Tip Sheet 3, we discuss the different types of partnerships and roles for each of those partners in proposal development, as well as the ways to document different types of partnerships.

Tip Sheet 4: How to Design Your Proposal

Tip Sheet 4 outlines the sections of a proposal and what information goes in each section, as well as the different roles for partners in proposal writing and who should provide the technical review(s).

Tip Sheet 5: Staffing Considerations

The fifth tip sheet presents the various staff roles that may be required for proposals, how to determine the levels of staffing needed, when and how to include consultants, development of a staffing plan, and the supporting materials needed related to staffing.

Tip Sheet 6: Proposal Budgeting Essentials

This tip sheet covers the main categories of a budget, the difference between direct and indirect costs and how to estimate each, negotiating budgets with partners, and the budget narrative/justification. A budget template is also provided.

Tip Sheet 7: Developing Strong Capability Statements

Tip Sheet 7 addresses how to create capability (cape) statements, including what goes into each of the four components of a cape statement, the recommended length of the document, and tailoring cape statements to specific audiences.

Tip Sheet 8: Capture Planning

The tip sheet on capture planning defines the concept and presents strategies for learning about funding opportunities prior to their release, as well as the information to try to find out and the actions you can take during capture planning.

Tip Sheet 9: How to Network for Funding Success

This tip sheet discusses the role of networking in identifying funding opportunities, how to approach donors and what to talk about, and what to do after you network.

Tip Sheet 10: Marketing Your Organization

The last tip sheet covers ways to market your organization, including the different types of materials to develop, when to use them, and how to market your organization in person.

Where to Look for Funding Opportunities

When working your way through the tip sheets, it may be helpful to have already identified a funding opportunity of interest. This will allow you to apply the information discussed in the tip sheets. Some common places where funding opportunities are posted by donors and others include:

- U.S. Government Grant Opportunities (<u>www.grants.gov</u>)
- DevEx (https://www.devex.com/projects)
- United Nations Global Marketplace (https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice)
- U.S. Federal Business Opportunities (<u>www.fbo.gov</u>)
- Australian Government Tender System (https://www.tenders.gov.au/?event=public.home)
- Ambassador offices from different donor countries
- Corporate social responsibility programs of private companies
- Asian Development Bank (https://www.adb.org/
 projects)
- World Bank (https://www.devbusiness.com)
- Foundation Center (http://foundationcenter.org/find-funding)
- European Union (https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/funding-grants-en)
- United Nations Development Business (UNDB) (http://www.devbusiness.com/)
- Grantmakers in Health (http://www.gih.org/)
- Funders for Reproductive Equity (http://www.fundersnet.org/)

About the Local Capacity Initiative (LCI)

The LCI was established by the U.S. Government in 2013. Its goal is to strengthen the sustainability of national HIV and AIDS responses by increasing the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to conduct advocacy that helps local health systems more effectively address HIV. The LCI is implemented through two funding mechanisms — direct funding of CSOs and funding of capacity-building technical assistance.

Organizations have been funded in Botswana, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kazakhstan (including partners in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Thailand (including partners in Laos and Vietnam), Trinidad and Tobago (including partners in the Caribbean), Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Grants are three-year awards running from 2013/14 to 2016/17 and are made by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The focus of many grants is addressing policy barriers that impede access to HIV and other health services among key populations.

Two USAID-funded projects, the Health Policy Project (HPP) and Advancing Partners & Communities (APC), work with country LCI teams to assess and strengthen the organizational development and advocacy capacity of LCI grantees. Technical assistance supports grantees to implement the program and enhances their policy and advocacy programming with a focus on organizational sustainability.

Acknowledgements

Development of Tip Sheets: Responding to Funding Opportunities was a collaborative effort drawing on the expertise of multiple staff, the experiences of LCI organizations in Papua New Guinea, and FHI 360 global staff. Amita Mehrotra and Emily Bockh conceptualized the initial proposal development training, which was delivered by Srunya (Nui) Nopsuwanwong (FHI 360) and Maria Presley (FHI 360). The tip sheets were conceptualized jointly by FHI 360 staff from the Papua New Guinea, North Carolina (USA), and Washington, DC (USA) offices, in a process led by Amita Mehrotra. Natasha Mack's writing and editing were invaluable for turning the content into individual tip sheets, and Jill Vitick's design skills resulted in an accessible, aesthetically pleasing layout. Content review was provided by Chamberlain Diala, Jennifer Magalong, Srunya Nopsuwanwong, Parsa Sanjana, Matilina Gendua, Daniel Tesfaye, and Jennifer Grollman. We extend special thanks to the CSOs in Papua New Guinea who attended the initial training and provided insights and feedback on the content and structure of the tip sheets. Finally, we acknowledge with gratitude the LCI Steering Committee members from CDC, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and USAID, as well as the USAID and CDC Mission staff who provided feedback and reviewed the contents of these tip sheets.







GLOSSARY

Ceiling: The upper limit of funding available for a project proposed in response to a funding opportunity

Compliance matrix:

A reference sheet funding applicants create to document and organize essential information found in the funding announcement

Cost share: Resources that a recipient of funding secures (through leveraging funds, donations, or valuing assets) to the overall award total

Evaluation criteria: A breakdown (often with points per section) of how the overall proposal will be evaluated and the maximum points per section

Floor: The minimum amount of funding available for a project award

Funding announcement:

An announcement indicating that funding is available and that organizations can propose how they would use the funds to address the problem specified in the announcement

Key personnel: Staff who will work on the project and whose qualifications and skills will be approved by the funder as being essential for the project

Period of performance:Proposed start and end dates of the project

RFA: Request for applications, used to solicit responses for cooperative agreements in the U.S. Government funding system

RFP: Request for proposals, used to solicit responses for a contract in the U.S. Government funding system

Solicitation: see "funding announcement"

Tender: (see "funding announcement")

TIP SHEET 1:

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Funders typically announce funding opportunities around a specific content area through a proposal request document that may be called a **request for applications [RFA]**, **request for proposals [RFP]**, **solicitation**, or **tender**. The particular term used will give you information about the funding type. For example, an RFA is used to award a Cooperative Agreement within the U.S. Government, whereas an RFP is used to award a contract. In a contract award, the funder has a higher level of involvement with and control over costs, implementation, and obtaining results than it does in a cooperative agreement, which is more flexible.

In response to a funding opportunity announcement, organizations can submit proposals to apply for the funding. (Please see the Introduction to the tip sheets for suggestions on where to look for funding announcements.)

There is no standard format or template used by all funders for these announcements, which can include a lot of information and be overwhelming to read. It is difficult to know what is most important to look for when reading a funding announcement. In addition, each funder will have different requirements for how the written responses to funding opportunities (i.e., proposals) should be structured and submitted.

This tip sheet summarizes the key information to locate within the announcement. It also provides a template to keep this information organized during the proposal development process.

What basic information is important to locate in a funding announcement?

The first things to find in the announcement are the funder name, name of the opportunity, and the anticipated amount of the award. This information is typically included on the first page, or even in the cover letter that accompanies the announcement. The award amount may include a "ceiling" and a "floor." A ceiling is the largest amount a funded organization can expect to receive, or an upper limit, while the floor is the minimum amount. In the early pages of the announcement, you will likely also see a program summary, which includes the program goal and objectives, and the geographic focus area.

The eligibility requirements are also key. This section will outline the types of organizations toward which the funding opportunity

is geared. For example, it could be intended for organizations that are registered to work in a given country, organizations that are owned by women, small businesses, or any organization, without restriction.

Make sure to write down any special requirements of the application process. Some funders may request, for example, that applicants submit only a 10-page concept paper, whereas others may require submission of a proposal followed by a presentation. Finally, when recording the submission requirements, include a list of what documents need to be submitted, such as a written proposal, budget, or CVs of staff who will work on the project. Also look for how the proposal should be submitted — whether by courier, hand delivered, via the postal service, electronically on a website, etc. Noting and organizing all requirements will enable your organization to be responsive. See Table 1.1 for a summary of what information to find within a funding announcement

Table 1.1. Summary of key information to locate in a funding announcement

KEY INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION		
Funder name	The name of the funder who has released the funding announcement		
Name of opportunity	The specific name of the project		
Anticipated amount of the award	The listed amount of the award, may be described as a ceiling and/or floor		
Due date	The deadline for submitting the proposal		
Program summary	A short summary of the focus of the funding program, including the goal and the objectives		
Geographic focus area	The provinces, districts, towns, etc. where the project will focus its efforts		
Eligibility requirements	Criteria for the types of organizations that can apply for the funding		
Cost requirements	Whether or not the funding opportunity requests cost share, and if so, the amount, and if there are other cost-recovery issues (e.g., the funder will not pay for certain necessary costs)		
Special requirements	Special components that may be necessary as part of the application, such as a cover letter or presentation		
Submission requirements	The documents to be included in the application (e.g., proposal, budget, CVs, cover letter) AND how the proposal should be submitted (e.g., email, website, courier, in person)		

What key dates should we note?

Key dates include the *anticipated period of performance* and the *due date* of the proposal. The **period of performance** is the time range when the project would be implemented. When documenting the **due date** of the proposal, it is also important to note the exact time (and time zone) the proposal is due. The

deadline for submitting questions to the funder is relevant for funders that allow applicants to ask questions about, for example, the project description, geographic focus, personnel requirements, or the possibility of an extension if the proposal deadline is very tight. These questions are sometimes (but not always) anonymous. Table 1.2 provides a summary of key dates to note.

Table 1.2. Summary of key dates

KEY DATES	DESCRIPTION
Anticipated period of performance	The timeframe for implementation of the project (proposed start and end dates)
Date for submitting questions to the funder or date for workshops/ meetings for interested civil society organizations	Some funders allow offerors to submit questions regarding the proposal or may offer a meeting/workshop for potential bidders. Questions may include, for example, requests for clarification about the funding program description, geographic focus, or personnel requirements. If the proposal deadline is very tight, it may not hurt to request an extension for submitting the proposal. When submitted in writing, these questions are sometimes (but not always) anonymous, so the funder may not necessarily know who is asking them.
Deadline for responses to questions	The date by when a funder promises to respond to questions submitted
Proposal due date and timeline	Timeline that includes the proposal submission deadline, when candidates will be shortlisted, and the date for notification of final results

What staffing requirements are important?

Some funders include staffing or personnel requirements for the project and proposal (see **Tip Sheet 5: Staffing Considerations**). These may include criteria for including people on the proposal as **key personnel** — staff who will work on the project and who will need to be approved by the funder — or documentation requirements for staff who will work on the project (e.g., CVs, biographies, letters of commitment or intent confirming their availability to serve in a given position, or position descriptions).

What formatting requirements might there be?

A few funders, such as the U.S. Government, specify formatting requirements. These may include page limits (total and per section), and requirements for line spacing, font, font size, and margin size. Adhering to these requirements will ensure that your application is reviewed.

Will there be information on how proposals are evaluated?

Funding announcements often give you information about how the submission will be evaluated, or evaluation criteria. Typically, there is a point system adding up to 100 points, with different numbers of points assigned to different sections. Noting the evaluation criteria will indicate which sections are valued as higher and will help you identify how much effort may be needed for each section.

How can we organize the information in the funding announcement?

Create a reference sheet or **compliance matrix** to document and organize essential information found in the funding announcement. It will be a helpful document to refer to while developing the proposal AND when reviewing the final document for submission to the funder. The matrix will also allow the proposal team to document that required items have been addressed. A sample matrix template is provided in Table 1.3, but you may wish to capture more information than is listed in this version. The template can be adapted for each funding opportunity.

Table 1.3. Example reference sheet or compliance matrix

REFERENCE SHEET		PAGE # (from funding announcement)
Key Information		
I. Funder		
2. Name of opportunity		
3. Anticipated amount of the award	Floor:	
	Ceiling (if applicable):	
4. Funding program summary	Goal:	
	Objectives:	
5. Geographic focus		
6 Eligibility requirements	Is my organization eligible? Yes/No	
	If no, is there an eligible organization to partner with for this proposal?	
7. Special requirements		
8. Submission requirements	Documents required:	
	Submission method:	
Dates		
9. Deadline for submission of questions		
10. Date when questions will be answered		
II.Anticipated period of performance		
 Date/time (including time zone) proposal is due 		
Formatting requirements		
 Proposal format requirements (line spacing, font, number of pages, sections to include, margins, etc.) 		
Evaluation		
14. Evaluation criteria and points per criterion		

RESOURCES

How to analyze a solicitation: https://sbccimplementationkits. org/resource-mobilization/lessons/ analyse-a-solicitation/ Cost share explained:

https://www.usaid.gov/india/ partner-resources/infographiccost-share-program-incomeleverage Cooperative agreement and contract defined:

https://blog.grants.gov/2016/07/19/what-is-a-cooperative-agreement/













& COMMUNITIES



HOW TO DECIDE WHETHER TO APPLY FOR FUNDING—THE "GO/NO-GO" DECISION

GLOSSARY

Follow-on funding opportunity: When a funder will award a new round of funding for an opportunity that has previously been awarded. Organizations must compete for the new round of funding, even if they are the incumbent (see incumbent).

Incumbent: The organization or consortium currently implementing a project through a previous funding award

One of the most important decisions in the proposal development process is deciding whether to apply for a funding opportunity. Proposals require a great deal of time and effort from staff and may take staff away from project work. Thus, to manage resources effectively, it is important to be strategic in selecting the funding opportunities to which you would like to apply.

As described in **Tip Sheet I: What to Look for in a Funding Announcement**, when a funding announcement is made, staff who may support proposal development should read the announcement and develop a reference sheet to outline the major requirements. The next step is to determine whether the organization will respond to the opportunity.

We are not sure whether we should move forward. What should we consider when deciding whether to apply for funding?

Before moving forward, many organizations bring together a management team, including organizational management staff and technical experts, to review the reference sheet and determine whether it is worth investing the resources to respond to the opportunity.

There are many factors to consider when determining whether to apply. These are described in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Considerations for determining whether to pursue a funding opportunity

QUESTIONS TO ASK	ASSOCIATED FACTORS
Is the opportunity consistent with your organization's mission/vision and areas of expertise?	It is important to review the technical area of interest described in the funding announcement to see if it (1) is aligned with your organization's mission and vision, (2) corresponds to your organization's existing areas of expertise, and (3) reflects a new technical area or geographic focus that your organization would like to expand to include in the near future.
Is the budget reasonable for your organization?	Consider the size, monthly expenses, staffing, and systems of your organization. Would you realistically be able to spend the award budget within the period of performance, or is the amount too large? Or, is the budget too small to cover the effort to put together a proposal and then implement a project?
What do you know (or what can you find out) about the funder, their requirements, and their work style?	Some funders are more complex to work with than others. Consider whether your organization can meet the funder's requirements, such as submitting deliverables, reporting on progress and results, participating in meetings, signing a pledge committing to specific actions, and meeting expectations regarding project results. You may need to learn more about the funder's style from others who have worked with the funder previously.
Does your organization have a good reputation (or any reputation) with the funder?	Think about what, if anything, the funder may already know about your work. How strong is your reputation in the type of work described in the funding announcement? You may need to introduce your organization to a funder who has no knowledge of it or reframe any misconceptions they may already have about your work.
Does your organization already have the skills to implement the program, or are the skills easily obtained? Could you address any gaps through partnerships?	Think about whether your organization has the skills and staff to implement the proposed project. If not, are you well-positioned to hire staff with this expertise? Although some proposals will allow your organization to develop expertise or a larger skill set in a specific area, you will need to already have a basic level of skills in the technical area of the proposal in order to have a chance at being awarded the funding.
	Also think about whether your organization has the management and financial systems in place to implement the proposed project or how to ensure that these systems will be put in place. You may need to consider whether partnerships can help fill gaps.
Do you know of other organizations planning to respond to the funding opportunity? If it is a follow-on funding opportunity, what organization is currently implementing the project (the incumbent to the project)?	Competition, and how your organization compares to the competition, may affect your decision on whether to move forward with a proposal. If there is an incumbent organization implementing the project and they are performing well, is it worth your time to compete for the next round of funding for the project (i.e., for a follow-on project)?
What level of resources (human, financial, time investment) will be required to respond to the funding opportunity? Are resources available to respond to the proposal by the due date?	Writing a winning proposal takes substantial resources. There may be other organizational priorities and projects staff will not be able work on while preparing a proposal. Consider staff schedules, holidays, and organizational events during the period when the proposal will need to be developed. Would it be possible to hire additional help, such as consultants (see section below), to support current work while other staff develop the proposal? If the likelihood of winning is strong, it may be worth the staff time and effort. If the due date seems unreasonably quick, the proposal may already be targeted toward another organization.
What is the likelihood of winning?	It is helpful to determine your likelihood of winning in a systematic way. You may do this using a point system, as described in the next section, "We have reviewed the considerations for deciding"

We have reviewed the considerations for deciding whether an opportunity is right for our organization. How can we make the final "go/no-go" decision?

Once your team has reviewed the considerations described in Table 2.1, you will have to make what

some organizations call the "go/no-go" decision. The go/no-go decision will help you make sure that precious organizational resources are used strategically. One way some organizations make this decision is to develop a scoresheet.

A scoresheet might look like Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Example scoresheet to inform the go/no-go decision

CRITERIA	SCORING		
Alignment with mission/ vision	l 2 Not at all aligned	3	4 5 Very aligned
Budget is reasonable	I 2 Too much/too little money	3	4 5 Money is appropriate for project/organization
Funder requirements and style	I 2 We cannot work with funder's requirements/style	4 5 We can work with funder's requirements/style	
Alignment with skills of organization	I 2 We do not have/cannot obtain skills required	3	4 5 Strong alignment with current skills
Competition	Competing organizations may be a better "fit" for the work	4 5 Funding opportunity "fits" our organization very well	
Resources required	I 2 High level of resources required	3	4 5 Low level of resources required
Availability of resources to respond to funding opportunity	I 2 Resources unavailable	3	4 5 Resources available
Ability to implement	I 2 Project implementation would be challenging	4 5 Well suited to implement project	

RESOURCES

Tips from USAID for responding to a proposal: https://www.usaid.gov/partnership-opportunities/respond-solicitation/

Tip Sheet **2** To determine whether the organization should bid (go) or not (no go) on a given funding opportunity, you will first need to find a way to value each criterion. Then, look at the values you have assigned for the criteria to determine if the scores are high enough to bid for the funding opportunity. To do this, assign a score to each criterion in the scoresheet (and any other consideration you want to include) and then add the scores together. If the score is over a certain number, your management team may decide to go ahead and develop a proposal in response to the funding opportunity. If the score is lower than that number, the decision would likely be made to not develop a proposal. For example, you may wish total the scores, divide by the number of considerations, and if the resulting score is 3 or over, the management team would consider this a go decision whereas under 3 is a no-go decision.

This score may be different for every organization and even different for the same organization at different time periods, depending on the current funding situation and staff resources of that organization.

We have decided to apply for funding, but our organization does not have the capacity to draft the proposal. If we decide to move forward, is it appropriate to hire a consultant to write it?

Sometimes, preparing a proposal may be overwhelming for a small team. There are many tasks involved, including writing the proposal, developing the budget, confirming that the budget aligns with the proposal, developing the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy, identifying and working with partners, identifying (and potentially recruiting) staff, preparing annexes, reviewing and editing the text, and putting all the pieces together for the submission. In some cases, a small team can manage all of these tasks, while in others it is simply not possible.

In the latter case, it may make sense to hire an external consultant as your proposal writer. This will allow you to apply for funding without the pressure of leading the actual writing of the proposal. An external proposal writer can take the ideas provided by your team, along with the capabilities of your organization, and develop these into a narrative. Your team would still need to provide the information that should go into the proposal (i.e., the inputs), share background information about your organization, and review the drafts. Keep in mind that most funders will not pay for proposal development costs, so your organization will need to find a way to pay for this. Although it is an extra expense, sometimes hiring a consultant writer can be worth it.

A strong candidate for this type of consultancy is someone who has excellent writing skills, knows the donor well, has written winning proposals for the donor previously, is reliable, and can consolidate inputs from different people into a narrative. Other organizations may have suggestions for potential writers, or you may wish to place an advertisement in local papers or on job websites. Be sure to ask candidates for their references.















GLOSSARY

Coalition: An alliance of organizations for combined

Collaborating partner: An organization, such as the Ministry of Health or UNAIDS, that may play a limited, non-exclusive role in the proposed project

Consortium member:

Organization that brings complementary skills and experience to the overall team and works with other team members to accomplish the common project goal

Exclusive partner: An organization that has agreed to work ONLY with the prime partner in responding to a funding opportunity

Non-exclusive partner: An organization that may support proposals from multiple organizations

Prime: The organization that has ultimate responsibility for the quality, accuracy, responsiveness, and completeness of the proposal submitted to the funder

Resource partner: An organization with specific technical expertise that the project will call upon, as needed, during implementation of the proposed project. The specific scope of work may not yet be defined at the time of proposal submission.

Subpartner (sub): An organization that has some expertise in proposed project areas but may not have the time, a prime

Teaming agreement:

A legally binding document that outlines the terms of a partnership and that is signed by your organization

TIP SHFFT 3:

PARTNERING FOR **PROPOSALS**

Most proposals take a great deal of work, and it is difficult for any single organization to be responsive to all of the funder's requirements. Partnerships allow organizations to focus on areas where they excel and to work together to accomplish a common goal. Partnering to respond to funding opportunities can help strengthen the overall approach and can be a great way to collaborate with other organizations in your country. There are many different forms of partnerships and various methods to formalize a partnership.

What are the different roles partners can play?

Most partnerships for addressing a funding opportunity are composed of a lead (prime) with several supporting partners (subpartners [subs] or resource partners). Some proposals have coalitions; however, this is not as common. The roles of each type of partner are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Partner roles in proposal development and project implementation (if awarded)

ROLES IN PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION Has overall responsibility for quality, accuracy, and responsiveness of the proposal Trainable takes responsibility for interpreting the funding
responsiveness of the proposal
 Typically takes responsibility for interpreting the funding opportunity, writing the proposal, coordinating the overall response with partners, and submitting the proposal Is responsible for meeting project objectives and managing project resources (if awarded) Selects partners during the proposal development process and manages partners during project implementation (if awarded)
 Provides the prime with details and materials related to its negotiated scope of work, as requested by the prime partner Expands the ability of the team to achieve objectives Provides key technical insights in a given subject area and may lead development (and implementation, if awarded) of objectives or activities in the proposal
 Provides a specific skill or resource that may be required for a project Contributes to activities and provides a resource such as a network or access to a particular population May or may not be involved in the development of a proposal, outside of confirming partnership

How can we decide what role to play?

Determining whether it is best to submit a proposal as a prime, subpartner, or resource partner depends on several factors. These include the technical area of the funding opportunity, the expertise of your staff in this area, your calculated likelihood of winning (using a scoresheet like the one in Tip Sheet 2: How to Decide whether to Apply for Funding—The "Go/No-Go" Decision), whether there are other organizations that can fill your organizations's gaps, and your ability to manage other organizations as subpartners. In addition, you may consider whether your organization has expertise that makes you well positioned or unique to be a prime versus a subpartner.

You may also want to go back to Table 2.1 in Tip Sheet 2: How to Decide whether to Apply for Funding—The "Go/No-Go" Decision to review the considerations around whether to apply for funding. Think about whether you have or can hire the necessary staff to be a prime partner. For example, if your likelihood of winning is low, but you have strong technical skills in a specific area relevant to the funding opportunity, you may choose to subpartner with another organization. That way, you could focus on writing about and implementing a specific component of the project. Alternatively, if your organization feels strongly that you can manage most of the proposal development and project implementation work, you may wish to look for a subpartner or resource organization to fill any gap(s) and support your proposal development and project implementation efforts.

We are considering being a subpartner to a prime. What factors should we think about?

When thinking through your potential role(s) on a project, your team members can ask themselves several questions:

- Will you be able to meet the prime's expectations for work on the proposal and for project implementation? Clear communication with the prime about these expectations is key.
- What is the likelihood that the overall team can win the proposal? Determining this involves considerations similar to the go/no-go decisionmaking process. Even though developing a proposal as a subpartner involves less work and is less complicated, be careful about using limited organizational resources for proposals the overall team may not have a good chance at winning.

- Is the amount of work your organization has been assigned on the proposal appropriate?
 This can be negotiated with the prime if your organization would like to have more or less responsibility on the proposal.
- Will there be enough funding to complete the work on the project, if funded? Often, a prime provides a scope of work and budget to subpartners. Work with your management team to determine whether there will be enough money to allow you to meet your obligations. Remember that you can also negotiate the scope of work and budget.
- What is your relationship with the prime?
 Strong communication and leadership and clear expectations go a long way toward creating a positive working relationship with a partner.
 Be wary of primes who do not answer your questions or who are vague or secretive about key details you request.
- Are there strategic reasons to be a subpartner?
 Sometimes organizations partner in order to
 eliminate competition; that is, if you partner with your
 biggest competitor, you may increase the likelihood
 that your organization will be awarded the funding.

What are the types of partnerships?

In addition to there being different roles for partners, there are also different types of partnerships. These include **exclusive partners**, **non-exclusive partners**, and **collaborating partners**. See Table 3.2 for a description of these partner types.

Exclusive partnerships give your team a competitive edge, as the team can offer their unique collective contribution; however, an exclusive partnership only guarantees work to your organization if the team's proposal wins the award. Some primes require exclusivity in order to work with them.

As a non-exclusive partner, your organization may be able to partner with different teams on many proposals, thus giving you a greater chance of receiving some funding; however, some primes are reluctant to share activities or strategies with non-exclusive partners — organizations that are not partnering ONLY with them. Organizations can sometimes be protective of their sensitive intellectual property or concerned about the technical approach being shared publicly. Collaborating partners are often organizations like the Ministry of Health, National AIDS Council, or the local UNAIDS office. They will likely cooperate with all proposal teams competing for the opportunity and

Table 3.2. Types of partners for proposals

Table 3.2. Types of partitiers for proposals			
TYPE OF PARTNER	DESCRIPTION		
Exclusive partner	 Has agreed to work with ONLY a prime partner on this specific opportunity Typically has specific expertise or skill set Signs a teaming agreement that includes a nondisclosure clause before the proposal strategy and sensitive information are shared Provides an exclusive letter of commitment 		
Non-exclusive partner	 Is not committed to working with one prime or team for a specific opportunity Provides a letter of support Should not have sensitive information shared with them 		
Collaborating partner	 An organization such as a government ministry, multilateral organization, or national resource organization that will potentially work with many organizations and may not have a specific scope of work on the project Provides letter of support for your team stating their willingness to work with you if the proposal is awarded, lending the proposal greater credibility 		

will affirm during the proposal process that they are willing to work on your proposed project, if funded. It is nonetheless important to have these partners write a letter of support stating that that they will work with your team, as this will add credibility to your proposal.

How should we document the partnership?

There are many ways to finalize, or document, a proposed relationship between two organizations during the proposal stage and project implementation. Some of the more common options are teaming agreements, letters of support, and letters of commitment.

A **teaming agreement** is a document developed by the prime that captures the agreement to partner. It is often reviewed and signed by senior leadership

of the organizations listed in the agreement. A typical teaming agreement contains a scope of work outlining the expectations of all organizations within the teaming agreement for the project, whether the partnership is exclusive or not, important dates, and contact information for both organizations. It often contains a nondisclosure clause stating that no sensitive information discussed during the proposal process can be shared. It is recommended that both organizations review the teaming agreement carefully to ensure their comfort with all terms and conditions and with the detailed scope of work proposed. Any problematic terms of agreement should be negotiated by an authorized person within the organization, such as the executive director or technical director. The agreement should only be signed when both organizations have negotiated the terms and are satisfied with the language included. Please see the "Resources" section at the end of this tip sheet for additional information about teaming agreements.

A **letter of commitment** is a letter from each subpartner that outlines their role on the proposed project and states their commitment to work with the prime organization. The letter may contain a brief scope of work and should be written on organizational letterhead. It is signed by an authorized person within the subpartner organization. Note that a letter of commitment should be broad and not include nondisclosure language or legal language. (See sample letter of commitment on the next page of this tip sheet.) In addition, the partners will still have a separate teaming agreement.

A **letter of support** is often provided by non-exclusive partners, collaborating partners, and resource partners to demonstrate that they are aware of the proposal and their role described in it. It also states that they have committed to working with your organization/team to make the implementation of project a success, if funded. It is important to include the proposed project name and the name of both the supporting organization and the prime organization, and to ensure that the letter has a signature from an authorized person at the supporting organization (see example on the next page of this tip sheet).

A teaming agreement is typically used at the start of the proposal development process, either just before or after a funding announcement is released. Both a letter of commitment and letter of support are submitted along with the proposal as evidence that the partners have agreed to work on the project in some capacity.

Sample Letter of Commitment

[Partner organizations should write this letter on their letterhead stationery.]

To: [your organization's contact person]

Re: [insert reference number or name of funding opportunity]

[Insert name of partner organization] will be pleased to serve as an exclusive partner to [your organization] on the above-referenced funding opportunity should the [your organization] team be selected to implement this project. We recognize and appreciate the team's long involvement with projects in [insert country/geographic focus area] working to [insert summary of project focus].

[Insert name of partner organization] confirms its willingness to perform the duties described in our joint proposal, including [briefly describe scope of work of partner organization]. We look forward to working with you on this and other future endeavors.

Sincerely,

[Insert name of partner contact person]
[Insert title]

Sample Letter of Support

[Partner organizations should write this letter on their letterhead stationery.]

To: [insert name of funder]

Re: [insert reference number or name of funding opportunity]

This letter confirms that, in the event that [your organization name] is awarded the contract to implement the above-referenced project, [insert name of partner organization] would be pleased to collaborate with the team.

We recognize and appreciate the team's long involvement with projects in [insert country] working to [summarize project focus].

[Insert name of partner organization] has expertise in

[briefly describe your organization's experience relevant to funding opportunity].

Through this letter, [insert name of partner organization] confirms its willingness to collaborate with and support the [insert name of your organization] team in their efforts to implement this project. We look forward to working with you on this and other future endeavors.

Sincerely,

[Insert name of partner contact person]
[Insert title]

RESOURCES

Partnering on USAID bids:

https://www.devex.com/news/ask-devex-can-i-be-included-in-2-competing-usaid-bids-88524

Subpartnerships under USAID funding opportunities and teaming agreements:

https://extra.usaid.gov/partner-learning/ subpartnerships/presentation_html5.html















TIP SHEET 4:

HOW TO DESIGN YOUR PROPOSAL

GLOSSARY

Capability statements:
A brief written statement
describing your organization,
what it does, and how it is
different from competitors

Gantt chart: A visual table of tasks to be completed over time

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan: A document that helps track the results of a program

Organogram: A chart that shows how an organization is structured and how job positions relate to one another Thinking about how to respond to a funding announcement can be overwhelming. There are typically numerous objectives and requirements, and it is hard to know how to respond to all of them within one document. It can be helpful to review the proposal components that will need to be written, outline the contents of each, and consider how to ensure that the components are technically sound.

What is a proposal?

Some organizations that have never responded to a funding opportunity may start with the very basic question, "What is a proposal?" In short, a proposal is a written response describing how your organization will solve a specific problem. It proposes what you will do to address the problem, what methods and materials you will use to implement your proposed solution, and how much it will cost to implement. It also outlines the anticipated results of your work.

What are the major parts of a proposal?

Funding announcements sometimes specify a format for the proposal or particular components to be included. Some may require responses to specific questions and no additional information, whereas others may allow you a certain number of pages to explain your ideas. It is important to check the funding announcement for the requirements prior to creating an outline for the proposal (see **Tip Sheet 1:What to Look for in a Funding Announcement**).

Generally, proposals include the following components:

- Technical response to the problem posed in the funding announcement, organized by subsection or goal
- · Budget and budget justification (if required)
- Annexes, such as organograms, CVs, capability statements, letters
 of support or commitment, and a monitoring and evaluation
 (M&E) plan

What information goes in each section?

Prior to writing full sections of the proposal, it is helpful to write a proposal outline. You can refer to the table of key information collected about the proposal (see Table 1.3 in **Tip Sheet 1:What to Look for in a Funding Announcement**). Table 4.1 contains some of the information typically included in a proposal and that should be included in the outline. However, as all funders and funding opportunities are different and require different information, it is important to develop the outline based on the sections requested in the funding announcement. Then, you can use the outline to assign page length, writer(s), and a due date for each section.

Table 4.1. Technical subsections and the information each section should address

SECTION	INFORMATION INCLUDED
Front Matter	
Cover Page	 Name of proposed project Names of the organizations making up the team Contact information for the team member organizations Submission date Any reference numbers for the funding opportunity
Table of Contents	Section names and page numbers
Abbreviations	List of the acronyms and abbreviations used in the proposal
Proposal Body	
Background	Information on the problem to be addressed in the proposal
Goal and Strategic Approach	 Project goal: The change you foresee as the result of your project Strategic approach: Summarizes the overall strategy for the project Highlights the unique, innovative approach the organization is proposing Can include a conceptual model or diagram, helpful for demonstrating the "big picture" and explaining the overall strategy for the project The model/diagram should be accompanied by a written description for the approach, linking project inputs to desired outcomes.
Objectives and Activities	 What you will do to meet the goal of the project Activities should be tied to an overall objective. Typically, each objective is a subsection of the proposal and has associated activities.
Partners, Staffing, and Management	Who will help you achieve this goal
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	How you will demonstrate progress and results

Technical

The technical portion of the proposal typically includes the following sections: Background; Goal and Strategic Approach; Objectives and Activities; Partners, Staffing, and Management; and Monitoring and Evaluation. It may also include an executive summary, table of contents, or abbreviations list, depending on the complexity of the proposal and the funder's requirements. Some funders may also require an illustrative work plan or Gantt chart, organogram, or capability statements, often in annexes to the proposal.

Background

The Background section answers the question, "What is the problem to be addressed by the project?" Typically, the funding announcement will include a

problem statement. In the Background, you will need to demonstrate that you understand the problem. You can do this by sharing data that show the extent of the problem in your context and by describing some of the factors that cause the problem.

Goal and Strategic Approach

Next, answer the question, "What will you do?" by stating the proposed project's goal. The goal statement is broad and says what you hope to achieve in solving the problem. Often, the funding announcement already provides a goal statement within the text. An example of a goal statement from an RFA is:

The goal of the project is to support a sustained community response to the HIV epidemic in ABC country.

Then describe the strategic approach your organization or team will use to achieve the goal. This description should highlight your unique, innovative approach. The section often includes a conceptual model or diagram, along with a written description that links the inputs of the project to the desired outcomes.

Objectives and Activities

The next step is to state the project objectives. The objectives are milestones, or shorter-term achievements, that will need to be reached to eventually achieve the project goal. While your organization may not have much control over whether the broader goal is ultimately achieved, it does have control over whether you make progress toward and meet the more specific objectives.

For example, the objectives to support the goal statement above might include:

- Promote HIV testing to help ensure that 90 percent of country ABC's residents are aware of their HIV status
- Promote improved linkages to care to support country ABC's residents to obtain HIV treatment and reach viral suppression
- 3. Strengthen community systems to promote sustainability of the HIV response
- 4. Reduce structural barriers and harmful practices that reduce access to HIV services

Finally, for each objective specify the proposed project activities. The activities should demonstrate how you will achieve the objectives. Activities are often the

actual intervention you are proposing to address the problem. For example, activities might include actions such as service delivery, capacity development, quality improvement, or purchase of commodities, among others. The activities are the most detailed way to explain how your organization will respond to a problem.

Partners, Staffing, and Management

Either in a section of its own or throughout the text, you will need to answer the question, "Who will support you to reach this goal?" The roles and responsibilities of partners in meeting objectives and implementing activities should be clearly documented. If a partner is responsible for a specific activity, make sure that the description of the activity clearly includes the name of the organization.

You also need to document how your team will manage the project, including the key staff supporting the program and the organizational and reporting structure for the team. Please see **Tip Sheet 5: Staffing Considerations** for more information.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

Last, describe how you will demonstrate results. This is usually done through an M&E plan. Usually, it is difficult to include an entire M&E plan within the body of the technical proposal, but it would be useful to include the key indicators your organization will use to track progress and outcomes of activities and objectives. Table 4.2 describes what an M&E plan needs to include.

Budget and Budget Justification

The budget and budget justification are described in **Tip Sheet 6: Proposal Budgeting Essentials**.

Table 4.2. Components of a monitoring and evaluation plan

INDICATOR CODE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DEFINITION	DISAGGREGATES	TARGET	FREQUENCY
A simple code that will be used to identify the indicator Example: HTS_TST	A short statement that describes what the indicator is, what conditions need to be met in order for the indicator to be satisfied, and whether the indicator is a whole number or a percentage Example: The number of individuals who received HIV testing services (HTS) and received their test results	The subsets of data to be counted under the indicator Example: This indicator may have disaggregates of results (positive or negative), age within 5-year age bands, sex, and testing modality (e.g., self-test, community-based testing)	The target is the number or percentage your organization anticipates reaching within a specific time period. (Not all plans require a target.) You may need to provide a target for different subsets of data. Example: 1,234 women under 20 years of age	How often data will be collected Example: Monthly

Annexes (or appendices) are not a requirement for every proposal. Sometimes funders request annexes, or you may choose to add them on your own. However, some funding announcements specify that bidders should ONLY submit requested annexes and no additional annexes. Nonetheless, when appropriate, annexes can

support statements made in the technical section of the proposal. They can also add more detail when space in the main document is limited. Some potential annexes are described in Table 4.3. The order of the annexes in Table 4.3 is only an example. Remember to follow the section order specified for a given funding opportunity.

Table 4.3. Typical proposal annexes

ANNEX	DESCRIPTION		
Organizational Annexes			
Capability statements	Short statements describing previous projects that demonstrate the organization's skills and competence to complete the type of work requested in the funding opportunity		
Personnel Annexes			
CVs/résumés	The CVs or résumés of key staff who will work on the project. They should all be formatted the same way and edited to highlight skills requested in the funding opportunity.		
Letters of commitment (from staff)	Letters from staff committing to work on the project		
Organizational chart	Also known as an organogram, this shows the management structure of the organization or project team.		
Job descriptions	A short description of what staff members involved in the project will be doing in support of it. Make sure the job description includes the position title, responsibilities, and qualifications.		
Skills matrix	A simple matrix (or spreadsheet) created to capture the skills capabilities of the project team, ranging from technical to administrative staff, to ensure that all skill sets required to implement the project are available.		
Partnerships			
Letters of commitment (from partners)	Letters from potential partners committing to work on the project		
Letters of support (from partners)	Letters from resource partners indicating their awareness of the project and their commitment to working with your team		
Project Implementation Plan			
Detailed implementation plan and timeline	Often in the form of a Gantt chart, shows the activities and a timeline for when major activities will be completed		



What roles can a subpartner play in proposal development?

The prime organization typically leads the writing of the proposal, but as a subpartner, you may be expected to provide some or all of the following to the prime organization:

- Inputs or descriptions of specific activities your organization is responsible for in the scope of work. Make sure to ask the prime for the project goal and objectives so that you can relate the activities to these.
- Capability statement(s) demonstrating that your organization has previously done this type of work.
- A budget detailing the costs for your organization's work and the corresponding budget notes to explain the costs. Make sure to negotiate the budget ceiling with the prime for your work.

Ensuring That Concepts Are Technically Sound

As you develop the proposal, you will want to make sure that you can support what you write with recent evidence. You will also want to make sure that the proposal is aligned with the country context and any technical standards. For these reasons, it is useful to have important guidance documents available during proposal development. These might include the funder's strategic plan for the region, technical guidelines from international or national technical agencies, and peerreviewed research articles documenting best practices. Google searches or emailing funder's country offices should help you identify regional or technical area strategy documents. Consult these to ensure that activities are technically sound.

Who should review the proposal before we submit it?

Technical reviews are an important part of the proposal development process. Reviewers can confirm if proposed activities are realistic, ensure that ideas are technically sound, and provide suggestions of their own. Additionally, a reviewer can indicate if the proposal reads well and if concepts are clearly communicated. Typically, it is good to have one or more reviewers from within your organization, as they will already be familiar with your organizational capabilities. These reviewers can focus both on technical content and proposed management structures and partnering plans. It can also be useful to have someone with a budgeting perspective review the proposal to ensure that the budget and proposal activities match. If the proposal focuses on a specific technical area it would be helpful to have the organization's technical experts review that section. For example, an orphans and vulnerable children technical expert might review that section, and someone in your organization's management team might review the management section.

Make sure that you allow time in the proposal development process for the proposal to be read by someone other than the proposal team and for the proposal team to incorporate feedback and suggestions. It is also useful to provide the reviewer with a copy of the compliance matrix for reference during their review. It may even be wise to incorporate a few rounds of review: one round following the initial design stage as the proposal is coming together, to ensure that you are moving in the right direction, and a second round for final feedback once the proposal is nearly complete.

Be strategic about how many reviewers to include — you want to get strong, constructive feedback but also to avoid being overwhelmed by comments. Also consider incorporating partner feedback, if helpful, since part of building a strong partnership is ensuring buy-in from partners beginning in the proposal stage.

RESOURCES

Effectively responding to **USAID** funding opportunities:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/E-Module%203%20-%20 Effectively%20Responding%20to%20USAID%20 Award%20Solicitations.pdf

Writing a proposal:

https://sbccimplementationkits.org/resource-mobilization/lessons/write-a-proposal/















TIP SHEET 5:

STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

GLOSSARY

Biodata sheet: A one-page form, called Form 1420, to be filled out by each candidate for a position on a proposed project for USAID-funded opportunities

Biosketch: A brief narrative describing the work experience of a candidate being proposed for a position on a project

CV/résumé: An exhaustive list of a person's work experience, education, consulting experience, publications, presentations, and other relevant qualifications

Job description: Title of position and summary of key qualifications and responsibilities

Key personnel: Staff who will work on the project and whose qualifications and skills will be approved by the funder as being essential for the project

Letter of commitment: A letter from a proposed staff member confirming their willingness and availability to participate in the project

Management plan: A written description of the team and its structures for implementing a project, including the systems to support the functioning of the team, the staff reporting structure, and the tools used to support overall project implementation

Organizational chart/ organogram: A visual representation of a staffing structure

Skills matrix: A grid or table that clearly and visibly illustrates the skills and competencies of individuals proposed for a given project

During the go/no-go decision process, your organization considered whether you have the team in place (or can hire the right people) to implement your proposed project. It is important to consider that question in-depth, as you will need to develop a staffing plan.

Some funding opportunities require that the proposal include a full section on the proposed staffing plan and how the project will be managed. For other proposals, you may only need to briefly discuss key staff and their skills for managing and implementing the proposed work. Still other funding opportunities make no reference to staffing. Whatever the case, it is always helpful to identify staff for the project when working on the proposal. It is also a good idea to include their key skills within the text of the technical section of the proposal. Having qualified staff demonstrates that your organization has the skills in place to successfully implement your proposed project.

What types of staff roles should we include?

Key Personnel

Some funding announcements may designate some specific required positions for "key personnel" on the proposal, such as project director, operations director, and technical advisor. Typically, only a small number of staff positions are considered key personnel. When USAID is the funder, the term key personnel refers to staff who are directly responsible for managing the project. Staff in these positions must demonstrate and will be evaluated on specific technical and management experience and leadership skills. Also, if the U.S. Government funds your proposal, the funding announcement usually specifies the minimum requirements or qualifications that must be met by key personnel. Any changes to these positions during project implementation, including a change in the person serving in the position or a change in the scope of work for the position, would require approval from the funder.

Key personnel are typically (but not always) required to work full time on a project. In this case, full time means that, on average, 100 percent of their time should be spent on a specific project. Part-time work, or a certain percentage of work such as 25 percent, would be appropriate for staff who are supporting discrete activities or who will not be working on a project full time throughout a project year.

A funder may also ask that your organization name the staff positions that will serve as key personnel. In these instances, you will need to carefully consider which staff positions are most critical to project success, such as an overall project director, financial director, or technical director. Think about the staff positions that will ultimately be responsible for the success of the project, base your selection of key

personnel positions on those considerations, and justify your reasoning for each position.

You may also need to provide the actual names of the people who will be serving as key personnel. When identifying staff, it is important to pay close attention to the qualifications required for each position in the funding announcement.

Management Staff

In addition to key personnel, consider including staff who will do the day-to-day management of the project. These staff will be responsible for meeting the requirements specified in the agreement with the funder, keeping activities moving on schedule according to your work plan, and managing partners, human resources, and deliverables.

Technical Staff

Technical staff will design and implement the proposed interventions suggested in the project. These staff may also collect and analyze data, develop and deliver trainings, or write reports based on findings. Remember to include monitoring and evaluation staff within your technical staff, including staff who will verify programmatic data, analyze trends, visualize results, and share data with decision makers and stakeholders in an understandable way.

Operations, Management, and Administrative Support

The finance, procurement, management, and oversight roles are often overlooked in planning for staffing. Consider whether you will have sufficient staff to support the training, procurements, deliverable submissions, and subgrant reviews that will be required for the new work. If needed, budget to hire finance, management, or operations staff to support the activities.

How do we know the appropriate level of staffing?

Some funding announcements detail the key staff required, while others may not mention staff members or staff levels at all. It can be difficult to determine the right staffing when there is little guidance. As noted above for key personnel, you may also need to justify why you believe other positions are essential to a project. Consider the following questions when developing your staffing plan.

What skills are needed?

Carefully review your proposed activities and think about what skills will be needed to implement them.

Remember to think about skills that may be needed to support activities such as procurement, training design, or administrative support. Write down the skills needed for the project, as this will help inform job descriptions if you need to develop them later, as well as help indicate what should be highlighted in existing staff's CVs.

Do we have staff with these skills?

Compare the skills needed with the skill sets your organization currently has. Are there skill profiles that you do not have within the organization? Are there skill sets you may need to hire based on gaps? Often, funders request rapid start-up of the project, so you may need to consider the logistics of beginning the search for a candidate, or selecting and negotiating with a candidate, during the proposal development phase. And, it is always useful to include letters of commitment for identified staff.

Do our staff with these skills have time available to work on the project?

Even if there are staff with the necessary skills in the organization, will those staff have time to work on the new project? Think about the staff members' workloads and what amount of time, if any, they may be able to devote to new work.

You may need to think about how staff divide their time across projects. For example, one staff member may already support two projects; meanwhile, you are proposing this person as part of the new project team. This person's time could be allocated to each project in different ways, and then shown in the budget as the estimated percentage of time. Table 5.1 shows a few different scenarios of time allocations for staff.

If staff with the right skills do not have time to devote to the project, you may need to consider how to fill these skills gaps—either by recruiting and hiring new staff, contracting consultants, or bringing on a subpartner for a specific scope of work.

Do we need any consultants to provide short-term technical assistance?

You may need to include a section on consultants in the proposal. Consultants can be helpful to fill short-term needs of the project, supplement skill gaps within the organization, or help scale up an intervention quickly. Consultants can also complete work that may not be central to your organization but that needs to be completed in order to meet objectives and accomplish activities such as data collection or assessments.

Table 5.1. Example of time allocations for staff working on multiple projects

	PROJECT A	PROJECT B	PROPOSED PROJECT C	EXPLANATION
Scenario I	34%	33%	33%	In this scenario, the staff member is working an equal amount on each of the three projects.
Scenario 2	20%	20%	60%	In this scenario, you anticipate the staff member to work much more on the new project than they are on the current two projects (A and B). You will need to work with the management staff of Project A and B to determine how any gaps in their projects might be handled if this staff member spends a greater amount of time on Project C.
Scenario 3	50%	40%	10%	In this scenario, the staff member may be providing a discrete service to the new project, such as a training or document review, and their time will be limited on the new project.

What work can our partners take on?

There may be some work partners are able to take on, depending on the activity. Consider whether a partner has more skills in a specific area and should be responsible for particular work, or if that work is better suited for your organization's team. Keep in mind that giving away work, or taking on additional work, should have a corresponding effect on the budget. Typically, a prime organization will hold key management positions while subawardees may hold technical key personnel positions. This will all depend on the skills and strengths of the organizations in the partnerships.

What is a management plan, and do we need one?

A management plan describes how proposed staff will work together. It highlights the systems your organization has in place to manage a project. Not all funding opportunities will require a management plan; however, it may nonetheless be useful to include some information about your team's approach to management in all proposals. A management plan typically includes a staffing plan, which specifies who is ultimately responsible for the project, as well as reporting lines within a project.

How can we develop a staffing plan?

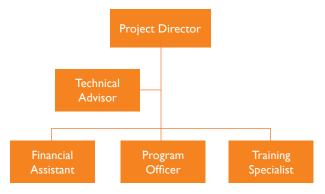
The staffing plan can easily show who is responsible for project management through an **organizational chart/organogram** (see Figure 5.1 for example). An organogram is a helpful way to visually depict the proposed staffing structure for the project. The first step in developing the organogram is to

identify which positions the funder requires and which positions are suggested. Then the management team will identify additional positions required for successful implementation of the project, any additional staff who will be proposed, and any short-term technical assistance needs. The narrative can also describe the positions for staff with whom a funder will interact, as well as the systems in place for ensuring technical and financial management of the project.

Within the staffing plan, make sure you also include a table or a chart of all staff working on the project and each staff member's proposed level of effort (percentage of time) on the project.

Developing a staffing plan is a delicate balance. On the one hand, you need to ensure that you have enough staff to manage the project. On the other hand, you need to keep the staffing structure streamlined and efficient enough to make sure staff are not duplicating efforts and that the staffing burden on the budget is not too high. There is no exact formula to make a staffing plan work. Instead, you will need to keep this balance in mind for each staffing plan you develop.

Figure 5.1. Example organogram



RESOURCES

USAID key personnel:

https://www.usaid.gov/india/ partner-resources/infographicwhom-do-you-seek-approvalchange-key-personnel-underassistance-award

Staffing on a proposal, from an employee perspective: https://www.devex.com/news/what-it-means-to-be-staffed-on-a-usaid-proposal-86281

What supporting materials are needed related to staffing?

Some funding announcements require supporting documents related to staffing. Typically, for large and complex funding opportunities, these include CVs/résumés, letters of commitment, job descriptions, and biographical sketches (often called biosketches).

The U.S. Government often requests a "biodata" sheet. This one-page sheet called Form 1420 lists pertinent employee/consultant data for the past three years, including name and address, education, consulting experience, and salary history. Although this may not be a submission requirement for your proposal, it is a good idea to complete and file this form, as it can be used as supporting documentation if the funder has questions about staff salaries.

A **skills matrix** is typically not required, but it is an easy way to convey your staff's wide range of skills. The matrix should be tailored to include the key competencies that are required for a given funding opportunity. For example, a matrix might include skill areas such as behavior change communication, working with key populations, project management, financial management, or HIV testing. These key competencies should be listed along the top of the matrix in the first row. Down the side, in the first column, you will enter staff names. Then indicate for each skill or competency each person has.

What are the staffing considerations for subpartners?

As a subpartner, you will need to first be informed of the staffing resources the prime partner will provide and then develop your own staffing structure accordingly. For example, if a prime is responsible for all training logistics, you may need less administrative staff support to manage trainings. Develop a sketch of your organogram and discuss your proposal with the prime. Make sure you understand the resources that will be budgeted and confirm that your staffing levels are appropriate.

The prime may have some staffing requirements for subpartners. For example, the prime could require that all staff be housed in their offices. In addition, they could stipulate that subpartner staff work on the project full time and not support other projects; these criteria would all need to be discussed with any staff planning to join the project.













TIP SHEET 6:

PROPOSAL BUDGETING ESSENTIALS

GLOSSARY

Direct costs: Costs that directly support only the project being described in the proposal and that exist only if the project exists

Fringe benefits: Benefits that include paid vacation time, statutory taxes, medical coverage, and any other benefits you may pay for staff. They are typically a percentage value of the salaries.

Indirect costs: Costs that are necessary to complete a project but that may not support only that project

NICRA: A percentage of all costs based on a negotiated indirect rate

Per diem: An allowance an organization provides to staff for daily living expenses, such as meals, taxis, and lodging

Most proposals require submission of a budget, which breaks down the resources required to implement the program or activities being proposed (i.e., the funding request). Developing a budget for a proposal, especially for a funder with whom you have not previously worked, can be an intimidating process. The formats and terms may be new to you, and it is difficult to learn everything in the limited time available to work on a proposal. However, with the right format and a solid understanding of the terms, the budgeting process can be straightforward.

What are the main parts of a budget?

A budget consists of your project activities, their costs, and their frequency. The *activities* are what you will be doing. These are typically described in the budget line items. The costs are the money it will take to complete an activity, broken down into a unit cost for a time or event, such as per training, per day, or per commodity. The *frequency* is the number of times you will need to complete an activity or the number of units of an item, such as the number of days for a staff member. The spreadsheet in Table 6.1 provides an example.

Table 6.1. Example spreadsheet showing activities, costs, and frequency

ACTIVITY	COST	FREQUENCY	TOTAL COST
Community health worker training	\$750/ training	4 trainings in YI	US\$ 3,000.00
Technical advisor	\$150/day	45 days in Y I	US\$ 6,750.00
Office space rental	\$1000/ month	12 months in YI	US\$ 12,000.00

The budget should also reflect the project period of performance, as shown in the Example Budget Template provided in Annex 1.

How should line items for costs be organized in the budget?

Costs should be divided into "direct costs" and "indirect costs" and then organized under the major budget categories specified in the funding announcement.

What are "direct costs" and "indirect costs"?

Direct costs support only the project being described in the proposal and nothing beyond that; if the project did not exist, neither would these costs. **Indirect costs** are costs that are necessary to complete a project but that will not support only that project. These costs exist for your organization even if the proposal does not get awarded.

What are the typical budget categories for direct costs?

The typical budget categories for direct costs are salaries, fringe benefits, and consultants; travel/

transportation; equipment; supplies; and activities. Table 6.2 defines these typical budget categories; however, make sure you consult the funding announcement to see what budget categories the funder has outlined before creating your budget outline.

Table 6.2. Typical budget categories for direct costs

BUDGET CATEGORIES FOR DIRECT COSTS	DESCRIPTION						
Salaries, Fringe Benefits, and Consultants	The names, salaries, and fringe benefits of staff proposed to work on the project in a technical, management, operations, or administrative role. For consultants, make sure to indicate their role(s). For both staff and consultants, indicate each person's daily rate and number of days.						
	Fringe benefits include the paid vacation time, statutory taxes, medical coverage, and any other benefits you may pay for staff. Fringe benefits are typically a percentage value of the salaries.						
Travel/Transportation	Travel conducted specifically for the project, including the origin, destination, and brief description of the purpose of the trip. Travel costs should include costs for the method of travel (e.g., plane, bus, vehicle), per diem (i.e., daily living expenses such as meals, taxis, and lodging) based on the organization's travel policy, and mileage costs. Make sure per diem rates follow any funder guidelines.						
Equipment	Items needed to implement the project, such as vehicles. Generally, items with a value greater than \$5000 are considered equipment and less than \$5000 supplies (depending on the funder and agreement).						
Other Direct Costs, Including Activities	Other direct costs include supplies (e.g., computers, office supplies, or mobile phones), printing and copying, shipping, security, and communications, among other costs that will directly support the project.						
	Activity costs are for project activities such as trainings, production of manuals or materials, outreach, and campaigns. Each activity may have multiple costs listed under it, such as:						
	• Outreach:						
	- Condoms						
	- Counselor stipends						

How do we determine the direct cost amounts?

The first cost to estimate is staff time. Look through the potential activities in your proposal outline (see Tip Sheet 4: How to Design Your Proposal) or proposal drafts. Break down each activity into individual steps and think about which staff will be needed to complete each one. Then estimate the number of days it will take each staff member to accomplish the activity. Once you have developed the staff estimate for each activity, total them to come up with an overall estimate of staff time for the project. Sometimes, it is helpful to create a table that lists proposed activities and the staff needed to accomplish them to confirm that all activities and staff have been included. Ensure that you include time for the technical, operations, management, financial, and administrative teams, as needed.

In addition to staff time, also budget for these direct cost categories:

- Consultants (people contracted to do work outside the capacity of your organization)
- Subagreements with partner organizations you will contract to do work
- Equipment
- Travel
- Conferences, trainings, and meetings (including meeting space rental, catering, and other meeting costs)
- Other direct costs, including mailing/delivery/ shipping, printing, mobile phone airtime, etc.

It is helpful to go activity by activity to determine the costs associated with each one. Table 6.3 provides an example of a table that can be developed for each activity to account for the associated direct costs, including staff time.

Tips for Budgeting for Staffing

The following points are important to think about when budgeting for staff time:

- Account for the time staff will need to attend meetings, trainings, or new-hire orientations. It may be helpful to reference the time allocations you outlined when developing the staffing and management plan.
- Consider whether any staff members will be ex-pats (i.e., expatriates, who are people living outside of their native country), as they may have additional associated costs.
- Ensure that you consider costs that may not be obvious, such as time needed for project management and oversight, as well as planning and coordination of activities.

- Be realistic about the amount of time that
 will be required for project management
 and monitoring and evaluation. This can vary
 depending on the project's complexity, the
 funder's expectations about communication and
 oversight, and the degree of difficulty expected
 around implementation.
- Realistically estimate how long each task will take; otherwise, if your proposal is funded, you may find yourself without sufficient resources to cover staff time during each project year.
- It is better to scale back on the activities themselves rather than not have the staff time needed to implement them. Remember that your organization will be accountable to the funder to complete all funded activities and will need the human resources to complete them.

Table 6.3. Example table that can be used to estimate direct costs, including staff time

ACTIVITY	BUDGET NEEDS	NOTES				
Adapt outreach training curriculum (Activity 2.1)	- Time for technical expert to adapt - Focus group discussions with stakeholders	Copyediting and layoutPrinting curriculumPilot testing	I time in quarter I			
Deliver outreach training (Activity 2.2)	 Travel for outreach workers Training venue Accommodation for all participants and trainers 	Food and refreshmentsTraining materials	I time in each of 3 districts in quarter 2			
Launch outreach workers in districts (Activity 2.3)	- Stipend for outreach workers - Transportation costs for outreach workers	 Printing costs for job aids Time for supervisors and supervisory meetings 	Ongoing cost beginning in quarter 3			

What are some line items for indirect costs?

Indirect costs — those costs required to implement a project but difficult to attribute to a specific project — include office rent, utilities, shared bank accounts, and legal fees.

How are indirect costs calculated?

There are two ways to present indirect costs—as a percentage of all costs based on a negotiated indirect rate (e.g., NICRA) or charging the indirect costs as direct costs (see section "How are indirect costs calculated?").

Larger organizations usually combine all indirect costs and determine a percentage rate that will be charged to each project for all indirect services. Smaller organizations tend to list out these indirect costs and determine what percentage of that cost it would be fair to charge to each project—thus turning an indirect cost into a direct one. For example, with an item such as office rent, an organization may count the number of staff within the organization and look at who works on each project run by the organization. Each project would then be charged a monthly rental fee based on the proportion of staff from the entire office working on that specific project. Staff who support many projects may be counted as half or a quarter of a staff member. Utilities or benefits could be handled the same way. Legal fees might be split by the number of projects requiring legal services. Whatever method you use to split indirect costs, you will need to document it within the budget narrative (described in the section "What is a budget narrative?").

Note that if your organization decides to create an indirect cost rate, you will need to check with the funder regarding their restrictions on what can be included in an indirect rate AND what type of documentation is needed for approval of the rate. For example, the U.S. Government has an established process for determining an indirect rate and requires

Tips for Developing Budgets

- Confirm the required currency for the budget with the funder or the prime organization.
- Use historical, actual costs from previous projects to inform your current costs.
- Remember to budget for items such as staff benefits, insurance, and indirect costs.
- Consider whether costs will remain the same each year, and include a small increase in costs (such as inflation), if needed.
- Make sure your budget is consistent across unit costs. For example, if refreshments and meeting space costs for a half-day meeting for 30 people in your city cost US\$25 per person for one meeting, do not charge US\$30 per person for another meeting in the same city.

documentation, such as an audit, to support the proposed rate. In addition, once the rate is established, it must be consistently used across all projects, regardless of the funder.

How do we know what budget total is allowed?

In **Tip Sheet 1:What to Look for in a Funding Announcement**, a budget "ceiling" and "floor" were defined as the largest or smallest amount, respectively, that an organization can receive through the proposal. When developing a budget, it is important to stay between those two numbers (or within the "budget range") specified by the funder.

What are unallowable costs?

When listing out costs, make sure that you consult the funder guidelines or the prime partner for any costs that may be unallowable. For example, the U.S. Government does not allow programs to charge for alcohol or entertainment costs, fundraising activities, or lobbying of the U.S. Government. Each funder has different rules, and it is important to know these prior to completing the budget.

How should we negotiate the budget with partners?

As noted in **Tip Sheet 3: Partnering for Proposals**, negotiating the scope of work and budget for a partner is complex. When negotiating a budget amount, begin with the proposed scope of work and develop a rough estimate of the costs. Use this value as a starting point to begin discussions around the budget with the partner. Remember that the partner likely has a better sense of costs within their area of expertise, but the total costs for all partners will need to be within the ceiling provided. Carefully check subpartner budgets to make sure that there is no duplication in activities or staffing between the partner(s) and the prime organization.

What is a budget narrative/justification?

A budget narrative is a document that accompanies the budget and provides details on what is included in the budget and how you arrived at the total cost. It can also be called a budget justification, as it provides a short justification for each cost and some detail as to how the cost is budgeted. The document is typically organized by the major cost categories from the budget, and it links costs back to the goals and objectives in the technical narrative. Table 6.4 outlines cost categories and what types of details might be expected.

Table 6.4. Cost categories and associated details to be included in the budget narrative/justification

COST CATEGORY	DETAILS
Salaries	A list of positions with a short description of the responsibilities within the project and the amount of time (shown either as a percentage or the number of days in a year) that the staff will work on the project. State how the rate for each person was determined (based on salary history, local norms, or market rates from similar projects).
Consultants	A list of the consultants needed with a short description of their scope(s) of work and the amount of time (number of days) estimated for them. State how the rate listed in the budget was determined.
Travel/Transportation	List anticipated local transportation costs (buses, taxis) and explain why the rates are reasonable. Consider using historical costs from your organization to justify this cost item.
	List the anticipated trips with a justification for the rate (using an estimate from a travel agent or otherwise) and a justification for the unit cost (e.g., a manager will travel to provide quality assurance four times per year). Make sure that the justification aligns with the organizational travel policy.
Other Direct Costs	For each item listed, explain why the cost is needed and how it is relevant to the project. If the organization has decided to charge indirect costs as direct costs (e.g., rent, utilities, etc.), list the method used to split the cost.
	For activities, list the activity and how you determined the cost. Referring to previous costs is helpful for this category.
Equipment	Explain the need for each category of items and how it will be used in support of the project. Also include how your organization determined the price (from a quotation, previous costs, etc.).
Indirect Costs	Indirect costs can be justified by providing a direct rate approved by a funder (such as a NICRA) or a detailed rationale for why a rate is appropriate.

A budget narrative/justification is not required for the proposal. Should we develop one anyway?

A budget narrative/justification is required by many funders, but not all. Even if it is not required for a particular proposal, it may be useful to note how you determined costs. This can help you develop a budget or budget narrative/justification for future proposals, as well as answer any questions your organization may receive after the proposal is submitted.

What should subpartners consider when developing a budget?

When preparing a budget as a subpartner, check in with the prime organization regarding what costs to

include. For example, if the prime organization chooses to pay for office space rental or all travel, you would not need to include these in your budget. Make sure to follow your organization's policies when discussing and negotiating costs for particular items. For example, follow your organization's travel policies for travel costs and the compensation policy for staff salaries.

As a subpartner, ensure that your final budget is sufficient to carry out the tasks you agree to implement. If a prime organization insists on including activity costs in their budget, ensure that you have a say in how much is budgeted for them.

Lastly, make sure that you can justify all of your costs in order to respond to any questions the prime may have.

RESOURCES

Preparing budgets for USAID:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/E-Module%204%20%20 Preparing%20Budgets%20for%20USAID%20 Assistance%20Applications.pdf

Mango guide to budgeting:

https://www.humentum.org/free-resources/guide/budgeting?

Annex I. Example Budget Template

		Ą	oject N	ame, Star	't Date	Project Name, Start Date to End Date	d)				
FX Rate: US\$1=	23				Pro	Project Year	<u></u>	Project Year	ď	Project Year	Total
<u>-</u>	SALARIES	Name	Mon thly. Salar	% time	ò	Amount (local currency)	ò	Amount (local currency)	Q	Amount (local currency)	Amount
	[List Position Title]					0		0		0	0
	[List Position Title]					0		0		0	0
	Subtotal Salary					0		0		0	0
2.	FRINGE BENEFITS	@XX:XX%	%								
m	CONSULTANTS		Name	Daily Rate	Q		Qty		Qty		
	[Consultant Scope]					0		0		0	0
	Subtotal Consultants					0		0		0	0
4	TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION				Qty		Qty		Qty		
	Local Transport					0		0		0	0
	Domestic (in-country):					0		0		0	0
	International:	LIST EACH LOCATION SEPARATELY	H LOCA	NOIT		0		0		0	0
	Subtotal Travel					0		0		0	0
5.	OTHER DIRECT COSTS (ODCs)										
	Office Expenses		ပိ 	Cost/mo	Š	Amount (local currency)					

Annex I: Example Budget Template (continued)

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0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0		0	0		0	0		
											_					
0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0		0	0		0	0		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0		0	0		0	0		
												Unit				
om/	/mo	/mo	/mo	/mo	/mo	om/		/unit		/			/unit			
							Unit cost			0		Unit			[%X:	
															[@ xx:xx%]	
								List	Trainings	(I) Title/Purpose						s
Office Rent	Office Utilities	Office Supplies	Communications	Printing/Copying	Bank Fees	Vehicle Fuel, Maintenance & Insurance	Equipment/Supplies		Meetings/Workshops/Trainings		Subtotal ODCs	EQUIPMENT	[provide description]	Subtotal Equipment	INDIRECT COSTS	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
												6. EQU			7. IND	TOT













TIP SHEET 7:

DEVELOPING STRONG CAPABILITY STATEMENTS

GLOSSARY

Capability (cape) statement: A written description of who your organization is, what the organization does, the organizational accomplishments, and how the organization is different from competitor organizations One of the best ways to demonstrate that your organization has the skills to complete an activity is by sharing your previous, successful experiences completing similar work. This can be done through a capability statement. A well-written capability statement (also called a "cape" statement) can be an effective way to help your organization win funding awards. They can also be useful in marketing your organization outside of the proposal process, such as during meetings or when speaking with a prime about a subpartner role. Crafting a strong capability statement will take some time and effort, but the format is clear and straightforward. A strong cape statement will set you apart from your competition and position you to be successful with your proposal.

What is a capability statement?

A capability statement is a brief written description of who your organization is, what you do, what work you have done, and how you are different from your competitors. A cape statement should give the reader confidence that your organization has the technical and programmatic experience, expertise, and previous successes to implement an effective program. In addition, it should be written in a very concise and targeted manner (see section "How long should our capability statement be?").

How are capability statements used?

Capability statements are versatile documents that can be adapted for many different uses. Some prime organizations request capability statements from all potential partners to better understand how each organization could contribute to a specific proposal. Most funding opportunities from the U.S. Government require a capability statement (or past-performance statement) from the proposal team. Cape statements can also be used in organizational marketing materials. Additionally, it is a great networking document to leave with an organization to remind them of your organization and its strengths.

What are the components of a capability statement?

Cape statements can be tailored for each proposal, but all strong cape statements include four major components: the core attributes of your organization, past performance, the "differentiators" that make your organization different from other organizations, and data to support your statements. These are described in more detail below.

Core Attributes

Core attributes are the features that make your organization what it is. These include characteristics such as your mission and vision statement, your area(s) of technical expertise, where you work, or the populations you serve. The core attributes are important because they tell the reader who you are as an organization.

Past Performance

Past performance is the results and impact from current and previous projects. It is helpful to include funder names and amounts, if possible, that your organization has been awarded. While the core attributes of an organization may not change, you can and should change the section on past performance based on the anticipated reader. For example, if the cape statement will be read by evaluators for a proposal focused on health in youth populations, then the cape statements should be focused on your work with youth. Alternatively, if the cape statement is targeted toward a general audience for networking purposes, the past-performance section may focus on your largest or most successful accomplishments.

Differentiators

Differentiators are what distinguishes your organization from peer organizations and competitors — what makes it unique. Often, multiple organizations work on similar issues in the same geographic space, so it is important to highlight why your organization is special. This may involve a range of things, such as your approach, your expertise on a particular issue (e.g., prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV), or your access to certain key groups. When coming up with the differentiators for your organization, you may wish to consider responses to the following questions:

- What does our organization offer that competitors do not?
- What skills or expertise does our organization have that our peers or competitors do not?
- How is our organization/approach different from other organizations who do what we do?
- What do we offer that beneficiaries appreciate the most?

Data

Data are important to support or illustrate key points within the cape statement. They can be helpful to show the impact of your work. Remember to present data in a way that is easily understood by the audience and that provides the context of your work. Including

timeframes and showing the impact for beneficiaries are also important. For example, stating that 3,467 youth were tested for HIV sounds impressive, but it does not provide the scale of your work. Instead, this statement could be reworded to say that one in every seven youth in ABC province was tested for HIV within the first year after project initiation, which led to finding 423 new HIV infections among the 3,467 youth tested.

Contact Information

Include your organization's contact information, such as your website or organizational email address, for cape statements that you will leave with a potential partner organization for networking purposes. When including a cape statement in a larger document that already has your organization's contact information, feel free to leave it out.

What makes a compelling capability statement?

A compelling cape statement should be tailored for different audiences. Therefore, it is important to adapt your cape statement each time you share it. Knowing your audience can help you adapt the statement appropriately. The most effective capability statements are concise, convincing, tailored to the audience and specific funding opportunity, and results oriented.

It is also important to demonstrate that your organization has delivered results for beneficiaries. Rather than focusing on outputs such as trainings conducted or manuals produced, try to present the data and previous project results in a way that focuses on how the work has helped beneficiaries. For example, instead of stating the number of HIV tests conducted, state the number of new people linked to care as a result of the testing conducted by the organization.

How do we get started writing (or adapting) a capability statement?

Getting started on a cape statement can be tricky. As a first step, read the funding opportunity document carefully and write down the following information:

- Technical and geographical focus
- Target population
- · Capabilities that need to be demonstrated

You can refer to the reference sheet, or "compliance matrix," you created (described in **Tip Sheet I:What to Look for in a Funding Announcement**) to locate this information as well. Then check the funding announcement to see if there is a suggested format or required information for a capability statement.

Tips for Writing Effective Capability Statements

- Develop multiple cape statements to highlight different technical areas, themes, and geographic areas. Also develop statements highlighting your management and financial capabilities.
- Modify your cape statements for each funding opportunity, as needed.
- Make sure that you update your cape statements as you grow your experience.
 It is useful to have a staff member tasked with updating cape statements on a regular basis.
- Strike a balance between showcasing your organization's strengths and work in a given area and keeping the cape statement very concise. Focus on how to make your point quickly. Too much detail can make it difficult for the reader to get a quick overview of your capabilities.
- Use active voice rather than passive voice (e.g., "Our organization worked with youth on HIV prevention," rather than, "Work with youth on HIV prevention was done by our organization").
- Use simple language and avoid jargon (i.e., overly technical vocabulary).
- Use bullet points to increase readability.
- Provide evidence to back up your statements. Evidence should include specific examples of your past work, the timeframe of that work, what the results were, and how past projects are related to the proposed project.
- Do not forget to include your contact information on cape statements when appropriate.

Once you have this information, use the proposed format, or your own, to begin writing. Highlight your experience in a particular region, country, or technical area, or with a methodology and population.

How long should our capability statement be?

Typically, cape statements are no longer than a few paragraphs and should fit on one page. While short, the statement is full of key details and information to make the case about your previous work. A convincing statement means that the data presented, and the way they are presented, prove that your organization has not only completed this type of work previously, but also that you are well placed to do this type of work again.

A tailored statement takes both the details of the funding opportunity and what is known about the audience into consideration. Review your proposal outline (or, if developing a capability statement for another reason, think about the reason for developing the statement), and think about what data and past performance would best illustrate that you can complete the requested work successfully. Include this information in the capability statement.

Our old cape statements do not seem to fit the current funding opportunity. What should we do?

It is helpful to have several capability statements already developed — focusing on technical areas, regions, and management and financial systems — that can be adapted when funding opportunities are announced. That way, you will not be starting from scratch during the limited time available to write the proposal. In addition, cape statements should always be adapted for their purpose, whether for a proposal for the current funding opportunity or for organizational marketing purposes.

RESOURCES

Strategies for fostering the sustainability of nongovernmental organizations:

https://www.fhi360.org/resource/going-distancestep-step-strategies-foster-ngo-sustainability

Tips for writing capability statements: https://sbccimplementationkits.org/resource-mobilization/resource-mob-home/guidelines-for-researching-and-writing-capabilities-statement/











TIP SHFFT 8:

CAPTURE PLANNING

GLOSSARY

Capture planning: The process of learning about the funding opportunity prior to its release — such as the technical and geographical areas of focus, approximate award amount, eligibility criteria, and potential competitors — and engaging in preparatory work, also before the release of the funding

Follow-on project: When a project that has already been funded and implemented is awarded for another set period of time, whether to the incumbent or another organization

Pre-solicitation notice: Provides advance communication

that a funder will be issuing a funding opportunity

Rebid: A funding opportunity to continue or revise an existing project. As most projects have a set timeframe, a rebid is a funding opportunity for the purpose of continuing to address a larger problem.

Preparing a winning proposal is time-consuming. Yet, there is often only a short amount of time to write the proposal. Therefore, it is helpful to complete some work on the proposal before the funding announcement is released if you know some of the details about the funding opportunity.

What is capture planning?

Work conducted prior to a funding opportunity release is often called "capture planning." Capture planning includes collecting and tracking information about an opportunity before the funding opportunity is released. This may include information about the technical area of focus, the approximate amount of the award, the types of organizations that may be eligible to apply, or the geographic area of focus. In addition, capture planning includes identifying competitors who may also be considering the funding opportunity or prime organizations who may be looking for subpartners. Once you have learned some of these details, you can begin preparatory work on the proposal (see section "What actions can we take before a funding announcement is released?").

How can we find out about a funding opportunity before it is released?

To learn about potential funding opportunities, you can do the following:

- Network with other organizations and funders. In many countries, there are associations of nonprofit organizations, roundtables, or working groups that provide opportunities for organizations to gather to discuss pertinent issues and to network. Additionally, you may network with funders or other organizations through personal, familial, and professional connections. These are wonderful opportunities to ask about potential new funding, strategize around specific technical issues, and listen for hints about future potential funding opportunities. You may also hear of forthcoming opportunities at meetings with funders or in public announcements made by funders.
- Find out when existing projects will end. Through your network, advertisements, or other means, you may learn of programs in your country or region that will be coming to an end. If a project is coming to an end, the funder may put out a rebid of the work, which is a funding opportunity for continuing or revising an existing project in order to continue to address a larger problem. It is useful to find out the end date and proactively prepare to respond to a proposal for a follow-on

project. Most funders try to award new programs immediately after the close of an old one, or they may even build in some overlap between an old and new project. Therefore, to figure out the approximate time when a funding opportunity may be released, work backwards by finding out both the end date of the current project and how long a given funder takes to review and award proposals. For example, say that the donor review and award process takes approximately three months and the time between the release of a funding opportunity and submission is three months. Thus, the time between the release and awarding of a funding opportunity is six months. If the end date of a project is September 30, you might look for a funding opportunity to be released in March if there is to be no overlap in the projects; if there will be some overlap, you might look for it in January. Read pre-solicitation notices. Pre-solicitation notices provide advance communication that a funder (especially the U.S. Government [USG]) will be issuing a funding announcement. Although not always posted, if they are, pre-solicitation notices are posted at least 14 days before a funding announcement and include some information about the forthcoming funding opportunity.

- Read pre-solicitation notices. Pre-solicitation notices Read pre-solicitation notices. Pre-solicitation notices provide advance communication that a funder (especially the U.S. Government) will be issuing a funding announcement. Although not always posted, if they are, pre-solicitation notices are posted at least 14 days before a funding announcement and include some information about the forthcoming funding opportunity.
- Read funder documents and websites. Some funders publish lists of anticipated funding to be released during the year. These typically include the technical area of focus and potential release date for the funding announcement. For example, USAID posts a "USAID Business Forecast" organized by country and updates it quarterly. Other funders include strategies for each technical area of work that give hints regarding future funding, as well as the funder's priorities. Funder websites may also include information about when to check back for potential funding. You can also sometimes sign up for email updates.

What should we try to find out before a funding announcement is released?

While it is helpful to collect as much information as possible, there is some key information to document in the capture process (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. Key information to find out during capture planning

INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION		
Funder/donor overview	Funder's name, mission statement, snapshots of previous funding in the technical area, technical strategies		
Geographical focus and technical strategy	The proposed area of work and the type of work to be done. It is helpful to know whether the funder prefers some approaches over others (e.g., does not typically fund massmedia campaigns and prefers a different social and behavior change approach).		
Issues and hot buttons	Describe the overarching objectives of the funder. Also include any information about what the donor does not usually fund or has spoken poorly of in the past.		
Staffing needs	Will the funder allow foreign staff working outside their country or only local staff? Are there any particular people who have worked for this funder in the past and whose work has been reviewed favorably? What technical or management staff might the project require?		
Competitors	Who are your competitors for this funding opportunity and what are their strengths and weaknesses? If the funding opportunity is a rebid, who is the current implementer?		
Solution	Describe your intended solution to the overarching funder need.		
Teaming partners	Who else should be on the proposal team and why? Whom should we partner with and why?		
Past performance	Which of your organization's past projects will you use in support of the proposal?		

Is it okay to talk to funders about potential and actual funding opportunities?

As noted, you may want to network with funders through formal and informal channels to learn of funding opportunities that may be released soon. However, once funding announcements have been made, be careful to abide by any rules a funder may have. For example, U.S. Government representatives cannot speak about funding opportunities once they have been made public. There are, however, typically opportunities for questions and answers (Q&A) after a funding announcement has been made. The U.S. Government often publishes responses to all questions received in reference to a funding opportunity. However, because the Q&A process is often public,

it may be better to ask some questions before a funding opportunity is released. This is because some questions you ask may let others know your proposed strategy or potential staff. Carefully review questions to ensure that you are not revealing too much information. Also note that there is typically only one opportunity to ask questions and that funders will not respond to any additional questions. Therefore, read the funding announcement carefully to ensure that you think of all of your questions for the Q&A.

What actions can we take before a funding announcement is released?

There are several actions your organization might take prior to the release of a funding announcement. These are detailed in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2. What organizations can do to prepare during capture planning

ACTION	DETAILS
Identify a technical approach	Your team may be able to discuss the strategy you will propose and begin collecting and reviewing the latest technical guidance documents to help ensure that your approach is sound. If the project is a rebid, look for evaluations of the current project or lessons-learned documents. In addition, you may be able to write some of the background sections and identify some data to include. Remember, however, that the funder may choose to change the proposed opportunity in the final announcement, so the strategy you write will need to reflect the funding announcement that is actually released.
Draft job descriptions	If you will need to hire new staff, you can post job descriptions and even potentially begin collecting CVs. You can inform candidates that you are awaiting the release of a funding announcement.
Update CVs, biographies, and capability statements	Staff who will be included on the proposal may be able to update their CVs and write brief biographies highlighting particular skill sets. Additionally, staff may be able to adapt or create new capability statements around the technical area of work.
Develop capability statements	Review existing capability statements in the proposed geographical or technical area (See Tip Sheet 7: Developing Strong Capability Statements) and adapt them based on what you know the funding announcement will include.
Identify partners	Your organization may be able to identify potential partners or organizations who could be subpartners and to begin having conversations about the scope of work. Sometimes, proposals teams are formed prior to the release of a proposal, so you may ask (or ask other organizations) to sign a pre-teaming agreement or partnership letter.
Identify staff to work on the proposal	You may be able to identify staff with availability to work on the proposal. Also, if you find that staff will not be available, you may be able to contract with a consultant to support the proposal development process.

Tip Sheet

RESOURCES

Responding to funding opportunities from USAID:

https://www.usaid.gov/ partnership-opportunities/ respond-solicitation Another key action you can take is to create a tracking system for multiple funding opportunities, such as a business opportunity tracker. This tracker can be a simple Excel spreadsheet that contains information on each funding opportunity you are considering, including the funder name, the status of the funding (i.e., released, not released), and the anticipated release date. Additionally, this tracker can have a "notes" column to keep others up-to-date on any efforts staff are making to learn about the funding opportunity (e.g., conversations with funders, competitors, potential staff). Ideally, the tracker would be updated and reviewed with senior staff responsible for proposal development.

What can subpartners do as part of capture planning?

If your organization hopes to be a subpartner to a certain organization, it may be wise to begin conversations with that organization early to discuss dates, your capabilities, and potential partnerships. In many countries, international nongovernmental organizations invest resources in capture planning and so will have a sense of when new funding announcements may be made. In this way, you can already become part of a proposal team by the time a funding opportunity is released.

You can also offer to sign a "pre-teaming" agreement, which is similar to a teaming agreement but written before a funding notice is released (see **Tip Sheet 3: Partnering for Proposals**). A pre-teaming agreement will not have the same level of information as a teaming agreement, but it can outline a general anticipated scope of work. There may be changes from the time a pre-teaming agreement is signed to when the funding notice is released and a teaming agreement is signed. Know that you can negotiate the scope of work at either stage!













TIP SHEET 9:

HOW TO NETWORK FOR FUNDING SUCCESS

GLOSSARY

Elevator pitch: Introduction to the organization that can be delivered in the time it takes to ride the elevator

Two-pager: A short document that gives a high-level overview of your organization

It is difficult to be proactive about proposal development without knowing about potential funding opportunities, your strengths in comparison to competitors, and the interests of potential funders. Some of the best sources of information regarding new funding opportunities are other organizations or funders themselves. Additionally, most organizations successful in obtaining new funding would agree that having a strong network helps with quickly identifying partners and understanding the competition and your organization's competitive advantage. With time and practice, networking will come naturally to your organization, and the information you learn can be applied to capture planning, identifying new partners, or gathering information on potential competitors. Networking might seem daunting, but there are some basic actions that can support your organization's networking efforts.

What is the role of networking in finding funding?

While some information about potential opportunities and funders can be found in paper materials or online, there is also a lot to be learned through networking. This can consist of individual conversations with funders, other organizations who have been funded by these donors, and others within your industry.

What should we learn about funders?

One of the first things to collect information about is donors who fund projects in your geographical and technical areas. You may need to do a quick scan of the funders in your region and the issues they support by searching funder/donor databases (see Introduction for a list of databases), asking local offices of international corporations if they have corporate social responsibility programs, searching for who funds other projects in your country, and reading the websites or annual reports of known international foundations and governments who invest in your country.

When collecting information about potential funders, you may need to review their annual reports or marketing materials or call them directly. Try to collect the following information:

- Has this donor previously funded work like ours?
- · What are some of this funder's priority issues?

- What types of activities have been funded and not funded?
- What organizations have been funded by this donor?
- Does your organization have any connections with this donor?
- Does the donor have any known funding restrictions?

This information can help you narrow down which funders to keep your eye on for future opportunities or to target for unsolicited proposals. This information can also help address questions in capture planning (see **Tip Sheet 8: Capture Planning**).

How should we approach a donor about funding when there is no request for proposals?

For unsolicited proposals, there will be no funding announcement requesting proposals. Instead, your organization will take the initial step to start a conversation with a donor about funding. Once you have identified an appropriate funder (see section "What should we learn about funders?"), and you believe that that donor may have funding available, contact your network (e.g., a coworker or someone on your professional network who knows the donor well) for help setting up a face-to-face meeting. Prepare for the meeting by doing your research on the funder. Create a "pitch" on how your organization is well suited to help address the problem of interest to them (see section "What should we talk about while networking?"). The first meeting is the opportunity to introduce your organization to the funder and provide them with marketing materials (see Tip Sheet 10: Marketing Your Organization). Once the funder understands your skills and unique value, you can develop a relationship with them and begin conversations about potential funding opportunities.

How and where can we meet people from other organizations?

It can be daunting to think about how to network with new potential partners. Fortunately, networking can often be incorporated into typical professional commitments. Places to connect with other like-minded organizations include:

- Conferences
- Meetings, such as roundtable discussions, funder updates, and technical working group meetings
- Networking events
- Service delivery sites
- · Professional association events
- Fundraising events for similar causes

Since networking encounters in busy settings such as conferences tend to be brief, ask if you can set up a one-on-one meeting afterward to follow up. You can use the following prompts to help ask for a follow-up meeting:

- "I want to learn more about what your organization does."
- "I would like to discuss possible collaboration in areas of mutual interest."
- "I have a particular project relevant to your mission that I would like to discuss with you."

What should we talk about while networking?

When meeting staff from other organizations, you can use your elevator pitch to introduce yourself and your organization. You can also ask the other people questions to understand more about their work. Make sure to collect information about each organization, including:

- Name
- · Technical and geographical areas of work
- Contact names and contact information for follow-up

It is useful to bring business or contact cards with you and to exchange contact information with the people you meet. If you cannot answer a question, just request their information and say that you will check with someone on your team and get back to them with a response. Make sure to write down their question so that you do not forget to follow up.

Tips for Preparing for a Meeting

- Know who will attend the meeting and tailor any talking points or presentations to those attendees.
- Make sure that all members of your team are clear on their role and know the purpose of the meeting.
- Prepare for controversial or difficult questions that might be asked during the meeting.
- Prepare a package of relevant organizational documents, such as the two-pager, recent publications, marketing materials, annual report, success stories, data sheets, etc.
- Discuss the ideal outcome of the meeting with your organization.

If staff within your organization diligently track networking conversations and follow up with organizations soon after meeting their staff, within a few months your organization will have enough information on other organizations and contacts to create a database.

What should we do after networking?

After networking, make some notes about the organization. Include your thoughts on how you might partner with this organization in the future, whether you would like to learn more about a resource that was mentioned, or with which colleagues in your organization you would like to share information about this partner. Lastly, be sure to note if there is to be any follow-up. It is also a good idea to send a note to the contact, even to say, "It was nice to meet you. Please keep in touch."

For staff you requested to speak with afterward, make sure to follow up as soon as possible, ideally within two business days. Contact them with a brief reminder of your conversation and ask for a time to meet or speak. Then, make sure you prepare for the meeting by setting an agenda, bringing the right people with you to explain any organizational strengths or discuss potential partnering, and prepare any materials you may need, such as capability statements or presentations, as appropriate.

RESOURCES

Cobb N, Divine C.Writing business bids and proposals for dummies. Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.; 2016.

Gather intelligence:

https://sbccimplementationkits. org/resource-mobilization/lessons/ gather-intelligence/

Resource mobilization module:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/Resource-Mobilization-Module-Facilitators-Guide.pdf













TIP SHEET 10:

MARKETING YOUR ORGANIZATION

Numerous organizations are working on global development issues. In any given country, many partners are working toward eradicating disease, supporting education, or protecting the environment. Whatever the mission of your organization, it is important to find ways to effectively communicate your mission, vision, and successes and to allow other organizations to learn more about you.

Marketing is one way to share information about your organization with others. It can take many forms, but the essential thing is that marketing materials communicate key information you want the general public and key stakeholders to know about your organization.

What marketing materials should we use?

Most marketing relies on sharing the same basic information through different media, for example, two-pagers, fact sheets, presentations, social media, and elevator pitches. The capability statements described in **Tip Sheet 7: Developing Strong Capability Statements** are another form of marketing material. All should contain similar information about your organization, as appropriate, including:

- · Your organizational mission statement, vision, or tagline
- · Where you work and your main beneficiaries
- · Previous funding awarded to your organization
- · Highlights of organizational successes
- Compelling photos
- · How additional funding can help support the work
- Contact information for your organization, including the website

Once you have this information, it can be shaped into a variety of materials.

Before you begin developing the materials, it is important to think about your audience, as not all of the information listed above needs to appear in every marketing document. In addition, you may adapt some materials for specific audiences, as needed, such as a two-pager on your organization that focuses on a funder's specific interests and a website meant for the general public.

What should our website and social media presence include?

In this age, an online presence for your organization is essential and should include a website and social media accounts appropriate for your context. As most organizations research other organizations for partnering purposes via the Internet, they need to be able to find basic information about your organization online, such as:

- Name and focus area(s) of work
- A description of the organization, perhaps including the mission statement
- Success stories highlighting particularly important work
- · Contact details for your organization
- Key staff who work for your organization and their areas of work
- Key results from your work showing its impact

Keep these materials up-to-date by adding stories and content quarterly, if possible.

What else can we do to keep stakeholders informed about our work?

- Consider developing a listserv for press releases, organizational updates, or a periodic newsletter for stakeholders that showcases the highlights of your work.
- Send key documents (e.g., annual reports, media stories, policy briefs, or other reports) to stakeholders over the listserv or describe highlights of these items.
- If you know a stakeholder is interested in a particular project or technical area, keep them updated on progress by inviting them to project events or meetings. For example, invite them to relevant workshops, planning meetings, or training sessions.
- Consider writing success stories, blog posts, letters to the editor, and other knowledge management pieces to showcase the work of your organization

and keep a broader audience aware of the incredible work your organization is doing.

How can we market our organization in person?

Sometimes you may not have the relevant marketing materials on hand to provide to a stakeholder, or it may be more appropriate to market your organization verbally. This is when you can deliver your "elevator pitch."

The elevator pitch is a compelling introduction to your work that can be delivered in the time it takes to ride an elevator. It is an important marketing piece, as networking can happen at any time, including at unplanned moments. Therefore, it is critical to be able to effectively communicate information about your organization and what you do. Similar to a capability statement, the elevator pitch shares who your organization is, what is unique to it, what it does, and where your organization works. It ends with an "ask" — what you would like the listener to do (see section "What is an 'ask'?").

These components should be adjusted based on who the listener is. A compelling pitch personalizes the issue to the listener (for example, tells someone's individual story) and shares data in an understandable way. The key to delivering an effective elevator pitch is practicing it repeatedly. The elevator pitch is also something that can be delivered by almost anyone in the organization, so it is important to have all staff practice their pitch.

What is an "ask"?

When creating materials for a particular audience, be clear about your "ask" for that audience. The ask is what you would like the audience to do and tells how the action will help your organization or project. It should also always be tailored to the audience. For example, on a website for the general public, the ask might be for readers to donate to your organization to further your work. In a presentation for a funder, your ask might be for a specific sum of money or an in-kind donation of equipment and should include an explanation of how the donation would be used. In an elevator pitch to a funder, the ask might be for an inperson meeting to discuss your organization's approach.

COMPONENTS OF AN ELEVATOR PITCH/TWO-PAGER	DETAILS
Who your organization is	The name of your organization and beneficiary population served
What is unique to your organization	What makes your organization different from others working in the same field (see Tip Sheet 8: Developing Strong Capability Statements , "Differentiators" section under "What are the components of a capability statement?")
What your organization does	The type of work your organization does and where
Call to action	The specific action you would like the audience to take

What is a two-pager?

The two-pager is a versatile document that can be distributed at almost any meeting, networking event, or conference. It is a short (two-page) document that gives a high-level overview of your organization. It

contains the same information as an elevator pitch but in a written format. It can also include a quotation from a staff member or beneficiary to support project/organizational successes, as well as photos to draw readers in.

How and Where to Use Marketing Materials

CONTEXT	MARKETING MATERIAL
Official meeting with a funder	Presentation and two-pager
Technical working group meeting with a potential partner	Elevator speech and two-pager
General awareness campaign of your work	Email with a link to your website
Professional association event with a potential funder	Elevator speech with an "ask" to meet again in person

RESOURCES

Pitching your program: http://www.ngoconnect. net/documents/592341/0/ External+Relations+Pitching Social media marketing https://www.usaid.gov/sites/ default/files/documents/1866/ SMGuide4CSO.pdf Strategies and tips for marketing your nongovernmental organization http://www.ngopulse.org/article/ marketing-ngos-strategies-and-tips















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Advancing Partners & Communities

1616 Fort Myer Drive, 16th Floor Arlington, VA 22209 USA Phone: 703-528-7474 Fax: 703-528-7480

www.advancingpartners.org