



Preparing a proposal for a new project

Before you begin a new project you need to be clear about what you want to do and why. You have to be able to explain your project to others, and a good way to do this is to prepare a **project proposal**. This explains what you are trying to do and why there's a need for your project. It aims to explain the difference your project will make, how you intend to make it happen and who besides you supports the project.

Think about who will read your proposal and why. Its purpose is to clearly explain why you need to do this work, so it can grow into a real project. Don't expect that people reading your proposal will necessarily know your concerns or needs, or understand the problems you are facing. Be passionate and be realistic.

When working together as a group, you really need to make sure you're all aiming for the same thing. It is important that everyone involved in your project has ample chance to add to and agree your proposal describes your ideas accurately.

Your proposal can help you gain support for your project.

These supporters might include funders, your local authority or free professional advisors. Or be residents or community groups who might want to join or support you. A clear proposal can also help people already in your group get more involved. It can become the basis of a funding application or business plan.

A proposal needs to be short — no more than one to two pages long.

It must be easy to read, using clear everyday language and without too much detail. It is good to indicate the date the proposal was made, when the project might begin and how long it might last.

Getting started on writing your Project Proposal.

On the next page is a step by step guide of what you might include. You don't necessarily need to add everything that's suggested. If you don't know something, say so and explain you are looking for advice. Your proposal is a working document and will change over time. The ideas below are to help you begin.

- Raise your ideas at a group event, like a forward planning meeting.
- Leave enough time for discussion and try to get everyone's comments.
- Choose one person or a small team to go away to write up your ideas
- Circulate it for wider comments - ensure everyone affected has their say.
- Ask someone not in your group to check it makes sense to 'outsiders'.
- Have everyone's agreement 'minuted', or recorded in writing. Verbal agreements can be a problem if there is any dispute or conflict later on.
- Trustees, or your senior management body, must agree it, especially where there are legal or financial issues. Don't assume they will do this.



Give your project a name.

The right name will help other people remember your project. Then add ...

1. Your aims, and your ambitions

Give a brief overview about what is new or important about what you are trying to do. Say what activities could be happening, who will benefit, and why. Add what it might feel like to become a part of the project. Sell your idea, make it exciting.

2. Show there's a need for your idea

Explain why you need to begin this new project. Describe your current situation or activities. Be clear about the problems your project is trying to solve. Point out background information that might support the need for your project, such as what your community tells you, your own research, local statistics or official reports.

3. Show the idea has wide local support

Describe where the idea for the project came from. If you have already done some consultation explain who you asked and how. Describe what local people or organisations think of the project, and what help they have offered.

4. Explain how you can make the project work

Describe who you are, what things your group has achieved or relevant skills and experience you can call on. Explain briefly how much it might cost, and the resources you might need, such as staff, volunteers, transport or equipment to make it work. Indicate where you expect to get the resources you need to pay for and sustain the project. Say when it might start and when it might be completed.

5. Add positive things that will result from your project

These are your project 'outcomes'. Describe as simply and clearly as you can the most important change from your project and the difference it will make: This might be for your group, for your community or local residents. Say if it will improve education, create jobs or care for the environment for example.

6. Your project could help others achieve their aims too.

Think about how you can help others (who might support you) do their job better. Consider how your project fits in with things like the priorities of funding bodies, existing services or future plans of the local authority, government initiatives, the work of other organisations and of any potential partners. Convince others your project will promote social justice, equal opportunities, or remove barriers to a fairer society. Be passionate about your commitment to make a difference.

That's your proposal completed.

Now start to share it with others. Keep it as short and interesting to read as you can. It's only a proposal at this stage, and you can add in all the detail later.