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Guide for Designing Results-Oriented Projects and Writing Successful Proposals

International
Planned
Parenthood
Federation
WESTERN HEMISPHERE REGION, INC.

Acknowledgments

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About IPPF/WHR

The vision of IPPF/WHR is to build upon a network of local and global partnerships to advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, men and young people. IPPF/WHR is one of six Regional Offices of the International Planned Parenthood Federation and is a secretariat to 45 member associations in the Western Hemisphere. For our partners, IPPF/WHR offers technical assistance and training in a variety of capacity-building and programmatic areas, including proposal writing and evaluation. To find out more, visit our Web site at ***www.ippfwhr.org*** or contact us at ***info@ippfwhr.org***

Introduction

Pressing health or social issues exist in your community, and your organization wants to address them. You may wonder, "How can I design a project that will be successful and convince a donor to fund it?"

This guide unites the processes of project design and proposal writing for two purposes: to help you design a project that is results-oriented and that will appeal to donors. The guide is aimed at organizations seeking funding for a medium- to large-size project; however, some of the suggestions in the guide are also useful when developing a concept paper or smaller project.

In this guide, we introduce tools for designing a project and focus on integrating monitoring and evaluation from the beginning. We also describe what sections to include in the proposal, give examples, and provide tips on what donors are looking for.

The proposal format presented here encompasses the elements sought by many donors. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that many donors have their own format for proposals that may differ from this one and should be followed closely.

Examples in this guide relate to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) projects and are grounded in IPPF/WHR's extensive experience working with our affiliates and other nongovernmental organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. The principles presented in the guide can be useful for organizations developing any type of project, whether you will seek funding for it or not.

Keys to Success in Project Development

So you have a project in mind? Consider these "keys to success" before starting the process of designing your project and preparing a proposal document.

Collaboration

We recommend that, in organizations where programmatic, evaluation, and finance activities are separated, staff with knowledge of these areas develop the project together. Today, program managers and funders alike are concerned with the results of a project and the effects that the project will have on the focus populations. To show results, a project needs to incorporate a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluation from the beginning. Involving a staff person with knowledge of finance will also enable the project to have realistic cost estimates.

When different staff members provide their input and take on various tasks, designing and developing a project and proposal will be easier. One person should be designated as the main project organizer to assemble all the information received from other staff members. To start the process, hold a brainstorming and planning meeting with all collaborators in your organization.

Increasingly, organizations working to promote health and well-being are forming partnerships or collaborating to reach a larger population, address a variety of related needs, or pool their combined skills, expertise and resources. Consider what other groups or "stakeholders" your organization may want to collaborate with from the beginning.

You may wish to collaborate with outside experts or other organizations that have experience with a particular type of work or with a focus population you wish to serve, and with representatives of the focus population as well. Involving potential beneficiaries will help determine their needs and provide input on the appropriateness of the project.

Create a work plan for project development

When developing a project, the project team should set dates for the completion of the different tasks described in this guide, and assign tasks as appropriate.

Develop a concept paper

Many donors do not accept unsolicited proposals but will accept or request a "letter of inquiry" or a "concept paper." These documents are much shorter than full proposals (generally two to four pages). From reviewing these shorter documents, donors can determine whether your project fits into their funding priorities. Writing a letter of inquiry or a concept paper first will save you time because you will have to prepare full proposals only for donors that are interested in your project. See the concept paper format at the end of this guide.

Focus on funders

As you are developing a concept paper or proposal, you may have a particular donor in mind. If not, conduct preliminary research on potential donors while you are developing the proposal.

To identify local or international donors that may be interested in your project, consider donors who have funded your organization in the past or organizations doing similar work to yours, and who are interested in your geographical area. For information on U.S.-based charitable foundations, an excellent resource is the Foundation Center (http://www.fdncenter.org).

When developing your proposal, keep in mind a potential donor's specific interests and requirements, and think about the reasons why the donor may be interested in your project or organization. Request and review any information that a donor has on its programs, priorities and requirements, such as guidelines or publications. Search for and visit the donor's Web site, if possible. Show that your proposed project complements and does not duplicate other work that the donor has funded.

You will need to be proactive in selling your project idea to donors. If you have questions, need clarification or want to discuss your ideas, contact the donors. Some donors welcome the opportunity to communicate with potential grantees, while others do not. This depends on many factors, such as the number of staff and grantees that a donor has. Personal contact can be instrumental in developing a relationship with a donor.

It is also important to remember that donors receive a large number of project proposals and can fund only a limited number of them. Why should a donor provide your organization with funds instead of another applicant? Your proposal needs to describe concisely the pressing problems that your project will address, and convince the donor that your organization can successfully carry out the project.

Increasingly, donors are interested in joining other donors in funding a single project. Donors may request that there be "counterpart" funding from the implementing organizations or funding "leveraged" from other sources. Your request for funds may have more appeal if you can show that other donors have already committed themselves to, or expressed interest in, the proposed project.

If you plan to send your proposal to a donor that has its own proposal format, follow the format closely. Your chances of success will increase if you present all the information that a donor requests. A donor may specify the sections of a proposal, its length, and what attachments describing your organization you should include.

Be aware that most donors have deadlines for accepting proposals, which are based on when their board meetings will occur. Find out when the deadlines are.

Questions to Consider When Researching a Donor

- What are the donor's priorities and organizational values?
- What kind of projects has the donor funded in the past?
- Where has the donor funded projects?
- Are there expenses that the donor will not fund?
- What are the proposal guidelines?
- When is the due date for proposals?
- What are the budget levels that the donor will fund?

Check for clarity and consistency

At different stages in the development of a proposal, you may wish to ask someone who knows your organization, but is not involved in the writing process, to review the proposal, provide comments, and think about questions that a potential donor may have. Once a proposal is finished, it is essential to proofread the document and check for consistency in terminology and concepts, especially when several people have been involved in its development.

A. Project Design

1. Conducting a Needs Assessment

What is a needs assessment?

A needs assessment often forms the basis of project conceptualization and implementation. It allows for the identification of the needs of the community or focus population and helps in the design and development of a strategy to address those needs appropriately.

Needs assessments are generally conducted for two purposes:

(1) *Pre-project design*. A needs assessment is often used to help an organization fully understand a problem and ways to address it. A needs assessment for pre-project design highlights issues or factors within a community, organization or service delivery setting that may interfere with or facilitate a proposed intervention. Ideally, your project's implementation strategies should be based on the results of a pre-project design needs assessment.

(2) *Baseline assessment*. This is often conducted to collect data on a focus population prior to, or at the beginning of, a project or intervention. It is used to establish preliminary information or data against which to measure change. Specified indicators from a baseline assessment are later compared to those of an endline (or end-of-project) assessment to determine the effects of the project.

If needs assessments are well designed, they can frequently serve both purposes.

When to conduct a needs assessment

In an ideal world, the needs assessment would be done prior to writing the proposal, but frequently this does not occur for a variety of reasons. Your organization may have worked extensively with the same issues in similar populations or may already have a needs assessment that is based on previous studies.

You may find that your organization needs to seek funding in order to conduct the needs assessment and collect baseline data prior to the implementation phase of your project. In this case, you will need to include costs for the needs assessment in your proposal.

In practice, needs assessments are often used to refine project strategies; develop messages for information, education, and communication (IEC) activities; and further tailor the project to community needs.

Methodologies

Before designing a needs assessment and to help determine the types of assessment methods to select, consider your time frame, information already available, and the resources (technical, financial, and human) needed to implement the different methodologies.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used for needs assessments. The table below lists different types of data sources.

Sources of Quantitative Data
• service statistics • surveys • inventories of supplies and equipment • project reports and evaluations

Sources of Qualitative Data
• focus group discussions • semi-structured interviews • key informant interviews • observations • review of materials/documents

Who should be a part of the needs assessment?

A needs assessment can be conducted by program managers and internal researchers, or researchers from outside your organization. Involving potential beneficiaries (such as youth) and collaborators is crucial for conducting your needs assessment.

One methodology for involving your focus population is Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), in which the beneficiaries themselves do the data collecting and analysis. This methodology can be used to assess the quality of existing services and how they are used, the health needs of the community, and the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of the focus population. Data collection techniques for PRA include the following:

Data Collection Techniques for Participatory Rural Appraisal

- free-listing
- ranking and scoring
- matrix ranking
- seasonal calendars
- clinic-flow charts
- timelines
- activity charts
- body mapping
- social mapping
- census mapping

One of the principal advantages of this participatory approach is that it involves community members, key stakeholders, and potential collaborators from the outset. By encouraging their active participation in assessing, analyzing and acting on identified needs and priorities, these participants are not only empowered but also become invested collaborators in all subsequent activities.

How is the needs assessment linked to proposal writing?

Important findings or results from a needs assessment should be summarized in the "Introduction and Justification" section of your project proposal, whenever possible. A brief description of the needs assessment and subsequent findings strengthens your identification of the problem and bolsters your organization's ability to address it.

A description of a baseline needs assessment that will be conducted as part of the project should be included in the "Activities," "Monitoring and Evaluation," and "Budget" sections of your proposal.

Other resources on needs assessment

Chambers R. The origins and practice of participatory rural appraisal. World Development 1994;22(7):953–69.

De Koning K, Martin M, eds. Participatory research in health: issues and experiences. London: Zed Books; 1996.

Patton M. Qualitative evaluation and research methods. London: Sage Publications; 1990.

Soriano F. Conducting needs assessments: a multi-disciplinary approach. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; 1995.

Witkin BR, Altschuld JW. Planning and conducting needs assessments: a practical guide. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; 1995.

2. Developing a Conceptual Model

Another initial step in designing a successful project is to develop a conceptual model of your project. While this step is often neglected, it is an important tool for ensuring that your project design is consistent, coherent and theoretically based. The conceptual model serves as the foundation for your project and will help you when writing objectives and selecting appropriate indicators.

What is a conceptual model?

A conceptual model, sometimes called a conceptual framework, is a statement of how the proposed project will achieve the desired results *in theory*. Your conceptual model should explain how the interventions being proposed would effect the desired change. It clarifies the relationship between the intervention strategies, the expected results and the goal of your project by demonstrating the theoretical link between them. The conceptual model is often presented as a diagram with arrows indicating directions of change.

Many different types of conceptual models are available in the sexual and reproductive health literature. A conceptual model that has been used widely in the field of reproductive health is the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) model. This conceptual framework theorizes that strategies designed to increase knowledge will affect attitudes, which will then lead to positive changes in behavior.

Other models based on theories of behavior change (for example, the Health Belief Model and the Theory of Reasoned Action) have gained wider acceptance in recent years. These models incorporate the idea that interventions have to do more than increase knowledge in order to change attitudes and behavior, and thus focus on practices and skills development.

Once you have reviewed the theories of behavior change or other theories that relate to your program area, you will need to determine whether your project is related to any of these. You may decide that one of the theoretical models in the literature is appropriate to inform your own project, or you may decide to develop your own.

Overview of a Conceptual Model

Strategies/ Interventions → Intermediate Results → Goal

Developing a project conceptual model

The information collected from a needs assessment will be useful in developing your conceptual model. If you have not conducted a needs assessment, you will want to document the following information: the environment, including cultural factors that will likely play a role in your project; the problem you plan to address; relevant health behavior theories; your ideas about how to resolve the problem; and research findings related to your ideas.

Conceptual models are often depicted graphically as moving from left to right to show the relationship between the interventions, results and goal. However, in developing your conceptual model, you should start by identifying the goal of your project, that is, the specific problems that you will address (on the far right of the diagram). Then you identify the intermediate steps (in the middle of the diagram) that are important in affecting the problem and feasible to change. The challenge is to design relevant interventions (on the left side) for achieving these goals.

The pathways between the graphical boxes in your project's conceptual model (represented by the arrows) need to be clear and plausible. Ideally, these should be based on empirical evidence, but at least they should be based on logic, on the experience of program managers or members of the focus population, or on theory.

To help identify the *goal* of your project, ask yourself:

- What are the specific problems affecting the focus population?
- Which of these problems are feasible for our organization to contribute to changing?

To help identify the *intermediate results* of your project, ask yourself:

- What changes must happen in the focus population to reduce the problem?

To help identify the *interventions* of your project, ask yourself:

- What activities can we carry out that will help lead to these changes?
- Why do we think that our activities will accomplish these changes?

A common problem when designing a new project is that staff tend to think of interventions first, and then develop the goal and objectives to fit those interventions. Remember that interventions should always be driven by the objectives: develop a conceptual model, identifying the problem first, then changes that need to occur to reduce the problem, and then the interventions that will lead to those changes. These steps will help you avoid this common mistake.

The following page shows a conceptual model of a project that aims to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies and STI/HIV infection among young people through the provision of youth-friendly services. You may want to replicate the format used for this conceptual model to guide the process of developing your own model.

Other resources on conceptual models

DiClemente RJ, Crosby RA, Kegler MC. Emerging theories in health promotion practice and research: strategies for improving public health. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers; 2002.

Earp JA, Ennett ST. Conceptual models for health education research and practice. Health Education Research 1991;6(2):163–71.

Glantz K, Lewis FM, Rimer B, eds. Health behavior and health education: theory, research, and practice. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers; 1997.

Sample Conceptual Model: Youth-Friendly Services

3a.	3b.	2.	1.
What can your program do that will make the changes in Step 2 happen?	**Will the actions in Step 3a lead directly to the change in Step 2, or is there another logical step in between?**	**What changes must occur for the long-term goal to happen?**	**START HERE!** **What is the long-term goal?**
Conduct community outreach to promote clinics to young people. Refurbish clinics to meet youth-friendly criteria. Train all clinic staff in how to work with young people. Acquire contraceptives, particularly condoms.	Young people know where clinics are, and what services are offered. Clinics are arranged to be “youth-friendly.” Clinic staff have knowledge and positive attitudes about and skills for working with young people. Clinics have a full range of contraceptive methods available, particularly condoms.	Young people come to the clinics. Young people are satisfied with the services they receive in the clinics. Young people are counseled in how to use contraception (particularly condoms), and are provided contraceptives. Young people have the skills to negotiate and use contraception, particularly condoms. Sexually active young people use contraception correctly, particularly condoms.	**Reduced incidence of unwanted pregnancy and STI/HIV infection among sexually active young people ages 10 to 24 in City X**

3. Developing a Logical Framework

Following the development of a project conceptual model, an important step in designing a project is to prepare a logical framework. We recommend that you complete the logical framework *before* you start writing the proposal. Organizational staff who work in programs and evaluation should collaborate on the design of a logical framework.

a. What is a logical framework?

Similar to the conceptual model, the logical framework is a method for organizing your project graphically. In fact, your conceptual model will be an important tool in creating your logical framework, which in turn will be critical in writing several sections of your proposal, including the "Project Goal and Objectives," "Activities" and "Monitoring and Evaluation" sections.

While the conceptual model represents a theoretical overview of your project, the logical framework provides details of what your project will accomplish, how it will accomplish it and how you will know whether it has been accomplished. In addition to helping you write your proposal, your logical framework will be useful in implementing your project because it provides a detailed visual overview of your project and how it will be evaluated. A logical framework includes:

- What problem you will contribute to solving (goal)
- What you wish to achieve (objectives)
- How you propose to do it (activities)
- How you will show that the objectives were reached (results and process indicators)

The following items are also useful in a logical framework:

- Means of verification of indicators (data sources)
- How often you will collect data (frequency)
- Who will collect data (person/department/organization responsible)

Developing a logical framework

Many international development organizations, such as IPPF, UNFPA and USAID, have their own logical framework formats. While we present the IPPF/WHR format in this guide, it is important to identify whether your potential donor has a required format. If so, follow the instructions of the donor closely.

The next page presents an example of the logical framework format used by IPPF/WHR, followed by a description of how to complete the different sections of the logical framework.

Refer to your completed conceptual model when developing the logical framework. Reviewing your conceptual model from right to left will help you to complete the project goal, objectives and activities sections of the logical framework.

b. *IPPF/WHR Logical Framework*

Title of Project:
Goal:

Objective 1:				
Key Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification	Frequency	Person Responsible
	Process:			
1.1				
1.2				
1.3	***Results:***			
1.4				

Objective 2:				
Key Activities	Indicators	Means of Verification	Frequency	Person Responsible
	Process:			
2.1				
2.2				
2.3	***Results:***			
2.4				

c. Writing a project goal

The project goal refers to a general, often lofty, long-term change, such as a change in health behavior or in public policy. Due to limitations in the scope of the intervention, geographic coverage, and available resources, a single project usually will not be able to achieve the goal by itself, but will *contribute* to the achievement of the goal. Thus, you will usually not attempt to measure your goal during the life of your project.

Tips for writing goals:

- Refer to the major health or social problem
- Refer to your focus population and location
- Use clear terminology

Be mindful of the terminology that you use. A particular term or phrase may be understood by your organization, but not by others outside of it. In this case, place a definition in parentheses or in a footnote. For example, if your project seeks to improve "social insertion of adolescent mothers," then you may want to clarify with "(continuation of schooling, involvement in income-generating activities, and access to ongoing health services)."

The following are examples of appropriate project goals related to sexual and reproductive health. Examples of corresponding objectives, indicators and activities will be presented later in the guide.

HIV project—Sample goal:

To reduce incidence of HIV infection among young people ages 15 to 24 in Country X.

Emergency contraception project—Sample goal:

To reduce unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and morbidity among women experiencing gender-based violence in Community Y.

Advocacy project to address unsafe abortion—Sample goal:

To reduce maternal mortality and morbidity related to unsafe abortion by changing laws and policies to favor access to safe and legal abortion services for women in Country Z.

Research and dissemination project—Sample goal:

Increase the capacity of youth-serving organizations to implement more effective peer education programs for preventing HIV infection among sexually active young people (ages 15 to 24).

The following table presents a poorly written goal.

Example of a poorly written goal
Increase knowledge about sexual and reproductive health in Mexico.
Why is this goal poorly written?
• This goal does not refer to the major health or social problem to be addressed. Organization staff should ask themselves, "*Why* is it important to increase *knowledge*? What do we think will happen if knowledge is increased?" • This goal does not provide information about the focus population; it is too general.
How can this goal be improved?
Improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people ages 15 to 24 in City X, through the reduction of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

d. Writing specific objectives for your project

Objectives refer to the intermediate changes desired among the focus population or in their environment, and describe the expected results of your project. Objectives are more specific than goals and refer to a specific location and time period. Unlike a goal, which a project will only partially *contribute* to achieving, the project objectives **do** need to be achievable and measurable within the scope of the project.

Later, as the project is implemented, you should report on each objective and provide data demonstrating the degree to which the project objectives specified in the proposal were met. In other words, the project objectives will need to be measured *by the project*.

When writing project objectives, refer to your conceptual model. Your project objectives are represented in the intermediate results section of the model. Well-written objectives identify:

- WHO will be reached
- WHAT change will be achieved
- IN WHAT TIME PERIOD the change will be achieved
- WHERE (in what location)

It is important that objectives be realistic, not just impressive, as lofty, unfounded objectives undercut the credibility of the entire project.

FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVE

Objectives should be ***"SMART"***:

- ***S****pecific* to avoid differing interpretations
- ***M****easurable* to monitor and evaluate progress (preferably numerical)
- ***A****ppropriate* to the problems, goal and your organization
- ***R****ealistic* achievable, yet challenging and meaningful
- ***T****ime-bound* with a specific time for achieving them

When writing objectives, choose action verbs that indicate a change and the direction that change will take. Avoid verbs that refer to activities or implementation strategies. Appropriate and inappropriate verbs are presented in the table that follows.

The following are examples of project objectives related to the goals presented earlier.

Appropriate Verbs for Objectives

- Decrease
- Increase
- Strengthen
- Improve
- Enhance

Inappropriate Verbs for Objectives

- Train
- Provide
- Produce
- Establish/Create
- Conduct

HIV project—Sample objective:

By the end of the first project year, increase knowledge and skills of staff in five clinics in City X in how to counsel young clients (ages 15 to 24) about HIV prevention, with emphasis on condom use and negotiation.

Emergency contraception project—Sample objective:

Over a two-year period in service delivery sites in Community Y, increase access to emergency contraception among women experiencing gender-based violence.

Advocacy to address unsafe abortion—Sample objective:

At the end of the three-year project, increase awareness among national policymakers (legislators and Ministry of Health officials), women's groups and other nongovernmental organizations of the consequences and extent of unsafe abortion in Country Z and strategies to address it (emergency contraception, post-abortion care, and safe abortion services).

Research and dissemination project—Sample objective:

By the end of the two-year project, increase the availability of information about the effectiveness of community-based versus center-based peer education programs in increasing condom use among sexually active youth (ages 15 to 24).

The following is an example of a poorly written objective.

Example of a poorly written objective

Train 60 peer educators to promote the ability to practice safer sex.

Why is this objective poorly written?

- This objective refers to a strategy or activity, not a change sought among a focus population. Why does the organization want to train peer educators—what change is sought?
- This objective is not time-bound: in what time period is the change expected to occur?
- The focus population is not specified: among whom and where will the change occur? For this project, is the change to be achieved among the peer educators or among the people the educators will reach?
- The terminology is not clear: what does the ability to practice safe sex mean for this organization? How will the organization recognize it when it occurs? For example, will it be that the focus population is abstaining, is having sex with one faithful partner only, or is using a condom correctly and consistently?

How can this objective be improved?

At the end of the three-year project, increase condom use among sexually active young people (ages 15 to 24) in Community X.

In project objectives, targets should be justified

When writing objectives it is sometimes possible to specify the amount of change expected to occur—in other words—to define a specific target. Some donors, in fact, may require the project to define specific targets. Where this is not a requirement, targets should be specified *only* if baseline data are available and the target is based on prior experience.

For example, if a Demographic and Health Survey or another population-based survey revealed that the contraceptive prevalence among women of reproductive age is 10% in a given area, and a similar project in the past achieved a 5-point increase over two years, it may be realistic to choose a similar increase (from 10% to 15%) or a slightly higher increase if you hypothesize that the strategies in your new project will lead to that increase. *If you do not have reliable data or strong prior experience on which to base your targets, do not include specific targets.*

Be careful when specifying a target amount of change in an objective. If the target is not realistic, your project may be considered a failure if it is not met—even if the results achieved are impressive.

Tips for writing objectives:

- Think about what success means for your project and how you would show that success
- Refer to the intermediate results in your conceptual model
- Describe the focus population and the desired change among the population
- Include the location and time period for each objective

It should be noted that in order to assess the impact of your project—that is, the degree to which a change can be directly attributed to your interventions—appropriate resources and expertise must be available to undertake an experimental design that will allow you to make inferences. If you are able to implement a more rigorous evaluation methodology, you should consult the references on research design provided at the end of this section.

Once you have drafted your project goal and objectives, it is time to begin considering the activities and indicators section of your logical framework.

e. Choosing Activities

In IPPF/WHR's logical framework, the activities are listed on the left of the chart, and are linked to a particular objective. The activities are what your organization and collaborators propose to do to achieve your objectives. The term "activity" generally refers to a specific task. When activities are referred to broadly or when they are grouped together, they are sometimes called "strategies" or "interventions."

When devising activities, consider the skills and expertise of your organization and your collaborators. Become familiar with similar projects that have occurred in the past to learn from their successes and challenges in carrying out activities.

One tip is to list activities by number (this will help you refer to them in other parts of the proposal or in subsequent reports) and in chronological order.

The following are examples of activities related to the goals and objectives presented previously.

HIV project—Sample activities:

1.1 Develop HIV prevention counseling checklist with input from recognized HIV experts, counselors, and clinic staff.

1.2 Conduct three ten-hour training sessions for clinic staff on HIV transmission and prevention, the special needs of young people, negotiating condom use and counseling techniques.

Emergency contraception project— Sample activities:

1.1 Hold training sessions to sensitize police, women's organizations, judges/legal staff and health professionals in select sites on emergency contraception (mode of use, common side effects, access) and on the importance of timely identification and referral for emergency contraception for women experiencing gender-based violence. Provide emergency contraception kits to these organizations.

1.2 During the counseling session on sexual and reproductive health, offer counseling and information on emergency contraception to all clients identified as victims of gender-based violence.

Advocacy project to address unsafe abortion— Sample activities:

1.1 Form partnerships with women's groups and other NGOs interested in the issue of unsafe abortion to plan and conduct awareness-raising activities, including an advocacy campaign.

1.2 Develop an advocacy campaign—including defining the message, setting the goals and objectives of the campaign, and devising strategies for reaching the audience and monitoring the campaign—that includes the development of press releases, fact sheets, presentations and other materials.

Research and dissemination project— Sample activities:

1.1 Develop data collection instruments, select sites, and define criteria for peer educator selection.

1.2 Select and train peer educators in the curriculum and data collection.

1.3 Implement peer education sessions among 200 sexually active youth at each site, and monitor data collection.

1.4 Analyze data and prepare research report and publications.

1.5 Disseminate research publications among youth-serving organizations.

f. Identifying indicators

An indicator is a measure of a concept or behavior. It is not necessarily the concept itself, but a *reflection* of that concept. For example, an abstract concept such as gender equity will require you to find specific, concrete measures that reflect gender equity, such as the male-to-female ratio of peer educators or the proportion of IEC materials that use gender-sensitive language. The principal types of indicators are process and results indicators.

Process indicators

These indicators provide evidence of whether the project is moving in the right direction to achieve an objective. Process indicators give information about the activities being implemented, such as what and how many activities were conducted, and who participated in the activities. Because process indicators provide information about the implementation of activities, they should be collected throughout the life of the project.

Qualitative or process information about the quality of activities—which answer the question, "How well were the activities carried out?"—can also be collected. However, because change cannot be measured by qualitative data, process information is not technically an indicator. Nonetheless, the way in which services and activities are conducted is an important issue that can relate to the achievement of objectives. Thus, including qualitative information can be a vital part of data collection.

Project monitoring consists of collecting process indicators and reviewing them periodically. Process indicators and qualitative process information may also inform the final evaluation of the project. Frequently, process data can shed light on the reasons a project intervention worked (or didn't work).

Results indicators

These indicators provide information about whether an expected change occurred, either at the program level or at the population level. Results indicators measure the changes that your program's activities are seeking to produce in your focus population (in other words, the objectives). This type of indicator is often stated as a percentage, ratio or proportion to allow you to see what was achieved in relation to the total population (the denominator).

Results indicators should be a direct reflection of your objectives. *Because results indicators tell whether or not an objective was achieved, every objective should include at least one results indicator.*

When selecting indicators, you should ensure that they are clear and precise. Definitions should be provided for any terminology used. If indicators are written as percentages, both the numerator and denominator should be specified. The following examples illustrate what we mean.

Example of a poorly written indicator – where denominator is *not* specified

Percentage of youth who know three modes of HIV transmission.

In this example, the numerator is the number of youth who know three transmission modes. What is the denominator? The total number of youth in the program? In the community? In the country?

Example of a well-written indicator – where the denominator *is* specified

Percentage of youth participating in the training session who know three modes of HIV transmission.

In this example, the numerator is the number of youth who know three transmission modes. The denominator is the total number of youth participating in the training sessions.

While indicators measure change, they should not indicate the direction of the change. For example, rather than write "increase in age at first sexual intercourse," write "age at first intercourse among males and females aged 10 to 19 in City X." Later on, the data will show if this age increased, decreased, or stayed the same.

Refer to your conceptual model to help determine appropriate indicators. Look carefully at the results section of the model—in other words, what must happen among the focus population in order to contribute to the project goal? Ask yourself, what would be an indication that those things have occurred?

In seeking a gender perspective, your project may need to disaggregate indicators by gender, where appropriate. (For more information on including a gender perspective in your proposal, see section B-7.) You may also consider disaggregating data by age. For example, an indicator may be, "number of youth, by age and gender, who complete the six-week educational sessions on HIV prevention." This will help you know whether you are attracting more women than men, or vice versa, allowing your project to adjust your recruitment strategies as needed. It will also help you know whether you are reaching young people, or those in an age group you are targeting.

In identifying indicators for each level of the model, you will probably come up with several different ones. Your next step will be to select the most appropriate indicators, keeping in mind the resources available to collect and analyze data. It is useful to remember that the donor will expect you to provide data and information on each indicator in your logical framework, so you should include only those that are feasible and best reflect the outcome you are attempting to measure. Think about which indicators will truly provide information useful to project staff in knowing whether the project is on the way to meeting the objectives (process indicators) and whether the objectives have been achieved (results indicators).

Issues to Consider When Selecting Indicators:

- Relevance
- Availability of information
- Ease in measuring
- Understandability
- Resources (money, personnel expertise and time)
- Donor interest
- Gender perspective
- Youth perspective

It is best to select several indicators for each objective, since objectives usually have different dimensions. However, select a manageable number of indicators, keeping in mind the availability of information and the resources that will be available during your project (both human and monetary). After a discussion with the project staff and other collaborators, choose only the best indicators.

The logical framework should be simple and useful to your project. Moreover, it is not necessary to have an indicator for every activity. Process indicators relate directly to activities, but it is easy to select more than are necessary or advisable. Having too many indicators will burden the project in data collection and analysis. Results indicators should relate directly to your objectives, and they provide program managers and donors with information on changes that occurred among the focus population. There needs to be at least one results indicator for each objective.

Process vs. results indicators

Sometimes it is difficult to determine if an indicator is a process or results indicator, because a process indicator for one objective may be a results indicator for a different objective. For example, the indicator "number of clinical services provided to youth aged 15 to 24, by type of service" may be a process indicator (since it gives information about the activities being implemented), but if the objective is to increase access to clinical services, the number of services provided could be a results indicator. *The important thing to remember is that the indicator relates to the objective.*

Whenever possible, use the many indicators that have already been devised for sexual and reproductive health projects. Please see the references at the end of this section for lists of sample indicators.

The following are examples of process and results indicators related to the goals, objectives and activities described earlier.

HIV project—Sample indicators:

Process indicators:

- HIV prevention counseling checklist developed
- Number and percentage of clinic staff participating in training sessions, by position, by clinic

Results indicators:

- Percentage of staff participating in training sessions with favorable attitudes toward and correct knowledge of HIV issues (as indicated by a score of at least 150 on the *Attitudes About AIDS Scale*), by clinic
- Percentage of clinic staff participating in training sessions who correctly demonstrate how to use a condom, by clinic

Emergency contraception project—Sample indicators:

Process indicators:

- Number of people sensitized/trained in emergency contraception by type: peer educators, women who have experienced gender-based violence, service providers, counselors, women's groups, police officers, legal personnel

- Number of women identified in SRH consultations as experiencing gender-based violence, by type of violence

Results indicators:

- Number of emergency contraception kits (including condoms, emergency contraception packet, IEC materials) distributed to other organizations, by type of organization
- Percentage of women identified as experiencing gender-based violence who receive emergency contraception

Advocacy to address unsafe abortion—Sample indicators:

Process indicators:

- Number of media spots conducted by project staff and partners about abortion issues, by topic and media type (print, television and radio)
- Number of people participating in awareness-raising activities, by type of activity (community forums, media events, policy discussion groups) and type of participant (policymaker, women's group representative, NGO representative)

Results indicators:

- Percentage of people participating in awareness-raising activities who can identify three consequences of unsafe abortion, by type of participant
- Percentage of people participating in awareness-raising activities who can identify three strategies to address unsafe abortion, by type of participant

Research and dissemination project—Sample indicators:

Process indicators:

- Number of peer educators trained, by age, gender and type of site (community- or center-based)
- Number of sexually active youth receiving peer education session, by age, gender and type of site (community- or center-based)
- Number of sexually active youth receiving peer education session who report using a condom at last intercourse, by age, gender and type of site (community- or center-based)

Results indicators:

- Number of publications and presentations about research results, by type
- Number of organizations receiving results of research study

The following is an example of a poorly written indicator.

Example of a poorly written indicator

Increase in percentage of people using a condom.

Why is this indicator poorly written?

- The indicator should not specify the direction of change. (The direction is specified in the objective.)
- This indicator is imprecise because it does not specify the point in time at which condom use will be measured—will condom use at first intercourse, last intercourse, or at every intercourse be examined?
- The denominator (base population) is not clear: among whom will condom use be measured—all people in the world, all people in the country, all people in the community, all people participating in the project, people of a certain age? Will it include only those people who are already sexually active?

How can this indicator be improved?

Percentage of sexually active young people (ages 15 to 24) participating in the project who report using a condom at last intercourse, by age and gender.

g. Determining the means of verification (methodologies)

You will most likely use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in collecting data for your indicators. While both types of methodologies provide important information about your project, remember that donors will likely expect some quantitative evidence that your project objectives were achieved.

Using both qualitative and quantitative data will greatly strengthen the evaluation design. The following table illustrates characteristics of quantitative and qualitative methods, the purpose of each, and examples of data sources.

Characteristics of Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies

	Quantitative Methodologies	Qualitative Methodologies
Characteristics	• Require relatively large sample sizes • Can be used to generalize findings to the larger focus population (when probability sampling is used) • Require some knowledge of statistics	• Do not require large sample sizes • Cannot be used to generalize findings to the larger focus population • Do not require expertise in statistics (but should employ a systematic analysis)
Purpose	Quantitative data measures actions, tendencies and levels of knowledge. With this type of data, you can determine *How many? How much? How often?* Quantitative data is typically closed-ended; that is, variables or themes are predefined before data collection begins.	Qualitative data provides information about attitudes, perceptions and motivations. This type of data can be used to answer *Why?* It is therefore usually structured in an open-ended fashion so that information arises spontaneously.
Data Sources	• Program records • Service statistics • Surveys at the program level (with providers, clients, etc.) • Surveys at the population level (local, regional or national)	• In-depth interviews • Case studies • Focus groups • Observation studies • Mystery client studies

h. Deciding on the frequency of data collection

When deciding on how frequently data will be collected for your project, consider the resources available (human and financial resources). It will take time to develop evaluation tools and instruments, administer them, and analyze and interpret the data. Data collection should be frequent enough to identify and correct problems during the implementation of the project, but should not be so frequent that you are unable to use the data. You may wish to collect data more often at the initial stages of implementation so that data can be used to inform project planning. As you finalize your logical framework, you should also think about who will collect and analyze the data; these activities should be included in your project workplan.

In the needs assessment section, we discussed baseline data collection. Whenever possible, baseline data should be collected in order to understand the degree of change that occurs during the course of your intervention. To reiterate, baseline data:

- Provide information about the pre-intervention situation
- Can come from multiple sources (such as service statistics or surveys)
- Imply a comparison between pre- and post-intervention (Baseline → Final)
- Should be accompanied by data from an endline survey, in order to make a comparison.

Other resources

Buckner B, Tsui AO, Hermalin AI, McKaig C, eds. Guide to methods of family planning program evaluation, 1965–1990. Chapel Hill: The EVALUATION Project, Carolina PopulationCenter, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; 1995.

Adamchak S, Bond K, MacLaren L, Magnani R, Nelson K, Seltzer J. A guide to monitoring and evaluating adolescent reproductive health programs. FOCUS on Young Adults, Tool Series 5. Washington (DC): Pathfinder International; 2000. (Available in PDF format at http://www.pathfind.org/.)

The EVALUATION Project. Indicators for reproductive health program evaluation. Chapel Hill: The EVALUATION Project, Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; 1995. (Available in PDF format at http://www.cpc.unc.edu/.)

Bertrand J, Escudero G. Compendium of indicators for evaluating reproductive health programs. Chapel Hill: MEASURE Evaluation, Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; 2001. (Available in PDF format at http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/.)

Fisher A, Laing J, Stoeckel J, Townsend J. Handbook for family planning operations research design. 2nd ed. New York: The Population Council; 1991.

B. Writing the Proposal

If you have followed this guide from the beginning, you have now learned about principles to guide project design and the preparatory steps, including the completion of a preliminary needs assessment, a conceptual model, and a logical framework. We are now ready to begin discussing how to write the different sections of the proposal so that you can get the project funded.

The length of the proposal will depend on the nature and size of the project to be implemented. Generally, for a smaller project that will be implemented in one or two years, the proposal may be 8 to 10 pages long (excluding attachments). For a large, multiyear project, the proposal may be longer. Donors may specify in their guidelines whether there is a page limit on proposals. Be sure to adhere to these guidelines, as some donors will not even consider the proposal if it falls outside the guidelines.

1. Cover Page and Table of Contents

The cover page for your proposal should provide key information and look professional. On the cover page of the proposal, include:

- Name and logo of your organization
- Name of project
- Name of potential donor
- Month and year of submission
- Contact person(s) at your organization, with contact information (include all means of communication, such as street address, phone and fax numbers, e-mail address and Web address)
- Optional: duration of project and budget amount and request

Do not bind your proposal or have plastic covers. Many donors now view this as excessive and not environmentally friendly. Simply present the proposal on white paper and stapled. This will help staff at the donor organization make photocopies for others. You should send a copy of the proposal to the donor by e-mail, as well, which is a more environmentally friendly way for staff to share the proposal with others. Make your proposal stand out with the quality and clarity of the writing, and the evidence of your preparation.

If the contact person listed will be out of the office for any amount of time after the proposal is submitted, it is recommended that s/he designate another person who can answer a donor's questions.

If your proposal is longer than five pages, include a Table of Contents. This will help the donor reading it to know what to expect, and know that you have considered different aspects of project development, such as sustainability and evaluation. It is often helpful to create the Table of Contents before you begin to write the proposal, and use it as an outline for your writing. Add page numbers to the Table of Contents once you have finished the proposal.

Make your proposal stand out with the quality and clarity of the writing, and the evidence of your preparation.

2. Executive Summary

The recommended length for the Executive Summary is one page (or two pages for a larger proposal).

Why should you write an Executive Summary? Donors receive a large number of proposals, and in reading an Executive Summary, donors can determine whether your project interests them. The Executive Summary should be compelling—an invitation for the donor to read further—and a good overview of the essential elements of the proposal. A well-written Executive Summary demonstrates that you know what your project is about because you can highlight the key elements. By writing a strong Executive Summary, you will in fact be helping an interested donor, whose own staff members often have to write project summaries for their Board of Directors.

An Executive Summary is a summary of the entire proposal. This means that it should include brief descriptions of key information from each section of the proposal. The text of the Executive Summary should answer the following questions:

- Who (what organization) is requesting a grant?
- Why are you requesting it?
- What problems will you address and where?
- How long will the project last?
- What are your goals and objectives?
- How will you meet those goals and objectives? (What are the activities?)
- What results do you expect to achieve?
- What is the project budget? How much are you requesting from the donor? Are there counterpart funds that your organization or another organization is offering?
- How will your project continue once funding ends (sustainability)?

The Executive Summary should be written last, after you have completed writing the entire proposal and know the answers to the questions listed above. It is often tempting to write the Executive Summary while colleagues in your organization are reviewing the main body of the proposal. While sometimes this expedient is necessary, it is wise to give the Executive Summary the same attention and careful review that you do to the rest of the proposal. Remember, sometimes the Executive Summary is the only section of the proposal that a decisionmaker has time to read. The Executive Summary should be placed right after the Table of Contents in the proposal.

3. Introduction and Justification

The recommended length for the Introduction and Justification section is two or three pages.

The introduction to a proposal must cover two themes: the problem the project intends to address and the credibility and qualifications of the organization planning to implement the project. It is best to think of each as a separate subject area and to thoroughly cover one before proceeding to the other. Address the following points when describing the problem and the organization.

Describe the problem or need for the project:

- Convey a sense of urgency. Why should a donor pay attention to the problem you describe? Be thorough but brief.
- Provide up-to-date statistics and the most recent research findings. Present statistics at the international, national, and local levels. Draw on information obtained from the needs assessment, if one was conducted. Cite each statistic or finding with a footnote, endnote, or with a parenthetical citation. Donors may want to know how recent your information is and the credibility of your sources. If the only available statistics seem out-of-date, mention that they are the most recent ones, if, in fact, they are the only statistics available.

> ***Every piece of the application points to the credibility of the group, and dated or faulty information can prove the difference between a positive or negative impression.***
>
> *IPPF/WHR DONOR*

- Refer to your review of theories and programs that have dealt with issues similar to the ones you seek to address, taking note of results and lessons learned, gaps in knowledge, strategies and program areas that need to be expanded or tested.
- Describe the sexual and reproductive rights that are most relevant to the problem that the project seeks to address. For example, if the project is related to increasing access to emergency contraception, refer to the Right to the Benefits of Scientific Progress, the Right to Decide Whether and When to Have Children, and the Right to Information and Education. The IPPF Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (http://www.ippf.org/charter) lists 12 rights that are based on human rights conventions, the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and other documents.
- Discuss the type of project that is needed to address the problem.
- Provide a brief overview of the proposed project, including beneficiaries and expected results (no more than one paragraph).
- Describe the project location's salient characteristics (urban, rural, dispersed population, etc.). You may want to provide a map of the area where the project will take place in relation to the rest of the country or to major population centers.

Describe the organization that proposes to address the problem:

- An accurate understanding and definition of the problem should lead logically to a description of why the problem is of concern to your organization.
- Describe steps taken in the past by your organization, other NGOs and governments to address the problem. Present achievements as well as pending needs.
- Describe your organization, including when it was established, its mission and goals, and particularly, the skills or experience the organization has that makes it a good candidate for the proposed project. Your aim is to convince the donor to invest in your organization by showing that it has the ability to carry out the project successfully.
- Name other organizations (that is, collaborators) that will participate in the project, if any. Many donors are interested in funding collaborations, in order to draw on the expertise of various organizations, scale up programs, and obtain a greater return on their investment. If you plan to collaborate with another group, how will you collaborate? Describe your previous involvement with other collaborators and why the alliances were successful.

- Describe how the future beneficiaries were involved in the development of the proposal, if relevant. For example, a youth-focused proposal should involve youth from the development of the project through its implementation and evaluation.

4. Goal and Objectives

The listing of the goals and objectives should take up less than half a page.

Prior to writing the proposal, it is recommended that you complete the logical framework described earlier in this guide. In this section of the proposal, simply list the overall project goal and the specific objectives. As discussed previously, your project objectives should refer to the timeframe of your project, the beneficiaries or focus populations, and the location. Present your objectives as "Objective 1," "Objective 2," and so on; this will help you refer to them in other parts of the document.

5. Activities

The recommended length for the Activities section of the proposal is three to five pages, depending on the size and scope of the project. This is an important section because you can explain to the donor exactly what you will do with the donor's funds.

As described earlier in this guide, the activities should support the achievement of the objectives and be related to the indicators. In this section of the proposal, provide more details about the specific activities that will be conducted. Consider the skills and expertise of your organization and your collaborators. Through your needs assessment, you should have become familiar with similar projects that have been undertaken in the past.

Be descriptive in the Activities section of the proposal. For each activity, discuss:

- How will it be done or carried out?
- Why did you choose these activities?
- Who will conduct the activity?
- Who are the beneficiaries? Will the beneficiaries be involved in the design, implementation or evaluation of the activity?
- How many beneficiaries will be directly involved? How will you recruit or attract them? How can you maximize their participation in the activity?
- When will the activity occur? For how long? What will be the frequency of the activity? (Will it happen once, or will it be repeated?)
- What materials will you need to conduct the activity? Will materials or curricula have to be developed or do the materials already exist? Will the materials need to be adapted to the new population, and if so, how?
- Will your organization collaborate with other organizations to carry out the activity? What will be the role of each organization?

The activities described in this section need to be consistent with the budget. How the activities will accomplish each objective must be explained clearly.

The Project Activities for each objective will also be listed in the Work Plan or Project Timeline. This is a grid that lists all the activities, the persons to carry them out, and when the activities will be conducted. Sometimes the specific month is specified; other times, only the quarter or semester of the year is specified, if it is a multiyear project. Please see page 39 for a template of a Work Plan.

Because of the emphasis placed on youth programs within the sexual and reproductive health field and in the work of IPPF/WHR's affiliates, we provide some considerations for youth program activities below.

Considerations for Youth Program Activities

- Identify the specific youth population the project will work with; conduct a needs assessment.
- Involve youth throughout the life of the project.
- Work with the community, including parents.
- Strengthen links to existing programs for youth.
- Use materials designed for and by youth.
- Make sure services are accessible to youth, as indicated by youth.

Source: WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF. Action for adolescent health: towards a common agenda: recommendations from a joint WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF study group. Geneva: WHO; 1997.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the project proposal, and the Monitoring and Evaluation section is of great interest to donors. This section provides details on how the effects of the intervention will be measured. In addition, a well-designed monitoring and evaluation plan will enable project staff to understand how the project is functioning and to make programmatic decisions throughout the life of the project.

The monitoring and evaluation section should answer the following questions:

- What indicators will be measured? (Refer to the logical framework.)
- Where will the information or data come from?
- Who will collect the data?
- How and how often will data be collected?
- How and how often will reporting occur?

To prepare this section of the proposal, you will need to:

- Refer to the logical framework (which should be attached to the proposal as an Annex), and describe the indicators, the means of verification (data sources and data collection methodologies), and the frequency of data collection.
- Describe how the monitoring and evaluation plan will be implemented.
- Describe the human resources that will be used to monitor and evaluate the project, including the staff or department of the organization responsible for data collection and analysis and the consultants or technical assistance you will need.

The descriptions of evaluation methodologies should include:

- Sources of information (providers, clients, community leaders, etc.)
- Instruments to be used (existing tools or tools that will be developed)
- Sample size (when appropriate)
- Who will collect the data
- When the data will be collected
- Who will analyze the data and how

- Discuss the evaluation methodologies you will use for each indicator or type of indicator (organized by methodology).
- Inform the donor of your reporting plans and frequency, keeping in mind that donors may have their own requirements for reporting to them.

Remember that the Monitoring and Evaluation section of your proposal should be consistent with the budget. For example, if the Monitoring and Evaluation section states that staff members will work on evaluation activities, then there should be a budget line to cover the corresponding portions of their salaries, or the salaries should be listed as being funded by another donor or collaborating organization. Similarly, if you plan to conduct focus groups or carry out a survey, include the relevant costs in the budget.

7. Gender

The recommended length for this section is half a page. Alternatively, your proposal could address gender concerns throughout the document, especially if gender issues are among the key components of the project. This section should summarize how your project will address the issues surrounding gender and sexual and reproductive health described below.

Gender refers to the expectations and norms shared within a society about appropriate male and female behavior, characteristics, and roles.[1] Gender roles are socially constructed or determined and can change, as opposed to sex, which is biologically determined and generally permanent. Gender-based power in sexual relationships is frequently unbalanced, and women usually have less power than men do. Gender-based power can be linked to sexual and reproductive health directly: power imbalances can interfere with women's ability to negotiate condom use with partners, contribute to violence between partners, and influence whether and how women use health services.[2]

Gender inequities, societal and individual notions of male and female identities, power imbalances in sexual relationships, and other gender-related factors fuel sexual risk-taking behavior, which increases women's and men's vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and to unwanted pregnancy. A review of what has been learned to date about gender-based power shows that, although many challenges remain, addressing the role of gender-based power as an integral feature of sexual and reproductive health programs is of considerable benefit to both women and men.[3]

For a project to be effective in improving the sexual and reproductive health of women or men, underlying gender issues need to be addressed. Write about how you will incorporate a gender perspective in your project. For example, if your project will be recruiting female and male peer promoters, what issues will you need to address to encourage males and females to participate? If your project will establish a youth center for young men and women, how will you ensure that both young men and women have access and opportunities there? Will you develop strategies to meet the needs of both sexes? For example, do women or girls have issues with time availability, personal security or child care that may interfere with their full involvement? How will the project address these issues?

How will your project ensure that educational materials seek to change gender stereotypes instead of reinforce them? Will your project's staff and providers be trained in gender issues and how they relate to health problems? Will staff and providers be trained on clients' rights, including confidentiality? During counseling sessions, will providers consider the power dynamics within a couple? Does your project's personnel reflect the gender make-up of the population you intend to serve?

The analysis of gender considerations is also tied to evaluation. You may want to assess the satisfaction of the project's beneficiaries of each gender, and solicit their input and feedback over the course of the project. It is generally a good idea to collect data on your indicators by gender (for example, number of female peer promoters and number of male peer promoters). In addition, narrative information on gender issues helps to ensure that reports go beyond the quantitative.

References

[1] Gupta GR. Gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS: the what, the why and the how. Plenary address at the XII International AIDS Conference, Durban, South Africa, 2000 July 9-14.

[2] Parker R. Comments. Power in sexual relationships: an opening dialogue among reproductive health professionals. New York: Population Council; 2001. p. 9.

[3] Blanc, AK. The effect of power in sexual relationships on sexual and reproductive health: an examination of evidence. Studies in Family Planning 2001;32(3):189–213.

The following excerpt from the IPPF/WHR Gender Continuum describes an ideal gender-sensitive program that integrates HIV/STI prevention into family planning services for women. When designing your SRH project, keep the following points in mind. Does your project address these aspects of gender?

Ideal Gender-Sensitive Program for Integration of HIV/STI Prevention into Family Planning Services

- Identifies a broad range of individual and social determinants of vulnerability to HIV. For example, helps client to determine current need through an objective assessment of all needs and practices.
- Builds decision-making and negotiation skills on sexual relations, including condom use and personal needs.
- Explains transmission of the HIV virus and discusses with client her specific sexual practices, preferences and sexual orientation to determine her own individual risk.
- Recognizes the contextual issues that render women vulnerable and targets those issues, and especially the most vulnerable women, for intervention; works to help create conditions to reduce vulnerability.
- Uses a rights-based approach (the right to be healthy and free of disease, unwanted pregnancy, coercion or violence) as motivation.
- Helps women recognize and overcome gender-based abuse and power imbalances that affect their ability to make decisions and take actions to protect themselves from HIV and other harmful consequences.
- Explores risk of STIs and other RTIs (reproductive tract infections) with all clients with confidentiality; provides appropriate treatment.
- Helps women to make fully informed, independent choices about their reproductive and sexual lives regardless of HIV status.
- Provides opportunities for women to dialogue individually and in groups about the factors which contribute to STI/HIV transmission, such as poverty, violence, and dependency.
- Works in collaboration with other women's groups to better women's lives, by challenging social constructs that create gender injustices.
- Explores gender-based violence (GBV) with all women who come to the clinic for HIV counseling and testing, and offers specific services to those women identified as being victims of GBV. Assesses women's risks not only in terms of STI/HIV, but also mental and physical well-being and other reproductive health outcomes, such as unplanned pregnancies.

Source: "How Gender-Sensitive Are Your HIV and Family Planning Services?" (HIV/Gender Continuum), IPPF/WHR 2002

8. Key Personnel

The recommended length for this section is half a page or less.

An interested donor will want to be convinced that the project will be carried out successfully, and that the human resources are adequate for the tasks proposed. In this section of the proposal, describe:

- Who will work on the project?
- What responsibilities will they have?
- What proportion of their time will be used to support the project?
- What qualifications do they have?

Remember to be consistent with job titles in the Key Personnel and Budget sections of the proposal. If the Project Coordinator is described in the Key Personnel section as working 50% of her/his time on the project, then include a Project Coordinator at 50% in the Budget.

If volunteers will constitute a significant portion of the human resources needed for the completion of the activities, then this can be described as Key Personnel and their responsibilities and qualifications should be specified. Peer educators, for example, are often volunteers.

If there are key staff who will work on the project but are not included in the budget, then present this staff time as counterpart funding. If your project will rely on a consultant, include the consultant in this section as well. Discuss whether you already have the staff needed for the project, or whether the staff needs to be identified and hired.

9. Strengths and Innovation

The recommended length for this section is half a page.

Donors realize that providing their funds to an organization is not only an opportunity to address important issues, but also a risk. To help minimize the risk and to reassure a potential donor that the project will meet its objectives, it is important to convey the strengths of the project. This may relate to your organization, your partners, your experience with the focus populations, the fact that the strategies have been successful elsewhere, and so on.

In addition, donors often want to fund new initiatives, pilot projects, or projects with innovative qualities. This section of the proposal is a place for you to reiterate what is innovative or interesting about your project, what sets it apart from other projects. Talk about the innovative features in the project design, in the process of conducting the project, or in the programmatic elements. For example, if you will reach out to youth with new technology as part of the project, this may be considered innovative if it has not been done before. If you are reaching out to a population that has been neglected before, mention this. If your organization is forging links between groups that have never worked together before in order to address the same goals, then discuss this. The innovative qualities of a project should be highlighted in the Executive Summary and discussed in the Activities sections of the proposal, as well.

Some projects are justifiably not striving for innovation; rather, they may be implementing strategies that have been proven to be effective. In this case, you may choose to focus on the strengths of the project.

10. Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the ability of a project to continue once the initial grant or external source of funding has ended.

Thinking about the sustainability of a new project may seem difficult. You may wonder, "If the project has not even started, how can we plan for its continuation?" The following reasons justify thinking about sustainability:

- To ensure that beneficiaries will continue to be served
- To reassure donor agencies that their investment will not be lost
- To convince the donor that you have planned wisely for the future of your project
- To ensure that the organization's investment (direct and indirect) is not lost

Although assuring the continuation of activities beyond a period of donor funding is a challenge, it is possible. Designing your project appropriately from the beginning can help. Some strategies to generate local income or to cover the costs of the project that could be explored are as follows:

- Integrate the project into your organization's budget and cover its costs through normal fundraising means.
- Seek other local, national, or international donors who can support the project and may have a long-term interest in the project's success.
- Sign agreements or enter into collaborations with other institutions, such as governmental agencies, which can assume some responsibility for the project or can finance the project.
- Involve the community or beneficiaries in planning for the sustainability of a project that affects them.
- Offer to sell your organizational expertise gained from the project to other organizations, through the provision of technical assistance or training.
- Explore cross-subsidization. This means that the profits made by income-generating activities (that is, sales of services or products) cover the deficits of social programs. For example, urban clinics may subsidize rural ones, or urology services may subsidize family planning services. (In order for cross-subsidization to be implemented, the organization needs to have an institutional financial sustainability plan and analyze and project cash flows frequently.)
- Improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- Collect fees from clients or users for services and products provided, as appropriate.
- The project itself may not need to continue, but aspects of it may be incorporated into the regular work of the organization. For example, if your project created guidelines for a special kind of service delivery, these may be included in the overall protocols and training materials of the organization.

In the proposal, it is important to demonstrate to the donor that you have thought about the issue, and **will explore strategies** that are feasible to achieve some level of sustainability. Show your commitment to the sustainability of the project by including sustainability activities in the work plan for the project.

If there are research or other costs that are included in the project because it is a model designed to provide lessons for the future, it is wise to point these out. You can go on to explain what aspects of the project might be sustained.

11. Budget

The Budget section of the proposal should reflect the staffing and resource requirements for the project. It should include costs for personnel, materials, equipment, and activities mentioned in the proposal. Be sure to include the costs for monitoring and evaluation. For some donors, the Budget is the most important section of any proposal, and, along with the Executive Summary, it is what many donors read first when they receive a funding request. Make sure that this section is as clear as possible. The Budget, presented in a table, should be accompanied by narrative Budget Notes on a separate page.

A staff member at a donor organization should be able to look at the Budget and the accompanying Budget Notes and see almost everything he or she needs to know to make a decision about the project. The Budget relates directly to the Activities described in the proposal.

Consider the following tips relating to the budget format and costs:

Format

- If a donor has a particular budget format for applicants, follow it.
- At the top of the page, include the project title, the name of the organization, and the project period.
- The staff persons listed in the budget should be consistent with the staff persons described in the Key Personnel section of the proposal, using the same job titles.
- Figures can be rounded to the nearest single unit of currency.
- For a multiyear project, provide costs for each year in a separate column.
- For donors in the United States, budgets should be presented in U.S. dollars. If the budget also includes the local currency, provide the exchange rate.
- The budget that is sent to a donor with the proposal should be a summary and should fit on one page. (You will need a detailed budget for your own programmatic purposes.) The summary budget should show main budget categories, the same ones that are used by your organization's Accounting Department.
- Many donors like to see what other donors are contributing to the project, so if there are several donors, include a column listing the amounts they will be contributing to each budget line.
- On a separate page(s), include "Budget Notes." This is a narrative description of the budget that clearly explains to the donor what is included in each budget line.

Costs

- Staff costs should reflect salaries by monthly rate, and the proportion of their time to be spent on the project. For example:

  Project Coordinator (100%)
  @$2,000/month x 12 months = $24,000

  Community Promoter (50%)
  @$500/month x12 months = $6,000

  Note: Fringe benefits can be shown on a budget line separate from salaries, or they may be included in the salary amount.

- Include a budget line for "indirect" or "overhead" costs normally accepted by the donor organization. Some donors may be unwilling to fund indirect or overhead costs. Therefore, it is usually best to include as many costs as possible in "direct" costs (that is, in the main budget lines).
- If a planning phase is proposed, make sure to include costs associated with it.
- Equipment costs must be well researched and justified. From the Activities section, and the Budget narrative, it should be clear why your project needs new equipment, such as a vehicle or a computer projector. Items that appear unreasonably expensive, or surprisingly inexpensive, will undermine the credibility of the proposal and the project.
- Plan for likely price increases in the future. For example, if the project operates for three years, take inflation and pay raises into account when

planning personnel costs. This is essential to minimize budgetary constraints later on.

- Include monitoring and evaluation costs, which are described below. You may not need to incur all of these costs, depending on the type of monitoring and evaluation activities you will conduct.

Evaluation Costs to Consider

Evaluation staff time or consultants for ...

- Finalizing monitoring and evaluation plans
- Developing instruments/methodological protocol
- Providing technical assistance
- Carrying out surveys or other data collection activities
- Processing data
- Analyzing data
- Conducting evaluation training

Other evaluation costs to consider ...

- Per diem and travel costs
- Photocopying or replication of instruments and materials
- Training (meeting space, equipment and materials)
- Honoraria and refreshments for focus groups and interviews
- Evaluation software
- Data processing (if outsourced)

- Show what costs will be covered by counterpart funding (that is, funding from other donors or from your organization). Have a column in your budget for costs requested from the donor and a separate column for counterpart costs that your organization and other donors will contribute. This may include, for example, the part-time costs of a staff person's expertise or the estimated costs of in-kind equipment.

On the following pages, a sample budget worksheet format is illustrated. Use this format when developing the budget. On the next page, a sample budget format for the donor is provided. This is a summary of the detailed budget, and includes only the subtotals of the major budget categories. This is the type of budget that your project will report on to the donor.

Summary Budget Format For Donor

Project Name

Organization

Today's Date

Period Covered (specify months, days, years)

Currency, exchange rate

Expense	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Counterpart
Salaries and Benefits				
Technical Assistance				
Equipment/Supplies				
Training Workshops				
IEC				
Publications				
Materials and Supplies				
Evaluation				
Total Operational Costs				
Indirect Costs				
Total Project Costs				

Sample Budget Worksheet Format

Project Name

Organization

Today's Date

Period Covered (specify months, days, years)

Currency, exchange rate

Expense	Unit Cost	# Units	Year 1 Donor	Year 2 Donor	Total 2 years	Local Counterpart
Personnel (Salaries & Benefits)						
XX (Specify % of time)						
XX (Specify % of time)						
Subtotal:						
Technical Assistance						
Consultant Fees						
Staff Travel and Per Diem						
Consultant Travel and Per Diem						
Subtotal:						
Equipment						
Vehicles						
Audio Visual Equipment						
Office Equipment						
Medical Equipment						
Communications Equipment						
Computer Hardware and Software						
Subtotal:						
Training						
Consultant Fees						
Consultant Travel and Per Diem						
Staff Travel and Per Diem						
Training Supplies/General Services						
Subtotal:						

IEC						
Publications (Printing and Design)						
Production (TV, Radio, Media)						
Documentation (Writing and Editing)						
Distribution						
Subtotal:						
Operational Expenses						
Rent and Utilities						
Repair and Maintenance						
Postage and Shipping						
Telecommunications						
Professional Fees, Audit/Legal						
Subtotal:						
Materials and Supplies						
Office Supplies						
Clinic Supplies						
Commodities						
Subtotal:						
Evaluation						
Evaluation Staff Time or Consultants						
for developing instruments and						
methodological protocol						
Providing technical assistance						
Processing data						
Analyzing data						
Conducting evaluation training						
Per diem and travel costs						
Photocopying of instruments						
Training (meeting space, equipment)						
Honoraria and refreshments for focus						
groups and interviews						
Evaluation software						
Data processing (if outsourced)						
Subtotal:						
Total Operational Costs						
Indirect Costs (specify X%)						
Total Project Costs						

12. Annexes to the Proposal

Attach several annexes to the proposal. The material in the attachments will complement the text in the proposal. An interested donor will have the option to review the annexes after reading the proposal if s/he desires.

Annex 1: Conceptual Model
(described earlier in this guide)

Annex 2: Logical Framework
(described earlier in this guide)

Annex 3: Work Plan
(see sample on next page)

Annex 4: Letters of Support From Collaborating Organizations
(see sample that follows)

IPPF/WHR Work Plan Format

[The following should be completed and included in the Annexes section.]

Title of Project:	
Goal:	

Key Activities	Key Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.	1.1:													
	1.2:													
	1.3:													
2.	2.1:													
	2.2:													
	2.3:													
3.	3.1:													
	3.2:													
	3.3:													

Sample Letter of Support From Collaborating Organization

[Logo]

[Date]

[Name of Your Organization]

[Address]

Dear *[Director of Your Organization]*:

[In the first paragraph, the collaborating organization should introduce its mission and work, including the location of its work.]

[In the second paragraph, the collaborating organization should mention the title of the project being developed, why the organization is interested in collaboration, and what role the collaborating organization will play. Experience related to the proposed project should be described.]

[Close with a general statement of looking forward to working together.]

Sincerely,

[Name of Director]

[Name of Collaborating Organization]

C. Annexes to This Guide

Checklist for Proposals

Put a checkmark in the box when you have completed each step:

Preparation

- ❑ **Step 1:** Review Keys to Success in the Process of Project Development:
  - Collaboration among programs, evaluation and finance departments.
  - Form a proposal writing team, and prepare a work plan for proposal development.
  - Identify and involve stakeholders and collaborators in the community.
  - Obtain all possible information about the donor (interests and requirements).
- ❑ **Step 2:** Conduct a *Needs Assessment* (review of the literature, focus groups, interviews).
- ❑ **Step 3:** Create a *Conceptual Model* (diagram on one page).
- ❑ **Step 4:** Develop a *Logical Framework* (complete this before beginning to write the proposal).

Step 5: Prepare Sections of the Proposal

Begin writing the proposal after the preparatory steps have been completed. Use the format presented below when the donor does not have its own requirements. If the donor has its own requirements, it is important to follow them closely. If the donor does not specify how long the proposal should be, it should probably be less than 15 pages long, and less than 10 pages long for a small project.

❑ **Title Page**

- Name of project
- Name of the organization submitting the proposal (include logo)
- Contact person
- Project duration
- Name of potential donor and date submitted

❑ **Table of Contents** *(1 page)*

- List all sections and include page numbers

❑ **Executive Summary** *(1 page)*

- Include key information from each section of the proposal. (Write this section last).

❑ **Introduction and Justification** *(1–2 pages)*

- Include discussion of problems to be addressed and present statistics or findings.
- Include discussion of your organization and how your experience enables you to address the problem and be successful.

❑ **Goal and Objectives** *(1/2 page)*

- The goal refers to broad and lofty changes that are needed to confront a problem. The project will most likely only contribute to addressing the problem, rather than eradicate it. The goal should indicate the *beneficiaries/focus population/group to be involved.*
- Objectives should be SMART, or specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and time-bound. Objectives refer to changes you would like to see in the beneficiary population or their environment. Objectives should be achievable in the proposed project time period, and should refer to the project location.

❑ **Activities** *(3–4 pages)*

- Begin this section with a two- or three-paragraph narrative that summarizes the main activities or strategies.

- List each objective, and then the activities to support each objective. Describe the activities—who will conduct them, how long each activity will last, what tools or materials you will use, how you will attract people to your activities, etc.

❑ **Monitoring and Evaluation** *(1 page)*

- Include only a narrative section here. Here you can describe who will be responsible for evaluation, how the project will be monitored and evaluated (methodologies), and what are the major process and results indicators.
- Refer to the Logical Framework, which will be included in the Annexes section.

❑ **Gender** *(1/2 page)*

- Describe the gender inequities that are related to the health problem that your project seeks to address. Discuss strategies your project will employ to change gender norms or satisfy the needs of its beneficiaries.

❑ **Key Personnel** *(1 page or less)*

- Write about who will work on the project (management, administration, training, evaluation, finance). If volunteers will play an important role, discuss this.

❑ **Strengths and Innovation** *(1/2 page)*

- Highlight the project's strengths and aspects of your project that are innovative. Think about what makes your project stand out from others. You may restate the factors that you think will lead to the project's success.

❑ **Sustainability** *(1/2 page)*

- Describe some strategies that you will employ to continue the project once the funding ends. Describe ways to generate local income or seek other funders.

❑ **Budget** *(2 pages)*

- Create a detailed budget for yourself. For the donor, include a summary budget in a table format (with subtotals for major categories), which the project will report on. Also include a separate narrative summary (Budget Notes) describing what the components of each line item are, and for what purpose.
- Be consistent with the Key Personnel section.

Step 6: Include Annexes

❑ **Annex A: Conceptual Model** *(optional)*

❑ **Annex B: Logical Framework**

- This is a table that includes the goal and objectives. For each objective, list activities, process and results indicators, methodologies, and frequency of data collection.

❑ **Annex C: Work Plan**

- This is a timetable of activities.

❑ **Annex D: Other Annexes**

- Other annexes that could be useful: monitoring and Evaluation Work Plan/Timetable, study instruments, information on participants, curriculum, photos, quotes from beneficiaries.

Guidelines for a Concept Paper

Often, prior to developing a full proposal, which can be a lengthy and detailed document, it is advisable to develop a shorter document called a concept paper. This document is generally two to five pages long and gives an overview of your ideas for a new project.

In a concept paper, you will present most of the sections that are also in a proposal; the difference is that these sections can be brief. The different sections—Introduction and Justification, Objectives, Activities, Monitoring and Evaluation, Strengths and Innovation and a rudimentary budget—each should be described in a few paragraphs. You may present an overall budget figure and the major expense categories that will compose the budget.

Remember, at this stage, you need not have worked out all the details; the concept paper is designed to determine whether a donor is interested in receiving a full proposal. Preparing a concept paper before writing a long proposal will save you time. Donors also appreciate the opportunity to review a shorter document to determine their interest in the project.

For a concept paper, use the following format.

- Name of Organization
- Title of Project
- Potential Funder
- Date Submitted

- Justification: What problem will the project address?

- Experience of the Organization: Why is your organization qualified to address this problem? (a few paragraphs)

- Goal and Specific Objectives

- Strategies/Activities

- Expected Results (related to each objective)

- Strengths and Innovation: Why is this project innovative or why will it succeed?

- Monitoring and Evaluation

- Budget

Guide for Designing
Results-Oriented Projects and Writing Successful Proposals

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