

7. Project proposal template

The tool

This tool will help you plan out a project idea that you could present to a potential sponsor, like a company from your community. Also, this tool helps you to prepare the project idea in a format that will make sense to a sponsor, including information about why the community needs the project and about why the company should get involved and support this specific project.

A project proposal outline

- Cover page
- Executive summary
- Overview of the organization and its qualifications
- Total amount of request/The request for support
- Needs addressed by the project
- Target groups
- Goal and objectives
- Activities and time frame
- The core team of the project and other partners involved
- Results, sustainability and evaluation
- Sponsor benefits
- Volunteering opportunities for sponsor's employees
- Promotion plan
- Budget
- Contact info
- Appendices

The project proposal explained

Cover page:

Use a compelling title and a short compelling text about the proposal, your logo, and also a photo or a video (depending on the channel you use to send the proposal), which is representative for your project.

Executive summary:

Describe briefly who you are and what your project is about. Think about *why* this project is needed, why the company should support it, *how* you are going to provide results and impact, and *what* you will actually do to achieve the results you want. Watch Simon Sinek's Ted presentation to understand how to use why, how and what rule:

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en

Overview of the organization and its qualifications:

Provide a short presentation of your organization, of the mission, main programs, number of the people you serve, target groups for which the organization is known in the community. In this short

part, your objective is to build your credibility, so make it compelling to the sponsor, and also include information on: the impact you generate, such as changes in the life of the people you serve and of the community, measurable results, directions for development for the following couple of years, main partners & other sponsors, etc. Make also references to similar experiences or projects you implemented before with the same target groups or on the same topics.

Total amount of request/The request for support:

Write here how much money do you need or what kind of support do you need from the company.

Needs addressed by the project:

What problem do you want to solve in your community? What needs to you want to respond to? Also, describe which will be the consequences of not solving this problem, and present the project's benefits for the community or for the people you serve, and how this project solves the identified need.

Target groups:

Answer to the following questions: Who are the people you want to help? Who are those affected by the problem or who have that specific needs you mentioned? How many people your project will serve? What do you know about them? Have you worked before with them? Why do you want to work with these target groups? Finally, think also to the people who are indirectly, but positively, affected by your project (indirect target groups) and explain how you reach them and how the project helps them as well.

Goal and objectives:

Describe what do you plan to achieve at the end of the implementation for the project, and formulate up to three main objectives of the project, in regards to the general goal you have. Express the objectives in a SMART way. Make sure the objectives refer to your target groups and the changes you want to happen in the life of these people.

Read here about what SMART - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-related objectives mean: <https://www.fundsforngos.org/proposal-writing-2/understanding-smart-objectives-project-proposals/>

Activities and time frame:

Here you have to detail how you plan to reach the project's objectives. Describe the main activities of the project, and the order of their implementation. Use a work plan or timeline or a Gantt chart to present the calendar of the project's activities and the main milestones or responsible persons.

Read more about work plan, timeline and Gantt chart here:

<http://proposalsforngos.com/articles/proposalsvocabulary/difference-work-plan-timeline-gantt-chart/>

The core team of the project and other partners involved:

Present the core staff or volunteers you will involve in the project, what their qualifications and expertise relevant for the project are, and also what will be their roles and main responsibilities in the project. In this part of the proposal, you want to ensure the sponsor that your organization and staff is competent and fully prepared to achieve the proposed results. Also, if you need to involve in the project other partners/stakeholders, you could mention them here, talk about their expertise, why they are needed and how they will help your organization to achieve the promised results.

Results, sustainability and evaluation:

Here you have to explain how you expect your project to influence the identified problem, to describe the expected results and impact, and how you see the continuation of the project and of the work done with the people you serve. Also, you will have to talk about the methodology of evaluation you will use for the project (qualitative or/and quantitative methods, interviews with beneficiaries, evaluation survey, etc.).

Sponsor benefits:

Using the information you gathered in the donor profile (see the tool *Donor Profile Model*) related to the matching ways, identify the common interests between the project's target market, objectives and values/attributes promoted, and the company's target market, objectives and values/attributes. Also, use the same profile, to understand the company's marketing goals and motivation. Afterwards, based on these findings, present shortly the benefits for the sponsor for supporting and making this project to happen.

Volunteering opportunities for sponsor's employees:

These opportunities of volunteering for the sponsor's employees could be also part of the previous section, but it is better if you can emphasize them in a separate section. Design and present genuine, relevant and meaningful volunteering opportunities for the sponsor's employees, as part of the project's activities dedicated to the target groups, but they could also be involved in promotion or evaluation activities of the project.

Promotion plan:

Similarly, the promotion opportunities for the sponsor could be part of the "sponsor benefits", but if these promotion activities include a specific or a more organized promotion campaign, present it here. Help the sponsor to understand who will hear about its support, how the promotion will be done, how the company will be presented, how the audience will be reached, how often the promotion is done, and how the promotion results are measured. See how a promotion plan looks like by checking the tool: *The communication plan for an event*.

Budget:

The budget could be more or less detailed, in accordance with the company's sponsorship guidelines. If there are no specific requests, keep it simple and transparent enough. Use at least the following categories of costs: personnel costs inquired by the project activities, non-personnel costs inquired by the project activities (such as direct costs/participant) and indirect costs (administrative, promotion, etc.), and also present all income sources you plan to involve in the project.

Contact info:

Do not forget to leave details about the person who is in charge with the sponsor relations: name, position in the organization, email, phone number, etc.

Appendices:

These could be specifically requested by the sponsor, through the sponsorship guidelines, and could include the last annual report, the articles of incorporation, recommendation letters, etc. If they are not specifically asked, we would recommend you to insert here at least the link to the organization's last annual report.

How to use the project proposal template?

You will need to use such a proposal template when you want to present a project idea to a potential sponsor, a company from your community. Companies that have already established sponsorship guidelines, they will most probably also have templates for the proposals they receive from NGOs, and they might also have a clearly defined process of submitting and evaluating proposals. In that case, follow the template the company provides, always, but you could use this tool to prepare your portfolio of draft project ideas before starting to search for potential supporters.

Also, this kind of proposals could be sent to companies, after you had the first meeting with the company's representative. For instance, first, you could pitch your idea to an SME owner, and during the discussion you could mention you will send more details about the project through a follow-up email. Then, you will send such a proposal, detailing the main aspects of the project.

Or, you could apply with such a proposal for a "project market"/"project fair" type of event, in which NGOs enroll their projects and companies are "buying" the projects that fit their profiles and interests. Usually these events are organized by NGO resource centers or by business associations. Check if there are such events in your community.

In any situation from the ones described above, keep in mind that you need to be open to adapt the project idea, to add or leave out activities so that the project, in the end, will match better with companies' interests, motivation and capacity to support the project idea. You are building a partnership, so expect and allow the partner to contribute to the idea and to the implementation of the project.

Such a proposal can be one-page or 10-page or even more, depending on the level of details the potential sponsor expects from you. If there are not specific instructions given by the companies, we would recommend to keep the proposal very short (4-5 pages), and also make sure you have ready a one-page proposal summarizing the project idea. What we learned from [CoOp research on the youth organizations and SMEs cooperation](#) is that most of the time SMEs have no dedicated staff for taking care of the community involvement projects, and usually the PR or marketing person will deal with the process of receiving proposals and answering to them, after the decision is made by the senior managers team or by the SME owner. In other words, you do not want to waste anyone time, be clear and concise, and express in a simple way what you want from the company and what the expected impact and results are.