



Identifying the Need

The starting point for any project or funding application.



Project Proposals

'Need' is the term we use to describe a problem, issue or situation, where something needs to change to make things better for a person, a group of people, an environment or an organisation.

It is important to identify need because:

- You will need a clear vision of what your project will tackle when designing your approach
- It will help you decide the best way to address it or how to complement other projects
- It will keep everyone involved in the project focused on the priorities
- It will help you revise and adapt your project if necessary

Writing Project Proposals and Funding Applications



Aims and Outcomes

Once you understand the need for your project, there are two key ways to describe the difference you want to make:

- **Overall aim** – a brief statement of the overall purpose of your project
- **Intended outcomes** – the specific changes that you want to achieve from your project

Why are they important?

Because they:

- help focus everything that you do
- explain the changes your project will bring about to meet the needs you have identified

Aims

The overall aim provides a clear focus by summing up the purpose of your project and the effect it will have. Choose a simple aim and word it carefully, it should be one sentence and something that you know you can achieve or at least influence strongly over the course of your project, for example:

"To engage young people/older people/children/families/men/women etc. positively in the community". The needs that you have identified should help you to write your aim.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes that your project can make over time, to address the need(s) you have identified. They are the result of what you do rather than the activities or services you provide. Your outcomes might contribute to e.g. improved health, new skills or increased confidence.

Outcomes can be described by using words such as, more, better, less or improved. In some cases outcomes may involve keeping an uncertain situation stable.

Depending on your project, outcomes can occur at different levels, including:

- **Communities** – fewer people are involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour as a result of participating in a range of positive activities.
- **Organisations** – people have greater skills and capacity to meet leadership needs.

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Tracking Project Progress

Why is tracking progress important?

- To confirm if your project is making the difference you intended
- To understand what's working and what isn't and make any necessary changes
- To learn from your project

How to demonstrate the change your project achieves:

- Understand and identify the signs of change (using indicators)
- Measure the extent of change that is occurring (tracking progress)

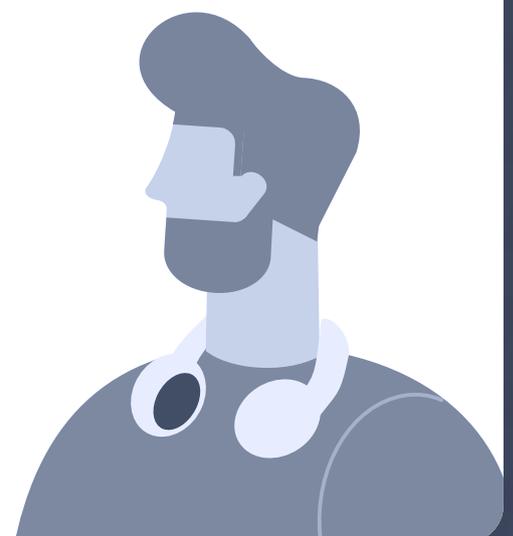
Workers and those involved should try and answer these questions together.

The journey from identifying need to intended outcomes

For example a youth project might progress like this:

Individuals involved in anti-social behaviour ►► Individuals positively engaged in the community.

NEED	►► INDICATOR	►► INDICATOR	►► INDICATOR	►► OUTCOME
Individuals need opportunities to engage positively with community in order to divert or distract them from antisocial behaviour.	Individuals engage with project and talk about the difficulties they are experiencing.	Individuals start trusting and building relationships with those running the project.	Individuals start to take responsibility for running activities with support.	Individuals are positively engaged in the community and stop behaving in an antisocial way.



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Project Activities

These are the tasks, actions or services that will be implemented in the project.

- They will pinpoint what will be done, how, when and who by, to achieve the outcomes
- They will form the main content of your project planning
- They will determine the resources and budget that you need to run your project

Having identified the changes you want to achieve, you can now plan how to make them happen. Activities will bring about the changes that your project will deliver. They are the core of the project and should be the most appropriate and effective way to address the need(s) that the project is addressing.

Learning From Your Project

Learning from your project is important because it enables you to:

- Explore the reasons why things are (or are not) working well and make necessary changes
- Gather information about the impact of your project, which will be helpful when reporting on your project's performance and how you've adapted it to changing circumstances
- Build a culture of reflection and analysis within your organisation to improve understanding and quality of work

More information is available in Section 10: Evaluation and Monitoring.

Funding Applications

Writing funding applications can be daunting and each funder may require different information. In general, though, most applications will follow a similar pattern.

To complete some of the sections on your application form you will need

A Project Summary.

- Give your project an eye-catching title
- State your target group and area
- Highlight the need for your project (with evidence)
- Summarise how you intend to meet this need and what you will achieve
- Explain how what you are proposing is unique or innovative
- Emphasise the benefits of your project and what would happen if it did not exist

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Project Activities

To provide evidence of need for your project

- Check for research completed in East Belfast
- Complete your own needs analysis
- Consult research archives

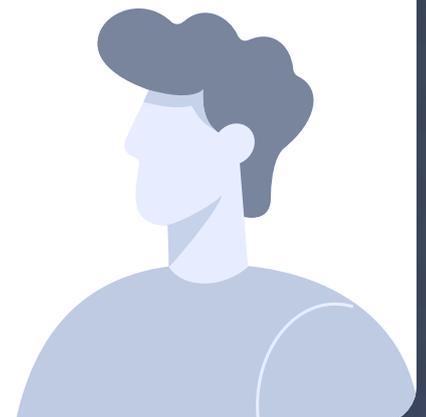
Use the Northern Ireland Measures of Multiple Deprivation to show how disadvantaged your area is in relation to specific themes such as health, education, crime and disorder or employment – you can access these statistics at www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk www.nisra.gov.uk www.statistics.gov.uk www.nicva.org

To provide a project evaluation showing

- Your expected outcomes – who will benefit?
- What your performance indicators will be E.g. numbers participating in training, numbers achieving a qualification, etc.
- How you will monitor your success E.g. set and appraise targets, complete regular progress/ visit sheets, etc.
- How your Project will provide value for money – who will control the finances and what experience do they have?
- How you will measure and evaluate your outcomes – internally or externally?
- Will you need an audit or independent evaluation? Most statutory bodies will require this! If so, plan for the cost in your budget

To Provide A Detailed Budget

- Make a list of everything you need your funding to pay for (a template budgeting list is available from EBCDA)
- Include extras, such as telephone, utilities, advertising, evaluation costs, etc.
- Make a note of anything the funder will not cover– plan how you will meet these costs
- Be realistic and cost everything on your list
- Apportion utilities costs if your organisation currently runs more than one project (EBCDA can help with this)
- Decide on your salary scales, pension allowances, etc., and allow for these increments in your budget
- With salaries and pensions, allow for inflation in your 2nd and 3rd year budgets (normally a 3% rise)
- **Discuss final figures with other stakeholders**



Writing Project Proposals and Funding Applications



Tips for a Better Application:

When completing your application...

- Know your funder– double check criteria to make sure your project is suitable and ALWAYS read the completion and deadline guidelines
- Be enthusiastic about your project- how will it make a difference?
- Stand out from the crowd - give your project an eye-catching title and interesting details
- Show how your application is unique - do you have user input at committee level? Will you create jobs?
- Avoid vague statements, such as, 'we plan/hope to...'. Always say 'our project will...'
- Keep answers concise and to the point
- Substantiate your claims– use research, statistics, etc. as evidence of need

Remember presentation....

- Use letterheaded paper and type your application
- Two heads are better than one. Have someone else check your grammar, spelling, content, etc.

Before you submit....

- Supplement your application with relevant evidence of your previous success e.g. annual report, staff qualifications or press releases.
- Imagine you are the assessor. Would you commit funds based on your application?

After submission....

- If successful, send a thank-you note and keep in touch. You never know when you will need them again!
- If at first you don't succeed try again!

Recap

- Most application forms will ask for some or all of the following information:
- A synopsis of your current aims and objectives
- A project summary including evidence of need
- Plans for evaluation
- A clearly thought out budget
- How you plan to sustain your project beyond this funding
- Contact information
- Supplementary information (annual accounts, constitution/memorandum of association, annual report, success stories etc.)