

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORGANISATION AND PROJECT

Are you ready and confident enough to tell funders everything about your organisation and project? Having a complete understanding of your organisation and project/s before you start thinking about funding is really important. You need to be fully prepared to describe everything clearly to the funders.

In this topic we will help you understand your organisation's aims and objectives, explain governing documents, highlight the importance of need and demand for your project, explain project costing and make it clear what it means by project 'outcomes'. If you come on Course One you will have a chance to apply this knowledge to your own project.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A good way to explain your organisation is to write its aims and objectives.

Your organisation's **aims** will explain why it exists and what it is you are trying to achieve. Sometimes this is called the 'mission statement'.

The **objectives** describe how you will achieve that aim by highlighting your day to day activities, so there may be several objectives for each of your aims.

For example

AIM: The organisation aims to promote social inclusion for adults with learning difficulties.

OBJECTIVE: To meet this aim the organisation has established a work team of adults with learning difficulties who are supported and trained to undertake maintenance and environmental tasks in varied rural locations for five days a week'.

Why have aims and objectives?

Once you have clear aims and objectives all the staff, Trustees, volunteers, service users etc have an understanding of what you want to achieve and where you are heading in the future. This will allow you all to have a focus and be clear about why it is set up, what it is trying to achieve and how it will achieve it.

Organisations are then able to look back after a period of time and see whether the objectives have been achieved and whether the aim is being met. You can celebrate your successes if aims and objectives have been met, and it allows you to focus on developing your organisation or making any changes if not.



WARNING: All projects that you undertake must be kept within what is stated in your governing document and must be in line with these aims and objectives.

SMART Objectives

Funders are now specifying that your objectives must be SMART - as follows:



Specific – not a broad objective but something quite detailed.

Measurable – you should be able measure whether it's being achieved.

Achievable – it should describe something that can be done in a set time.

Realistic – it should be something that can actually be done using your available resources.

Timebound – a time should be set for when it is to be achieved.



GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

These documents are important, and not just for organisations that are registered charities.

There are different types of governing documents depending on the type of organisation you are set up as:

- An unincorporated association (charitable and non charitable) will use a **Constitution**.
- A company limited by guarantee or a community interest company would have a **Memorandum and Articles of Association**.



These legal documents set out what the organisation is set up to achieve and includes a set of internal rules and procedures. It is the trustees' or management committee's "instruction manual", as well as a legal document.

Governing documents enable groups to set up a bank account, including the authority for signing cheques. We recommend that at least two people sign cheques, one of whom is a trustee.

Your local infrastructure organisation (such as the CVS) will be able to provide advice about governing documents and the Charity Commission has model forms which charitable organisations can use to help them write a governing document.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

How do you know your project has made a real difference? Do you have any evidence? How can you prove this to funders?

The jargon that is usually used by funders to show the difference a project makes is 'outputs', 'inputs' and 'outcomes'.

Outputs: the activities that a project delivers, such as a training course in basic IT skills or a funding newsletter each month. You can usually quantify these easily.

Inputs: the resources which are needed to carry out the activities. They can be financial, material or human including time, money, staff, volunteers and premises.

Outcomes: the changes, benefits and effects that happen as a result of the project. These are usually harder to measure such as increased confidence, or less social exclusion.

NEED AND DEMAND

Funders need to make sure that there is a reason for your project, so be prepared to justify this in your applications as it can take a while to research. You need to make sure firstly that there is a real issue in your area that you are trying to overcome and secondly that people will definitely use your service/project.

The '**need**' is the particular problem/issue that your project will try to address, for example, increasing levels of obesity, or high levels of anti social behaviour in your area.

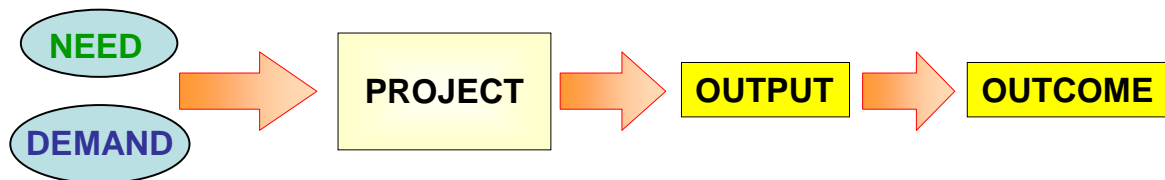
The evidence for the need can be indicated in national government initiatives, your Local Area Agreements, or your local parish plan etc.



The '**demand**' for your project shows the number of people/organisations that do, or could, benefit from the project, for example, 50 people with obesity in the local area or 25 young people with ASBOs.

The evidence for the demand can be indicated in statistics (e.g., census), other projects in area, questionnaire, surveys, consultation, feedback, quotes.

This project process flow chart should help you see where all this jargon fits:



COSTING YOUR PROJECT



An organisation needs a project budget to show what money is coming in and what money is being spent within the next year of the project. This detail will allow you to plan financially for the future and help you manage your project.

It will help you clearly see whether you have enough money to cover the costs of your project and help you identify the gaps in funding. This budget will change as the project develops so you need to review it on a regular basis to make sure it is realistic and accurate.

PREPARING YOUR BUDGET

You need to start thinking about your budget in the early stages of developing your project idea, and before you write a funding application or proposal.

CAPITAL: This is the one-off expenditure such as equipment, vehicles, buildings or setting up costs, mostly large physical items.

REVENUE: This is the ongoing expenditure which remains throughout your project such as rent, electricity and travel costs.

SOURCES OF INCOME

You need to highlight to funders which part of the project they will fund if it isn't the whole project costs. You then need to let them know about other sources of income which will contribute to covering the remaining costs of the project. The sources of income that you should consider can include fundraising activities, grants and donations, or generated income.

ESTIMATE

The income is an estimation of how much you could possibly get from each source during your project. It may be harder to estimate than the expenditure but it needs to be realistic targets - not pure guess work.

- 1) Identify known sources of income i.e. funders, membership, donations.
- 2) Identify the shortfall
- 3) Identify where you may get this from – including the current funder.

You need to be clear with funders what is definite income and what is inspirational.

CONCLUSION

You should now have a clearer idea about your organisation and project to help you on the way to preparing your funding applications or proposals. If you attend Course One of the Funding Training Programme you will be able to acquire a deeper understanding of this information and how you can apply this to your own organisation.

Your local Funding Adviser is available to support you on a one to one basis by helping you to develop your project, research the right funder, plan a funding strategy, and give you advice about any funding applications you would like to submit. Visit the contacts page of this website for the contact details of your local Funding Adviser so you can make an appointment with them.

Also, download the other Factsheets in this website to assist you along the other fundraising steps.