



Standard proposal format

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Introduction

This is the standard proposal form of the Nederland-Batam foundation. Organizations that are seeking support for their project can use this form to submit project proposals to the foundation. Only projects that match the core values, objectives and target groups are eligible for support by the Nederland-Batam foundation (See chapter 4. Information about the Nederland-Batam foundation).

The Nederland-Batam foundation is an intermediate between your organization and supporting organizations. The foundation searches for support from these funding organizations using the proposal you submitted (See chapter 5. Information about funding procedures).

A proposal is a lobby instrument

A project proposal describes your project to supporting organizations with the objective to convince them to provide funds for your project. Supporting organizations, especially international organizations, usually have only limited knowledge of Indonesia in general and even less about the local situation, your organization and the background of your project. To convince them you will have to explain your project to them.

The better your explanation, the higher your chances of receiving support.

The standard proposal format

To assist your organization to provide all the necessary information about your project, the Nederland-Batam foundation has developed a standard proposal format. The format consists of eight simple questions. All projects can be explained by answering these questions.

All successful proposals have provided answers to all eight questions.

Although the questions are short and simple this does not mean the answers will be short and simple too. In answering the questions, please be clear and as complete as you can. The better these 8 questions are answered, the better the proposed project is explained and the higher the chances are that support for the proposed project is granted.

Communication with supporting organizations is often limited. Most of the time proposing organizations communicate with their funding organizations twice; once to propose a project and once to report on the project after the project has ended.

There is one chance to explain the project. Take the opportunity!

Question 1. Who is doing the project?

The question about who is doing the project asks you to introduce your organization.

Supporting organizations must know who they are giving funds to.

To answer the question you have to provide information about the organization that is submitting the proposal.

Regarding the proposing organization, please include:



- The name of the proposing organization
- The address of the organization
- The legal status of the organization
- The names of the board members
- The number of members of the organization
- The mission, vision and objectives of the organization

Remember that a proposal is a lobby instrument and that, especially international organizations, have little to no knowledge about your organization. If you think that more information is needed about your organization to convince funding organizations to support your project, you should include that information. If you are unsure whether to include extra information it is advisable to include the information anyway.

Better to be over complete than not to include all necessary information.

An example of extra information

Nowadays, the amount of funding that is available for projects is limited. Your organization is competing with others for these funds. That makes it important to distinguish yourself from the other organizations.

What distinguishes you from others should be included in the proposal.

One of our partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS on Batam works with a team of volunteers from the target group, to realize their projects. Having a team of volunteers, especially a team coming from the target group itself, makes them unique among organizations fighting HIV/AIDS on Batam and therefore this information is included in their proposals.

Question 2. Why are you doing the project?

Projects do not stand on their own; projects are not done just to do a project. They are done to fix a problem or to address a threat. And even these problems and threats do not stand on their own; they have root causes.

Root causes are often related to the living conditions in the project area.

Bad living conditions, such as poverty, low level of healthcare and hygiene standards and low levels of education cause a wide variety of problems and threats. To answer the question of why you are proposing the project, you have to explain about the problem you aim to fix or the threat you want to address and the living conditions of the people in the area?



Problem description:

- What is the problem or threat?
- What is the root cause of that problem or threat?
- What are the living conditions in your project area?

An example of problems and root causes

One of our social projects is located in an area where people live under poor conditions. The hygiene standards in the area are low. To do something about this problem our local partner there has proposed to construct a clean water installation. This improves the hygienic conditions in the area and thereby the poor living conditions.

Question 3. For who are you doing the project?

Project are done for the benefit of people. The question for whom the project is done asks about target groups.

Target groups are groups of people who will benefit from the project.

If a proposed project consists of building a community healthcare center in a village it is the whole village that will profit from the project and so the whole village is the target group for the project.

Sometimes not everybody in the target group can immediately benefit from the project.

If a project for instants aims to reduce poverty for all poor people in North-Sulawesi, the poor people in North-Sulawesi are the target group for the project, but only a small portion of them can immediately benefit from the project, because funding and manpower are probably insufficient to help everybody immediately.

So to answer the question for whom the project is done, you must describe the target groups, you must tell how big they are and how many people in these groups will benefit from the project.

Projects are more effective when target groups are involved in the project.

Effectiveness and sustainability of projects are essential for supporting organizations. So although the information is not strictly necessary to describe the target groups, it is important to include information about the benefits and involvement of target groups.

Target group:

- A description of the target groups of the project
- The size of the target groups
- The number of people benefitting from the project
- The benefits from the project for the target groups
- The involvement of the target groups in the project



An example of involvement of target groups in a project

Involvement of target groups in the project can be in many forms. Maybe members of the target groups came up with the initial idea for the project and they helped plan for the project. Or they participated in the realization of the project and helped to monitor and evaluate the project. These are all forms of involvement and should be included in the proposal.

When your organization is community based organization (CBO) members of your organization might come from the target group of the project themselves. In that case representatives of the target groups are involved in all phases of the project.

In some instances the involvement of intended target groups is absent or very limited. This might be the case when young children and infants are the intended target group for the project. If the involvement of target groups is limited in your project this should be explained in the proposal.

Question 4. What will you do in your project?

This question about what you will do in your project asks about the project itself. But the answer is more than a list of activities.

A project must be structured.

To structure a project, it must be related to the core values (mission, vision, goals and objectives) of your organization and be related to the problem, threats and causes that form the basis of the project.

The question of 'What' is related to 'Who' and 'Why'.

When you explain what you will do in your project the first thing to describe is the objective of the project. A project aims to reach a certain goal or objective.

To reach that goal a number of activities must be realized. The list of activities is like the recipe in a cookbook. Just as following the recipe will lead to the cake, following the list of the activities will lead to the realization of the project.

All activities will have a certain output. These are the expected results. And all of these expected results together lead to the realization of the objectives for the project.

An example

One of the projects the Nederland-Batam foundation supports is the construction of a well. The aim of the project is to provide drinkable water to the community. To reach this aim a series of activities must be realized.



First the materials for the construction must be bought, then the materials must be brought to the project location and finally the well must be built.

Goal: Drinkable water for the community

Activities	Output
Buying the materials	The construction materials
Transporting the materials	Materials are at the project location
Building the well	The well is build

Note that the goals and activities can be split into sub-goals and more detailed activities and that the stepping plan can be linked to the time planning and an overview of who will be responsible for which activity. Thereby answering the question what you will do in your project becomes a tool in your project management.

Project description:

- Objectives of the project
- Overview of activities
- Output of the activities

Supporting organizations use your project description as a means to follow what you want to do with your project and if you will be able to reach your goals. The better their insight into your project the higher the chances of gaining support for your project. So also in answering this question it is better to be over complete than to forget activities and expected results.

Question 5: Where will you do your project?

Where will you do your project asks about your project area. You should at least give the name of the project area, but remember that international organizations have limited knowledge about the area. Therefore, it is advisable to give more information about the area, not just the spot where the project is realized, but also the wider area, perhaps up to provincial level.

Items that could be included are descriptions of its geography, history, population, local culture, socio-economic situation, religions, politics, tourist attractions, etc. Please choose which is appropriate for your specific project.

It is advisable to include maps and photographs in the proposal.

Project location:

- Description of the project location

Question 6: When will you do the project?

When you will do the project refers to the time planning of the project. The time planning should indicated when the project will start and end, but also when you want to realize each of the planned activities of the project. It is usually sufficient to make a time planning per month or per week.

It is usually not possible to tell exactly when funding will be available.

Therefore it is usually easier to describe the time planning in numbers of weeks and months.



An example of a time planning

Time planning project: 6 months

Week 1	Activity 1
Week 2	Activity 2
Week 3	Activity 3

Time planning:

- The start of the project
- The end of the project
- Planning for the different activities

Do not forget to include time for preparations, evaluation and reporting in your time planning.

Question 7: How will you monitor the project?

Monitoring and evaluation are done in order to improve the execution of the project and to learn lessons for future projects. Monitoring and evaluations are not an attack on the people who are planning and executing the project. Monitoring and evaluations are instruments to steer the project in the right direction and to correct a project when it goes off course.

Monitoring and evaluating a project are critical success factors and are integral parts of project management.

In a proposal how projects are monitored and evaluated must be addressed. Common ways of monitoring and evaluation are meetings and discussions. These are very useful especially if you aim to include stakeholders in the project. Other methods can be questionnaires, but also visits to project locations, independent audits and such.

During meetings and discussions the progress of the project should be described. This means that not only the positive developments should be addressed, but also complications that arose during the execution of the project.

Complications are addressed not to blame people, but to find solutions for these complications and to find ways to prevent the same complications to occur in the future.

It is advisable to keep notes of monitoring and evaluation sessions. These are important for reporting to funding organizations, but are also a useful tool for future projects.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- Description of methods of monitoring and evaluation
- The persons responsible for monitoring and evaluation
- Time planning for monitoring and evaluation sessions

An example for monitoring and evaluation

The Nederland-Batam foundation organizes HIV trainings in North-Sulawesi. These are monitored and evaluated in different ways and by different groups. The training is evaluated and monitored:



- by participants using questionnaires that they fill in during each training,
- by the organizing committee in a meeting at the end of each training,
- by the boards of the Nederland-Batam foundation and the training provider via financial and progress reports following each completed training
- by stakeholders such as the healthcare services (DINKES) via reports and meetings
- by an independent auditor

Question 8: How much will the project cost?

A very important is of course how much the project will cost. The cost, or budget, of a project can be split in two types of costs; project costs and operational costs.

Project costs are costs that are directly related to the project activities. Transport costs, costs for materials, construction costs are examples of project costs.

Operational costs are costs that are not directly related to the project activities but that have to be made to facilitate the project. Examples of operational costs are costs for documentation, costs for copying, internet and printing and such. Be advised that the operational costs for a project cannot exceed 10% of the project costs.

After determining as accurate as possible all costs for the project (project costs as well as operational costs) and extra margin of 5% can be included to cover unexpected costs.

Supporting organizations are aware that prices can change unexpectedly.

It can take between 6 months and one year to find project funding. For that reason you will be asked to update your budget from time to time. If during execution of the project costs for certain budgeted items increases dramatically an updated budget must be submitted.

Budget of the project:

- Total budget for the project
- Total project costs (direct costs)
- Total operational costs (indirect costs)
- Other organizations that fund the project

Besides the questions about the budget itself, it is important to inform funding organizations who else is supporting the project. If other persons, or organizations are also supporting the project you must mention them in your proposal (who are they and how much funds and or goods are they providing).



Information about funding procedures

Before funding can be provided the following steps have to be taken.

1. Submitting a proposal

The proposing organization submits a proposal to the Nederland-Batam foundation.

2. Deciding on the proposal

The board of the foundation discusses the submitted proposal in a board meeting, the board meets three times per year, to decide whether to support the proposal, to decline the proposal, or whether additional information is needed.

3. Applying for funds

In case the proposal is supported by the board, the foundation will use the proposal to apply for funding from funding organizations.

4. Deciding on the proposal by funding organization

The funding organizations discuss the submitted proposal to decide whether to support the proposal, to decline the proposal, or whether additional information is needed. Usually proposals can be submitted to funding organizations twice per year.

5. Transfer of funds to the Nederland-Batam foundation

In case a funding organization decides to support the project the board of the Nederland-Batam foundation will be informed and funds will be transferred to the foundation.

6. Transfer of funds to the proposing organization

The Board of the foundation will inform the proposing organization and will transfer the funds to them as soon as they are ready to commence the project.

7. The project realization

In case projects run longer than 3 month intermediate reports will be required otherwise a final (financial) report will suffice.

8. Reporting on the project to the Nederland-Batam foundation

Within one month after completing the project the proposing organization should submit a written (financial) report, including supporting notes, bank statements and such) to the Nederland-Batam foundation.

9. Reporting on the project to the funding organization

After completing the project the Nederland-Batam foundation submits a written (financial) report to the funding organization.

10 Finalizing the project

Only after the funding organization and the Nederland-Batam foundation are satisfied with the reports can the project be concluded.



Conclusion

A proposal is a lobbying tool and a means of communicating with potential sponsors and donors.

Especially international funding organizations receive many more proposals than they can support each year. That means these funding organizations have to make a selection which organizations and project they will support and since the proposal is one of the few moments of communication between funding and proposing organizations, the first selection is based on the quality of the proposal.

With this proposal form you will be able to write a complete proposal.

This offers a good start for finding support for your project but, unfortunately, success is not guaranteed. Funding organizations can have many reasons for not supporting a project. This does not mean you should give up! Like with all lobbying activities, fundraising takes time!

If at first you don't succeed, try and try again!

Writing a proposal is a lot of work and can be difficult, especially when this is the first time you write a proposal for an international development aid organization.

Should you require any assistance do not hesitate to ask.

Good luck and success with writing your proposals,

Jaco van As,

Project manager Nederland-Batam foundation