



Community Arts Network SA Inc

INFO SHEET

Version July 2009

Developing Your Project

Seven steps from Idea to Project

1. Clarify your idea
2. Set your time frame
3. Match your idea to resourcing strategy
4. Develop your pitch
5. Design the proposal
6. Plan for success
7. Put together your project team



Step 1

Clarify your idea

It may be clear in your head - but can you express it well to other people?

If you're not clear about your project and its value, you will have difficulty convincing other people about it.

Think about the idea from someone else's perspective - what information do they want to know? Try to spell this out clearly. Separate the information into parts which cover the basic idea or concept:

- ◆ **What** is the intention? What is the most important thing you want to do? (aim)

- ◆ **Who** will be involved? Who will benefit? (stakeholders)

- ◆ **Why** is this important? Why is it needed? (context and/or rationale)

- ◆ **What** will happen as a result? What are the outcomes? (expected outcome)

- ◆ **When** is it likely to occur? (timing)



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Step 2

Set your time frame

It is important to plan **how much time** things will take. You can use your timeframe to work out whether you are on track as your project develops.

To plan a timeframe you need to **break your project down** into its main **stages**. A typical timeframe might be:

1 - 2 months - Develop your idea

- Get your idea clear - who, what, why, when, how
- Check it out and talk to people - consult with any 'stakeholders'
- Work out which funding body or support organisations to approach

1 month - Prepare any funding applications

- Work out your project proposal in more detail
- Write the funding application
- Get others to look at it and give feedback
- Get support material and letters of support together

2 - 4 months - Application processed

- Funding body assesses your application
- Notification of whether funding is approved (the time this takes varies greatly for different funding bodies)
- Be prepared for delays at this stage

1 - 2 months - Prepare your project

- It often takes some time to sign a letter of agreement and actually get the cash
- Arrange for your project to start, hire people etc

1 - 12 months - Make your project happen

- The time it takes to implement your project from start to finish will vary from project to project
- Document your project as you go (photos, video, comments, writing)

1 - 2 months - Evaluation and reporting

- Remember you will have to 'acquit' the grant and write a report at the end - this has to match what you said you would do in your application



Step 3

Develop a resource strategy

A resource strategy involves locating the right amount of funds, in-kind support and people to ensure that your idea is feasible.

It is frequently easier to generate in-kind support than to attract cash from non-funding sources. Businesses often prefer to donate goods, equipment or services as sponsorship rather than give cash.

For instance, a printing company might print invitations or catalogues at a discount rate or for free. Local Government Council might waive venue hiring charges or supply a community bus with driver, the scouts might do a letterbox drop or the Apex club might loan their barbeques and provide volunteers to run the catering or refreshments. The range of possibilities is enormous.

Finding the right funding body to gain the funds for things you can not source will take a bit of effort.

It's best if you can find **more than one** funding source - most funding bodies won't want to fund the whole project. If you get a grant from one, others are more likely to think your project is worthwhile.

Here are some things to try:

- **Talk about your project in the community** - someone will know someone who received money or support from somewhere
- **Ring the funding bodies you already know** of and talk to a project officer - they will put you onto other possibilities if they're not the right place for your project idea
- **Phone a peak body** or organisation and ask advice
- **Find someone working in an arts organisation** and ask them for advice
- **Find others you know who have received funding** for a similar activity and ask their advice
- **Get details of funding programs sent to you** e.g. eligibility, criteria, guidelines, application forms. Application forms are very valuable in clarifying what the funding program is about
- Always ask if there are **other likely funding sources** which might support your proposal, you may be able to approach several sources or have an alternate plan should you be unsuccessful in your first attempt



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Step 4

Develop your pitch

By this stage you should be able to clearly and succinctly articulate the idea to people in a couple of sentences. Remember that people's attention spans are quite short.

Think about your idea in marketing terms.

What is it you will be selling to the funding source or community group? If you are not clear what it is that you are selling then they won't know how to be involved.

Your pitch is your basic argument for funding or to attract support.

You have already worked out your aim, participants, rationale, and expected outcomes. Now you need to work out **why this is important in relation to the funding criteria or people involved**. You may think it's a great idea - but will they? Try thinking of it from their point of view.

Try writing a one sentence 'pitch' which summarises why your project should occur and why people should want to be involved.

If you are applying for funding then **check all funding criteria** carefully.

Does your proposal fit this program?

Will it really achieve the types of outcomes the funding program hopes to support?

If not, can you adjust your project proposal to make it fit - **without changing it so much that it becomes something else altogether?**

If you can't, find another way to do it. It's not worth losing sight of your goals just to get the money.

Working out when you have a great idea and the wrong funding program can save you a lot of effort and disappointment.

If this happens it's time to go back to the drawing board and find another way to achieve your aim.



Step 5

Design the proposal

The next question is 'how?'

In a practical way, **how are you going to make the project happen?**

This is the point to start thinking in more detail - but not too much detail. Don't get bogged down, just think through the key things step by step that will have to happen to make the project work.

Ask yourself:

- What skills are needed?
- How will they be obtained?
- How will artswriters or other workers be employed?
- What will their different responsibilities be?
- How will money and budgets be managed?
- What resources and equipment will be needed?
- Where can the project take place?
- What are the different stages of the project?
- Will the different stages of the project fit into the timeframes?

For your proposal to be convincing it will need to convey to the reader exactly how the outcomes will be achieved.

You need to identify all the people who may have an interest in the project. These are a list of potential stakeholders.

An effective way to identify your project's stakeholders and likely sources of support is to list all the benefits that are likely to occur if your project is successful. Think laterally as well as listing the obvious benefits, remember to include social outcomes, health outcomes, artistic achievements, educational impact and economic impacts such as cost savings for government (where applicable). Then list the people or organisations that may benefit from or be interested in these outcomes occurring. These are potential stakeholders.

Try out your proposal on potential stakeholders.



Step 6

Plan for success

Your Plan at this stage should include pitch, timeline and key stakeholders. You need to expand your resource strategy to include a budget.

The budget is just another way of telling the story of your project. **It is often the first thing** that people look at when assessing a funding application or considering support.

A good, clear, realistic budget is the sign of a good, clear, realistic proposal.

Always start with a rough estimate in the early planning stages and before you research the funding options.

For example, if your rough estimate shows that you need \$15,000 but your funding source only allocates amounts up to \$5,000 you will have to revise your plans or search for other funds.

If this happens you could:

- find other sources of funding
- revise the size of your proposal
- look for in-kind support instead of cash

List all the resources you will need. Then work out how much they will cost. Don't guess! Ring up and find out how much things will cost. Find out about similar projects - what did they cost?

Common budget factors are:

- salaries/wages/fees
- facilities
- travel
- insurance
- marketing and promotion
- printing
- professional services
- administration
- materials
- venue and equipment



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Step 7

Putting together the Project team

When developing projects covering different industries/sectors it is important to plan for expertise in all areas as part of the team. But more importantly it is crucial to have people with the skills to facilitate the process. Many experienced artswriters are guided by the philosophy of Community Cultural Development (CCD), with guiding principles of:

- **Self-definition**
the right of communities to identify a shared sense of identity through identifying shared symbols, needs and goals
- **Self-representation**
the right of communities to access and use the tools to express or represent that identity to themselves and others
- **Self-determination**
the right of communities to control their own development and to achieve shared goals and aspirations
- **Cultural democracy**
the right of people to participate in cultural production and create their own cultural practices
- **Cultural diversity**
the right of people of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to their own cultural practices which are recognised and validate

(Adapted from Mann 1994 A Bridge between Two Territories)

When constructing the project team always consider the principles that inform your decision-making and your project.

The CCD principles above suggest both the range of possible participants and possible issues for their involvement, as well as informing the structure of the project. For example: to encourage people from a range of cultural backgrounds it may be necessary to provide interpreters or involve senior members of their communities to ensure cultural appropriateness. Or to ensure self determination there needs to be representation in decision-making processes which might suggest a steering committee or an advisory body.



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Some helpful hints for filling in application forms

Photocopy your original form and use this to write your first draft. If working electronically, copy forms onto hard drive or draft your ideas in a word processing format and then copy and paste them. Working online always involves a small risk of losing work if a computer crashes.

Show your draft to someone experienced. Ask them to tell you if it was clear, easy to read, if they understood what was being proposed, if they had any concerns. Triple check that your budget is accurate.

Leave yourself time to make changes based on the feedback. Plan on at least three drafts with time between.

When you **read through your application.** Think about it from their point of view. Can you find holes or weak points which may exclude your application from funding?

Present the information clearly and neatly on the form. If this isn't your strong point, find someone else to do it! **Make sure you answer every question.** If you don't understand anything, ring the project officer.

Put all the essential information in the form itself, not in an attachment.

Check you have provided EVERYTHING they ask for eg:

Numbers of photocopies of the application

Attachments - keep these short and sweet and **relevant**

CV's of artists

Audited accounts

Letters of support

Get it in by the deadline! Late applications won't be accepted.