

Concept Papers Development

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What is a Concept Paper?

- Also called a prospectus, preliminary proposal or pre-proposal, a concept paper is first step in the development of a project (especially that which requires funding)
- It's the shortened version of the real proposal
- It could also function as a summary of the entire project

Advantages of a Concept Paper

- It helps to clarify and organise ideas
- From the CP, several projects can be developed from the same idea
- Simultaneous submission of a concept paper to several agencies is permitted
- It gives fore-knowledge of your idea to the funding agency and also to your colleagues
- Acceptance of a CP by a funding agency is a form of commitment that energises the full proposal development

Features of a Concept paper

- Should not be more than 2-page long
- It could be written as a letter of inquiry to the funding agency
- It must contain concrete and do-able ideas, especially those that are novel
- It should be written in simple, non-technical language because the reviewers may not be in your field.

Sections of a Concept Paper

- Project title
- Need – Project Justification
- Goal and Objectives
- Methodology
- Resources and Personnel Available
- Budget
- Conclusion

Project Title

- Should be inspirational and action-oriented
- Should include the main issue to be addressed and the place where the project will be carried out
- Should not be too long and not be too technically-oriented

Need – Project Justification

- Describe the importance, timeliness and innovation in the project
- Show evidence that you are familiar with the literature on the subject matter
- Also state the relevance and applicability of the project to the funder's priorities
- In a concept paper, this should not be more than $\frac{1}{2}$ a page or even less

Project Goal and Objectives

- Goal should be stated in one sentence only and should address the expected long term impact of the project
- Specific objectives should align with the Goal and should be listed clearly and briefly
- Objectives should be listed in a prioritised manner, if possible
- In my experience, specific objectives should not exceed three in a concept paper

Methodology

- Describes how the project will be conducted
- Should relate to the objectives of the project
- Should focus on the most significant points
- You should provide indication of having thought through the entire study, and having anticipated most reasonable questions and possible objections to the project

Resources and Personnel

- List significant facilities, and equipment available
- Provide information on key personnel and other previous relevant experiences
- Prove that you can do the project with the resources available

Budget

- It's the most important section
- Consider project activities and specific costs
- But at the CP stage, it is better to quote a lower budget, with the hope that a more detailed budget justification will be given during the development of the full proposal

Conclusion

- Be passionate and convincing throughout all sections of the concept paper
- In the conclusion, make a statement to indicate that you will implement the project transparently, and honestly, and that the funds will be used for the purpose of implementing the project
- Also, state that the project will contribute greatly to achieving the goal of reducing maternal mortality in the community

Structure of Concept papers for Reducing Maternal mortality

- It should consist of a formative research phase followed by an intervention phase
- Funders often don't support projects that are mainly descriptive.
- They always like projects that are interventionists – addressing the problem that have been described

Formative (Needs Assessment) Phase

- Should be done in a clearly defined geographical area
- Both Quantitative and Qualitative research methods should be used
- Triangulation should then be done to establish the reasons that certain behaviours are taking place or not taking place

Interventions

- Interventions should be clearly defined and should emanate from the results of the formative study
- An experimental or quasi-experimental research design should be used to test the effectiveness of the intervention
- Preparations should be made for expansion and scaling of the project
- Multi-disciplinary approach is now the norm, including the involvement of policymakers in the project design and implementation

Examples of Questions for Concept paper development

- Why is acceptance of family planning low in a defined geographical area? And what can be done to increase women's acceptance of family planning?
- Why are women who do not want to be pregnant not using family planning methods? And what can be done to increase contraceptive use by women who do not want to be pregnant?

Examples of Questions for Concept paper development

- Why women in a specific community use traditional method of antenatal and delivery care? What can be done to increase women's use of orthodox antenatal and delivery care?
- What is the prevalence of under-nutrition and over-nutrition among pregnant women in a defined community. What are the effects of under- or over-nutrition on pregnancy outcomes in this population

Examples of Questions for Concept paper development

- What is the quality of emergency obstetric care in a defined community in the Gambia?
- What is the impact of quality of care indicators on use of maternal and child health care in the community?
- What is the impact of quality of care indicators on maternal and child health indicators
- How can the quality of care indicators be improved to reduce maternal mortality

Examples of Questions for Concept paper development

- What is the direct and in-direct costs of maternal health services in a defined
- What is the impact of cost of services on health care utilisation by women
- What is the effect of free maternal health services on service utilisation
- Does free medical services reduce maternal mortality? If so, by what extent?

THANK YOU