

Telling your project story

Funders are usually far away and do not know your community. This guide covers what to include in a proposal so they can understand your project.

The six things a funder needs to know

If you answer these six questions in your own words, you have a proposal.

1	What is the problem? What is happening in your community.
2	Who does it affect? Who they are, and roughly how many.
3	What will you do? The activities. What someone would see if they visited.
4	Why your group? What you know, what you have, what you have done before.
5	What will be different? What changes once the project is done.
6	What will it cost? The amount, and what it pays for.

Use your own words

Grant forms often use words like *capacity building* and *stakeholder engagement*. You do not need to use them. Plain descriptions of what is happening and what you plan to do are easier for a funder to understand.

Two ways of saying the same thing

Harder to picture	Easier to picture
"The project will build capacity around water security outcomes."	"Forty families walk two hours every day to get water. We want to build two tanks so they do not have to."
"Our organisation has extensive experience in community engagement."	"We are twelve women. We have run the village savings group for six years."
"The initiative will deliver sustainable long-term impact."	"When the tanks are built, our maintenance group will look after them. We have agreed who will do it."
"Beneficiaries will be empowered through the intervention."	"Twenty-eight children will not have to miss school to carry water."

The examples on the right include numbers, people, and things a reader can picture.

Five things that help

1. Include a number, even a rough one.

“Forty families” tells a funder more than “many families”. If you do not know the exact number, a rough count is enough — you can write “about forty”.

2. List what you already have.

Land, tools, volunteer labour, knowledge of the area, or a group that has been running for years without funding. Funders take these into account when deciding.

3. Say what is difficult.

For example: “The road floods in the wet season, so we will build between May and October.” This shows you have planned around local conditions.

4. Say what happens when the funding ends.

Funders often ask who will maintain the project and who pays for repairs. If you have not decided yet, you can say so and explain how you will work it out.

5. Ask for the amount you need.

Not less because you are worried it sounds like too much, and not more in case it gets cut.

If writing this is hard

Writing proposals in English is a skill that is usually taught, and many people have not had the chance to learn it. There are other ways to do this.

You can say it out loud and have someone in your group write it down. You can record it on a phone. You can write it in your own language. Or you can use Claim's grant builder: talk or type in your own words, in your own language, and it will turn what you said into a proposal in English that you can read, change, and keep.

Before you send it

- Could someone who has never been to your community picture the problem?
- Is there a number in it?
- Have you said why your group is the right one to do this?
- Does the budget total match the amount you asked for?
- Have you said what happens after the funding finishes?