A Guide to Fundraising and Proposal Writing
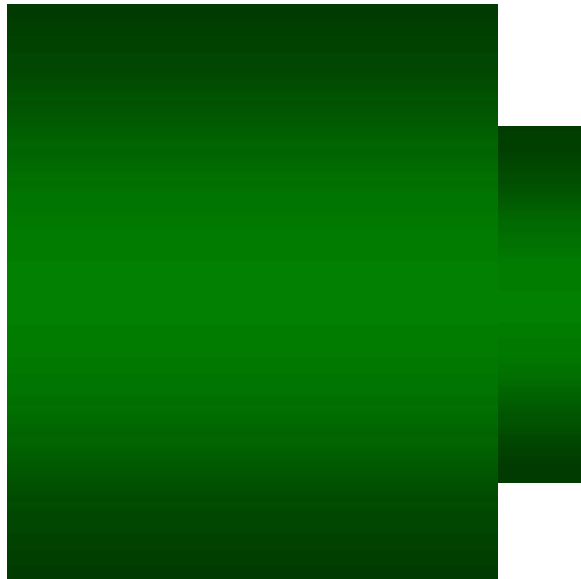
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Fundraising

What is Your Fundraising Goal?

Before you start fundraising, you need to know what your fundraising goals are. Whether it is for a specific project, or to acquire funds for staff to run ongoing programmes you need to make a budget. After you have agreed on this then you can see how much you need for any particular line item: stationery, staff salaries, training, office rent, utilities, vehicle maintenance, gas, etc.

There are many different sources of fundraising revenue and no single one will pay all the bills and are all subject to external forces. Any organization needs to attack all of them or at least a few different ones. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Types of Fundraising Ventures

These are the major ones:

- **Small Business Ventures**: There are business activities that the organization may be able to undertake to generate income, such as poultry chicken production, pastry sales, tour guide operation etc. Beware of going into business without knowing your market and how you will sell your tour etc.

- **Merchandise**: The sale of hats, t-shirts, books, videos or any products that are complimentary to the mission of the organization and may be branded with your logo.

- **Donations**: Donations can be large or small from individuals, companies or foundations that are interested in your work. They can be solicited through donation boxes (or cans) at strategic locations, on the street, at events or through a targeted programme of solicitation. Donors may specify how they want the money spent.

- **Corporate Sponsors**: Companies may donate cash, especially if they can claim tax relief from the Ministry of Finance (if your organization is on the list of approved organizations) but sponsors usually prefer to give in-kind, i.e. products or services. Corporations are also interested in sponsoring events or activities that generate good publicity for their company – make sure this is compatible with your mission (see also section below on "*How organization status has implications for funding access"*). In your letter to them, say what kind of publicity they should expect to receive, such as the use of their logo on all publications, media coverage to be received etc.

- **Donor Organizations**: many different ones will approve grants, small, medium or large, for specific activities or projects. The bigger the grant, the harder it is and the longer it takes. Success is not guaranteed, they are usually over-subscribed, so you have to have several proposals out at any time (*see also section on Proposal Writing for further details*).

- **User Fees**: If you have facilities or land or a community centre, the Government has approved, in principle, the concept of charging users to enjoy the facilities. This requires accountability and administration to work.

- **Community Events**: These are events such as an Earth Day, Environment Day, International Coastal Cleanup Day, Sports Day, Family Fun day activity. Typically a lot of work, but they do raise some money with sale of refreshments (and donations) and they also raise awareness of the organization and inspire commitment from the community.

? **Trust Fund**: By legal deed it is possible to set up your own trust fund, which can be sinking or endowment in nature, where donations can be invested and the income used by the organization.   In the case of sinking funds, the capital can be used so the fund is eventually depleted, as in the case of the EFJ. The National Parks Trust Fund is an endowment fund so the capital can never be spent, only the interest earned.

? **Special Events**: This could be any type of event and you can think of ones that are appropriate for your organization. Examples of such events are fundraising parties, for example a Valentines Day Party, Concerts, Barbecues, Dinners, Charity Ball, Bingo Party, Community Festival, The procedure is generally the same for all of these kinds of events, and for all, careful attention **must** be placed on the details of your plans. See the guidelines below.

Fail to plan, then you can plan to fail!

Golden Rules for Special Fundraising Events

1. Start Your Plans Early

You need to start the planning process at least three months before and sometimes as much as a year for larger events such as a Nyammins and Jammins.

2. Set Deadlines

Set timelines for when certain things need to happen and stick to it.

3. Steering Committee/Coordinator

Have a steering committee to help with the planning and decide who will do what, when. Hire a coordinator to do all the detailed work so they are completely focused and not distracted by other work. It's all in the details and your staff has other responsibilities that distract them.

4. Decide What Type of Event you are Having:

? **Who do you want to come?** Is it the local community people, or people from all over the island? Is it young people and students, is working people or is it a mixture?

? **Define your target**. Do they have money, can they afford the ticket price?

? **How many people do you want to come?** You can't do a sit down dinner for 1000. What numbers can the venue comfortably hold? Will there be dancing and is there space for this?

? **What is the best time?** What is the best day of the week for your crowd? What is the best time of day? Choose a few dates and check that nothing else is happening that will clash. Avoid times of year when they are spending money on school fees, Christmas presents, etc. Do it after payday. When you set the date, get the word out early so no one else plans a party the same day or week as you. Consider rain when setting a date. Even so, you need to figure out what to do if it rains. Can the venue

accommodate the guests undercover? Don't put expensive equipment or auction items outside, keep them covered.

5. Prepare a Budget

Prepare a budget for everything that you will need: food, drinks, tickets, advertisements, sales, items for auction or raffle, entertainment, rental of tables, chairs, glasses, equipment, and hotel accommodation.

6. Donations

Take your budget and see who you can approach to donate specific items. Beg as much as you can so you don't have to put money out and risk losing it. This involves writing dozens of good begging letters telling them what you are doing, why and how they can help. These should be sent to the decision makers in the organization so you have to find out who they are, get their right name, title and address. Letters then must be followed up with many phone calls and letters before you get a commitment. Vague promises, such as "no problem" don't count. Then you have to arrange to collect the goods they have donated. In the case of food, this has to be done on the day of the event and you need to organize containers, serving utensils, keeping hot food hot and cold food cold. Try to cover the majority (if not all) of your needs through donations.

7. Tickets

The first thing is to get the tickets printed and out early, so you must finalize as many details as possible right away: date, time, venue, cost, dress code, music, raffle, gate prize, etc. Set the ticket price so that people can afford it, it is good value for money, and will cover your costs. This will tell you how many tickets you have to sell. Print extra tickets, you won't sell them all. Sales are the hardest part but at least you will know how much money you have collected and how many people to cater for before the event. Once you have the tickets from the printer, get them out. Your directors, staff and volunteers are critical here. It takes perseverance to sell tickets and many people are uncomfortable doing it. Number the tickets so you can keep track of them and who you gave them to. Decide whether you are going to give people tickets on trust or only in exchange for cash at the outset. This will avoid nightmares later on.

Alternatively, send out invitations rather than tickets to a larger number of guests rather than trying to sell tickets in advance. You need to send three times as many to get your numbers and then be prepared to collect money at the gate. This is however very risky because you won't know how many people might show up. And if it rains on the day, you're soaked!

Details to Remember

? Run through the details with all your staff/volunteers the week before.

? Engage your directors and volunteers for staffing the event.

? Have more volunteers than you need.

? See that staff/volunteers have eaten before the event begins.

? Allow time for things to go wrong.

? Set up the venue early.

? Have guests sign a guest book (name, address and contact information).

- ✍ Keep checking that dirty plates (and any other significant solid waste) are removed.

- ✍ Check on your guests to see that they are having a good time. Talk to guests about your organization.

After the Event is Over

- ✍ Then you have to clean up.

- ✍ Leave the venue as you found it.

- ✍ Make sure that everything you borrowed is returned.

- ✍ Pay the bills and bank the money.

Wrapping Up

- ✍ Thank you letters make people feel good.

- ✍ Post mortem, what went wrong?

- ✍ Amend your plans next year.

IF IT'S NOT BROKE, DON'T FIX IT.

Examples of Additional Fundraising Activities

1. Membership and Other Affiliates

Membership Fees, Past Beneficiaries, Affiliate Clubs

2. Entertainment

Benefit performances, Book sales, % or royalties from records, films, books.

3. Sales from Products

Anniversary Magazines, Souvenirs, Agricultural, manufactured products such as Girl Guides Cookies, Operation Friendship Christmas Cards

4. Service Providers

Video production, accounting, constructed wetlands technology, land practices

5. Gift Brochures

6. Raffles from Donations

Cars, electrical equipments

7. Sporting, Cultural, and Leadership Events

YMCA Camps, Swim-a-ton, Media-a-ton, Walk-a-ton

8. *Special Events and Seminars*

   Green Expo, Children Events, Harvest, Workshops

9. *Service Clubs Projects*

10. *Incentives*

   Selling of Bricks, Doors, Windows, and Naming of Facilities

How Organization Status has Implications for Funding Access

A non-profit is a tax-exempt organization that serves the public interest. In general, the purpose of this type of organization must be charitable, educational, scientific, religious or literary. The public expects to be able to make donations to these organizations and deduct these donations from their taxes. Legally, a non-profit organization is one that does not declare a profit and instead utilizes all revenue available after normal operating expenses in service to the public interest.

Universities, hospitals and large national charities are examples of organizations that can be "non-profit" but have salary scales on par with almost any for-profit corporation.

A non-profit organization can have clients, can offer products and services, will need revenue, should market itself, and must be concerned about customer satisfaction whether in those assisted or those who contribute donations in support of operations, programs or services. It is a business that must serve the public interest and it will succeed or fail as any business will, depending on how well it is operated.

Proposal Writing

Understanding Your Role and Your Organization's Goals and Capabilities

A. The Starting Point

Organizations submit proposals to access funds to do projects. A successful project derives its strength from sound planning, and the development of a strategy that outlines all the essential aspects of the proposed project including the capability of your organization. The starting point for this planning and development is a solid understanding of your role within the organization, how the organization is currently operating, and what it wants to do. We can best define our goals-and how to reach them-if we recognize our role in the organization and understand that the organization is the means through which we achieve these goals.

The activities you perform can contribute to the evolution of the organization. It is important to understand and define what your contribution can be, and how you see yourself as part of your organization. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of your organization, you should be able to gain better understanding of its capabilities. This understanding should provide insight about how you can contribute more effectively to help create a better organization.

B. The Proposal Design Framework: Translating Your Organization's Aspirations, Capabilities, and Plans into Proposals

Proposal as Part of a Process: Proposals are not designed in isolation; they are constructed within a context of relations with other groups and organizations. In fact, developing relationships with other organizations-including collaborating organizations, beneficiaries, donors, and government agencies-is an essential element of the proposal design process.

By understanding your organization well, you will be better able to select partners to collaborate with you on projects. This understanding should also help you identify complementary characteristics that you might want to look for in a collaborating organization.

Figure 1 attached shows the basic steps in proposal design. Together, these five steps cover the proposed project's *life-cycle.* As you can see, internal and external steps are both critical to the proposal design process.

C. Organizational Capabilities: What Make For Success?

What does an effective organization looks like. Of course, the answer is as varied as the number of effective conservation-related work. Listed below are five types of organizational characteristics that directly impact effectiveness in an organization. Each one contributes to developing an effective well-managed organization.

Organizational Characteristics: Review the following list of characteristics that describe each category and add details or modify those characteristics that describe your organization.

1. Management and Leadership

    - ✎ Dedicated
    - ✎ Influential
    - ✎ Team oriented
    - ✎ Long-term planners

2. Staff, technical experts, and volunteers

    - ✎ Qualified
    - ✎ Motivated
    - ✎ Dedicated
    - ✎ Influential
    - ✎ Team oriented
    - ✎ Specialized expertise in: science, policy planning, evaluation, fund-raising, education, media, and law

3. Physical assets

    - ✎ Office space
    - ✎ Computers
    - ✎ Vehicles
    - ✎ Library
    - ✎ Database
    - ✎ Audio equipment
    - ✎ Communication equipment
    - ✎ Office supplies
    - ✎ Property
    - ✎ Field equipment

4. Financial resources

    - ✎ Capability to raise and manage funds
    - ✎ Ability to maintain a diversified funding portfolio over time

5. Recognition

    - ✎ Past performance
    - ✎ Solid outputs
    - ✎ Integrity
    - ✎ Independence
    - ✎ Credibility
    - ✎ Effectiveness
    - ✎ Team oriented

Organizational and project planning require that an organization understand and build on the full range of its strengths. Therefore, before attempting to design a proposal, we must first be thoroughly familiar with our organization's strength and weaknesses.

The Project Life-Cycle

A proposal is designed to present the activities your organization wants or needs to undertake and identifies the resources required to accomplish its mission. In considering the design of a proposal, it is helpful to think it terms of a set of key *questions* to be addressed by the proposed project. A proposal is actually a way of exposing the logic and implementation steps of a project's life-cycle (including purpose, method, and expected results). During the proposal design process, the organization must answer certain questions about the project and find ways to present the answers in the proposal.

Remember, each donor will have a suggested proposal format which you will learn about during preliminary contact. However, it should be possible to use their suggested format without losing

sight of your organizational goals. An effective proposal should be a document prepared to assist planning for your organization as well as to seek collaboration.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate key questions to answer in the Proposal Life Cycle.

Proposal Components

Introduction

The *introduction* provides an overview of the proposed project. The format is often dictated by donors. Some donors request a summary and/or title page conveying the same information. The important points to convey are usually the project name, sponsoring organization, a one-paragraph project summary (including its expected outcome), project timing, project manager(s), and project funding (organization and donor/partner contributions for the life of the project).

Goals and Objectives

Often, project *goals* and *objectives* are hard to differentiate. The following may help you to clarify the difference between the two components.

Project *goals* are thus an articulation of how the project is aiming. The project should be one part of an overall strategy to fulfil the organization's mission. Project goals are thus an articulation of how the project fits with the organization's long-range aspirations.

Project objectives are the specific anticipated outcomes of the project activities. Objectives deal with these questions:

What?

- ✍ What are you specifically proposing to do?
- ✍ What do you expect to happen during the life of this project?
- ✍ What will be different as a result of this project?

It is important to state project objectives in measurable quantitative and qualitative terms tied directly to the project's implementation, monitoring, and evaluation plan.

Statement of Need

The *statement of need* discusses the specific problem addressed by the project. Even for problems that are national in scope, the statement should focus on the target groups affected by the project. It should include the location of project activities and beneficiaries. Illustrate through your description of the situation that the project is essential and what work is currently being done in that area. Your presentation of the specific problem should convey your knowledge of the area, and understanding of all the relevant issues.

Donors also look for intended results to the beneficiaries. The questions addressed by this section include the following:

Why?

- ✍ Why are you undertaking the project?
- ✍ Why is this the best method?
- ✍ What specific problems and needs are being addressed?
- ✍ Who/what will be the direct and indirect beneficiaries served by the project?

Organizational Background

The *organizational background* section should summarize the organization's purpose and capabilities and why it is uniquely positioned to accomplish this project. Your emphasis in this section should also include credibility and previous experience in the project's field. If you are just starting this type of project, then describe the skills and expertise within your organization. It should deal with the following question by presenting particular organizational strengths:

Why you?

Why is your organization well suited and prepared to undertake this project? (That is, what are the organization's resources, strengths, reputation, experience, and so on?)

Approach and Operations

The approach and operations section describes the methods and activities to be used in the project. Often, proposals include implementation plans outlining all the activities in the project. The plan covers the following questions:

How?

- ✎ How will the project accomplish its objectives?
- ✎ What will be the major project activities?
- ✎ How will the project be managed?

Where?

- ✎ Where will the project be located?

When?

- ✎ When will project development occur?
- ✎ When will project activities occur?
- ✎ When and how will your organization coordinate activities with donors/cooperating agencies, other organizations, and the government?
- ✎ What are the key dates for the project over its life-cycle?

Figure 4 shows a typical Project Schedule

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

All organizations must be able to track the progress of their projects through a *monitoring* and *evaluation* system. Designing a monitoring and evaluation process for each project will enable your organization to examine the clarity of the project, measure its objectives, and determine a time-frame for expected results. The system should include procedures for monitoring the progress of the project, reporting on the progress, and evaluating the status of the activities.

The proposal should also describe the method for capturing and presenting the learnings to your organization as well as collaborating organizations involved in the project. The process is critical for your organization's continued understanding of the project's evolution and for improving its effectiveness. Another critical point is deciding who will conduct the monitoring and evaluation. Your organization can choose an individual from your staff, an outside firm, or an individual consultant. You should consider cost, competency, reputation, and impact. You might want to check references if you decide to use someone outside of your organization.

The project *monitoring* plan should present the method for ongoing review and measurement of the project to gauge its progress relative to its objectives and to plan continual improvements to both activities and management. Monitoring focuses on periodic measurement of work plan progress and achievement of intermediate project milestones. This section of a proposal handles these questions:

How will you track your progress?

- ✍ How will you monitor the project's performance on an ongoing basis?
- ✍ What are the critical features of the project you will be checking?
- ✍ How will the information benefit your organization?
- ✍ How will you collect the evaluation data?
- ✍ Who will conduct the monitoring and evaluation?

The evaluation plan includes periodic project reviews intended to summarize the major lessons learned during the course of a project's life-cycle, its activities, and impact on beneficiaries. Evaluations should be conducted to highlight lessons to improve the existing project and for future similar projects and activities. The evaluation is primarily for your organization. However, the collaborating organization should have the option to access the information. An evaluation takes a broad view of a project's activities; in essence, it answers these questions:

How will you assess impact?

- ✍ How will you measure the project's success and effects?
- ✍ What do the "critical success factors" for gauging the project's impact tell you?
- ✍ What difference will the project make?

In order to monitor and evaluate the project successfully and share the findings, it is important to develop a project reporting system. Project *reporting* includes periodic documentation of your progress. Reports may include financial updates, implementation status reports, and periodic evaluations. The report should be written for the project manager, executive director, and finance department-as well as beneficiary groups, donors, other organizations, and the government that has interest in the ongoing progress of the project. This section covers these questions:

How will you convey what you have learned?

- ✍ How will you capture the information?
- ✍ What ongoing information and reports will you be required to monitor and evaluate?
- ✍ How will you incorporate what you have learned into the project?
- ✍ What information and reports will be required by others-local groups, the government, or donors?
- ✍ Who is the report written for?

Budget

The *budget* should include the financial plan for the life of the project, including in-kind contributions, beneficiary contributions, and organization and donor-provided funds. A brief description should also be included for the procedures involved in managing the funds in your organization, identifying the bank your organization uses, financial reporting system, and person in charge of accounting within your organization.

The *budget* summarizes all the required resources for the planned project, including staff time, project materials, and organizational overhead. The budget will illustrate specifically how much money is needed and how it will be allocated. This component is critical for the effective

management of the funds over the life of the project. This section deals with the following questions:

How much?

- ? What types of resources will be required-funds, staff, volunteer time, land, equipment, and so on?
- ? When will fund and resources be required? What is the timing for major project requirements?
- ? How did you determine the resources required?
- ? Who is responsible for managing the funds?

Sustainability: Program Management and Funding

The *sustainability* section should contain a brief statement on the life-cycle of the project. The section should describe how the impact of the project will be continued after the project has concluded. It addresses these questions:

What next?

- ? What will happen to the project after the proposed activities completed?
- ? How will the project be managed when funded activities are completed?
- ? How will the project be funded in the future?
- ? How will beneficiaries or others carry on the work?

What else?

- ? What other materials are needed to support your project?
- ? How should it be presented for impact?

Elements of Strong Proposals and Common Weaknesses

While there is no single absolute right way or wrong way to write proposals, this handbook has elaborated on key aspects of the proposal development process and aspects of proposal components. Therefore, this material should not be considered the final word on how to write effective proposals. However, it should serve to give the reader the basics on common elements of effective proposal writing.

Each donor that receives proposals will have its own format and method in which they would like to see them presented. Many donors will have explicit format guidelines, while for others the format guidelines may be less explicit or non-existent. In each of these cases, this handbook should be useful to the writer as the concepts are applicable in most cases.

The following summarizes characteristics of strong proposals, and common weaknesses or shortcomings of proposals:

Elements of Strong Proposals

- ? Comprehensive
- ? Concise
- ? Well thought through
- ? Budget is justified
- ? Contain support documentation

Common Weaknesses

? Objectives not clear
? Poor writing style
? Does not say how it will be done
? Budget not related to objectives
? Contains unnecessary language

Summary

1. Understand and articulate your organization's goals and capabilities

Review the worksheets from the section on "Understanding Your Role and Your Organization's Goals and Capabilities." Do you understand the following features of your organization?

? Goals
? Objectives
? Beneficiaries
? Capabilities and strengths; weaknesses and obstacles
? Plans and proposed projects
? How your organization's goals organizational capabilities, and plans and proposed projects are linked together

2. Translate your organization's projects, capabilities, and plans into proposals

Review the section on "Understanding the Proposal Development Framework". Do you have a clear idea of the purpose of the questions in each of the following parts of the proposal?

? Introduction/Summary
? Goals and objectives
? Statement of need and organizational background
? Approach and operations
? Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting
? Budget
? Sustainability
? Supporting materials

Do you have a better sense of how each part of a proposal is important for your own project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting?

3. Build relationships

Reflecting on the discussions and exercises from this training material do you have a better understanding of how to approach donors and of how to work with donors as an   integral part of your organization's project planning, development, and implementation process?

It is hoped that this handbook has been useful to the reader in developing their ability to write proposals. Furthermore, implicit in the material, is the notion that the writer will come away with a better understanding of the capabilities of the proposing organization, and the role of the individual and of the organization itself. Ultimately writing effective proposals should be a process that also leads to the strengthening of the capabilities of the proposing organization.

Figure 1: Steps in the Proposal Design Process

INTERNAL

PLANNING	PROPOSING	IMPLEMENTING
Short– and long-term organizational planning and initial project development	Proposal development: Identifying project goals, rationale and operation	Project management, Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

EXTERNAL

MAKING CONTACT	COLLABORATING
Identifying and contacting potential Collaborating organizations	Ongoing work with Collaborating organizations: Implementation, coordination, And evaluation of project activities

Figure 2: The Project Lifecycle: Key Questions

? WHAT?.....................................   What is the project trying to achieve? What will you change or influence through this project?

? WHY? WHERE?   Why are you undertaking the project? Where
**   WHY YOU?............................**   will the project take place? Why are you best suited to undertake the project?

? HOW? WHEN?   How will the Project be conducted? When will project activities occur?

? HOW ARE YOU DOING?   How will you monitor the project's ongoing performance?
**   HOW DID YOU DO?........**   How will you measure success? How will you know when it completed?

? HOW MUCH?   How much will the project cost? What resources will be required?

? WHAT NEXT?   How will the project be sustained? What will happen after the initial project is completed?

? WHAT ELSE?   What other materials can you offer to support the proposal (such as letters of support)?
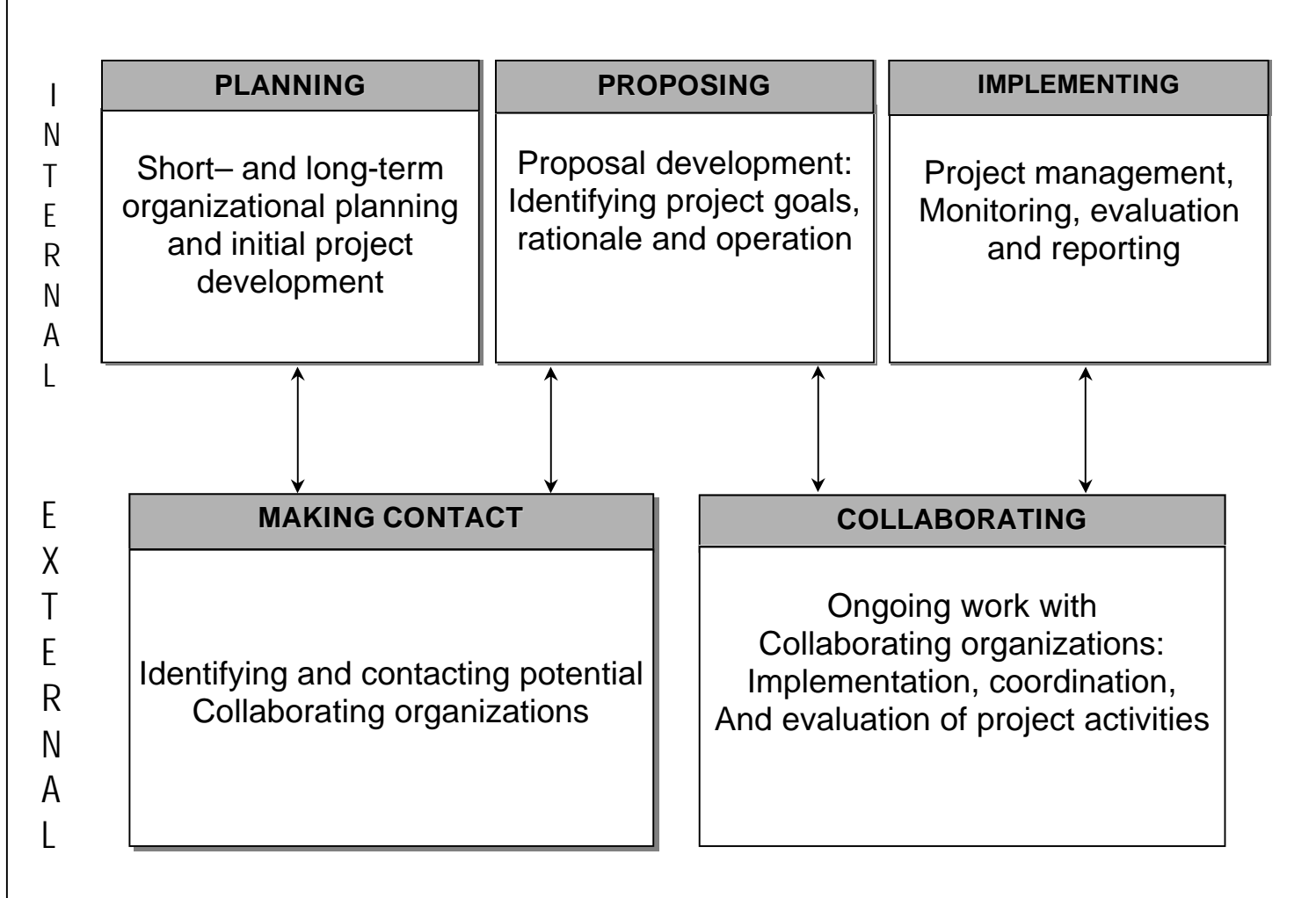
Figure 3: The Project Life- Cycle: Answering the Key Questions

What is the project trying to achieve?
What will you change or influence through this project?

Why are you undertaking the project?
Why are you best suited to undertake the project?

How will the project be conducted?
Where will the project take place?
When will project activities occur?

How will you monitor the project's ongoing performance?
How will you measure effectiveness?
How will you convey what you have learned?

How much will the project cost?
What resources will be required for which aspects of the project?

How will the project be sustained?
What will happen after the initial project is completed?

What other materials can you offer to support the proposal?

Proposal Components
Goals and objectives
Statement and need
Organizational background
Approach and operations
Monitoring, evaluations, and reporting
Budget
Sustainability
Supporting materials

Figure 4: Sample Project Planning Calendar

	Project Planning Activities	Project Start Date	Project Completion Date	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
1.	Develop initial project ideas based on organization's strategic plan. *Person Responsible:*			▓					
2.	Make initial contact with potential Partners/donors *Person Responsible:*				▓				
3.	Develop proposal document. *Person Responsible*					▓			
4.	Interact with and obtain review of partners/donors *Person Responsible*							▓	
5.	Negotiate projects terms (prepare for implementation)								▓