Information Sheet 3: Developing a project

This information sheet will help you design a project. You can use this for your own planning processes, as basis for a funding application or to work with other stakeholders.

1. What are you trying to do?

Aims and Objectives

Your organisation should have some written aims and objectives which focuses the work of the organisation. These may be part of your governance documents or part of a forward or business plan. You can use these to guide your project or you may wish to write some more specific aims and objectives for the project you are about to do. Whichever way you do it, they help you to focus on what you are doing.

Your organisation's **aims** will explain why it exists and what it is you are trying to achieve. Sometimes this is called the **'mission statement'**.

The **objectives** describe how you will achieve that aim by highlighting your day to day activities, so there may be several objectives for each of your aims.

For example:

Aim: The organisation aims to promote social inclusion for adults with learning difficulties.

Objective: To meet this aim the organisation has established a work team of adults with learning difficulties who are supported and trained to undertake maintenance and environmental tasks in varied rural locations for five days a week'.

Objectives should be SMART

Specific	Not a broad objective but something quite detailed
Measurable	You should be able measure whether it's being achieved
Achievable	It should describe something that can be done in a set time
Realistic	It should be something that can actually be done using the resources you have available
Timebound	A time should be set for when it is to be achieved

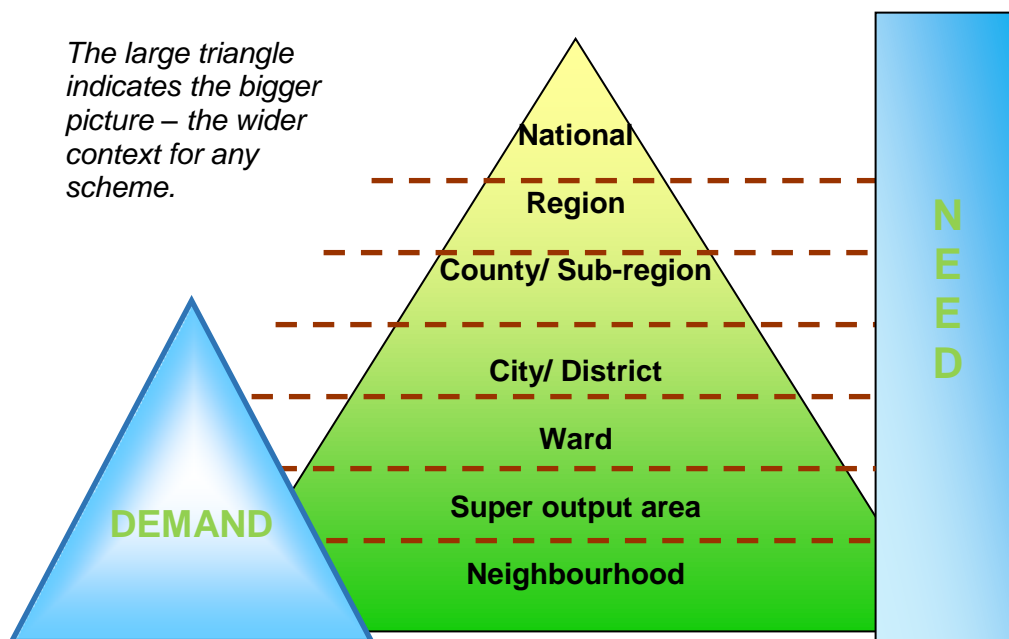## 2. What is the need and demand for your project

So you have had a really good idea for a project and you think it will work. For best results, and to show funders there is a demand, you need to do some research. This will enable you to be sure that there is a real issue or need in your area that you are trying to overcome and that people will definitely use your service/project.

Where can I find evidence?

Look at the *need* and the *demand*

- The *need* is the particular problem/issue that your project will try to address, for example, increasing levels of obesity, or high levels of anti-social behaviour in your area. The evidence for the need can be indicated in national government initiatives, your Local Area Agreements, or your local parish plan etc.

- The *demand* for your project shows the number of people/organisations that do, or could, benefit from the project, an example would be: 50 people with obesity live in the local area. Or 25 young people on the estate have ASBOs.

There is a notable distinction between where you can find evidence for need and evidence for demand. As the diagram indicates, need can be shown at all levels from national policies, reports and strategies right down to local area agreements, neighbourhood reports – because all of them will deal with issues or problems. However demand, for most projects (unless they are regional or national projects) will have to provide evidence of local demand because that is the extent of their realistic impact. So for most projects, demand will be shown through a range of evidence. These could include local surveys, questionnaires, feedback, anecdotal case studies, parish plans, census statistics, projects in other areas and consultations. The project process flow chart on page 3 shows how it all fits together.

The large triangle indicates the bigger picture – the wider context for any scheme.

National

Region

County/ Sub-region

City/ District

Ward

Super output area

Neighbourhood

DEMAND

NEED

3. What will a successful project look like?

As funding becomes more difficult to obtain organisations who can clearly show the real benefits they are having on their service users or communities are at a real advantage. Most funders will want to know how your project will make a difference. Funders will ask what are your project *outputs*, *outcomes*, and *impact*.

Outputs: Outputs are the services and facilities delivered by an organisation or a project. Outputs include training courses, support sessions and publications.

Outcomes: The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that result from what the project or organisation makes, offers or provides. These are usually harder to measure such as increased confidence, or less social exclusion.

Impact: The long term difference a project makes.

What do you need to put in to make it happen?

Inputs: Or resources - everything an organisation draws on to carry out its activities. These will include people, equipment, money and services. They may also include the less tangible things like time, morale and knowledge.

You will need to think about how you will collate the information to measure all of the above during the planning stage of your project.

Your objectives aims and outcomes should all reflect the difference the project is going to make to the lives of the people you have identified as having a need.
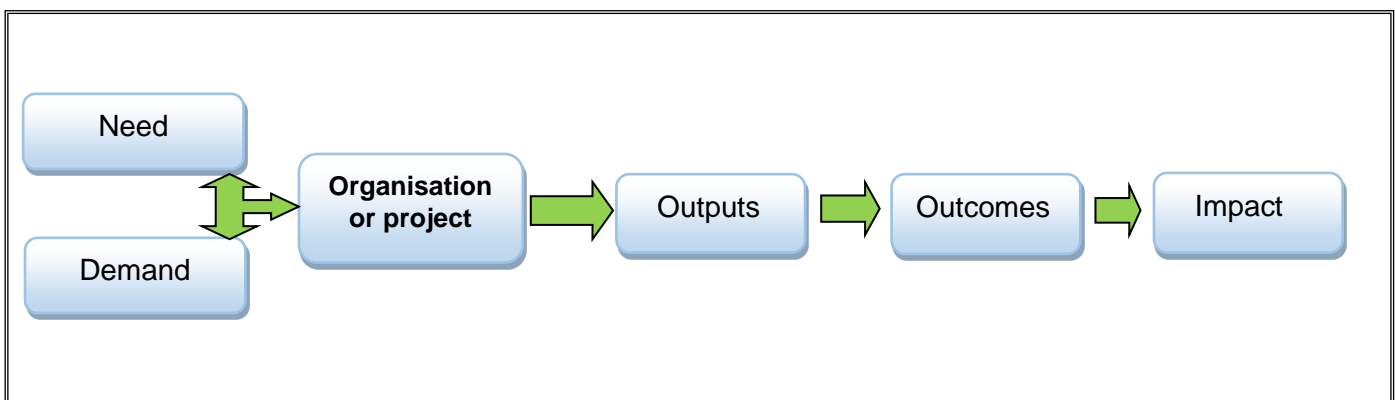
4. Developing a project

So you have identified the need and established how through your aims, outputs, inputs, outcomes you will address those needs and have Impact on the service users.
Before completing a funding application it is always good to sit down and develop and plan your project with your team and service users. You can start a plan with the aims, objectives, demand and needs. Next look at how you will do the project. What activity needs to take place, when does it need to happen, what resources are needed and who is doing particular tasks? Link these to your outputs and outcomes.

An easy way to do this is by developing an operational or activity plan.

Project Staffing	Activity tasks To be completed	Output totals	Output/ Outcome			Who?	Resources required	When by
2	Development of recruitment process Job descriptions and person specification Recruit 2 new members of staff							
	And for the outcomes of the project : 120 beneficiaries have accessed one to one provision and developed action plans/outcomes Star.	40				HAR		
	200 people accessing our daily activity sessions.	134				RS		

You can work through the project and put in what tasks are required and when, but also break down the outcomes and outputs and show how the project will be delivered throughout the year and who will be responsible for delivery.

Spending time at planning stage completing an exercise like this shows funders that you have thought through the project. It also provides you with a management tool to monitor the project and staff delivering it. It will ensure you remain on target and deliver successfully.

Evaluating and lessons learnt
It is always important to evaluate your services to ensure you are delivering what you set out to achieve and to learn from anything that isn't working. Some funders make this a requirement of funding. Good practice will always be to engage internal and external stakeholders in evaluating. Evaluations come in all shapes and sizes and can be conducted yourself internally or with an external organisation. Some funders allow funding within their budgets for work by external evaluations companies.

Preparing your budget
An organisation needs a project budget to show what money is coming in and how it is being spent within the next year of the project. This detail will allow you to plan financially for the future and help you manage your project.

You will be able to clearly see if you have enough money to cover the costs of your project and help you identify the gaps in funding. This budget may change as the project develops so you need to review it on a regular basis to make sure it is realistic and accurate.

Think about your budget in the early stages of developing your project idea, and before you write a funding application or proposal.

Capital: This is the one-off expenditure such as equipment, vehicles, buildings or setting up costs, mostly large physical items.

Revenue: This is the ongoing expenditure which remains throughout your project such as Salaries, rent, electricity and travel costs.

There are not many funders who will simply provide 'core' funding for organisations i.e. money to pay for all the main running costs of an organisation. Most funders prefer to fund projects and defined pieces of work. It is important that the project is fully costed and takes into consideration a proportion of the core or overhead costs such as rent, rates, electricity. This is called *full cost recovery*.

Funders want to feel that they are getting as much as possible out of their money.
So if you can demonstrate that a grant from them will result in extra benefits (or *added value*), this may make your application even more attractive to them.
Always make your budget as specific as possible and if possible get quotes for everything you will need to pay for. Funders are used to seeing budgets and they have a good understanding of how much things cost.

Sources of income
If you are asking for part funding for a project, be clear about. You need to highlight to funders which part of the project they will fund if it isn't the whole project costs. You then need to let them know about other sources of income which will contribute to covering the remaining costs of the project. The sources of income that you should consider can include fundraising activities, grants and donations, or generated income.

Estimate
The income is an estimation of how much you could possibly get from each source during your project. It may be harder to estimate than the expenditure but it needs to be realistic targets - not pure guess work.
1) Identify known sources of income i.e. funders, membership, donations.
2) Identify the shortfall
3) Identify where you may get this from – including the current funder.
    You need to be clear with funders what definite income is and what is inspirational.

Community First Yorkshire can provide support to choose the funding that is right for you

We can provide you with help on a one to one or group training basis by helping you to develop your project, research the right funder, plan a funding strategy, and give you advice about any funding applications you would like to submit.

Go to https://communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk/ to sign up to our news bulletins:

- Week newsletter – information about the volunteer and charity sector, including training courses about funding
- Our monthly funding bulletin updates on funding opportunities