# Planning your project and applying for funding

Below are some general guidelines and tips to help you plan your project and make an application for funding. It is very important that you read the application form and any guideline document(s) carefully to get a clear understanding of what the programme wants to achieve and what the funder needs to know about your project and organisation.

## Planning your project

It is very important that you have a very clear plan of what exactly you want to carry out. Plan the what, who, where and when of your project. Things to consider:

- What problem, need or opportunity is your project addressing?
- What specific equipment/ material/ other resources will be needed?
- Are there external resources or expertise needed in the planning and implementation of the project?
- How long will the project take?
- What type and how many people/ groups will be involved?
- How will people/ groups be involved and engaged?
- Who will manage the project during implementation and after?
- What are the costs? – Setup, operation costs, staff, insurance, communication etc.
- Are there any specific statutory requirements in relation to waste, planning, building regulations, Health and Safety, and Fire Codes etc. applicable to the project?
- How will you know that your activities are making a difference?

## Preparing the cost and the budget

Preparing costs and a budget is one of the most challenging and time-consuming tasks when making a funding application. You will need to make a budget detailing everything that you will need to pay for during the project.

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- Know the size of the grant and what type of expenses you can apply for.
- Prepare a realistic budget - you need to base your costs on real and current costs by seeking quotations from reputable suppliers. You will be required to follow public procurement guidelines.
- Ensure your budget is accurate – make sure to include everything that will be required to finish the project. It is important to be realistic and not to over or underestimate costs.
- Do not include costs for using your own equipment or premises.
- Round your costs to the nearest euro.

## Governance & Financial arrangements

It is critical that funders know how your organisation operates - who is involved, who makes decisions, how you manage your finances, your organisational decision making and reporting structures, as well as your groups expertise and track record. Governance is about decision making, accountability, transparency and fairness.

## Describing your project

It is important to be able to describe your project and that the information is concise, factual and realistic. Keep in mind that you are explaining your project to someone who knows nothing about your project or group.
The level of detail required often depends on the amount of funding being sought. A good approach is to:
- Summarise your project in a few sentences at the start i.e. who, what, where and when.
- Provide some background information or reason why your project has come about.
- Describe the key actions and include some key objectives and timelines.

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- Describe what is innovative, unique and/or replicable about your project.
- Outline any partners or stakeholders who will be involved in or who support your project.
- Outline how your project ties in with the funder's priorities.

## Why your project is needed

It is important to clearly outline why you want or need to undertake your project, regardless of size.

- Identify the need or problem that you are tyring to address.
- Use supporting information and ensure it is not out of date - e.g. an energy audit, environmental study, survey etc.
- Include your supporting information with your application.

## Project achievements and measuring success

It is important to know what you hope to achieve with your project and how you will provide evidence that your project is making a difference.

- Providing clear outputs (actions or items achieved) and outcomes (added value due to the outputs) will help to show the funder the value for money of your project.
- Results should be realistic and achievable, as you will be asked to report on the achievements and results of your project.
- Know how you will be able to demonstrate that your project is making a difference.

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## Completing the application form

A good approach for completing your form:

- Read each question carefully and make sure you answer the specific question being asked.
- Keep in mind the funder's criteria when preparing your answers.
- Be clear, concise and use plain English.
- Know the deadline and method for submission.
- Ask someone else to read your responses before you submit your form.
- Check that you have attached all the required and supporting documents.
- Keep a copy of your submitted form.