

## General feedback:

## Concept notes

- the quality of applications was very high for this funding round
- due to word count restrictions allocated to each question, even the most complex ideas required concise thought and this may have contributed to some applicants struggling to include all the relevant information to support their applications
- defining a Theory of Change was difficult for many; often too complex and not truly representative of what the proposal was trying to achieve
- responses to 'value for money' were quite weak and applicants often struggled to define an approach for each of the 'value for money' sections

## Project design feedback:

**Too elaborate**

**Keep it simple**

Many proposals were very complex, with some featuring multiple interventions to address a specific need.

Focus on areas where your organisation can make a difference and demonstrate a distinct need.

**Links to Global Goals not explained**

**Consider the linkages**

All the proposals linked their strategies to Global Goals, however many did not consider whether there was a stronger link between one Global Goal for their project over another.

**Failure to align with UK Aid Direct priorities**

**Show your contribution**

Weaker proposals struggled to show how their projects aligned with the aims and priorities of the UK Aid Direct fund.

We recommend proposed projects show clearly how they can contribute to the success of UK Aid Direct and are not working to achieve their own project goals alone.

## Project design feedback continued:

**Project didn't consider links**

Many projects did not draw a link between their proposed project and work already being carried out in the same sector or geographic location.

We recommend that you consider all existing interventions, whether they are delivered by private sector organisations, other NGOs, or government. Demonstrate how you are complementing what they are doing and learning from what works.

**Don't duplicate work****Lack of alignment with local priorities**

Whilst the national context was often well described, there was a lack of analysis of the local context.

Remember that national level data might not apply to the specific districts or regions where the most marginalised populations live.

**Provide local data, not just national data****Lacked local level analysis**

Often projects demonstrated how their strategies were in alignment with national priorities but failed to demonstrate how they were aligned at a local level. Organisations did not provide enough detail about how they are working with local county or district level authorities.

We recommend consulting and discussing with local authorities to ensure your proposed strategies address an agreed need. If possible, the objectives should be reflected in local development plans.

**Ensure consultation with local partners****Weak gap analysis**

In some service delivery proposals, analyses of the gaps and barriers to service delivery were weak.

Understand what is currently being supported and by whom. Identify the areas that are lacking in support and where you have an advantage. Consider the areas where you can make the biggest impact.

**Analyse the gaps and barriers**

Project design feedback continued:

**Impact unrealistic**

**Don't be overly ambitious**

Some of the proposals were trying to reach too many beneficiaries, using a very wide range of interventions.

The scale of the proposed project and the number of beneficiaries who will be benefiting needs to be realistic.

**Lacked data on potential beneficiaries**

**Demonstrate your classifications**

Most the projects identified potential beneficiaries as being poor, however the strongest applications clearly defined the beneficiaries as marginalised and vulnerable and demonstrated how they classified them as marginalised, vulnerable or extremely poor.

Ensure you include and clearly define the most vulnerable, using data to support your decision.

**Multi-country projects benefits unexplained**

**Justify the benefits**

For proposals designed to work across multiple countries, a lack of justification for working in more than one country.

Clearly demonstrate the benefits of working across countries and what learning you expect to be able to draw from it.

**Strategies lacked detail**

**Define the strategy and approach**

Many proposals lacked detail in their strategies, and listed a range of activities only.

We recommend you include a clear strategy and supporting approach.

**Not all elements of proposal were equal**

**Ensure all elements equal**

Some proposals included sections that were stronger within the application, than others.

Ensure each section of the application is answered clearly, responding to the questions asked and with the same level of detail.

Demonstrating results and change:

**Failed to provide evidence of difference**

Show your evidence

The strongest proposals used evidence of the impact they had had in previous programmes. They demonstrated what worked, and shared the results.

Explain how you can scale up and expand programmes to reach more beneficiaries or cover a greater geographic area. Fully use the evidence you have, to demonstrate how this could work.

**Couldn't show the change**

Use examples and evidence

One challenge that applications had was in demonstrating how the strategy and activities would lead to change.

The best applications used evidence and examples of how their approaches can make change happen (especially evident in proposals trying to change behaviour and attitudes).

**Didn't prove they would deliver**

Use examples and evidence

Some proposals did not choose appropriate strategies to create the change they were seeking.

Ensure the strategy and proposed interventions will deliver the change you want to take place and address the need you have identified.

Use examples of where it has worked previously.

**Couldn't define a Theory of Change**

Keep it simple and define

Some proposals could clearly define a Theory of Change, while others struggled and created very complex models that were difficult to follow. Many proposals struggled with defining inputs and often got confused between inputs and activities or outputs.

Keep the logic simple, and define the goal of the programme to describe how to get to your goal.

### Demonstrating results and change:

**Didn't consider all assumptions**

**Remember proposals should be flexible**

Some of the weaker projects did not consider all the factors that need to be in place to create a successful project. Consider carefully the things you assume are in place and articulate how you would adapt the proposal should these change. For example, when designing health promotion campaigns to build the knowledge of people on specific diseases, there is an assumption that there are trained health professionals available to treat the disease; this may not be the case.

Assumptions can change during the project and the proposal needs to recognise that it can adapt approaches to respond to the change in assumptions.

**Lacked detail**

**Be specific**

Certain interventions on behaviour change, sensitisation and empowerment, lacked detail. There was limited information on the specific change expected to happen as a result of the intervention.

Define the specific change you expect to happen because of the intervention.

### Additional comments:

- proposals that intended to use capacity building for change, were often weak in describing exactly what change they expected to take place and how they would measure it
- the descriptions of 'monitoring' were poor and required more detail on the type of monitoring, when it would happen and who would do it

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