

From a Good Idea to a Successful Project

**CSSP Helping Project Proposal
Makers to reach a Grant Agreement**

**In-Service Training Course
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at CSSP**

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Introduction

This in-service training course is designed for CSSP Grant Managers whose job involves helping a CSO with an idea to become a CSO with a project funded by CSSP.

The Grant Manager needs to end up with a Grant Agreement that contains :

- A Project Description (containing a Logical Framework Analysis (LFA), and a workplan
- A budget
- An agreed set of indicators for the CSO's own purposes, and an agreed set of indicators for USAID purposes.

The raw material that the Grant Manager has to work with is a project proposal and budget. These are of very varying quality – they may be very clear and well-thought out: or they may be very loose and inconsistent. Many of them suffer from the “NGO Disease” which is activities/activities/activities that do not lead anywhere. The Grant Manager takes the raw material that he/she is given and tries to work with the Proposal Maker in order to come up with a Project Description that aims to produce results that are consistent with the aims of USAID's Special Program Objective 10 (SPO 10)

The work of helping the Proposal Maker improve and clarify his/her proposal is not only valuable because it helps CSSP to manage the project BUT ALSO because such work helps the CSO concerned to think about all the elements that are involved in Project Planning and Implementaiton. The work of helping the CSO with Proposal Formulation, therefore, helps the CSO in three ways:

- It helps the CSO to design a project which has a good chance of achieving the desired results
- It helps the CSO to implement the project systematically and monitor his/her work
- It helps the CSO to learn the skills of project formulation so that it can present attractive and competent proposals to other donors apart from USAID.

There are a lot of project management tools available (“results based management” “management by objectives”, “Goal oriented project management” etc.). The basis of all these is producing a logical plan in which activities lead to objectives which produce results that can be measured. CSSP suggests a basic tool which involves a Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) and a Workplan. The idea is to work with the Proposal Maker until he/she has, with your help, produced such a framework, and is able to implement it.

The Background to this Training

According to the way that CSSP works with USAID/CPT at the present, CSSP receives a proposal from a CSO via the PRC, and does not know very much about the thinking and the preparation of the proposal was carried out. It may have been one individual writing the proposal on his/her own – or it may have been a very participatory exercise involving the CSO's constituency.

The best proposals have usually been through a number of stages in which stakeholders are identified, problems are agreed, objectives identified which address these problems, and the objectives linked to results. The GOPP system (Goal Oriented project Planning) identifies these as:

1. Deciding who are the stakeholders in a particular problem area, and involving them in discussion of the project idea
2. Brain storming with the stakeholders to get an idea of all the problems you are trying to deal with
3. Arranging the problems in terms of cause and effect (The “Problem Tree”)
4. Changing problems into objectives – i.e. the future desired situation which will “solve” these problems (The “Objectives Tree”)
5. Arranging the Objectives in terms of cause and effect and arranging Goal, Purpose, Outputs, Activities
6. Looking at the Assumptions
7. Looking at the Indicators
8. Looking at the means of verification
9. Taking the Outputs and Activities into a workplan
10. Adding Tasks, Responsibilities, Budget, and a calendar into the workplan.

CSSP Grant Managers enter the picture somewhere around Point 5 in this list when they receive a proposal. It is however, important, for Grant Managers to understand the steps that should already have been undertaken – since later problems may result from not carrying out these early steps well.

For instance,

- if the CSO never talked to any stakeholders when preparing the proposal then the proposal is likely to be doomed even if it is very well-designed – since the people necessary to the project may not want to be part of it.
- Or if the proposal attempts to deal with a problem that is only thought of as a problem by a minority of the people concerned, it may be implemented but is unlikely to be sustained.

The Training Sequence

The Training will go in the following sequence:

1. **Manila Traffic**

We will undertake a joint exercise to plan a project to improve traffic in Manila. This exercise will take us through all the stages of GOPP (above) so that we choose which part of such work fits our organisation, and end up with a Workplan for implementing the project

This Exercise is artificial, and it has the contents already provided, but illustrates all the elements of project planning.

2. **Prison Reform in Zambia**

We will undertake a joint exercise to plan an advocacy project to improve the situation of prisoners in Zambia's prisons. This is an exercise based on a real planning event in Zambia which takes us through all the stages of GOPP but in which the contents in the latter part are left to the participants to fill out.

3. **Yayasan Dian Sulawezi**

Here we will look at an actual proposal that has been given to CSSP to manage. The proposal is confused and unclear. We will try to understand from the proposal what the proposal makers have in their mind, and clarify it so that it ends up with a Goal, a Purpose, some Outputs, and some Activities per Output. We will also explicitly identify the assumptions that the project makes about other actors, the results that are expected, and the ways that the project will measure these results.

Finally we will look at the Indicators that are relevant from the USAID list of Indicators.

At the end of the day the participants will have practiced the skills that they need to use in working with a Proposal Maker to clarify, formalize and finalize a Project proposal.

Manila Traffic

**A Structured Exercise in
Goal Oriented Project
Planning**

Exercises in Cause and Effect

**Recapitulation
of the
Main Elements in
Logical Framework
Analysis (LFA)**

Prison Reform in Zambia

**A real life example of
Goal Oriented Project
Planning for an
Advocacy Project**

Yayasan Dian Sulawezi

Proposal

Yayasan Dian Sulawezi

**Goal
Purpose
Outputs
Activities
Assumptions**

**And what else is
needed?**

Please fill in the sections that have not yet been clarified

	Objectives	Assumptions
Goal	People in Sulawesi Utara living in peace with each other	
Purpose	Melalui YDS sikap dan perilaku masyarakat Sulut berkaitan dengan konflik antar etnis dan HAM akan berubah dengan cara memperkuat jaringan yang ada menjadi kelompok penekan khususnya untuk menghentikan konflik yang ada, mencegah kemungkinan konflik baru dan memperkenalkan kebijakan publik terkait melalui DPRD	
Outputs	<p>1.. Kelompok masyarakat yang aktif di jaringan ini memiliki pengetahuan tentang konflik antar suku dan pelanggaran HAM</p> <p>2.. Kasus-kasus tertentu mendapat perhatian dari DPR dan diselesaikan de pengadilan</p> <p>3.. Peraturan mengenai masalah-masalah controversial di keluarkan oleh DPRD</p> <p>4.. Pendidikan kewarganegaraan publik yang berkaitan dengan masalah antar suku dan HAM dilaksanakan</p> <p>5.. POSKO di tingkat kabupaten beroperasi untuk melaksanakan Output 1&2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No interference by PEMDA • People are ready and willing to work on these issues • Staff and volunteers are ready to carry out this work • The administrative structure of the POSKO is working well.

Activities

- 1.1. Diskusi kelompok reguler
- 1.2. Latihan fasilitator / pendamping kelompok
- 1.3. Lokakarya & konferensi untuk buruh perempuan de Sulut
- 1.4. Lokakarya anta imam dan suku

- 2.1. Investigasi kasus
- 2.2. Coba mengatasi kasus di tingkat POSKO
- 2.3. Membawa kasus ke public hearing di DPR dan Instansi
- 2.4. Melakukan gugatan hokum

- 3.1. ?? (This has to be checked with the proposers since it is not clear from the proposal)

- 4.1. Memeruskan penerbitan "Lentera Desa"
- 4.2. Pemsangan PSA di radio
- 4.3. Melaksanakan radio talk show
- 4.4. Melaksanakan Seminars (antar siapa??)
- 4.5. Melaksanakan Press conference
- 4.6. Melaksanakan Press release
- 4.7. Melaksanakan Quiz Show

- 5.1. Pelatihan intern YDS
- 5.2. Pembangunan POSKO sendiri
- 5.3. Melaksanakan Organisational Assessment.

	Objectives	Indicators	Verification	Assumptions
Goal	People in Sulawesi Utara living in peace with each other			
Purpose	Melalui YDS sikap dan perilaku masyarakat Sulut berkaitan dengan konflik antar etnis dan HAM akan berubah dengan cara memperkuat jaringan yang ada menjadi kelompok penekan khususnya untuk menghentikan konflik yang ada, mencegah kemungkinan konflik baru dan memperkenalkan kebijakan publik terkait melalui DPRD			
Outputs	<p>1.. Kelompok masyarakat yang aktif dijaringan ini memiliki pengetahuan tentang konflik antar suku dan pelanggaran HAM</p> <p>2.. Kasus-kasus tertentu mendapat perhatian dari DPR dan diselesaikan di pengadilan</p> <p>3.. Peraturan mengenai masalah-masalah kontroversial di keluarkan oleh DPRD</p> <p>4.. Pendidikan kewarganegaraan publik yang berkaitan dengan masalah antar suku dan HAM dilaksanakan</p> <p>5.. POSKO di tingkat kabupaten beroperasi untuk melaksanakan Output 1&2.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No interference by PEMDA • People are ready and willing to work on these issues • Staff and volunteers are ready to carry out this work • The administrative structure of the POSKO is working well.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Diskusi kelompok reguler 1.2. Latihan fasilitator / pendamping kelompok 1.3. Lokakarya & konferensi untuk buruh perempuan de Sulut 1.4. Lokakarya anta imam dan suku 2.1. Investigasi kasus 2.2. Coba mengatasi kasus di tingkat POSKO 2.3. Membawa kasus ke public hearing di DPR dan Instansi 2.4. Melakukan gugatan hokum 3.1. ?? (This has to be checked with the proposers since it is not clear from the proposal) 4.1. Memeruskan penerbitan “Lentera Desa” 4.2. Pemsangan PSA di radio 4.3. Melaksanakan radio talk show 4.4. Melaksanakan Seminars (antar siapa??) 4.5. Melaksanakan Press conference 4.6. Melaksanakan Press release 4.7. Melaksanakan Quiz Show 5.1. Pelatihan intern YDS 5.2. Pembangunan POSKO sendiri 5.3. Melaksanakan Organisational Assessment. 			
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Yayasan Dian Sulawezi

USAID Indicators

The relevant USAID Indicators are:

Strengthening civic education programs:

- a. Number of CSOs offering civic education activities
- b. Number of CSOs offering civic education activities that address gender issues
- c. Level of understanding of civic education message

Enhancing CSO Constituency and Coalition Building

- a. Number of local chapters of affiliates established for your CSO
- b. Number of networks that your CSO is using at a local, regional, national, and international level.
- c. Number (or percentage) of your CSO's constituencies which are involved in the programs of your CSO

Strengthening CSO's institutional capacity

- a. Whether an organisaitonal assessment has been carried out?
- b. Change in institutional capacity score measured by an institutional assessment

Strengthening CSO Financial sustainability

- a. Percentage of funding coming from USAID
- b. Whether an organisaiton has received USAID grant worthiness acceptance

Support Informed Public Debate on and involvement in constitutional reform, and the proper use of law

- a. Number of items of law reform identified by your CSO
- b. Number of interactions between your CSO and the public on law and legal reform
- c. Number of legal reforms taken place as a result of your CSO's work.

Supporting participatory decentralization

- a. Number of local government decisions demonstrably influenced by local citizens or your CSO
- b. Number of local legislature laws or regulations passed after full consultation with citizens or your CSO

Reducing, resolving and preventing conflict

- a. Number of people trained by your CSO actively involved in conflict reduction, resolution, prevention

- b. Number of existing mechanisms for conflict resolution used by your CSO, institution or groups
- c. Number of new mechanisms for conflict resolution used by your CSOs, institutions or groups

TIPS

for collaborating with Proposal Makers

1. The proposal is their proposal, not yours:

This means that they know the background to the proposal better than you, and, finally, they have to implement the project. Try, therefore to get as much information as you can and need from them, and make sure that you explain your point of view as clearly as possible

2. Logical Framework Analysis and Workplans are tools to help them

It is our experience that proposal makers are very willing to be helped with tools that allow them to plan carefully and think ahead. They particularly like the Workplan structure because it helps them to be able to see what they can do in what order, and what is able to be done in a certain length of time, given their staff and structure constraints.

If, however, the proposers do not find the structure helpful, back off. Think of other ways to explain things. The bottom line is that CSSP needs a clear proposal – and is not willing to fund a proposal that is not clearly thought out. If the tools that CSSP offers to help develop such clearness are not acceptable, try to get the clearness in some other way.

3. LFA and Workplans may increase the size of the Project Proposal

When a proposer carefully thinks through all the activities and tasks that need to be done, it may be that the proposer will realize that he/she needs a much larger project (and budget) than he/she suggested before.

If the growth is justified by the proposal, then CSSP is prepared to accept it, BUT CSSP will also need to look at the capacity of the organisation to take on a larger proposal. It may well be that the organization needs more and larger activities, but then it will probably have to cut down on the number of outputs, since it will not be able to manage them.

4. Style and Language

Clear thinking requires clear language. Encourage proposal writers to write simply and clearly. Your task as a Grant Manager is to try, in close collaboration with the Proposer, to come up with:

- A clear and feasible project
- A project that the proposer can manage
- A project that will achieve the results intended

If what is produced is a beautiful proposal and project plan that has not been clearly understood and accepted by the proposer, you will not have succeeded

If what is produced is a proposal that looks good on paper, but which the proposer will not be able to implement, you will not have succeeded

If what is produced is a proposal for a project which spends the money and implements the activities, but does not achieve the intended results, you will not have succeeded.

5. Objectives of the Grant Manager

The Grant Manager should:

1. Make sure that the proposal makes sense – i.e. that the Activities lead to the Outputs, and that the outputs lead logically to the Purpose
2. Make sure that the Outputs are within the competence and capacity of the Proposing Organisation – i.e. that they have a good chance of carrying them out.
3. Make sure that the results are clearly stated as Indicators, and can be achieved and documented
4. Make sure that the USAID indicators chosen are relevant to the proposing organizations work, and that it is within the ability of the organization to collect information on them.