

# Project Brief:

## A guide to applicants



### Introduction

This document is aimed at organisations intending to submit an application to the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). While we hope that it will be helpful to a wide range of applicants, it is primarily targeted at community-based organisations applying for capital grants for projects involving land and/or buildings.

Every project should have a defined project brief and we would expect applicants to complete this process themselves.

A project brief is an essential part of any project (especially those involving land and/or buildings). In this document we will set out some key components to be included and some key questions to be considered as you work towards completing your project brief.

### What is a project brief and why do you need it

A project brief is the initial document in which you, as the client, tell your professional advisors what you want from your project. You will use this document to procure the services of these professionals, usually referred to as the design team, whose aim is to deliver a project which successfully meets the needs identified within your community.

A clear and defined project brief is an important part of the design process. It helps develop trust and understanding between the client and the design team, serves as an essential point of reference for both parties and forms the basis of the appointment.

Whilst the project brief will be prepared at the earliest stage of your project it will remain a live document and should be referred to regularly to ensure that any subsequent decisions can be considered against the brief to establish if anything fundamental has changed. Any changes to the brief should be agreed between you and the design team to maintain consensus on the requirements for your completed project.

Your initial project brief will therefore be the document which is used to develop and prepare a full brief once you have appointed your design team.

Just as every client is different so is every project e.g. size, complexity, timescales, budget; the project brief should be tailored to meet the specific requirements of your particular project. However, the key components of the project brief remain consistent.

A good project brief will enable you to:

- clearly set down the needs of your community and the project outcomes
- procure appropriate design consultants
- meaningfully contribute to the overall design
- monitor and evaluate progress through the design and construction stages
- deliver on the defined needs, aspirations and outcomes of your community.

### Key components to a project brief

Your project brief should convey clear, defined and appropriate levels of information to your prospective design team. We suggest that you include the following within your project brief:

- ▶ Introduction: a statement outlining the principles behind the project brief and the RIBA Plan of Work stage to which the commission will progress. It is worthwhile including a statement confirming that your organisation is seeking to apply to BIG for grant funding and that the appointed design team must satisfy our requirements in terms of the services and information needed to assist in your application (details of these can be found in the "Land & Buildings Application Guidance Notes for Scotland" available from our website [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk) or by calling our enquiries line on 0300 123 7110).

- ▶ **Background:** provide an outline of your organisation, its aims and the identified needs for your project. It is useful to state the results of any available community consultations, investigations, research and details of any stakeholders and partnership involvement and support within the community. Your organisation may already have members or officers with particular skills who will maintain involvement throughout the project and this should be mentioned.
- ▶ **Aim and Vision for this project:** clearly define what you require to be delivered by the project. Identify facilities to be incorporated in the building i.e. room requirements, services and activities to be delivered and an estimate of occupant numbers.
- ▶ **Quality and Design:** requirements for the completed building in terms of construction, BREEAM rating, sustainable design and/or renewable energy measures, future maintenance and running costs.
- ▶ **Objectives of the design commission:** the principle aim of this commission is to secure a design team capable of delivering a completed project on time and budget and to RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Design Stage L. Funding restrictions may necessitate a initial commission for RIBA Stages A-D including obtaining a planning consent with progression to Stages E-L being dependant on subsequent successful funding applications. (details of the Outline Plan of Work are available from the RIBA website [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)).
- ▶ **Service Description:** do you wish to procure all the design consultants e.g. architectural, civil & structural engineering, building engineering services, quantity surveyor, CDM-C as a single design team through a lead consultant or as separate individual commissions?
- ▶ **Approach and Methodology:** any specific requirements in terms of the form of reports and reporting structure throughout the commission. It is useful to define the structure within your organisation for dealing with the management of the project i.e. individual point of contact, project sub-committee or main board.
- ▶ **Timescales:** provide a schedule of key dates for the commission and project. These should be realistic at this stage and include dates for concluding individual aspects of the commission, submission of funding applications, deadlines for draw-down of available funding (where known), planning & building warrant applications and any other statutory approvals, anticipated start and completion dates for the actual construction works.
- ▶ **Community, Stakeholder and Funder Engagement:** define the extent to which the design team will be involved with your community, stakeholders and funders. This may include attending and facilitating community open days to present the design proposals, stakeholder engagement, meetings with funders and compliance with BIG's requirements for capital projects.
- ▶ **Budget and Funding:** details of the anticipated construction budget together with anticipated sources of funding and any funding secured to date. This will include where there are any limits on the monies available to undertake any particular aspect of the design commission.
- ▶ **Monitoring and evaluating:** details of any review and monitoring processes you wish to incorporate to ensure that the projects remains in line to deliver the requirements of the project brief.

### Next Step

Having set down initial requirements in the Project Brief you are now ready to procure the services of building professionals. A separate guidance document has been produced to outline how to use your Project Brief to commission a design team. 'How to commission a design team' is available from our website [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk) or by calling our enquiries line on 0300 123 7110.