

Completing your outline proposal form

What's an outline proposal form?

Before we explain how to fill in your outline proposal form (OPF), it is useful to understand its purpose.

The OPF is a short form that we use to find out about your project, its outcomes and some basic details on your organisation. We use this information to tell you whether we think you should go ahead and make an application. If we think that your proposal might be one that we can support we will:

- tell you which area of investment your project best fits
- give feedback on your proposal which should be addressed in the full application.

The OPF is NOT:

- a first stage application or assessment
- a guarantee of being funded or a first stage "approval".

Filling in your outline proposal

Given that the OPF is to check out your idea and give feedback, it should be a relatively quick form to complete. However, spending time on the key questions and thinking about the sort of information you should include, will mean that we'll get a clearer picture of the project you're asking us to fund.

Project Summary (question 2) and Project Outcomes (question 4) are the two main questions on the form that help us make our judgement. This means that these are the questions you should spend most time thinking about. But don't confuse this with giving us lots of information. It's about giving us the right information.

Project Summary

When writing your project summary you should:

- be brief and concise
- provide no more than 700 words or 2 sides of A4
- be clear about the overall aim of your project
- tell us about any activities or services you will provide as part of the project
- tell us what you'll spend our grant on. For example, a development worker salary, computers, or training.
- give the location of the project. For example, Kilmarnock in East Ayrshire.

However, don't

- give us a detailed history of the group or project
- use jargon or vague statements like "provide appropriate learning resources" or "engage with beneficiaries in a holistic and meaningful way" or "facilitate learning opportunities".

Often project summaries are too long, lose their focus and contain lots of jargon. The more time we need to spend working out what your project is, the longer you wait for us to get back to you. Ask someone to read your summary before you send us your OPF. This should tell you whether it is clear and explicit so that anyone reading it understands what the project will do and how it will do it.

Project Outcomes

Think “difference” when you tell us about your project outcomes. In other words tell us the difference your project will make to the lives of the people you plan to benefit. To help define your project outcomes read our Explaining the Difference guide and our outcomes factsheet, available from our website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/scotland

When putting together your outcomes:

- write short statements, not paragraphs
- don't give information that should be in a project summary
- tell us about the difference the project will make not the activities
- ask yourself whether they are relevant to the activities you describe in your summary
- only provide between one and six
- think quality not quantity.

Project beneficiaries

We also need information at the outline stage on who your project will benefit. This must be about those who directly benefit. Question 5 specifically requests information about the people or organisations that will benefit from your project and the needs they have. Again it is important to keep the information you provide concise and to the point.

Examples of the sort of information we look for is:

- young people from low income families who are not in education, employment or training
- unemployed people looking to get back into work after being out of work for a long period of time
- lone parents and their families
- disability organisations in Scotland.

Finally...

If you follow our guidance, your outline proposal form should give us a clear picture of your idea, what you think you'll achieve and what you plan to spend the grant on. If you have any other queries when completing your form, email enquiries.Scotland@biglotteryfund.org.uk or ring us on 0870 240 2391.

And remember, the outline is not an application but a way of getting early feedback that points you in the right direction.