

**Tips for Writing a Good Application Proposal**  
**(For Application for Grant Sought Exceeding \$200,000)**  
**(For reference only)**

**Assessment Criteria** (*The following points are for reference only and need not be covered in all in the proposal*)

**1. Project Needs**

- whether there is a demonstrated need for the project, and whether the project is innovative and/or with new development (including enhancement and/or adaptation of existing practices/projects);
- whether the new ideas/practices of the project can serve to supplement or complement the existing experiences in individual schools or the education sector to bring about positive capacity and/or impact on learning and teaching;
- whether the project is compatible with the applicant organisation's mission and Government education priorities, whether it can be integrated or aligned with the school's development plan, and whether it adds value to the development of the applicant organisation;
- whether the need for equipment is linked to enhancing learning outcomes;
- whether the needs assessment for the project is evidence-based, and whether the outcome of the project is evidence-based and the benefits of the project are linked to the school curriculum and student learning; and
- whether the project scope, objectives and long-term impact are realistic and clearly expressed in concrete terms, where appropriate in the project.

Example: Students of a certain primary school perform less well in Mathematics. The assessment results of the subject are not satisfactory at all class levels. Besides, all the stakeholders opine that the students are having greater difficulties in learning Mathematics. Therefore, the school puts forward a project proposal with a view to reviewing the learning and teaching of Mathematics in the school and exploring how to develop a school-based Mathematics curriculum based on students' learning needs and make use of effective learning and teaching strategies to enhance students' performance in Mathematics. Apart from the school's own students, it is also hoped that the curriculum can benefit students of other schools, especially those perform less well in Mathematics.

## **2. Project Feasibility**

- whether the underlying conceptual framework/rationale/professional principles/justifications is/are sound with comprehensive project design supported by a detailed implementation/research plan and methodology, and whether the project has a realistic scope and an attainable target;
- whether the applicant can demonstrate the readiness for implementing the project, and whether there are sufficient implementation details with a realistic timeline for implementation;
- whether the project enhances professionalism among teachers and principals through implementing the project, whether there is evidence of collaboration, teamwork and sharing among them, and whether there are links to relevant professional networks in the school sector;
- whether the project can make full use of the applicant organisation's existing facilities, equipment and resources;
- whether the applicant can solicit collaboration with other parties such as schools, educational bodies and business partners in developing and producing project deliverables; and
- whether the project budget is commensurate with the goals, project scope, activities, number of direct beneficiaries and end products to be delivered, whether the project can make good use of the equipment/resources requested for attaining the project objectives, whether there is sufficient justification for each major expenditure item, and whether the project has any committed or potential matching contribution from other non-government sources.

Example: Referring to the above example of school-based Mathematics curriculum, the school should state in the proposal how it prepares for the implementation of the project, such as collecting relevant curriculum information, inviting academic consultants, requesting the teachers concerned to receive relevant training, setting up a working group for the project etc. The proposal should highlight the implementation plan of the project, such as formulation of curriculum framework, design of teaching materials, use of teaching strategies, implementation schedule, development of evaluation methodology and criteria etc. Regarding the budget, all expenditure items should be listed clearly. For instance, in submitting a request for employing project staff, the required academic qualifications and work experience, scope of work, salary and duration of employment should be listed.

### **3. Expected Project Outcomes**

- whether there are clearly stated criteria for evaluation with evidence-based measures for assessing the attainment of project objectives (e.g. student learning);
- whether major milestones are included in the project proposal to facilitate future monitoring of progress and achievement of performance targets;
- whether the project outcome/impact can be sustained and the equipment and resources acquired be properly deployed/reused after completion of the project; and
- whether the project, experiences or expected outcomes (including deliverables) have good value and potential for wide dissemination in the school sector as a whole, not merely to an individual organisation, and/or have commercialisation value or potential.

Example: Referring to the above example of school-based Mathematics curriculum, whether evaluation will be conducted at mid-term/different stages during the implementation process to find out if the implementation plan has helped enhance students' performance in Mathematics, to collect Mathematics teachers' views on the teaching materials and to identify the need for curriculum adaptation? After completion of the project, a final evaluation should be conducted to review the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The school should state in the proposal how to establish the deliverables in the school, and also how to disseminate their experiences and deliverables to other schools, e.g. by uploading the teaching materials onto the school website or organising sharing sessions.

## Common Reasons for Unsuccessful Project Proposals:

1. Project proposal lacks concrete contents and comprehensive design
  - too much elaboration on the background of the school/organisation and unable to point out how the project can address the needs of the school;
  - unable to state clear project objectives and/or the core ideas;
  - unable to state how to achieve the ideas;
  - suggested activities are not directly related to the objectives, e.g. an exchange programme is arranged for teachers to visit the Mainland for several days but the purposes of such exchange programme are not stated; and
  - unable to state contents of workshops/training courses.
  
2. Unable to meet the development needs of the school
  - the project is not compatible with the needs/priorities of the school's development plan;
  - the project may lead to excessive workload for teachers; and
  - lack teachers' participation or teacher training.
  
3. Project objectives, ideas and design are not innovative
  - project activities cannot illustrate that they are new to the school or they are enhancement/adaptation of other projects/practice that are considered suitable for the latest needs of students/context of school, or they are not new/unique, or they are direct copies of other schools/educational bodies/voluntary organisations ; and
  - unable to demonstrate that the conceptual framework /rationale /professional principles /justifications are new or adapted by the school to meet the needs of students/school.
  
4. Funding application for items is ill-justified and not cost-effective
  - the equipment, facilities and other resources requested are not directly related to the project, or are not reasonably priced;
  - the number of beneficiaries is too small for the scale of the project;
  - the number of staff requested is excessive, and the duties of such staff under the project are not specified;
  - unable to provide information on the expertise of the specialists to be invited from overseas and to explain why specialists cannot be

sought locally, and also unable to specify the services to be delivered by such specialists; and

- requesting funding for producing newsletter, other publications or teaching materials, but unable to provide the brief contents/outlines, etc. of such deliverables.

5. Lacking sustainability and dissemination plans (when appropriate)

- project activities are of a one-off nature and lack any stated impact; and/or
- project outcomes and deliverables lack referential/dissemination value for carrying forward the practical experiences.

6. Other causes concerning non-compliance with the application guidelines

- the proposed commencement date for the project does not coincide with the processing time of the application (e.g. an applicant submits an application for grant sought not exceeding \$600,000 and the proposed commencement date is one month after the application date. The applicant fails to take into account the three- to four-month processing time, as well as the agreement preparation time);
- the allowable page limits have been exceeded: the project details have exceeded 15 pages, or the project summary has exceeded 1 page;
- the font size is too small; and
- the project summary and the project details have been uploaded in the same file.