

## **STAGE 2 - APPLICATION FORM GUIDANCE NOTES**

The following document is designed to help you understand and respond to the questions on the BFSS Online Application Form. It provides guidance on selected questions where grant applicants sometimes have problems (not all questions are included below).

### **SECTION 1: ORGANISATION DESCRIPTION**

The details of the Head Office must be entered here, rather than the office location of the individual submitting the application. Contact details for the individual are entered at the end of the form.

### **SECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

#### **What does the project aim to achieve and how will it do this:**

Be clear about what you hope your project will achieve, such as "This project aims to provide young people who have been excluded or who are at risk of exclusion with a supported and achievable pathway to vocational training or sustained employment."

Be specific about exactly what you will be doing in order to reach your aims. For example, "we will run workshops" does not give any indication as to the depth or breadth of this activity, nor the impact of these. A clearer answer would be: "40 young people at risk of exclusion will attend 8 half day workshops covering interview skills, confidence building and working as part of a team"

#### **List 3 or 4 of the most significant outcomes (changes) you expect as a direct result of your project?**

An outcome is the change that you hope to see as a direct result of your intervention. A good outcome is:

- Specific – saying "children will have better education" is vague and lacks meaning. Instead, "Children will have improved literacy skills" is specific and can be measured.
- Measurable – You will be expected to measure your progress towards each of your outcomes and report against this. Consider whether you are able to measure these. For example, "Teachers will have improved attendance" is only measurable if you have access to that data. If you are running a school yourself this might be

fine, but if it's a government school then it may not be possible to access this information.

- Realistic and achievable – The outcomes or changes that you hope to see must be achievable within the lifetime of the project. It would be wonderful if every young person enrolled in your project eg successfully gained a vocational qualification, but there are many factors which could prevent this. Consider whether the change can be achieved within the timeframe of your project (1 to 3 years), and whether it is a realistic expectation.
- Within your sphere of influence – You may hope that providing education to girls will reduce child marriage, but unless the intervention is directly targeting this, it is unlikely that your project will achieve this – this is outside of the sphere of your influence. However, if your project includes parent workshops, working with local infrastructure and community initiatives based explicitly on this, then a reduction could be attributable to your project.

Construction projects must be clear about the educational changes you expect the project to achieve. Eg, an increase in numbers of enrolment or retention rates, or an increase in children enjoying their education due to the specifically child friendly environment. Avoid listing the construction or building itself as an outcome.

Please see the [sample logframe](#) for examples of good outcomes, and how to measure these.

### **What are the main environmental impacts of your project and how have you considered ways to minimise these?**

Demonstrate that you have given due consideration to the environmental impacts of your project, such as where you are procuring resources from, the carbon costs of construction, modes of travel etc.

BFSS give preference to applicants who procure resources locally, consider methods to offset construction carbon costs, reduce unnecessary international travel and use renewable energies wherever possible. There are various carbon offsetting websites available to help calculate carbon costs such as <https://www.carbonfootprint.com>

### **3. PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **How have local education authorities been consulted and involved in the design of this project, and how will they be involved in the implementation?**

BFSS gives preference to projects that work with local education authorities, where possible. Please explain how you have worked with them in the design of the project and how they will support the work and be involved during the implementation.

**How have local communities, including children, been consulted and involved in the design of this project, and how will they be involved in the implementation?**

It is vital that local people are consulted in any intervention which affects them. Who you have spoken to, how this was done, and what was the outcome of these consultations? Did any particular group ask for this approach? Did they express any concerns or give suggestions, and if so how have you listened to these and incorporated these into the project? What are your plans for ensuring their continued involvement?

We are particularly keen to hear how young people have been included.

**4. PROJECT FUTURE PLANS**

**What do you expect to be the lasting impact of the project?**

How will the benefits of the project be maintained over the longer term, for example by being embedded in existing state structures or providing a model for the community to replicate. If people are receiving training, is this likely to benefit future cohorts beyond the group targeted within the life cycle of this project, etc?

**If you expect activities to continue beyond the BFSS grant term, how will you do this once funding has come to an end?**

BFSS expects projects to have considered and built in an element of financial sustainability into the project design rather than a continued reliance on complete donor support. Whether this is establishing a small income generating element into the project or plans for local government structures to maintain the project after it has been set up and evaluated, it is important that if you expect the project to continue beyond the life cycle of the grant that this has been planned for. What will happen when the project comes to an end? How far into the future will further funding be required and how do you anticipate this will be generated?

**5. MONITORING**

**What are your plans for evaluating the impact of the project?**

It is important that you have plans on how you will monitor the progress of your project and evaluate its impact. A robust monitoring, evaluation and learning plan should:

- Be directly linked to the outcomes, outputs and milestones that you have determined in your logframe
- Specifically describe the tools that you will use to collect the data, using a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative

- Make sure that baseline data is carried out before the project begins
- Ensure that the service users – particularly children and young people – are consulted and that children’s voices are heard and represented.
- Be clear who is responsible for collecting and analysing the data.
- For larger projects or projects with a heavy emphasis on learning and contributing to an evidence base, particularly pilot studies, we would expect to see an external, independent evaluation.

## **6. PROJECT FINANCES**

BFSS gives preference to projects with an element of matched funding, although this does not have to be £ for £. In kind contributions from local communities and local authorities are encouraged.

Annual grant payments cannot exceed 50% of an organisation’s 3-year average income.

*Example 1: You have an average annual income of £20,000. You would like to apply for a 2 year project that costs £30,000, with costs of £15,000 in Year 1 and £15,000 in Year 2. As the annual grant amount exceeds 50% of your annual income, this project will not be eligible.*

Please refer to the BFSS Budget Guidance Notes and Template documents when submitting the budget.

## **7. ORGANISATION FINANCES**

We will review your records with the Charity Commission, so if there are any qualifications on your accounts or delays in submitting accounts, or instances where income may be much higher than expenditure, please explain why.

Please make sure you explain your reserves policy, and the actual reserves you held in your last accounting period, and expect to hold at the end of the current period. If reserves are outside the range of 3-6 months normal operating costs (whether higher or lower), please explain why

## **9. CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

BFSS will only fund construction projects with a clear link to long term educational benefit and improvement. When evaluating construction applications, BFSS will consider:

- Is there a link between the construction and one or more of the following: pupil numbers, attendance or retention, or staff attendance or retention.
- Is there a link between the construction and improvements in educational standards or attainment

- How other aspects of the project will be financed – for example, teachers' salaries, infrastructure, furniture, learning resources.

BFSS is keen to make sure that our funding benefits the wider community. Preference will be given to construction projects which show how buildings will be more widely available, for example out of hours or addressing other needs outside the direct beneficiaries.

Please note that all construction projects, unless simply refurbishing existing buildings, require drawings, schedules and costing. Applications without these documents will not be considered.

Many of the BFSS funded construction projects are of 1 year duration only, covering the period when the construction is carried out and completed. This limits the evaluation and reporting possible, since some the educational benefits like attainment may take longer to come through. All construction projects therefore require an additional final report 12 months after the end of the project, to allow fuller evaluation of educational attainment to be included.

## **NOTES**

Grant applicants are reminded that meeting these guidelines does not of itself guarantee acceptance; BFSS receives many more valuable applications than it is able to fund and it is inevitable that some good applications will be unsuccessful. If you have any further questions, please refer to our website [www.bfss.org.uk](http://www.bfss.org.uk) or email us at [grants@bfss.org.uk](mailto:grants@bfss.org.uk).