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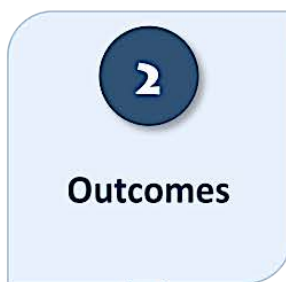
9 Starting Steps

for Concept Note Success



Constructing a narrative

Proposals should be structured to tell the story behind the project from the current environment to intervention to impact. Begin by **detailing the problem** the project is trying to solve – for adaptation, describe the relevant climate threats and for mitigation, describe the existing technologies and the market barriers to the adoption of alternatives. Then describe in detail **the intervention design**, how it will work, any obstacles it will face and how these will be addressed. This should draw from relevant studies and the success of related past projects. Finally, bring these together to **demonstrate the impact** of the project using quantitative indicators and targets wherever possible. To ensure your explanation is accessible and sufficient, imagine that the reviewer does not know anything about the subject.



Aligning your outcomes

The last step of the story is **matching each project outcome to the fund's strategic objectives**; directly reference the relevant objectives and look to see if your performance indicators are included in the fund's results framework. In addition, your proposal should state any **relevant national plans for sustainable development** which identify your outcomes as a national goal or priority. Climate funds want to know they are not funding something that has already been done; demonstrate your project is unique by discussing how it is coordinated with, and therefore complements, **existing projects with similar activities**.



Providing a rationale

Throughout the entire proposal, it should always be clear how you came to your decisions. This is particularly important for aspects of project design such as choice of technology, location and implementing partners. Detail any analysis you have done, what **alternatives you have considered** and **why your choice is the best**.



Understanding scale

Many climate funds look for the potential of a project to be implemented on a larger scale or replicated in a different community, geography or sector. Equally, different funds typically focus on different sized projects. This can mean it is difficult to identify what scale is most appropriate for your project and what fund you should apply to, especially if you are considering a pilot. The most **appropriate scale** will reflect your **ability to manage the project**; for each possible community, geography or sector, consider the following factors:

- What **evidence** is there to suggest the project will achieve significant impact?
- Is the **supporting infrastructure**, such as implementing partners, supply chains and the policy environment, of sufficient quality?
- What relevant **experience and capacity** do you have?

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Budget

Justifying your budget

All proposals must describe in detail exactly **how much funding is being requested** and how much will be spent on **each component** of the project and in **each year** of implementation. Construct your budget from the 'bottom-up'; describe how much each individual activity and the required resources will cost – research, materials, labour, project management. In this way, you can easily calculate robust and transparent **cost estimates for each project component** and also indicate how much funding is allocated to any partners. It should also be clear which of these components any co-financing, if applicable, will support.

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Capacity

Building the right capacity

Climate funds must be assured that you and your partners are able to successfully and efficiently implement the project; past experience and careful planning are key. Play to your strengths by using technologies and working in geographies you are familiar with, or select partners who are, as long as this does not compromise the project objectives. Detail what **relevant experience and expertise** your organisations have in terms of past projects, research and highly qualified staff. Consider including a diagram to show the **roles and responsibilities of each partner** and a **work plan** to show who will implement which project component and when.

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Stakeholder Views

Incorporating stakeholder views

Any project will have impacts on a number of different groups from beneficiaries and implementing partners to local communities, businesses and government. Climate funds need to see that these **stakeholders support the project**, in particular underrepresented groups such as women and ethnic minorities. Often they bring new perspectives and as a result, strengthen the project design. A strong proposal will cover four things: **who** you consulted; **how** you consulted them; **what** you consulted them about; and how it has **changed your design**.

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Sustainability

Thinking long term

A project is only as valuable as the outcomes it can achieve and crucially, how long those outcomes can be achieved for. If the progress a project has made is undone as soon as it is completed, it is not a very attractive investment. Think about what **actors, policies and activities** need to be in place to make your **outcomes sustainable after the project completion** and **adjust your project design** to account for these. Your proposal should also provide a guideline for how the project might be replicated in additional communities, geographies or sectors; think ahead to how lessons learnt from implementing your project could feed into and improve similar projects in the future.

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Monitoring & Evaluation

Measuring your results

If a climate fund wants to achieve progress towards its objectives, it needs to be able to measure that progress and thus, the outcomes of the projects it funds. Monitoring progress can often involve having additional partners, technologies or processes in place. Proposals should present **realistic arrangements** for the **monitoring of key indicators** and the **evaluation of overall progress**. Evaluations should draw lessons from the successes and failures of implementation so far and adjust the project design to improve progress in the future.