

Be clear about your aims

What is your organisation trying to achieve? Make sure you follow your priorities and don't let a funding opportunity tempt you into 'mission drift'. To avoid becoming 'funding-led', agree your development plans before you look for funding.

Plan your projects in detail

This is important to ensure they actually work – but also to convince funders that they will work and are worth supporting. Project planning needs to cover:

- who will benefit, their needs (with evidence), how you've consulted with them about what they want and why this is a good way to address their needs
- what positive changes (outcomes) you expect the project to lead to, and how you will know whether these are being achieved
- the practicalities of who will do the work, where and when
- accurate costings

Research funding sources to find the most suitable

You need funders who:

- will be interested in what you're aiming to do
- have enough money to make a meaningful contribution
- can approve the money in time if you need to start the project by a specific date
- have monitoring and reporting requirements you can comply with comfortably
- don't pose ethical issues for you or your supporters

If you can't find any, you may have to raise the money in other ways.

Communicate with the funders:

- read their guidance – it's there to help
- ask for clarification if you need it (as long as they have paid staff to advise you)
- communicate your enthusiasm for your work in your bids
- but back up your claims with evidence and keep to the point

Communicate with colleagues and others:

- ask a colleague to read your draft bid to see if you've missed anything out
- ask someone outside the organisation (e.g. a friend or family member) to read it,
- to check it makes sense to a stranger
- ensure colleagues are clear about the bid (including the delivery plan and the budget) in case the funder asks questions when you're not available