

UK Aid Match

Guidance: the principles of project design



This 2-page guidance is designed to provide you with some ideas and questions to help you to think through your project design to improve its effectiveness. It is not intended to be viewed as a list of requirements or expectations for applying to [UK Aid Match](#).

Why is good project design important?

- a well-designed project reaches more people in a more effective way
- a well-designed project builds the credibility of your organisation, and demonstrates that a Department for International Development (DFID) investment has been worthwhile
- a well-designed project is more likely to perform well and be able to flex and adapt when needed

What we look for in UK Aid Match projects

- projects that help DFID to meet their priorities
- working within and through the context; projects that identify opportunities for harmonisation and alignment
- evidence-based projects that combine innovation and flexibility, with proven approaches to achieving change
- realistic and measurable ambition for change, that demonstrates value-for-money

In more detail

We look for projects that help DFID meet the following priorities:

- the [Global Goals](#)
- [hard to reach](#) populations
- [gender](#) and inclusion
- the [DFID departmental plan](#)
- fund-level logframe

Working within and through the context

- who are the stakeholders?
- what are they doing?
- identify ways to build upon other work, reducing duplication and increasing alignment

Evidence-based, adaptive projects

- demonstrate context-specific evidence
- use numbers and data that demonstrate the identified problem
- use flexible and adaptive programming: establish beneficiary feedback mechanisms, work-planning, monitoring tools and clarity on the vision

Value-for-money

Why is your project worth it? We want to know the real cost of delivering. If you only have 10 beneficiaries, but those 10 are the absolute hardest to reach, and the intervention will have a significant effect on their quality of life and through multiplier effects, then that could be worth funding. However, you need to make the case for why it is worth it?

Consider how you can justify the cost of your project through; link the cost to a return on investment. For example, for every \$1 spent on FP, \$6 is saved and therefore, what will the overall impact of your project be?

Budget tips

- ensure proportionality in your budget
- think about what is realistic in terms of the timeline
- budget for what you need

Mitigate the biggest risks

- focus on risks and not challenges or current issues – consider what could happen in the future and what you will do if those risks materialise
- focus on the top few things that could stop you achieving your outcomes

Practical tips for applications

Don't look at the application form until you have done the following background thinking:

- establish your problem
- agree what you want to see on the final day of the programme and put a number to it
- do the beneficiaries and stakeholders also want to see what you want to see on the final day of the programme?
- is your vision worth the cost?
- define clearly and simply what you will do to address the problem in plain English and with few acronyms
- consider the who, what, why and how

Beneficiaries

- primary beneficiaries are people who will directly benefit from the intervention, for example, a mother attending an antenatal clinic
- secondary beneficiaries are those who are benefiting indirectly from an intervention, for example, members of a household where one individual has attended a training
- direct and indirect beneficiaries should only be counted once and should not be overestimated.