

Grant Decision Matrix

The first step in building a comprehensive grants seeking plan is to develop a grant decision matrix. A grant decision matrix is an analytical tool to help you to decide whether or not to invest time in applying for particular grants and can also contribute to priority setting and strategic planning. Writing grant applications takes resources and you need to know if applying for a grant is worth your group's time and money.

Building a grant decision matrix

Develop a spreadsheet to score each potential grant on your own criteria. Focus on the aspects that are important to you, such as the amount of funding available, likelihood of success and the resources required for application.

1. **Start by designing the matrix components.** Each component can be as simple or as complex as you feel is necessary.
2. **Develop a set of decision making criteria.** Think about creating criteria such as "staff time commitment availability" and "fits with funder's purpose and priorities" and then decide how much weight each measure should have.
3. **Assign a weight to each criteria** based on its importance in the final decision of whether to apply or not.
4. **Decide what total score will give you the go ahead** to move forward with the grant application. Decide what each score (or range of scores) means and how it should be used (eg "do not apply", "apply" or "needs further consideration").

After you develop a draft matrix, run a few test cases against it. This will be helpful in shaping the criteria and the weight that you give to each of your criteria.

Net Grant¹

Another helpful measure to consider when developing your overall funding plan is net grant. Net grant measures the value of grants received – that is, the amount of time it takes to apply for, administer and report on a grant compared with the grant amount itself ($Grant\ Amount - Total\ Grant\ Cost = Net\ Grant$). Taking net grant into account can complement your grant decision matrix, helping you to weigh up your likelihood of receiving a grant and calculate the cost of applying for, administering and reporting on it. Don't waste time applying for grants you won't get.

¹ For more information on measuring net grant see <http://blog.altum.com/net-grants-the-real-grant-amount>

EXAMPLE GRANT DECISION MATRIX

| Funder: Project/Expense: | | | | | | | | | | Decision: Apply for grant: Y/N | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|----|--------|--|
| | WEIGHTED DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA | | | | | | | | | | | RATING | |
| | Low | | | | Medium | | | High | | | | | |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | |
| Relationship with funder | No relationship | | | | Some relationship | | | Well-developed relationship | | | | | |
| Fit with funder's purpose and priorities | Not aligned | | | | Minimal alignment | | | Strategic alignment | | | | | |
| Alignment with group's mission/purpose | Not aligned: low priority, limited impact | | | | Moderate alignment: focuses on priority with limited/moderate impact | | | High alignment: major priority/high potential impact | | | | | |
| Documented community and internal need | Only anecdotal, qualitative information – little evidence of need available | | | | Partial data set available from internal or external sources | | | Multiple, high quality internal and external sources demonstrating need | | | | | |
| Staff skills and experience | No experience or skills in area | | | | Some experience, related skills | | | Extensive experience, exceptional skills | | | | | |
| Staff time commitment availability | No time to commit, cannot reassign staff | | | | Limited time available | | | Required time commitment can be met by staff | | | | | |
| Reporting requirements | Extensive | | | | Moderate | | | Minimal | | | | | |
| Length of grant term | Short term | | | | Medium term | | | Long term | | | | | |
| Partnerships | No identified partners or collaborative agreements | | | | Potential partners or collaborators identified | | | Longstanding relationships with partners/collaborators | | | | | |
| Potential to generate additional funding | Does not generate revenue, no future funding identified | | | | Future funding sources identified to cover some costs | | | Diverse set of future funding sources identified to cover all costs | | | | | |
| Group's resources and capacity | Requires significant investment of resources, including administration/staff time | | | | Requires some investment of resources | | | Requires minimal or no investment of resources | | | | | |
| Competition for grant | High | | | | Moderate | | | Low | | | | | |
| Likelihood of success | Low | | | | Medium | | | High | | | | | |
| Matching funds required | Significant funds required | | | | Moderate funds required | | | Minimal funds required | | | | | |
| Ability to develop a competitive application | Do not have time to respond competitively by deadline | | | | Reallocation of staff time but can be accomplished | | | Adequate staff time available to submit competitive application | | | | | |
| Sufficient funds to meet need | Fund insufficient to meet need | | | | Fund meets some of need | | | Fund meets total need | | | | | |
| Need for funding | Low | | | | Medium | | | High | | | | | |

0-31 = **Low** 32-63 = **Medium** 64-80 = **High**
Apply = score of 32+ **Do not apply** = score of 31 or lower

Project description worksheet

A project description worksheet is a quick reference sheet for each project/programme that requires grant support, which helps you to streamline your process of researching grants and it can also help you prioritise the projects that need funding the most. The worksheet doesn't have to be perfectly written, especially if it's just for your own use. However, the more detailed your worksheet is, the easier it will be to see which grants fit your project/programme best.

EXAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET

| | |
|--|---|
| Project | Eutopia Community Garden (Stage 1) |
| Total project budget (attach to worksheet) | \$7,900 |
| Project description | Need: Eutopia community does not have access to land to grow food due to high density apartment living. The community has high levels of poverty and many people express a desire to grow their own food, for physical wellbeing and to save money. People often report feeling unsafe in their community. |
| | Target population: Eutopia community members |
| | Goal: Eutopia community members will thrive rather than survive |
| | Objectives (specific and measurable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Memorandum of Understanding between Eutopia Community Centre and Greater Eutopia City Council signed · Community consultation and planning days (6) held · Community garden steering group established and terms of reference developed · Garden plan developed · Ground breaking and start of garden construction and planting · Garden construction and planting completed and community party held |
| | Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Community members grow their own food · Community members have food security · Community members have high levels of health and wellbeing · Community members are connected with their neighbours and feel safe in their community |
| Project lead | Sunshine Smith – Coordinator Eutopia Community Garden |
| Relationship to larger/past Projects | A small community garden at Eutopia Community Centre has been operating for last 5 years with some community involvement |
| Timeline (how long will it take you to complete this project?) | 9 months – Stage 1 (full timeline attached) |
| Evaluation (how will you know if your project is successful?) | Process, outcome and impact evaluations (provided free of charge by Happy Days University) |
| Sustainability (what will you do to ensure the ongoing sustainability of your project?) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Seeds, seedlings and surplus produce will be sold at market · Government contract opportunities will be explored · Feasibility of establishing social enterprise (plant nursery) will be explored (feasibility study grant available from Department of Hope) |
| Sources of funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Philanthropic funds · Government funds and contracts · Private donations · Corporate sponsorship |

Funding Calendar

An essential part of a manageable and efficient grants strategy is a funding calendar. Developing a funding calendar will streamline your grants strategy, helping with priority setting, establishing a timeline and ensuring you don't miss important deadlines.

EXAMPLE FUNDING CALENDAR

| MONTH | FUNDER | PROJECT APPLIED FOR | OPENING & CLOSING DATES | AMOUNT REQUESTED | DATE SUBMITTED | DECISION DATE | OUTCOME | REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & DATE | REPORTING STATUS | TIME SPENT COMPLETING REQUEST, ADMINISTERING GRANT & REPORTING (NET GRANT) | NOTES |
|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|---|---|--|--|
| January | Joanne Bloggs Foundation | Coordinator Wages | 1 January-1 February 2017 | \$20,000 | 25 January 2017 | 1 March 2017 | \$15,000 approved | Online report Evidence of grant spending Due 28 February 2018 | Submitted 25 January 2018 | 3 hours – request 5 hours – administration 1 hour – reporting | Application online – need to create account |
| February | Hope Fund | Electricity & Telephone Costs | 15 February-1 April 2017 | \$10,000 | 12 March 2017 | 10 May 2017 | Declined | N/A | N/A | 2 hours – request | N/A |
| March | Department of Social Support | Community Participation | 4 March-15 May 2017 | \$82,500 | 30 April 2017 | 10 June 2017 | \$75,000 approved | Quarterly reporting on numbers & activities participated in Quarterly budget reporting | First quarterly report due October 2017 – to be completed | 5 hours – request TBC – administration TBC – reporting | Multiyear contracts considered Must submit audited accounts |