Start-up form guidance notes: Level 3

Now that you have been awarded Comic Relief funding, the start-up form provides an opportunity for you to refine and build on the information you gave us in your application. It should set out clearly what you will be doing with this grant, what you expect to achieve and learn, and how you will track the progress you are making.

Once agreed with your Comic Relief Grant Manager, the start-up form will become the basis for your reporting back to us for the duration of the grant. We will ask you to tell us about your progress and learning in detail every 12 months, alongside a shorter update every 6 months.

As well as helping us manage our grants, we will also use the information and data we receive from your reports to help us understand and communicate the difference our funding makes with the public and our funding partners.

We understand that circumstances can change and learning will emerge over the lifetime of a grant. You will be able to adjust the start-up form to reflect such changes during the grant once discussed and agreed with your Comic Relief Grant Manager.

In sections 1, 2 and 3, if you are happy with the information you provided in the application form then you can use that to complete these sections. However, if you feel that you need to edit, add to or change that information to better reflect your project's aims and plans then please do so.

Grant Summary

Complete the table in the summary section and refer to your Conditions of Grant document to ensure that the Grant ID, start date and total value of the grant are entered accurately.

1. Project Overview

1.1. Project summary
   Please provide a concise overview of what your project will be doing. This should be able to give someone new to the project a clear understanding of the main elements and aims of the project.

1.2. What are the main opportunities for your project over the next year?
1.3. What are the main threats for your project over the next year?
   We would like you to consider the main opportunities and threats that your project might face over the *next year* (both internal to the project/organisation and external in terms of the context in which your project is operating). Please use bullet points or concise narrative.
   Examples of *opportunities* might include: chances to combine project activities with other work you might be doing; forthcoming learning that could inform your project; or planned consultations, changes or developments in local or national government strategies or policies that will provide you with an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues you are working on.

   Examples of *threats* might include: potential delays in hiring new project staff; delays in getting clearance or permissions to start elements of your project; environmental challenges (floods, drought etc.) that might severely affect your beneficiaries and how they engage with your project; or planned changes in government policies that make it harder for you to operate in this area.

1.4. How will you make the most of the opportunities and respond to the threats you've identified?

Given the opportunities and threats that you have identified in questions 1.2 and 1.3 please tell us what key plans you have in place to respond to these.

2. Changes you expect to see from your project

2.1. Your outcomes for the grant

This section is for you to set out your project outcomes and the key indicators you will track to measure progress towards these outcomes. You should be building on what you put in your application. You may want to make some revisions to any outcomes and indicators you proposed in your application as a result of further discussions you may have had during your project start-up phase. To ensure your outcomes and indicators are meaningful and relevant, you should

Outcomes

By 'outcomes' we mean **a set of statements which together summarise the difference your project intends to make.** Depending on the nature of your work, individual outcomes could relate to effects/changes for individuals, communities, organisations, sectors or policy.

A good outcome should:
- ✓ Go beyond project **activities** (which should be covered in section 4 of the start-up form) to focus on the resulting **changes** from those activities
- ✓ Describe the change you expect to see in terms of what you expect to increase, improve, or reduce
- ✓ Be expressed as a result that is easy to understand (simple, clear, short)
- ✓ Be SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound), when combined with its associated indicators
- ✓ Focus on one change and one group or issue
- ✓ Not provoke a 'so what?' question (i.e. the change should be meaningful!)

Indicators

By 'indicator' we mean **a tangible, observable sign of change that is critical to the achievement of the outcome and which you can use to evidence progress towards that outcome.**

Together a good set of indicators should:
- ✓ Include a mix of number-based (i.e. quantitative) and narrative-based (i.e. qualitative) types of changes that you will be tracking
- ✓ Be clear, tangible measures of change
- ✓ Draw on information from different sources and perspectives (triangulation)
- ✓ Be neutral statements (such as level of, number of, % of) rather than stating a specific direction of change (i.e. an increase or decrease The expected direction of change should be clear from your baseline and target figures against the indicator.
- ✓ Be specific, with each indicator focused on only one type of change
- ✓ Be realistic and relevant to your ability and capacity to measure, monitor, and analyse the change

always try to work with any project partners and other stakeholders (including your beneficiaries) in the development of those outcomes and indicators.

We ask you to set out between two and five outcomes for your project, and between two and four indicators for each outcome (a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators).

Please give careful consideration to the capacity, time and resources required to effectively *gather and analyse* the data across all the indicators you set out.

It is easy to be over-ambitious in what you want to track at the start of the project and then end up stuggling to either collect robust data on everything or find the time to use and analyse the wealth of data that you have! So please do not feel like you have to use the maximum number of outcomes and indicators – make sure you have a set of outcomes and indicators that are appropriate and realistic for your project and which will capture the main elements of change that you expect to achieve through your project.

Number-based (quantitative) indicators

- ### Indicator baselines and targets

For each indicator we ask you to set a baseline and a target. The baseline is the situation for that indicator at the start of the project, and the target is what you are aiming for the situation to be for that indicator at the end of your project. For example if your indicator is *'Number of young people enrolled in education'* and at the start of the project 200 of the young people you are targeting are enrolled in education your baseline is 200. If, by the end of the project you hope 500 will be enrolled your target is 500.

Your baseline and target may not always be related to numbers of people. You might have numbers of other things (e.g. numbers of schools, or number of service provider organisations), or you might have percentages or average scores – it depends on what you decide to mesasure in your indicator that will best track the change you expect to see.

If you have not yet collected baseline data for an indicator then just put 'TBC' in that column. Once you have collected the baseline data, send an updated version of the start-up form to your Grant Manager with the baseline data entered. Please ensure you have all the baseline data you need by six months of your project starting.

- ### Total number benefitting

If your indicator relates to people then you will need to specify how many you expect to benefit from that indicator. In many cases this will be the difference between your baseline and target figures – so in the example above the total number of young people benefitting is 300 (a target of 500 enrolled, minus the 200 who were already enrolled).

Please then split this total number benefitting into male, female and gender defined differently where this is possible to do so (for many projects we realise that the 'gender defined differently' category may not be data you are capturing or may not be appropriate or feasible to capture in your project context, in which case just leave the column blank).

- ### Data collection methods and frequency

This column is really important for us to understand if you have appropriate plans and methods in place to be able to capture the right data for your indicator. There are some important elements to think about here:

- Do you have the right kind of data collection method – for example if your indicator is about 'number of people with improved monthly income' (with 1000 people benefitting under this indicator) you would not use focus group discussions to gather this data because: a) are people likely to have, and be willing to reveal, accurate personal monthly income figures in a group setting?; b) focus group discussions are not going to be able to give you specific figures to say confidently that 1000 individuals have improved monthly income. A more appropriate data collection method would be surveys or individual interviews checked with financial records (if appropriate).

- Is the data collection going to be practically feasible – for example your indicator is 'Number of children with a 90% school attendance rate' (with 4000 children expected to benefit under this indicator) and you are using paper school registers to collect this data. It will be a huge investment of time and resources to be able to go into the schools, copy the registers, and collate and analyse all the individual rates for 4000 children – is this feasible?

- Is the frequency of the data collection appropriate and feasible – some changes take place quickly and you might want to collect data on that regularly (depending on whether this is feasible to do within your resources and capacity). However other change takes time, or the cost of collecting the scale of data you need for that indicator may be very high, so you might only want to collect that data at selected points in your project. Telling us this in the start-up form also helps us to know what to expect in your annual reporting (e.g. there may be indicators that you only collect data on at start, mid and end points of your project, and so in your annual report in year 1 you might not have data to report to us on that indicator).

Narrative-based (qualitative) indicators:

- Qualitative indicators are largely descriptive and are often based on people's opinions, feelings or viewpoints, but can also be used to track progress towards, for example, the adoption of a policy.

- Change you expect to observe over the life of the project: In this box please describe what the existing situation is in relation to this indicator and then how you expect this to change over the course of the project. Be as specific as you can – if the change you are describing is very vague you will struggle to track (and report) progress against the indicator over time.

2.2. Is there anything specific that you would like to learn about through delivering this project?

Here we would like to know if you have any specific learning questions that you hope to explore through the project. Your questions might relate to the difference you want to make, testing out the effectiveness of a new approach, understanding in more detail why something works, or looking in depth at how change happens for one specific group. You need to ensure that the questions you have can be answered by the data you are intending to collect through this project (either through your outcome indicators or may be through a specific piece of research as part of your project).

2.3. Data collection plan

Please give an overview here of how all your data collection methods link together, how many beneficiaries you are going to be using different tools with (i.e. the sample size), and how you are going to analyse that data. This should include the data for your outcome indicators as well as any additional data collection you will be doing for your learning questions.

3.   Numbers of people benefitting

3.1. Who and how many are benefitting <u>directly</u> from your project overall?
<u>Comic Relief only asks projects to report on the numbers of direct beneficiaries from your project.</u> By this we mean people who are directly involved in the project activities and who you can evidence have experienced a change through the data you are collecting. We would expect to see all of the groups of people benefitting represented somewhere in your outcome indicators, as this shows us that you are collecting that evidence to track whether they are benefitting.

We focus on direct beneficiaries only, and discourage very broad, assumed numbers:
- to ensure that the numbers we report back to the public and our funding partners on the difference their money has made are based on evidence;
- to help projects focus their resources and capacity on tracking the groups that are the key focus of their project and not disperse their efforts on trying to track everything and everyone

We have three categories of people benefitting directly which are explained below.

Please note it is perfectly acceptable to have '0' in any of the categories – the categories you use will depend on the type of activities and changes you want to see from the grant.

	Core target groups	Frontline workers	Other groups benefitting directly
Definition	• Main groups of people your project is focussed on supporting • Have intensive involvement in the project's activities • You should be able to count them accurately	• People who actively take part in the project interventions because they work with the core target groups in a paid or voluntary capacity • Receive some form of training/support/ guidance from the project to enable them to support the core target groups	• Groups who benefit from one-off or limited involvement in project activities • Numbers probably based on a confident estimate • You must have some information to show whether they have benefitted (not just assume they are benefitting)

Examples	• Survivors of domestic violence supported through services provided by the project	• Police and judiciary trained on dealing with cases of violence against women	• Community members with an increased understanding of services available
	• Pregnant women receiving healthcare from trained community workers	• Paid staff of local organisation or volunteers trained to provide basic health services	• Community members with improved awareness of their rights around a specific issue the project is working on
	• Young people supported to complete their education	• Teachers who the project have trained	• Family members with greater confidence or skills to provide specific support
	People supported to improve their financial situation	Financial service staff supported to offer new financial products	BUT the above would only be included if you are collecting evidence on these changes e.g. a knowledge or behaviour survey with a representative sample of the community members.
			REMEMBER if no evidence, or collecting the evidence is beyond the resources of the project, then do not include the group as beneficiaries here.

- **Brief description of who this includes**
  For each category of people benefitting please describe the groups you are including in this.
  Please be as specific as you can in defining who they are, including:
  - What kind of age range they may be (children, young people, older people – as defined in the context you work in)
  - Their characteristics (e.g. excluded from school, those experiencing mental health issues etc.)
  - An indication of how they are benefitting (e.g. accessing services, improved financial situation, increased awareness etc.)

3.2. **How have you calculated these numbers?**
  Please give us a brief overview of how you have calculated the beneficiary numbers in each group.
  We would expect to see a link between these overall beneficiary numbers and the numbers you expect to see benefitting in relation to your outcomes.

3.3. **Who else do you think might benefit from your project?**
  If you think your project will have a broader effect on other people (i.e. indirect beneficiaries, or those you are not specifically tracking through your indicators), then note these here.

3.4. Within your core target groups, are there some groups who are more likely to be under-represented in accessing and benefitting from your project (hard to reach or particularly marginalised groups) and how do you plan to address this?

We are keen to ensure that the funding we provide is being used to provide inclusive interventions that can help to ensure that no one is left behind. So here we want to understand which groups are usually under-represented in accessing or engaging with the type of work you will be doing, as well as how you are going to address this. We expect you to be monitoring this so that you can tell us about the success of your approaches in your annual reports.

4. Project activities for your first year

4.1. Activities for year 1

Please provide us with up to ten key activities that you will be doing over the first 12 months of your project which summarise your delivery plan. These should describe the main components of your work that are integral to being able to achieve your outcomes (e.g. training sessions, development of guidelines or publications, meetings with key decision-makers, counselling provision, community forums etc.). We are not looking for project administration/ management activities such as recruitment of staff, establishment of project office, purchase of materials etc.

For each activity please provide a clear description of what it is and who it is with, as well as any target for that type of activity (e.g. 5 training sessions on inclusive teaching approaches with teachers).

Please also tell us the number of people you intend to reach in each activity, e.g. how many people will participate in the training sessions or the forums that you hold. This will give us a good sense of the scope and scale of your project activities.

We are only asking you for your activities for the first 12 months because we recognise that things change over time and that as you learn from implementing your project, you may decide to adapt your approach or need to adjust how you do things. So we do not want to tie you to a rigid activity plan for the full project period, but would like you to describe in your annual reporting how and why you may have needed to adapt your plans to changing circumstances or learning.