



Business Proposals

17th January 2023



KRISTIN HOPPE
PROJECT OFFICER

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Community

Team



CLARE WHARMBY
CARBON INNOVATION
MANAGER, CLIMATE
PARTNERSHIPS

Clare works in the Climate Partnerships team at ECCi, focusing on developing tools and training for both the public and private sectors.

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NICE TO MEET YOU WE ARE ECCI



SARAH BISSETT
PROJECTS OFFICER,
CLIMATE PARTNERSHIPS

Sarah works in the Climate Partnerships team at ECCi and is currently providing support for the Climate Springboard programme.

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EMMA DORE
EDINBURGH GREEN SKILLS
PROJECT LEAD

Emma is leading a project for the Edinburgh Climate Commission to catalyze the development of green skills in Edinburgh.

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KIRA MYERS
CARBON ANALYST,
CLIMATE PARTNERSHIPS

Kira works in the Climate Partnerships team, helping ECCi to be part of delivering ambitious climate targets in Edinburgh and Scotland through partnership projects and programmes.

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Learn more about our team's expertise and experience, which projects we're working on and how to get in touch.



ALISON WOOD
PROGRAMME MANAGER,
CLIMATE PARTNERSHIPS

Alison works in the Climate Partnerships team at ECCi and runs Climate Springboard, a programme to support SMEs to respond to the climate emergency.

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- A team of 8 climate practitioners, including three recent GeoSciences MSc Graduates
- Our strategy – developing partnerships to enable systems change and scalable climate impact
- Support capacity building across Edinburgh and Scotland to embed climate impact into decision making

Climate Partnerships Team

c. £600k annual income:

Type of Funding	Description	£	%
Research	More traditional university funding – research councils (ESRC and EPSRC), Innovate UK	c. 120K	20%
Partnership	Projects and proposals developed in collaboration with a partner and then funding identified – Royal Bank of Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Cities Alliance, Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Green Tourism etc	c. 360K	60%
Consultancy	Won through competitive bidding process such as from Public Contracts Scotland – e.g. Scottish Enterprise	c. 120K	20%

Research Bids vs Business Proposals

Research

- Wider analysis of a problem
- More scope to develop approach and methodology
- Language – e.g. ‘explore’, ‘understand’, ‘work packages’
- Typically over longer timeframe
- Looser resourcing model
- Try to maximise grant award within specified budget ceiling

Partnerships & Consultancy

- Typically respond to more specific requirements
- Develop in dialogue or negotiation with a partner
- Language – e.g. ‘deliverables’, ‘recommendations’, ‘milestones’,
- Shorter contractual timescales
- Costs and resource specified and allocated to activities
- Competitive pricing

Research Bids vs Business Proposals

Similarities

- ‘Selling’ your expertise
- Using knowledge and insight to solve problems
- Need to demonstrate impact and outputs

Differences

- Timescales
- Blue sky vs client driven
- Knowledge creation and expansion vs knowledge utilisation or interpretation
- Goals & outcomes
- Working culture

Winning Work

Building partnerships and project proposals

Winning work and putting together proposals

- The ability to win new work **economically** is at the heart of a successful consultancy
- Invest time in developing relationships and understanding needs
- What are the characteristics of a proposal you might want to win?
 - e.g: *‘The problem/impact matches our knowledge, skill set or mission’*
- What to consider before deciding to develop a proposal or bid for some work?
 - Used to call it ‘Go/No-Go’ process

What sort of questions should you ask before bidding?

Key steps to a good proposal

- Know your customer and their priorities
- Read (and re-read, and re-read) the project specification properly
- Research the problem/solution
- Make the client feel unique and special
- Show how unique and special you are
- Ask questions/ discuss the topic to demonstrate knowledge
- Read the room – does the client want spec solution or off the shelf
- Leave time for review

Economics of proposal writing

- How much time should you spend writing a proposal?
- Formula we used:

Time for proposal writing = up to 5% of project value/average hourly rate of proposal team

For example:

The project is worth £50,000. The proposal team is 80% consultant time and 20% project director. The hourly rates are: Consultants £80, Project Director £150

Time for proposal writing = $£2,500 / ((80\% \times 80) + (20\% \times 150)) = £2,500 / 94$

Time for proposal writing = 27 hours (22 hours of consultants and 5 hours by PD)

Improving the economics of proposal writing

- How do you make proposal writing easier?
 - Standard text and template
 - Proposal format
 - Risk register
 - Costing spreadsheet
 - Documentation
 - Environmental policies
 - H&S
 - CVs
 - Review process
 - Specialist teams
 - Who does it, how long a lead time do they need

Exercise - contents of a proposal

- Work in groups
- Read through the project specification
 - What would you like to find out/ what questions would you ask of the client?
 - What is most important to highlight?
- Come up with a list of contents for your proposal and order
 - What would be in each section?



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