

PRCF Operational Guidelines (OP 009)

SUBJECT: PRCF STRATEGIC PLANNING BUDGET CHECKLIST

Purpose

Provision of guidelines for the preparation and review of project budgets, to help ensure that project costs are not overlooked when preparing grant proposals. Note that not all of the line items included would apply or be of relevance to all project budgets. In some cases more detailed budgets are required, in other there are additional guidelines provided by donors.

Checklist

Item / issue	Considerations
Personnel and Contract services	
1. Fees/ Salaries, national, and international	Indicate number of days/ months and/ or percentage of time if part-time If blanket overheads are not allowed by the donor/ granting institution, ensure that this will be covered in the fee/ salary rate (Refer to the relevant PRCF Operational Guideline)
2. Ensure that additional costs associated with staff placements are covered for in the budget	Tax, insurance, social security, pensions for the particular country, 13 th month salary when applicable (Check corresponding percent for these with the PRCF Chief Financial Officer)
3. Ensure that all possible recruitment costs are included in the budget	Including time; where new staff are required, advertisement costs
4. Ensure that staff inputs match project start-up and phase-out	Slow starts and project extensions may need to be considered in the budget
5. Ensure that consultant fees are based on standard fees applied by similar organizations for similar activities	Do not necessarily use the lowest fee possible. Consider the daily fee level that must be placed in the budget to cover corresponding salaries
6. Ensure that there is room in the set budget for pay rises, cost of living increases (inflation), exchange rate fluctuations	Currency of grant versus salary payment; annual inflation needs to be considered (including likely market increases due to competition for staff)
7. Consider staff training costs, if allowed in the budget	If training will be required, who will deliver and is the time budgeted
8. Consider additional professional services that are required for project delivery, which the budget could allow	Legal advice, consultants (including self)

Administration	
9. Accounting and bookkeeping	Ensure that required relevant inputs and costs are agreed with the PRCF Chief Financial Officer. Ensure that the relevant budget covers a % of monthly core costs (i.e. in-country Accountant and PRCF Chief Financial Officer).
10. Inflation	Ensure that the price inflation (check annual figures and forecasts) has been considered in budgeting, as it will affect the purchasing power of the grant over the project lifecycle.
11. Bank charges and exchange fees	Ensure that there is space to cover bank charges and exchange fees in the budget, especially where multiple currency transactions will take place. A minimum number of wire transfer charges for a one-year project is in average four, with both a sending and a receiving charge in each transaction.
12. Currency risk (exchange rate fluctuations)	Consider the possibility of a devaluation of the grant when preparing the project budgets. If relevant place a note or footnote to explain the risk, and allocated budget increase or contingency.
13. Reporting	Consider reporting time and publication costs, including reports to donors (which may require field staff time and time PRCF Core Technical and Financial Officers).
14. Quarter and Annual meetings with stakeholders, government officials, institutions	Consider expenditures for quarter and annual progress reporting meetings, and if at all possible include in the project budget as a separate line, which could be linked to project monitoring and evaluation procedures.
15. Monitoring and Evaluation	Consider costs involved in monitoring project activities and their evaluation as an on-going, cycle, and external monitoring costs. If at all possible include in the project budget as a separate line.
16. Project/ Country Program Audits	Consider project auditing, and if possible as a combined effort to audit the entire Country Program (cost to be shared by all projects in the Country Program) by an external international auditing company.

Staff Travel and subsistence¹	
17. International and local flights	Consider that sometimes there are different prices for foreigners/ nationals; the possibility of future price hikes if in high season; and, the possible need to purchase flights on a short notice. Also include the costs of visa fees
18. Local travel and subsistence	Consider these costs for each field individual during the course of the project, and for possible subsistence during international travel (e.g., overnights during travel, mileage, fuel, and maintenance costs)
19. Contribution to regional meetings	Consider the possibility of adding costs for planning and information sharing though participation of project personnel in regional meetings.
20. Carbon offset	For international flights and national flights where the air carrier offers carbon offsets, include such costs under the transportation budget category. Other carbon-offset guidelines will be provided by the PRCF in the near future, at which time this Operational Guideline will be reviewed.

Equipment and supplies	
21. Office consumables	Ensure that sufficient budget is placed for monthly expenditures of stationaries, paper, printer ink cartridges, postage/ delivery cost, communication costs (telephone and internet), office furniture if needed and permitted by the donor, and other similar items. The above can be based on averages of previous use per Country Program.
22. Field consumables	Ensure that sufficient funds are allocated in the budget for consumables such as power systems (batteries, solar systems), field equipment for employees and consultants, back-ups for irreplaceable field equipment (e.g., extra GPS, camera), emergency equipment (winch, satellite phone), Field First Aid kits and similar field needs.

¹ This will include visa runs, work permits, travel permits, visa processing fees, etc.

23. Field Equipment	<p>Ensure that necessary field equipment not already available is requested for particular projects, such as camera, GPS, compass, binoculars, tents/ hammocks, cooking equipment etc.</p> <p>Review the status of present equipment by examining Country Program Inventory Sheets.</p>
24. Health and safety provisions	<p>Ensure that a contingency fund for fieldwork (e.g., evacuation), appropriate/ protective clothing, satellite communications, vaccinations, medical equipment, and relevant medical training is provided for in the budget.</p>
25. Information Technology equipment	<p>Consider the option/ possibility to purchase software/ upgrades/ licenses, peripherals (computes, UPS, printer, scanner, backup HDD etc), flash memory for cameras etc.</p>
26. Maintenance for new and existing equipment that will be used on the project	<p>Consider the cost of refurbishments (eg, vehicles), regular wear and tear, spare parts, tools, and similar for allowable project budgets.</p>

Activities costs (see “core” budget template)	
<p>27. Ensure that all costs of activities are either broken down into more descriptive components or included under a specific budget line per activity. Examples include: village meeting, consumables, training course, two-week survey, national workshop, vehicle travel (Kms motorbike/car), Communications (internet, phones, fax.) etc.</p>	<p>Where activities are budgeted in ‘lump sum’, there should be a strong basis for the number provided (eg, previous experience); justification should be provided with the budget</p>

Communications and awareness	
28. Public Relations	<p>Consider costs related to time (including that of volunteers), and resources for the production of promotional materials (e.g., Country and Project Profiles and Fact Sheets). These include: design, translation, photography, and printing fees.</p> <p>Also consider the possibility of allocating some funds for upgrading/ maintaining of PRCF website, and costs associated with maintaining a successful public relations and fund-raising program</p>

29. Project-related materials	Ensure that the cost of production, editing, layout, printing of project-related materials is covered in the project budget
30. Further fundraising	Consider the need/ option/ possibility of an extra phase of the project subsequent to the one being proposed.

Office space and Utilities	
31. Project offices and core PRCF office and utilities	<p>Ensure that Country Program Offices/ Project Offices and utilities are included in the budget.</p> <p>Consider PRCF Core Office and utilities costs as an added percentage of the Office Scape and Utilities budget line.</p> <p>Liaise with the PRCF Chief Financial Officer for the allocation, as the percent allocation would reduce as per the number of projects on line.</p>

Overheads	
32. Costs included in project overheads	Note that all costs planned for covering from overheads must be cleared with the PRCF Chief Executive Officer prior to inclusion in project planning and allocation/ usage.
33. PRCF direction and monitoring	When not allowed in project budget, otherwise included as a minimum of one day per quarter. Liaise with the PRCF CEO, PRCF Regional Coordinator, or PRCF Country Program Manager.
34. PRCF accounting	When not allowed in the project budget, but see Item # 9 above. If such, liaise with the PRCF Chief Financial Officer is required for allocations.
35. PRCF administration	When not allowed in the project budget, but the administrator should always also have a technical task within the project framework
36. PRCF and project audits	When not allowed in the project budget. Also, see Item # 16 above.
37. PRCF and local office costs	When not allowed in the project budget. Liaise with PRCF Chief Financial Officer for allocations and details. Also, see Item # 31
38. Staff recruitment costs	But, note Item # 3.

39. Exchange rate fluctuations	-
40. Banking costs	When not allowed in the project budget. Also, see Item # 11.
41. Information Technology costs	When not allowed in the project budget, or if exceeding allocations in the project budget. Also, see Item # 25.
42. Program development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fund-raising and Public Relations - PRCF Core Personnel training/ capacity building - Proposal preparation - Other, in accordance to relevant PRCF Operational Guideline on the subject

Finally (before it goes to the CEO)
Does the budget table correspond to the proposed project activities and outputs?
Do the figures add up? Check all imbedded calculations.
Have the Program Manager and Finance Officer approved the budget?
What are the cashflow implications? When fund allocations be made?
How much upfront loading is required (eg, for equipment purchases)?
Is co-financing available, has it been included, do partners agree?