TYPES OF TECHNICAL PROPOSAL & ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Consider the situations in which proposals occur. A company may send out a public announcement requesting proposals for a specific project. This public announcement—called a request for proposals (RFP)—could be issued through websites, emails, social media, newspapers, or trade journals. Firms or individuals interested in the project would then write proposals in which they summarize their qualifications, project schedules and costs, and discuss their approach to the project. The recipient of all these proposals would then evaluate them, select the best candidate, and then work up a contract.

But proposals also come about much less formally. For example: if someone is interested in doing a project at work (for example, investigating the merits of bringing in some new technology to increase productivity). Suppose
you meet your supervisor and try to convince her of this. She might respond by saying, "Write me a proposal and I'll present it to upper management." This is more like the kind of proposal you will write in a technical writing course.

Most proposals can be divided into several CATAGORIES:

1. Internal, external: A proposal to someone within your organization (a business, a government agency, etc.) is an internal proposal. With internal proposals, you may not have to include certain sections (such as qualifications) or as much information in them. An external proposal is one written from one separate, independent organization or individual to another such entity. The typical example is the independent consultant proposing to do a project for another firm. Chances are, you will write one of these two kinds of proposals for this class, and it may be solicited or unsolicited, as explained below.

2. Solicited, unsolicited: A solicited proposal is one in which the recipient has requested the proposal. Typically, a company will send out requests for proposals (RFPs) through the mail or publish them in some news source. But proposals can be solicited on a very local level: for example, you could be explaining to your boss what a great thing it would be to install a new technology in the office; your boss might get interested and ask you to write up a proposal that offered to do a formal study of the idea. Unsolicited proposals are those in which the recipient has not requested proposals. With unsolicited proposals, you sometimes must convince the recipient that a problem or need exists before you can begin the main part of the proposal. Most of the technical writing projects we have seen in this class have been unsolicited proposals.

SIGNIFICANCE

Proposals are key documents in any organization. While the primary purpose of the proposal is to help secure funding for project's interventions, it is important to understand that the proposal document has other critical functions and that proposals need to be of a good quality to serve all of these. The functions of the proposal are:

1. Fundraising– Proposals secure funding. The proposal must convince the donor that the need that has been identified is important, and that proposal presenter has the capacity and the right approach to address the needs and achieve good results, and to ensure accountability. A poor quality proposal, or a proposal that misses the submission deadline, may result in missing out on important funding opportunities.

2. Design– The proposal documents the design of a project. Good quality outcomes depend on good quality project designs, and on a needs-based approach so the proposal must be more than just a sales pitch. The proposal must represent an appropriate design (activity and budget design) that will help to have a positive impact on humanitarian needs as well as consider the longer-term implications of its interventions to support the recovery of the affected population .

3. Implementation-The proposal serves as a key management tool for the implementation of projects. The proposal and budget should follow a clear logic, and provide adequate description of activities and expected outputs to help a project manager implement the project. It also assists with identifying staff required to carry out project activities. The expected outputs and outcomes must be clear and achievable.

4. Accountability-The proposal is the document that will be held accountable against in terms of what has been delivered. The project manager will need to report against what is stated in the proposal, so it is critical that the content is feasible programmatically and financially, and achievable within the approved time frame.