

Common Pitfalls	Advice
Missing components	Follow RFA guidelines carefully; use scoring criteria as a guide to write application.
No evidence shown for proposed activities	<p>Show how the proposed program relies on the MOP and existing resources. Also look at DHS and MICS data: http://www.measuredhs.com/</p> <p>For example, if you propose to increase use of bednets, show that use of bednets among target population is low (i.e. provide data), and that the strategies for proposed for increasing use are aligned with the MOP.</p>
Missing information	Put yourself in the position of someone looking at the situation from the outside; what would they be looking for?
Proposal not organized; difficult to read	Organize your proposal according to the RFA guidelines.
Plans are too general; more rhetoric than substance or strategy; too much “varnish” throughout	Back up what you’re proposing to do; use concrete examples and information, including data where available; varnish should become apparent at the end, not throughout the application (should not be written in varnish).
Budget inadequate for certain components	Budget has to back up what you’re proposing. E.g. if you propose training, it should be clearly articulated in the budget narrative and receives an adequate allocation; Budgets often lack adequate funding for M&E.
Strategy is not consistent with MOP and NMCP approaches and priorities; linkages with existing malaria control partners in-country are not demonstrated	Show how the proposed strategy is consistent with the MOP and NMCP and demonstrate links to other malaria control partners as warranted to avoid duplication of effort.
Intervention descriptions not thorough	Be thorough! If you include bednets in your malaria strategy, discuss all considerations for this type of programming. E.g. how to get bednets; sell/give to certain populations; how to increase use, etc. Use TRMs http://www.childsurvival.com/documents/trms/tech.cfm and PMI guidance http://www.pmi.gov/mcp/resources.html to ensure all pieces of intervention are addressed. Again, if not addressing a piece of an intervention, explain why.
Disconnect between language in proposal and management tools	Results framework, M&E plan, etc. should reflect the strategy articulated in the proposal. One should look at the RF and see the backbone of the proposal. As a reviewer reads a proposal, s/he can follow the RF and see exactly where each piece fits.
Applicant does not have appropriate key staff	Ensure that key staff are qualified for the job; namely, they have a MPH or public health experience and malaria expertise.
Staffing is inadequate	Ensure that there are enough staff at project site (not based hundreds of miles away in city).