ICT for Civic Data — Crash Course 2026

From Example to Proposal

Self-Paced Review — Section B

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Why This Matters

> Turn a case into a proposal

The goal of Section B is to go from a **concrete case study** to a **compelling, grounded proposal**, one that answers a floaty RFP with a specific, realistic story.

The RFP asks for broad things: *"strengthening CLI's ability to anticipate and prepare for climate-related disasters at the community level."* Your job is to make that concrete.

A strong proposal doesn't try to answer everything. It picks **one angle** grounded in a real example, and builds a story around it that the funder can see, trust, and fund.

Before You Start

> You can't answer floaty with floaty

The funder is vague, but **you must be concrete**. The RFP says: *"Proposals should describe how data analysis and geospatial tools can be used to confirm and enrich existing local knowledge about community-level risk, infrastructure gaps, and population vulnerability."*

That is a broad wish list. You cannot address all of it:

- The funder doesn't fully know their own needs
- A single project won't cover everything
- The budget won't allow it

Your advantage is **specificity**. Pick a clear thread, build evidence around it, and show what it would look like in practice. Concreteness beats comprehensiveness.

> You can start from a dataset or from a question

From a dataset

You find an interesting dataset and ask: **what questions can this data answer?**

Risk: you only ask questions the data can answer. You may miss the most important questions entirely because no dataset covers them.

Example: you find flood records with coordinates → you ask "where do floods happen?" but never ask "who is affected?"

From a question

You start with a problem and ask: **what data would I need?**

Risk: the data may not exist. You spend time framing a question that cannot be answered with available evidence.

Example: you want to know community evacuation capacity, but no one collects that data.

Both are valid. In practice, you iterate between them: the **Define** ↔ **Find** loop.

> The funder is your client

The RFP is about helping **the funder**, in this case CLI. The opening line says: *"CLI's field staff possess deep expertise in the regions where they operate, but the organisation currently lacks the technical capacity to systematically complement that expertise with data analysis and modern tools."*

The funder's problem is clear: they have expertise but lack data capacity. Your proposal helps **them** build that capacity.

Downstream benefit to communities is important, but the story **cannot skip the funder** to focus only on beneficiaries. The funder needs to see themselves in the proposal, as the user of what you build, not just the one who pays for it.

Walkthrough

> Start from concrete examples

Abstract thinking about "disaster preparedness" produces abstract proposals. **Case studies ground your thinking.**

A case study is a real situation: a place, a hazard, a population, a gap. It gives you something specific to point at.

From a case study, you extract a **common thread**: something that recurs across contexts and that your approach can address. That common thread becomes your **angle**, the central argument of your proposal.

The sequence:

1. **Case study** — a concrete situation you can describe
2. **Angle** — the insight that connects the case to a broader need
3. **Proposal** — the plan that turns the angle into action

> Case study → angle → proposal

Case study

Indonesia flood monitoring. Remote communities face recurring floods. Health facilities are scattered across islands. No systematic way to know which facilities are in flood-prone areas. Field staff rely on experience and informal networks.

The gap: **CLI has field knowledge but no tools to map risk systematically.**

Angle → Proposal

Angle: Prevention + staff safety + emergency response. If field staff know which facilities are at risk *before* a flood, they can prepare.

Proposal: A facility risk dashboard that overlays flood history, health facility locations, and population data. Field staff see which areas need attention. The organisation gains a planning tool it currently lacks.

The case study is specific. The angle connects it to the funder's need. The proposal makes it actionable.

> What makes a good angle

A good angle is:

Grounded — rooted in a real case study, not abstract aspiration. You can point to specific data, specific places, specific gaps.

Realistic — achievable within the project's budget and timeline. A 6-month project cannot build a national early warning system.

Approachable — an entry point for an organisation learning to use data. The funder's staff should be able to understand and use what you build.

Impactful — it opens new possibilities the funder did not have before. Not incremental improvement, but a new capability.

The angle is the bridge between "here is a problem" and "here is what we can do about it." It is the core argument of your proposal.

> Funders expect something they can see and use

Many funders expect something **"shiny"**: a dashboard, a map, a monitoring tool. Something they can show to their board, their donors, their partners.

The RFP signals this: *"Describe how the proposed project would be carried out, including how data would be used to support and enrich existing assessments."* It wants something visible that demonstrates the approach.

The real value is the **strategy behind the deliverable**: the methodology, the data pipeline, the capacity built in the organisation. But the deliverable makes the proposal feel concrete.

Think of it as packaging: the dashboard is the box, but the contents are the data skills and processes the organisation gains.

> Three roles shape every project

Role	Responsibilities	Example
Funder	Funds the project, coordinates stakeholders, provides field access	CLI provides funding, connects you to field teams, gives access to regions
Implementing partner	Field presence, local knowledge, training delivery	Local NGO with staff in the target communities
Technical partner	Data analysis, tool development, methodology, capacity building	Your team: builds the dashboard, trains staff, documents the process

The technical partner (you) provides **specific expertise**, not overall project leadership. The funder and implementing partner own the context. Your job is to make data work useful for them.

Behind the Approach

> Don't pitch incremental improvement

Weak: "We'll help you do what you already do, but with data."

This tells the funder nothing new. They already know they could use data. The RFP itself says they want to *"complement the expertise of field staff with data-driven approaches."* Simply echoing this back is not a proposal.

Strong: "Here is something you thought was impossible, and here is how data makes it possible."

Show the funder **new capabilities**: things they did not know they could do. The Indonesia example: field staff already knew some areas flooded. The dashboard shows them *which health facilities are in flood zones*, information they could not produce without combining datasets. That is a new capability.

> Find the most compelling point

Keep data presentation **simple**. A proposal is storytelling (Section F, slide 97): one message per chart, the title states the finding.

If you believe evaluation matters, **embed it in the methodology**, but don't make it the headline. "Better evaluation" is not a compelling pitch on its own.

The most compelling point is usually: **"Look at this specific thing your data can already show you."** A single, well-chosen example beats a comprehensive framework. The funder's reaction should be: *"I didn't know we could do that."*

This is the "show don't tell" principle from Section A: demonstrate the approach, don't just describe it.

> Show new capabilities

Many organisations already collect data but **don't know what to do with it**. The RFP hints at this: CLI's field staff have *"deep expertise"* but the organisation *"lacks the technical capacity to systematically complement that expertise."*

Your proposal shows what becomes possible **with what they already gather**:

- Field reports mention flooding → combine with geospatial data to map risk zones
- Staff know which facilities are hard to reach → overlay with population data to prioritise
- Regional offices track incidents informally → a dashboard aggregates and visualises across regions

You are not asking the funder to collect new data. You are showing them the value of **data they already have**, combined with open sources they didn't know existed.

FAQ

> How do you frame data projects with communities?

A question that arose in the crash course: **should the proposal teach communities to collect data?**

The goal is not teaching communities new things. It is helping them **demonstrate that what they already know and do is powerful**.

Communities in climate-vulnerable regions already have knowledge: they know which areas flood, which paths are impassable in the rainy season, where people go when they evacuate. This is knowledge that formal data systems often miss.

The proposal should **surface existing knowledge**: use data to highlight the impact of what communities already do, not to replace it with external systems. The data validates and amplifies community expertise, making it visible to decision-makers who allocate resources.

> Should evaluation be part of the proposal?

If you think evaluation matters (and it often does), **embed it in the methodology**, not in the headline.

"We will help you measure the impact of your preparedness work" is important but not compelling as a lead pitch. The funder knows they need evaluation. Pitching it as the main offering tells them nothing about what you will actually build.

Instead: include evaluation metrics as part of the methodology section. The dashboard tracks facility risk over time → this naturally produces evaluation data. The monitoring tool logs response times → this feeds into programme evaluation.

Evaluation is a **by-product of good methodology**, not the product itself. When embedded well, it strengthens the proposal without distracting from the core story.