



## How to Pitch your Story - A Toolkit from HESN

### Video Submissions

Videos are a compelling way to tell a story - and particularly, your story. As we all know each time a movie makes us laugh or cry, it is a media that allows you to deeply connect to your audience. Just think if you could harness that same kind of power to explain to the world who you are, what you do, and how you are going to change the world...

And of course, we have some data on this. According to Kickstarter, projects with videos succeed at a much higher rate (66%) than those without. So, no matter what your project is, or what stage it is at, a video can be a strong, compelling tool to help build support, encourage investment, and spread the word about your great idea.

Now, how do you do this? Here are some tips and useful suggestions to consider as you craft your very own video:

1. **Tell your story and be yourself** - In most cases people are interested in you as much as they are interested in your project. If you want people to support you, you need them to know - and care about - your dream. They want to see you, hear your passion, and get excited with you. Tell people about anything that helps them understand where your idea came from and what it would mean to you and the other members of your team to succeed in your goals. Where it's relevant, go into your collective backgrounds, both personal and professional. Viewers also want to make sure you seem competent and trustworthy. When you are on camera, bring all the energy you can muster, have fun, and smile often.
2. **Pitch your impact** - People want to know why your project is important, on a personal level. Whose life will it change? Who will benefit from your work?
3. **Explain your idea** - Tell people what you are actually going to do. Keep it short, and be focused on what uniquely stands out about your solution or project. Explain how this idea fits into the story about yourself that you told earlier in your video. Use as little text and as many images as possible. Show your video storyline to several people who do not know about your project and ask them to explain it back to you. Remember, you know everything about your project, so it is hard for you to know what parts of it are complicated, and what parts other people will not understand without additional details.
4. **Short and to the point** - People have short attention spans - they may be as short as 8 seconds! Most viewers will not sit through a 5 minute video to figure out what you are talking about. You have 10 seconds or less to hook your viewers and convince them that your video is worth finishing. After they are hooked, you have less than 3 minutes to tell your story before they wander off to think about something else, check their email, or make a grocery list.

5. **Keep it legal** - Beware of violating U.S. copyright law. Watch out that you do not include any copyrighted music, logos, images, and video. That includes things just sitting around in your space. For royalty-free content, check out [TuneFruit](#), [iStockPhoto](#), [SoundCloud](#), [Vimeo Music Store](#), [Free Music Archive](#), and [ccMixer](#).

6. **Ask** - People want to help you. End your video with a specific action, such as voting for your project to be selected for the Innovation Marketplace or to have people invest their Development Dollars in your great idea. Finally thank people for their interest in your project and for supporting your dream.

### **Non-Video Multimedia Submissions**

Of course the same objectives can be reached with other types of media submissions, not just videos. We will also accept picture slideshows with voice and/or music overlay, other automated slideshows, or alternative media creations (flash drawings, cartoons, etc.). Keep in mind the guidance provided above. The important thing here is that you are able to succinctly tell your story to a wide audience, engage them fully, and convince them that your innovation, research project, or idea is the best ever. If you have any questions about format - just ask! Email [techcon@usaid.gov](mailto:techcon@usaid.gov).

### **Links to Useful Tools and other Resources:**

<http://crowdfundingdojo.com/articles/cheap-free-resources-for-making-kickstarter-campaign-videos>

<http://www.videobrewery.com/blog/5-tips-kickstarter-video>

<http://crowdfundingdojo.com/articles/how-successful-kickstarter-campaign-videos-are-made>

<https://www.kickstarter.com/blog/one-question-six-creators-what-makes-a-good-project-page>

[https://www.kickstarter.com/help/handbook/your\\_story](https://www.kickstarter.com/help/handbook/your_story)

Example of a compelling video:

From Kickstarter: [SixFoods](#)