Imagine that a reviewer encounters competing proposals, each suggesting a different outreach activity listed on the photos above; in this example, let’s also imagine that the aim of the activity is to promote preservation of bird habitats and pro-bird gardening behavior…

The BIIF synthesizes theory and best practice to help distinguish among proposed activities.

1) WHO is the audience of the activity?  
- Proposal identifies a specific audience that can best use the science generated info, or further spread a message; e.g., “Our audience includes leaders and members of specific bird and garden clubs, such as…”

- No description is given of best “conduit” audience who can use or spread the info; i.e., gate-keepers or opinion leaders who could exert domino effects in their own communities.

(Khalil & Ardoin 2011, Dickinson & Bonney 2012, Clayton et al. 2013)

2) WHY was this particular activity chosen?  
- Proposal shows that the scientist is well acquainted with the needs and attitudes of the audience, and the scope of the activity is realistic; e.g., “We will draw on the pro-wildlife attitudes of local landowners to encourage pro-bird gardening habits.” The scientist does not expect to effect behavioral change in a heterogeneous audience by just providing science facts.

- Proposal shows vague, information-deficit thinking, with unspecific educational goals; e.g., “We will educate the public…” or “increase general scientific literacy…” or “raise awareness…”

(Gross 1994, Besley & Tanner 2011, Heberlein 2012)

3) WHAT does the activity involve?  
- Proposal indicates that the activity will seek feedback from the audience promote personal two-way, prompt communication, and identify “what you can do.”

- The activity’s communication will be solely one-way to audience, with no knowledge-building among the audience or promotion of self-empowerment.

(Koepfier et al. 2010, Dickinson & Bonney 2012, Druschke & Seltzer 2012, Clayton et al. 2013)

4) HOW will the activity accommodate attitudes?

- Activity will provide direct experience, appeal to sense of “ownership” or “place” (e.g., “my” garden, “my” town, “my” backyard birds) and/or identify the means to achieve a specific behavior; e.g., “We will highlight where landowners can buy the kinds of shrubs that birds use during migration, to plant at their own home…”

- Proposal makes no mention of direct experience, consideration of audience identity, or specific educational or behavioral targets.


5) WITH WHOM will the activity be designed or performed?  
- The scientist has an intra-institutional (e.g., communication department) or extra-institutional (e.g., museum, school, artist, etc.) partner. A social scientist will study the activity’s outcomes.

- A scientist without communication or outreach experience makes no effort to collaborate with a communication or outreach specialist.