**Advantage Africa Partners’ Workshop  
Handout 9.1: Dos and Don’ts in Donor Reports**

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| **Do** | **Don’t** |
| ✓ Make yourself aware of the donors reporting requirements and ensure that the monitoring and evaluation planned for your project will meet them  ✓ Keep a monthly diary of project activities and a project file with copies of all the relevant information that will be required to write a good quality report  ✓ Advise donors of any significant changes to the project as they occur  ✓ Take note of the deadline and plan, in order to submit the report on time  ✓ Start with a copy of the donor’s reporting format    ✓ Read through the original proposal submitted to the donor    ✓ Structure the report using headings, bullet points, tables, diagrams and photographs  ✓ Be clear and concise  ✓ Be honest about any problems encountered  ✓ Explain how problems were and are being addressed and any changes made to the project  ✓ Show how the project has had an impact on poverty and the beneficiaries’ quality of life    ✓Include case studies and ‘human-interest’ stories  ✓ Describe the impact of the project on different social groups, especially the most disadvantaged in the community, men and women  ✓ Describe progress against activities, outputs and the project purpose in the logframe    ✓ Produce a financial report in the same format and with the same headings as the budget in the original proposal  ✓ Explain any significant over or under spends for every budget line where they occur  ✓ Ask colleagues to read through the report and give their comments  ✓ Explain new knowledge/lessons learnt from the project and how these will be disseminated at various levels  ✓ Be positive and upbeat | × Ignore the information about reporting in the contract  × Forget to keep detailed project records  × Upset donors by explaining significant changes in a report without obtaining their prior agreement  × Leave it to the last minute or underestimate the time required and end up stressed  × Ignore donor formats and guidelines    × Forget what the donor agreed to fund  × Use small fonts and margins  × Use too many words or unnecessary jargon  × Be economical with the truth or try to gloss over any problems  × Talk about problems without also talking about solutions  × Describe the activities without communicating their impact on people living in poverty  × Make unsubstantiated statements about the impact of the project on the beneficiaries  × Make out that the beneficiaries are one homogenous group if they aren’t    × Ignore the project plan (or logframe), targets and indicators contained in the original proposal    × Use different budget headings or internal reports, unless you know they are acceptable to the donor  × Ignore deviations from the budget or send conflicting messages in the narrative and financial sections of the report  × Submit the report without proof reading and correcting at least twice  × Report on the project in isolation  × Be too dry or dull |