



Research proposal and grant writing for development impact

Session 2: Designing for impact and writing successful grant applications.

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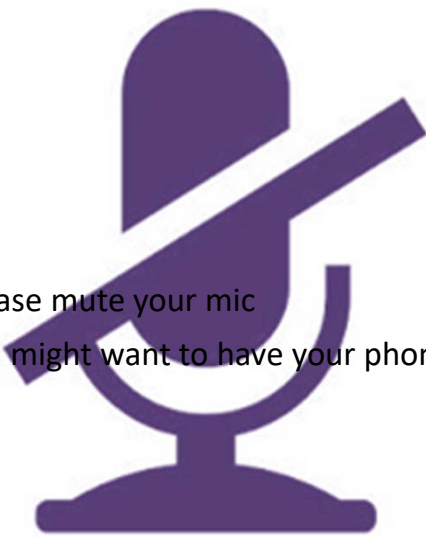
*Today's
agenda*

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 15.30: | Introduction |
| 15.35: | Designing for research impact |
| 15.50: | Grant writing - understanding and applying for a funding call |
| 16.20: | Tea break |
| 16.35: | Key components of a successful proposal |
| 17.20: | Final Q&A and wrap up |

housekeeping



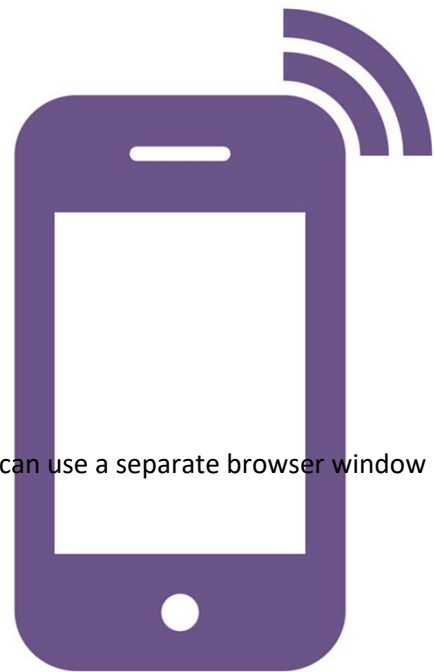
use
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Please mute your mic

You might want to have your phone handy - or can use a separate browser window

Please
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Have your
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Designing research projects for impact

- In this brief talk I'm going to refresh your memories of and then build on some of the ideas I introduced in the last session – in particular on theories of change and communication and introduce a couple of other tools which you might find helpful when planning a research project for impact.

- Identify what sort & level of impact is realistic
 - Set some clear objectives
 - Identify who you need to influence
 - Decide how you might be able to influence them:
 - What evidence you will need
 - How best to communicate that to them
 - Check what resources you'll need (people/skills)
 - Identify where to get them
 - Make a plan
 - Develop a budget
 - (Write a convincing proposal to) to get the money.
-
- It's not rocket science.
 - Essentially you've got to.....
 - And there are lots of tools that can help with all of these steps
 - I'll be focusing on the top few bullet points and Andy will pick up on the lower ones later in the session.






What is Impact?

Levels of policy



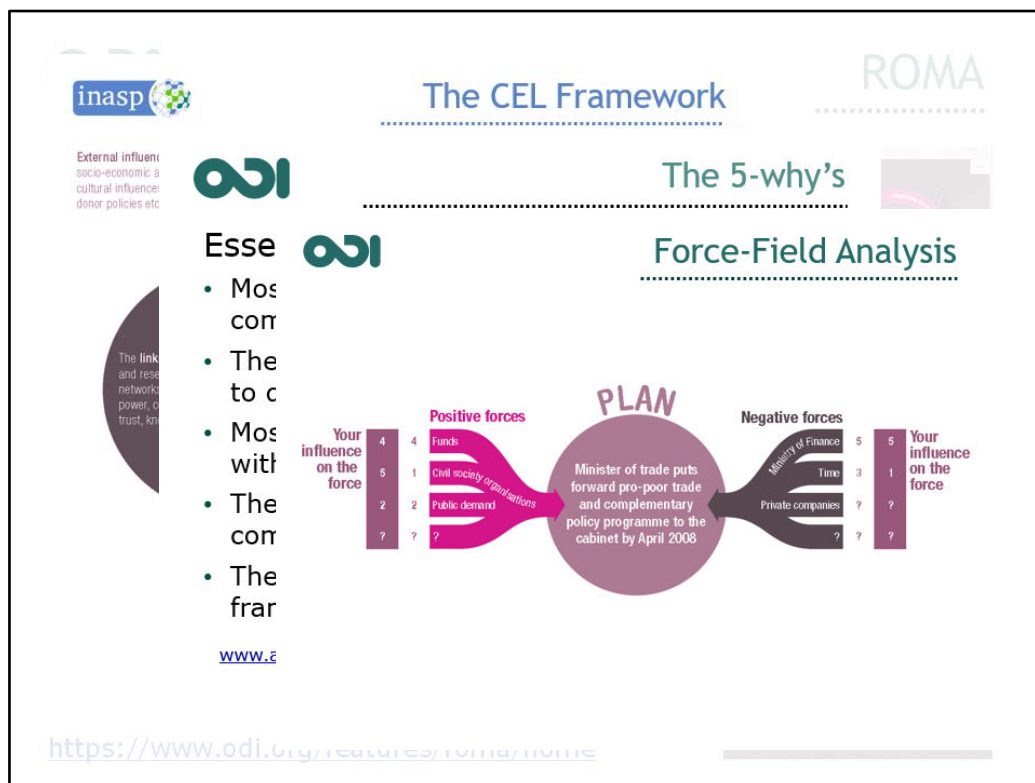
- *Discursive*: Client-focused services
- *Attitudinal*: Farmers have good ideas
- *Procedural*: Participatory approaches to service development
- *Content*: UU20, UU25. New guidelines
- *Behavioural*: Approach being applied in practice

<https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/what-is-impact/>

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02016.pdf>

<https://www.fasttrackimpact.com/what-is-impact>

- Last time I talked about the ESRC definition of research impact, and then a rather more complete list from Fast Track Impact – I'll be talking more about that later.
- Then I described the 5 levels of policy when I have found useful when thinking about what impact my work might have.



- I then ran through some of the tools that you can use to understand the context (the CEL framework), to narrow down your research question (the 5 whys) and start to identify who and what processes you might be able to influence with the results of your research.

“An ongoing process of reflection on how change happens, and the role we play”:

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. Who else is involved?
3. How do they influence change?
4. How can you influence them?
5. Which options will work best?
6. What else can help or hinder?

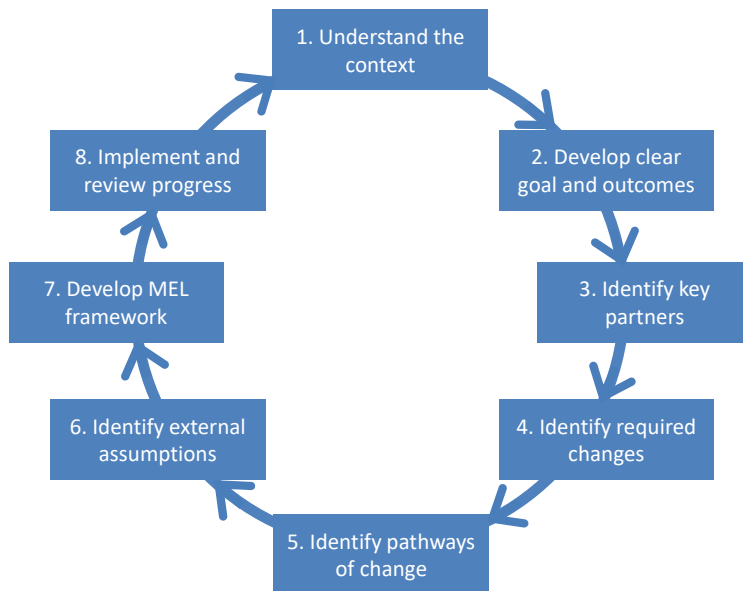
THEORY OF CHANGE REVIEW
A report commissioned by Comic Relief



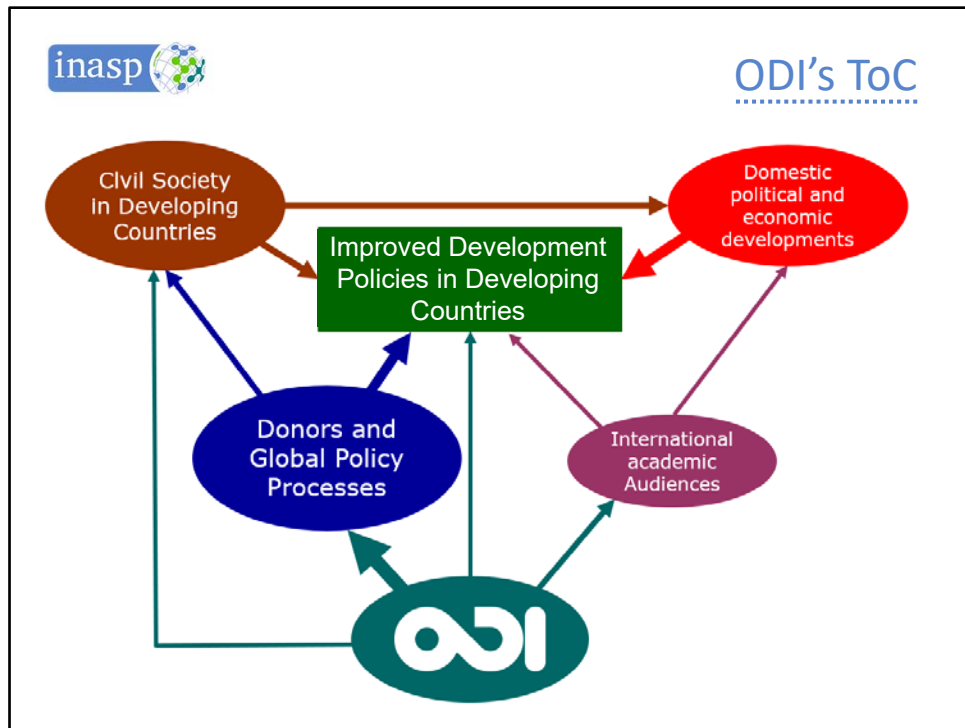
 Cathy James
September 2011

www.theoryofchange.org/pdf/James_ToC.pdf

- What I’m going to spend most time on today is theories of change. They can be a fantastically useful way of thinking through how to affect change, how to check you are on track, and how to present what you are trying to do succinctly in a picture or diagram.
- That’s what most people think is the most important thing about a ToC, but actually the most important thing is the process you use to generate it, and especially the people you involve in doing that.
- It should be a collaborative exercise involving the whole research team and all the other stakeholders who will be involved and affected by the project (remember my slide about transdisciplinarity).
- And it’s not just for the start of a project, it should be an ongoing process throughout the whole project – checking you are on track and changing course if necessary, and making sure all the other stakeholders are on board.



- Here's the process graphically.....



- And the resulting ToC can be almost anything – provided they show who you are hoping to engage with and how and how that will contribute to the final impact.
- Some are just lines and boxes
- This is a very simple one we developed for ODI about 15 years ago.

Indonesia has the capacity to develop effective and socially accountable policies that meet priority needs

Clear changes in attitudes, behaviours, capacities and institutions conducive to reducing the key barriers to Indonesia's knowledge sector producing and using evidence to inform priority social development policies

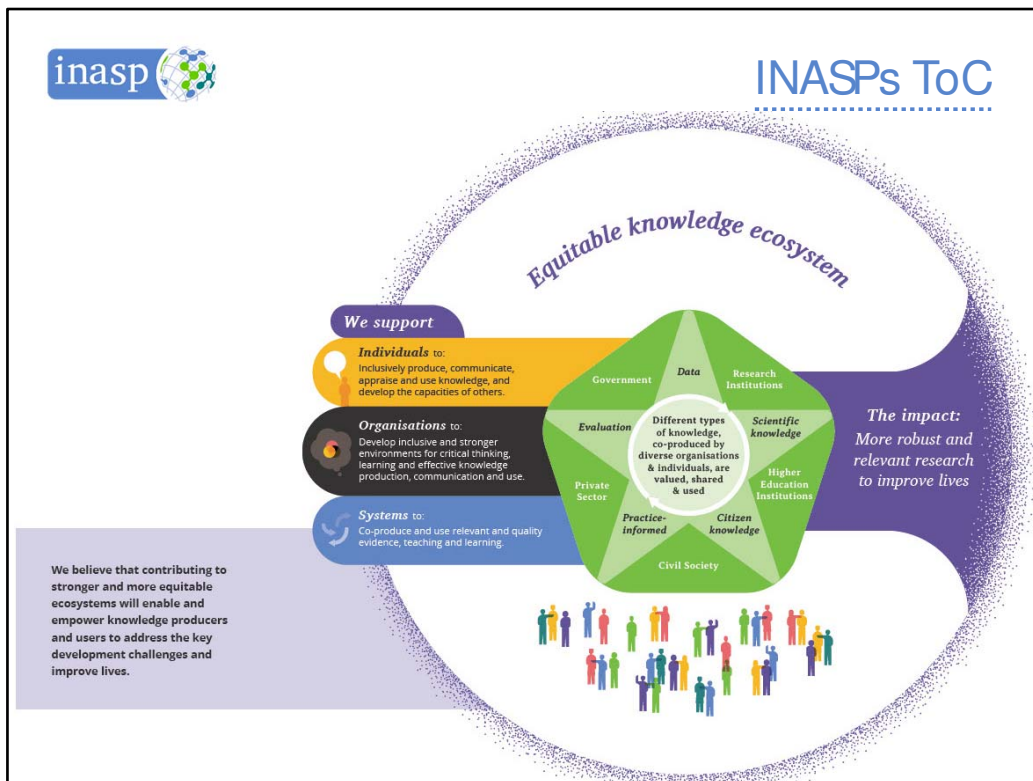
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|---|---|--|
| 1. Selected knowledge producing and intermediary organisations are producing and communicating higher-quality policy-relevant evidence in selected policy sectors / areas. | 2. Selected national and sub-national executive and legislative policy-making and influencing organizations start to demand, and use high quality evidence. | 4: Systemic factors constraining the production of high quality evidence identified & strategies to address some are underway. |
| 3. Selected policy-making, research and intermediary organisations are increasingly and systematically engaging with each other to support the production and use of high quality policy-relevant evidence. | | |

1. Selected Knowledge Communities support more effective policy-relevant research and evidence use in selected thematic/policy areas.

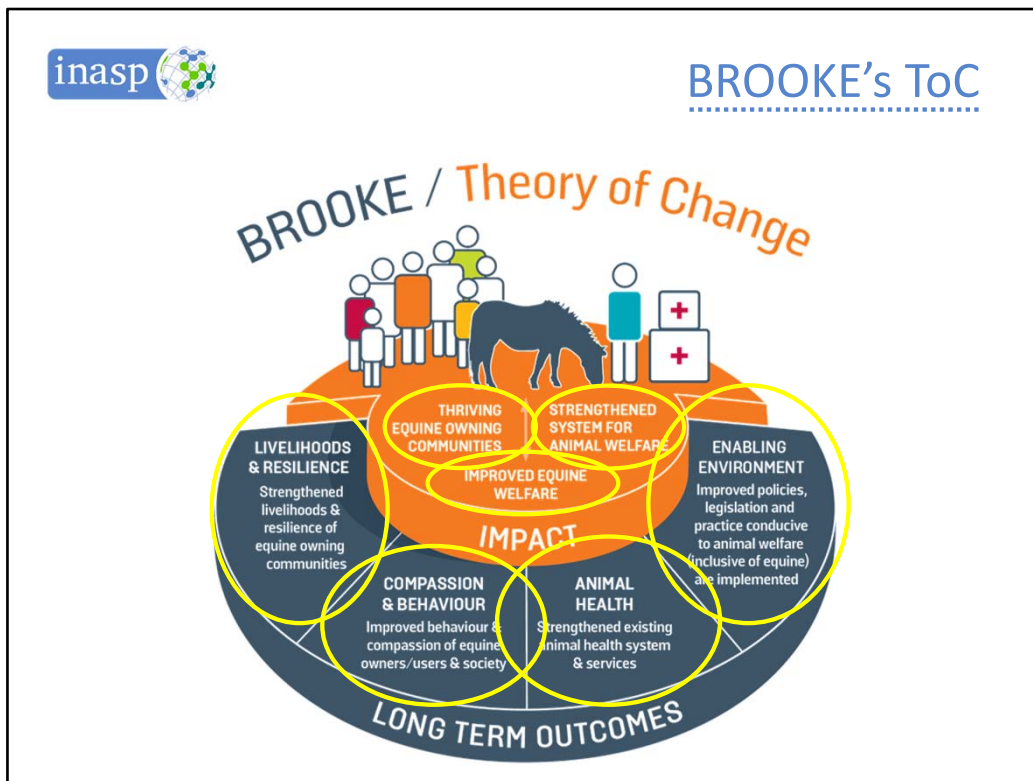
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|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| 2. Selected knowledge producing and intermediary organisations are organisationally stronger | 3. Selected knowledge producing and intermediary organisations are producing better quality research and are communicating it more effectively to policy-makers | 4. Selected independent knowledge exchange organisations are beginning to support knowledge/evidence exchange in selected policy sectors/areas (KCs). | 5. Selected policy-makers in KCs are aware of the benefits of and are beginning to use quality evidence in policy-making. | 6. Selected key institutions contribute to improved approach to K2P under development in Gol. | 7. Public sector reforms identified and under development in procurement, financing and university-based research. |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|

8. Selected stakeholders are more aware of the importance of, and ways of improving, evidence-based policy-making.

- And some are interlocking pieces or frameworks.
- This is one I developed about 10 years ago for a big programme in Indonesia called the Indonesia Knowledge Sector Programme.
- It has the overall goal at the top, then the overall outcome, then the contributory outcomes (or sub-components) of that, then some specific changes in specific stakeholder groups which will contribute to them.
- There was also a longer version which included specific activities with those groups.



- And sometimes there more like pictures.
- This is ours.
- It shows how we hope our capacity-development work at 3 levels will strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in, and contribute to what we call equitable knowledge ecosystems which will improve the quality and impact of research.



- And here's another one. This is for BROOKE – a charity which aims to improve the health of horses and donkeys world-wide.
- What they all have is:
 - A high level goal
 - A couple of different sub-elements of that
 - And four specific outcomes that BROOKE will deliver which will contribute to them.
- They often also try to illustrate the vision or mission in a simple picture
- And try to show graphically how things contribute to it.

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots. The left screenshot is the ODI 'Theories of Change' project page, which features a green header with the ODI logo and navigation links. The main content area lists several articles and reports, including 'Theories of Change: time for a radical approach to learning in development', 'Four principles for Theories of Change in global development', 'Can theories of change help us 'do development differently?'', and 'Six key findings on the use of Theories of Change in international development'. The right screenshot is the cover of a report titled 'The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change' by Andrew A. Anderson, Ph.D., published by The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. The cover is red with a yellow title box.

<https://www.odi.org/projects/2815-theories-change>

https://www.theoryofchange.org/pdf/TOC_fac_guide.pdf

- And you can find out much more about how ToC are being used, and how effective they are on this ODI web page
- And there's a really good step-by-step guide on how to do it on The Aspen Institute site.

Goal	Indicator	MOV	
Purpose	Indicator	MOV	Assumptions/ Risks
Output 1	Indicator	MOV	Assumptions/ Risks
Output 2	Indicator	MOV	
Output 3	Indicator	MOV	
Output 4	Indicator	MOV	

- Personally I remain a fan of log-frames
- It was developed in the United States for USAID and has been adopted and adapted for use by other major donors including DFID and the EC. As experience has grown on what makes development aid more effective and accountable, an increasing demand for greater rigour in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating has led to the introduction of the Logical Framework Approach.
- The approach enables the main elements of a project to be concisely summarised and brings structure and logic to the relationship between project purpose and intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results. If used with flexibility this approach to planning encourages creative thinking and promotes participatory engagement between all parties throughout the project life-cycle.
- Logframes have become discredited as being “too linear and logical”, but they needn’t be – you can have multiple purposes, and several outputs can contribute to more than one purpose..
- As with Theories of Change they should be developed in collaboration with and reviewed regularly with all stakeholders but seldom are.
- They can have policy-focused purposes.

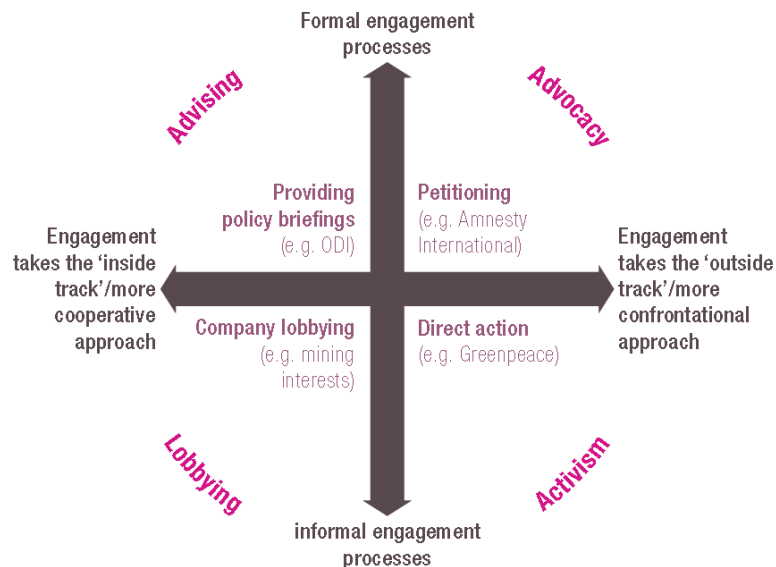


Develop a communication strategy

- Identify the audience
 - Information needs
 - Information preferences
 - Develop the message
 - “Shape” the message to suit the audience
 - Deliver it in the most appropriate way
 - Check it has been received
 - Reinforce it
 - Repetition
 - The boomerang approach.
-
- Last week I talked about how it is vital to think about communication throughout the research cycle. It’s not just something to do at the end – you need to communicate with everyone who might be involved right from the start.
 - Like a ToC the communication strategy will evolve through the life of a project – depending on who you want to communicate with about what.
 - And like ToC a good communication strategy is not rocket science – you just need to....
 - I particularly like what is called the boomerang approach – if you can’t reach your target audience directly, maybe you can reach them indirectly via someone else – you may remember the story I told last time about the department of agricultural extension in the ministry of agriculture in Indonesia telling their rather traditional colleagues in the department of livestock services that the participatory approaches we were using were actually rather good.



Develop a communication strategy



www.odi.org/publications/155-successful-communication-toolkit-researchers-civil-society-organisations

- One helpful way of thinking through a communication activity is whether you are going to use formal or informal approaches, and whether you are going to work closely with the people you are trying to influence, which we call inside track, or more remotely, which we call outside track.
- Different approaches work better in different situations.
- This figure shows how different approaches to communication map onto this framework.
- You can find out much more about how to use this tool and a wide range of other communication tools in our research communications toolkit at this address.



Assess your own capacity

- What type of policy influencing skills and capacities do we have?
- In what areas are we weak?
- What opportunities do we have (allies and connections)?
- What factors can undermine our ability to do this (enemies, time, resources)
- What can we do about them?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

www.betterevaluation.org/evaluation-options/swotanalysis

- Another vital part of the strategic planning process is ensuring the project has the capacity to do it.
- We frequently use a simple SWOT analysis to do this.
- A SWOT can reveal hidden obstacles to a planned project, especially when participants come from different departments or geographical areas in the same organization.
- You can find out much more about how to use SWOT analysis on this site.

Fast Track Impact

Get more impact | G4

Resources

Impact Planning Template for GCRF projects

Our evidence-based tool
 • Get Prof Reed's *Flows*
 • Get free online training
 • Read *The Researcher*



As researchers, we have
 from our funders. Give
 time to think, and the a

Through Fast Track Imp...
 having to work any more than you already do. I'm not going to ask
 who you are. You are all driven by gloriously diverse qualities - curi
 challenge, or a desire to change the world. You can use these dno
 impact on your own terms.

<https://www.fasttrackimpact.com/>

Impact goal	Evidence of need	Target stakeholders or populations	Reasons for being interested in the project (including benefits they are likely to enjoy)	Activities to engage the target group	Indicators of outcomes (and means of measurement)	Indicators of progress towards agreed means of measurement	Steps to activities (and milestones)	Steps to impact (and milestones)	Who is responsible and what resources are needed?	Timing
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<https://www.fasttrackimpact.com/i-want-to-plan-my-impact>

- I said I was going to come back to Fast Track Impact. As I said last time it is a fantastic resource on how to do research with impact.
- Mark Reed has a huge amount of experience advising research groups in the UK.
- There's lots of free stuff on his website or you can buy his book on Amazon.
- One of the most useful tools he has developed for UK-based researchers submitting proposals to the Global Challenges Research Fund is his Impact Planning Template.
- It's just a step-by-step framework to assemble the information you need to be able to include a really convincing description of how your research will have impact – in whatever format the donor wants it in.
- And that's what Andy is going to talk about next.

Any Questions?

Grant proposal writing: discovering, planning and writing phases

Delivering a presentation on proposal writing to a mixed group of scholars is always a challenge, because every funding application is different. It's worth noting that there are already lots of resources out there on the internet about grant writing tips, but many resources are specific to certain disciplines and funders, and so it's not always easy to find the right type of advice for the call that is in front of you. As this group is for a mixture of experienced and less experienced scholars, this presentation will cover all types of grants – from small fellowship and scholarship applications to large collaborative grants.

Proposal Writing With Impact

[Dashboard](#) > [Spaces](#) > [Proposal_Writing_With_Impact](#)

Proposal writing with impact - Part 1

'Selling' your research and your skills - Fellowships, small grants and beyond

 Introduction and learning outcomes

 Lesson 1: Before you write

 Lesson 2: Making your CV stand out

 Lesson 3: Your research proposal

 Lesson 4: Getting great references

Proposal writing with impact - Part 2

Winning funds for research impact - Collaborative proposals and large grants

 Introduction and learning outcomes

 Lesson 1: Collaborative research grant proposals - The what and the why

 Lesson 2: Finding collaborators

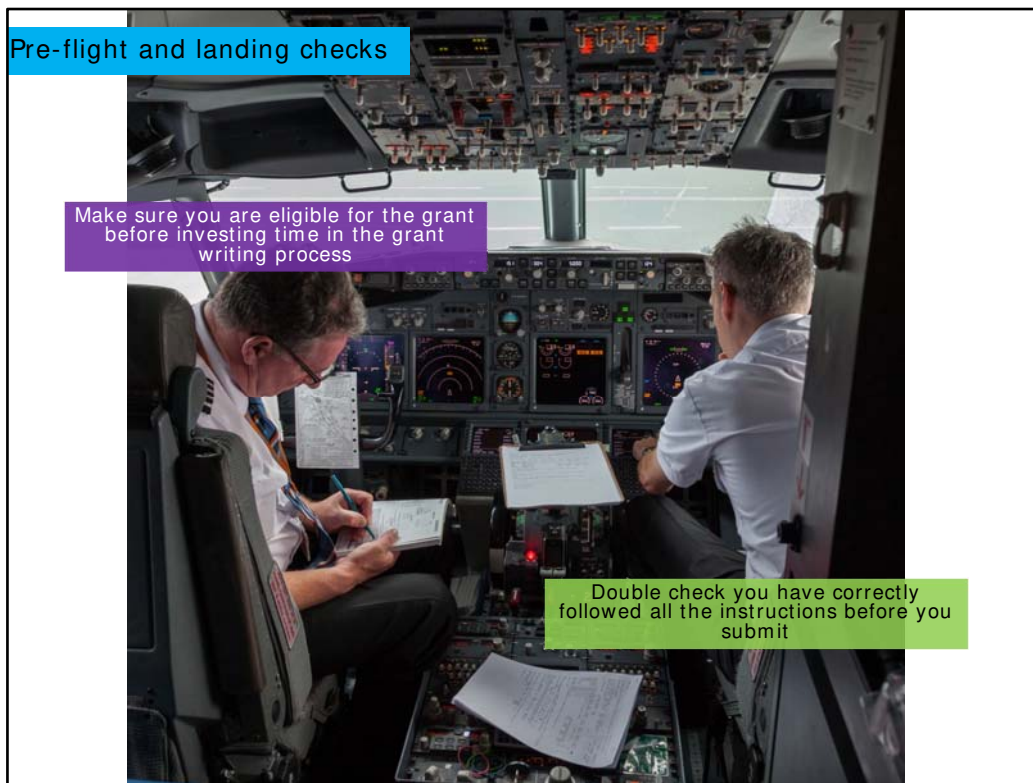
 Lesson 3: Planning for collaborative writing

 Lesson 4: Key factors in winning collaborative research grants

 Lesson 5: Moving forward, successful or not

This presentation is based on an online module that we recently developed called 'Proposal Writing with Impact'. This is available for the next month at the following link:

https://moodle.inasp.info/course/view.php?name=Proposal_Writing_With_Impact



Even if you have wings, you can't fly in the world of research funding unless you do your pre-flight checks! Do you have fuel, permission to take off, cabin pressure etc.? In other words, don't spend time writing an application for a grant that you are not eligible for! And you might also waste a lot of time on an application if you make an error which disqualifies you.

Safety On Board

Follow the instructions!

Give yourself time to get things right

- Deadlines are not flexible
- Word limits are not flexible
- Give yourself plenty of time (6-8 weeks for a research council grant, 6 months with big grants).
- Don't be afraid to ask questions to the Programme Officer of the grant giver (email address)




The number #1 tip for grant writing is to FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS! Often funders give you very clear guidelines and clues. Your proposal can be rejected for the smallest error, so give yourself enough time to get things right!

- Start small and early but dream big!
- Don't try to solve all the problems in your field in a single proposal
- If you lack key skills, build a team with people who have! Be strategic in looking for collaborators



(picture is a mustard seed)

- The information is out there on the World Wide Web!
- Subscribe to newsletters, websites, blogs.
- Follow funding bodies, societies, universities, researchers on [Twitter](#)
- Use Google (but smartly)
- Bookmark and sign up for alerts at common funding portals such as [Terraviva Grants](#), [Grants.gov](#), [Early Career Central](#), [Opportunity Desk](#), [ec.europa.eu](#), [UKRI Opportunities](#)
- AuthorAID funding page:
<https://www.authoraid.info/en/funding/>



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Social Science Research Council

KUJENGA AMANI

19-2020 NEXT GENERAL SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AFRICA

Introducing SSRC's Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa's 2019-2020 Fellows

by Next Generation Social Sciences
3 hours ago

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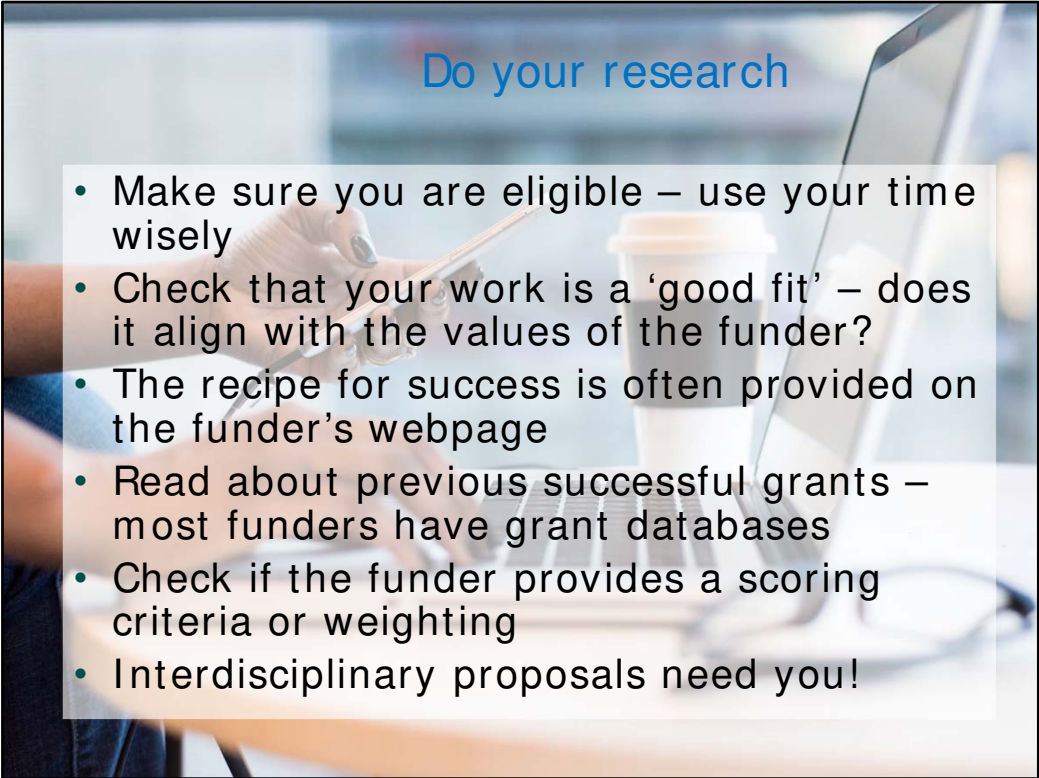
Warm congratulations to this year's Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa fellows. Next Gen looks forward to working with you and seeing the results of your promising research.

If you are interested in applying for a fellowship award from Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa, the next call for applications for the 2020 grant cycle will be released in October this year. Applications will be accepted from October 2019 through January 2020.

The Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa program is funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Anticipate the funding cycle

Too late? Plan for next year



Do your research

- Make sure you are eligible – use your time wisely
- Check that your work is a ‘good fit’ – does it align with the values of the funder?
- The recipe for success is often provided on the funder’s webpage
- Read about previous successful grants – most funders have grant databases
- Check if the funder provides a scoring criteria or weighting
- Interdisciplinary proposals need you!

- Ask your colleagues who have had success applying for the same funder
- Check your institution – they may have a database of successful grants
- Free online resources:
 - The Open Grants database
 - RIO journal (Research Ideas and Outcomes)
 - National Institutes of Health (US) sample grants

What do you need to make time for?

- Check eligibility /right fit
- Background research on the funder and requirements
- Checking your application with others – mentor, supervisor, colleagues, friends, previous applicants
- Official approval/institutional sign off
- Clarify details with the program staff
- Reference/recommendations?
- Do you need to attend an interview?
- Difficult requests for documentation/data
- Updating and tailoring your CV
- Final double and triple checks
- Breathing space for a 2nd look
- Leave time for possible technical problems

“Estimate the time needed then double it!”

There are lots of things to consider when planning your proposal – many things that can cause unforeseen problems and take longer than you think. One researcher I know also suggests that everything takes DOUBLE the time you think it will.

The Planning Phase – your ideas

What do you need to make time for?

1- Look at projects sponsored in the past by the funding body 2-Research topic and literature review to support the hypothesis3-Research site and collaborators4-Estimating time for which funding is needed5-Estimating resources needed-both p

1.The Deadline of the grant2. Time of team members3. Available resources to execute the project4. The objective of the funder5. Time of the senior reviewer

1. Funding body for my research; which organization is most suitable for my research.2. The expectations of the grant.3. How do I express my suitability and future plans?4. The fundamental reasoning behind my research.5. Planning my writing.

Application documentation requirements

Check for an experienced second reviewer of the application

- is my project aligned with the grant's interest- sustainability - what makes the project worthy of the grant (i.e. it's value, why is important, what makes it unique) - the plan should be actionable and realistic - credibility



Aligning your proposal with the funders' vision

The Challenge

USAID, the Government of Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, and DFID have joined together to launch **Saving Lives at Birth: A Grand Challenge for Development**, to find the tools and approaches to help the mothers and newborns during their most vulnerable hours.

We seek groundbreaking prevention and treatment approaches for pregnant women and newborns in poor, hard-to-reach communities around the time of delivery.

This is the period when the majority of maternal and newborn deaths occur and the population that has been the most difficult to reach.

We seek innovative ideas that can leapfrog conventional approaches in three main domains: (1) technology; (2) service delivery; and (3) "demand side" innovation that empowers pregnant women and their families to practice healthy behaviors and be aware of and access health care during pregnancy, childbirth and the early postnatal period, especially the first two days after birth.

Seeking Breakthroughs

Significant breakthroughs in innovation often come about when new ideas and disciplines are applied to long-entrenched problems. New technologies and approaches transform insurmountable development challenges into solvable problems. To harness this ingenuity, we encourage partnerships that bring together diverse expertise from non-traditional partners. And to foster sustainability, we encourage the private sector to bring their expertise and experience to bear on these problems.

Save and improve lives

Novel

"Out of the box" thinking

Groundbreaking

Sustained use

Substantial impact

Key Features

- A brief application.
- Rapid turnaround time. We aim to select grants within 5 months from the proposal submission deadline.
- Opportunities for shared learning and collaboration among innovators, funders and other public health experts.
- A review process designed to identify potentially groundbreaking ideas that show great promise.

What We're Looking For

Interventions that:

- Increase access to primary health care for women and newborns by at least 50%;
- Substantially improve the quality of care as measured by health outcomes; and
- Lead to improved and sustained healthy behavior.

Solutions Should

- Be "off the beaten track," daring in premise, and clearly differentiated from standard practices;
- Enhance uptake, acceptability and provide for **sustained use**;
- Enable or provide for **low-cost** solutions;
- Have a strong likelihood of achieving a **substantial impact** on one or more important adverse maternal, fetal, or neonatal health conditions;
- Be **scalable** in resource-poor settings;
- Be able to be **monitored, measured and evaluated**.

Read the Call for Proposals carefully. Pick up on important elements, words and phrases used, and ensure that these are reflected in your application.

“Physiology” of a reviewer



Proposal Summary

- It's my door: I enter the application through it.

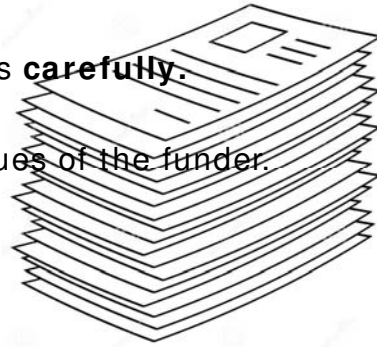
Proposal Goals Vs Funders' Goals

- If they **don't match**, an application is **in trouble**.
- If they **slightly match**, an application **begs me**.
- If they **very much match**, an application **commands me**.

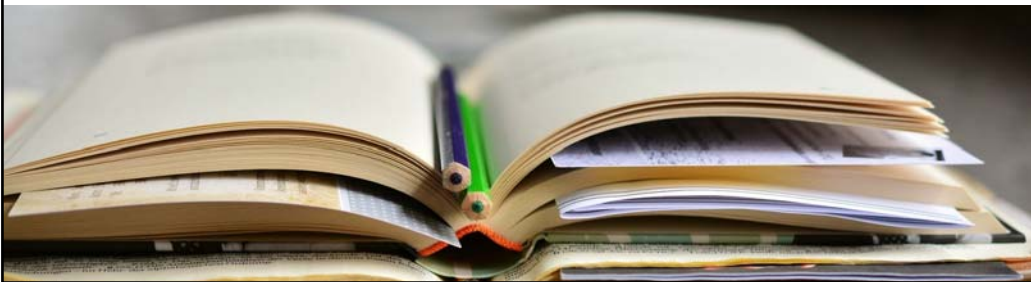
“Know the song of the funder, and sing it well, so a reviewer could dance to your version”
Bernard Appiah

Think of the reviewer – tired, overworked, slightly bored. Trying to justify why one proposal is better than the other . If your goals align with the funders, then reviewers like Bernard Appiah are ‘commanded’ to take the application seriously.

- My experience with assessing applications
 - Scientific soundness
 - Diversity (how we reported winners to the public and funders)
 - Impact (impressed by impact beyond career progression and publications)
 - Development impact (SDGs)
- Read and follow the instructions **carefully**.
- Look for hints.
- Research the language and values of the funder.
- Tell your story, stand out.



- Make the title compelling
- Explain why research is needed
- Avoid too much jargon, explain acronyms and write concisely
- Get specialists AND non-specialists to read your application
- Don't write like you would for a book or journal article!



Academic Writing versus Grant Writing: Contrasting Perspectives

Academic Writing	Grant Writing
Scholarly pursuit: <i>Individual passion</i> Past oriented: <i>Work that has been done</i> Theme-centered: <i>Theory and thesis</i> Expository rhetoric: <i>Explaining to reader</i> Impersonal tone: <i>Objective, dispassionate</i> Individualistic: <i>Primarily a solo activity</i> Few length constraints: <i>Verbosity rewarded</i> Specialized terminology: <i>"Insider jargon"</i>	Sponsor goals: <i>Service attitude</i> Future oriented: <i>Work that should be done</i> Project-centered: <i>Objectives and activities</i> Persuasive rhetoric: <i>"Selling" the reader</i> Personal tone: <i>Conveys excitement</i> Team-focused: <i>Feedback needed</i> Strict length constraints: <i>Brevity rewarded</i> Accessible language: <i>Easily understood</i>

From "Why Academics Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals" - Robert Porter

Why Academics Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals

Robert Porter

Journal of Research Administration; Fall 2007; 38, 2; ABI/INFORM Global

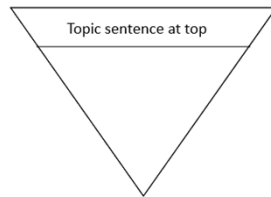
pg. 37

1. Diabetes is a public health challenge in Africa
2. X% of adults in Africa have diabetes and the proportion is expected to increase to Y% in the next decade

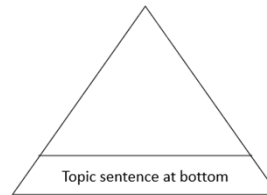


When you explain context, make sure you stress the significance and urgency of the situation

Effective paragraphs are modelled after news stories



Typical academic writing (passive)



Consider also:

- Using active voice
- The 'Assert-justify' technique

Writing is effective when the reader knows where they are going • The main building block of a piece of writing is the paragraph • Effective paragraphs begin with a “topic sentence”, so you are front loading with the most important information • Note: Academic or passive writing styles usually dictate that our paragraphs end with the topic sentence

Another similar method is called ‘assert-justify’, also called ‘Tell them; then convince them’

Example

Over three-quarters of school-age children in low- and middle-income countries have been shown to demonstrate inadequate reading performance. This deficiency has the potential to reduce the possibility of children continuing in school and reaching their full developmental and employment potential. Various educational interventions have been shown to help school children increase their reading speed and comprehension – these include computer software and hardware, access to reading specialists, and specialised training for teachers and parents. But these interventions have mostly been studied in developed countries like Canada and the US. They have not been widely studied in resource poor settings outside of North America. In Indonesia, the problem of reading skill is particularly worrisome – 80% of school children may not be reading at correct levels. Because of this great need research is warranted to understand whether assistive reading systems can help school children in rural Indonesia. **We propose to test and validate a novel, assistive reading system in rural Indonesia.**

We propose to test and validate a novel, assistive reading systems in rural Indonesia. Assistive reading systems, which involve computer technology, reading specialists, and training for teachers and parents, have been shown to improve students' reading performance in Canada, but they have not yet been well studied in low- or middle-income countries. There is enormous potential for novel interventions in the Indonesian school system because over 75% of children are reading at two levels below their grade and could benefit from tailored assistance that can maximize their ability to continue in school and reach their full developmental potential.

If taken out of context the paragraph speaks for itself

Make your CV stand out

- What to include – Name, contact information, educational background, work experience, publications, presentations, awards and honours
- Not needed unless asked for – marital status, number of children, photograph, religion, passport number, hobbies etc.
- Funders may have very specific requests – length (e.g. 2 pages), sections, font
- Tailoring your CV to match the grant
- Use descriptions of your previous work that displays significance to this application
- Tip: create a 'long version' of the CV which is regularly updated, which can be adapted to individual grants

CVs for proposals should not be like a CV for a job application

Key Components of a Successful Proposal

Who – You and your organisation / who are the beneficiaries?

What – What are you going to do?

Where – Define target area

When – Project timing/length, and activity delivery dates. Construct a timeline

Why

- Why you are targeting who you are targeting
- Why you have decided on what you will do
- Why you will provide services in a particular place
- Why you have decided on particular times

How

- How you will engage the target population
- How will individuals be assessed and admitted?
- How you will provide services.
- How you will retain participants.
- How you will evaluate the project's effectiveness.

“A good way to start [learning how to write grants] is to take English composition or Journalism classes at a local college to sharpen your writing skills.. You have to learn to tell a story

<http://seliger.com/2008/07/21/every-proposal-needs-six-elements-who-what-where-when-why-and-how-the-rest-is-mere-commentary/>

Heilmeier's catechism

- What are you trying to do? Articulate your objectives using absolutely no jargon.
- How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
- What's new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
- Who cares? If you're successful, what difference will it make?
- What are the risks and the payoffs?
- How much will it cost?
- How long will it take?
- What are the midterm and final "exams" to check for success?



- Proposal Form (including budget)
- Researcher/team Track record with/without CV
- Research environment
- Background / Importance / Lit review
- Aims / Objectives / Hypothesis
- Programme and Methodology
- Management plan
- Pathways to Impact / Impact Plan
- Justification of Resources
- Data Management plan
- Work Plan(s)

Components of a proposal

Swiss National Science Foundation
Problem statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue Mainstream responses and existing research Research gap
Hypotheses and objectives
Theoretical and analytical framework
Methodology (including methods of data collection, data management plan)
Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathways to impact Links to the SDGs
Implementation
Lay summary
Acknowledgements
References

OWSD Scholarship
Problem / research question
Methodology and feasibility
Budget and required resources
Institutional collaborations
Linking with possible industry partners
Scientific excellence
Leadership skills
Research impact
Ethical, environmental and risk factors
Outreach and communications
Inclusiveness
Sustainability

National Institutes of Health (US)
Article metadata
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive summary Keywords
Research & Related Other Project Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Description Public Health Relevance Statement Facilities & Other Resources
Budget
Specific research plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific aims Research strategy Resource sharing plan
References

Funder	What they assess on
National Institute of Health (United States)	The review panel assesses each individual on the strength of the approach, significance, innovation, investigators, environment
Australian Research Council – discovery projects	Assesses applications based on – the strength of the investigators (35%), project quality and innovation (40%), feasibility (10%) and benefit of the project (15%)
Economic and Social Research Council (UK)	Prioritises research excellence, ability to deliver and value for money , but they also judge applications based on impact, innovation and interdisciplinarity .

Common threads: Impact, innovation, Value for money, significance

UKRI scoring matrix

Score Indicators	Score
Exceptional - Top international programme, or of exceptional national strategic importance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific quality and impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crucial scientific question or knowledge gap or area of strategic importance Original and innovative; novel methodology and design Potential for high health and/or socioeconomic impact Scientific leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent leadership (<i>track record, team, environment, and collaborators</i>) Justification of resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for high return on investment (<i>resources requested, likelihood of project delivery, anticipated knowledge generation</i>) Appropriate staff time allocated to deliver project (<i>Principal investigators and co-investigators</i>) Other: Ethical and/ or governance issues are fully considered 	6

<https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/peer-review/guidance-for-peer-reviewers/scoring-matrix/>

Many international funders are increasingly interested in:

- Impact and sustainability
- Significance and innovation
- Interdisciplinarity/transdisciplinarity
- Capacity building for international partners
- Value for money (VFM)
- Due diligence and safeguarding
- Whistleblowing
- Risk management



I've spoken to a few grant officers, and many young researchers just don't know how to answer these questions and sometimes even leave them blank. Make sure you take these sections seriously, and get help if you need it.

Research collaborations can fail (50-75% of inter-organizational collaborations fail*)

- Ensure commitment from all parties
- Be clear over roles and responsibilities (in writing)
- Ensure you share the same vision
- Be sensitive to different cultural norms
- Ensure the collaboration is equitable

Giving and Getting Value in Research Collaborations: 10 Tips for Making Meaningful Impact and Advancing Your Career Dr. Nadia A. Sam-Agudu

<https://theconversation.com/ten-rules-for-successful-research-collaboration-53826>

“Good ideas don’t always sell themselves: Tell me why it’s important, up front, in the background section, and I’ll be ready to roll. Tell me what’s known and what isn’t known and how [...] you’ll move the field forward or answer important questions. A lot of people really are unaware of how absolutely important it is to tell the reviewer from the beginning why it’s worth doing”
NIH CSR Insider's Guide to Peer Review for Applicants

Significance has many different definitions, but it generally refers to general/global importance, or relevance to the big issues in the field - for example in public health research it might be defined as:

the extent to which the research findings will be of great importance in the research area by substantially advancing knowledge, clinical and/or public health applications, policy development or change in the Field’ (NHMRC)

1. Is it a current issue of importance or controversy in the field? Is it broad enough to be of interest to a general audience? Will it lead to a step change?
2. Explaining a real problem or barrier that exists in your discipline, or the real world – what is already known about this topic?
3. What are the gaps in knowledge (what does the literature say?)
4. What are you or your team proposing to do about it? What is your innovative solution?

Innovative?	Y/ N
Use of a new theory or model	Yes
Collecting more data on an existing topic using existing models	No
Connecting your research with practical applications in industry	Depends
Novel application of an existing theory	Yes
Conducting research because you want to contribute more to the field	No
Borrowing an approach from a different field and applying it to research in your field	Yes
Focusing on popular or cutting edge topics and technologies such as AI, machine learning, big data, or crowd-sourcing	No
New and better approach to an existing topic	Yes
Conducting the research because little is known about this topic	No

It is also important to be realistic about innovation in your work. Inexperienced researchers are unlikely to produce work that shifts major paradigms early in their careers. It is more normal for both experienced and inexperienced researchers to use new approaches or models, work in new areas, or test innovative ideas rather than cause a paradigm shift.

- This work **is innovative because** it will analyse the microparticles in plasma of infant children in using a rigorous method that will lead to new methods in diagnosing...
- This project **will depart from the prevailing paradigm** of studying the quantity of species, **focusing instead on** understanding how biodiversity evolves over time due to human intervention...
- Our study has also **revealed a novel connection** between mitochondrial DNA mutation, premature aging and neurodegenerative diseases, which we will analyse further using...
- This mixed-methods approach, along with the cross-disciplinary expertise of the team assembled, **will be combined to examine for the first time** the connection between microfinance and...
- We **seek to shift current research paradigms** by analysing existing data using two different, but complementary methods...
- **The advantage of our method over existing models** is that it builds upon the interoperability of 'open data' systems, and so we can analyse metadata that has not been compared with...

Sometimes it's about being very clear with the words you are using – signpost exactly how you think your methods is innovative. Don't make the reviewer have to dig deep

- You may have already talked about the potential impact of your research when talking about significance
- When thinking of impact itself, try to think about the future results and outcomes of the project – this is an additional way of answering the ‘so what?’ question, but in a more practical way.



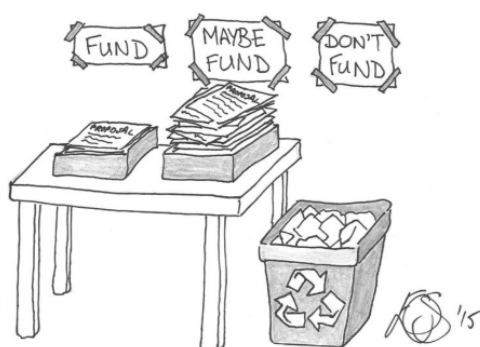
*1). goals, 2). beneficiaries
and 3). activities.*

Fast Track Impact – “Three simple things that will make the impact in your next funding proposal highly competitive”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2RaRUqp2PU&feature=youtu.be>

- How do you sustain the work beyond the funding period?
- Financial, organisational, or community sustainability
- Focus on sustaining outcomes and not necessarily the project.
- Describe how outputs will continue to be used beyond the funding period.
- Can the work continue through training and capacity-building?
- Sustainability needs to be part of the projects implementation – it's not an afterthought
- How can you leverage your collaborators, contacts or institutional links?

[we don't mean environmental sustainability]. Sometimes it can be difficult to demonstrate sustainability in research projects. And we could be looking at different types of sustainability depending on the proposal. For example, a new experimental drug, technique or tool that needs investment from the private sector; or embedding a training technique or pedagogy into a curriculum or larger training programme; or perhaps community sustainability - getting buy in from community and other stakeholders from the beginning of the project to ensure a practice continues].



Accept rejection and feedback. Even
'outstanding' applications get rejected

Try and remember that these are certain people's opinions and interpretations of a grant call that has also been set by people with certain opinions and preferences. The best thing to do is keep a good log of the grants you have not got funded. You can always re-use parts for other projects or turn them into other things. -- Louise Bezuidenhout, AuthorAID mentor

- Remember that even 'outstanding' proposals are rejected
- Review feedback (request feedback if none given)
- Can you resubmit? Make time for revisions.
- Learn from the successful applicants
- Look for other funders.

If reasons for the rejections are available, review them carefully. Reviewing the specific reasons for rejecting your proposal may give you some ideas for moving forward or maybe not even pursuing the idea again.

If a funder requires resubmission, do your homework prior to submission. Some proposals may require that you obtain preliminary data to strengthen it. If this is the case, resubmitting the same proposal without the preliminary data may be a big mistake. If you find that the team is not strong enough, you will have to consider other or additional partners.

Make sure that if you plan to resubmit you realise that you will probably have to rewrite a considerable portion of it to make it suitable for the specific call/funder.

Learn from those funded in the cycle that you applied. Some funders such as the Gates Foundation provide summaries of funded proposals. Reading the summaries may give you ideas for future grants. You could also consider contacting successful applicants to see if they would be willing to share tips or sample applications.

Sometimes, a funder may just not be a good fit for your idea. You will have to look elsewhere. However, ensure that you address key issues identified in the rejected proposal, if specific feedback is given about these.

Successful resubmission

2.1 Response to Review Comments

A previous version of this proposal was reviewed a year ago by the NSF Chemical Oceanography program and received generally positive reviews, with a final recommendation of “Very Good” from the panel. Although there were many positive comments, the most notable criticisms—which we have attempted to address in the present revised proposal—can be briefly summarized as:

- **Review 1 (VG):** “Few specific scientific hypotheses or questions have been posed . . . No plan has been proposed to involve undergraduate students in this work, or participate in outreach programs . . . With a combined budget of > \$700k, I would expect more effort to be made to engage with the broader community to build interest in the work.”
- **Review 2 (VG):** “While there is a great deal of information on the more technical aspects of the proposed work, there is much less attention devoted to the methods that will be used to analyze and validate the simulations. . . The main weakness of the proposal is the broader impacts section.”
- **Review 3 (VG/G):** “The proposal left me unclear as to which specific BGC questions or phenomena the investigators are ultimately interested in addressing. . . What is the current computational cost of running the BGC models in the LES framework? How much saving is necessary to make it viable for research? . . . What are the targeted scientific questions for application of the simulations? . . . Which tracers do you care about and why?”
- **Panel (VG):** “The proposal was too focused on the description of the methodology with the hypotheses solely focused on technical aspects of the approach. . . The connection between methodology and science application was too weak. . . PIs should include some external means of validating their modeling results. . . The broader impacts were relatively weak and could be enhanced.”

In response, we have made many changes—both small and large—to the proposal, most notably:

- We refocused the proposal on scientific, rather than methodological, aspects. Most notably, a

Successful NSF grant (2019) - *Resolving Large Eddy Simulations Using Reduced Biogeochemical Models*
(Hamlington, Lovenduski, Niemeyer)

Successful NSF grant (2019) - *Resolving Large Eddy Simulations Using Reduced Biogeochemical Models*
(Hamlington, Lovenduski, Niemeyer)

Any Questions?



Please be back at 16:45

Exercise: Constructing a winning proposal

In groups: Prepare a bullet point outline of a proposal to meet the requirements of your call. It should:

- List the main sections and show how long they will be (in pages)
- Have a few bullet points in each section outlining what will be in it.

Example: An outline for a proposal for an evaluation of a programme introducing blended learning into universities in Africa (12 pages max)

1. Introduction (1 page)

- Summary of the whole proposal

2. Our Understanding of the task (½ page)

- Summary of the requirements as in the terms of reference
- Comments and qualifications about the ToR
 - Our commitment in terms of scale and scope (given the small budget)
 - The impact of covid-19

3. Organisational profile (3 pages)

- INASP general experience with evaluations
- INASP approach to evaluations
- Examples of previous evaluations
- Description of the evaluation team (people/roles etc)

4. Technical proposal (5 pages)

- Clarification of the research questions (½ page)
- Introduction to the overarching methodology (1 page)
 - Description
 - Where it has been used before
 - Why it will be good for this evaluation
- The approach in detail (3½ pages)
 - Stages (inception, document review, new data collection, data aggregation & analysis)
 - Outputs (inception report, interim report, final report)
 - Involvement of other stakeholders (in new data collection, analysis and final workshop to generate recommendations)
 - Length, shape & style of the final report

5. Timeline (1 page)

- Gantt chart

6. Budget (1 page)

- Total budget by item (fees / reimbursables etc)
- Amount of effort for each stage / output

6. Further resources and feedback

- AuthorAID was launched to support researchers in developing countries, and has a community of over 20,000 researchers in 174+ countries
 - Free **online training** in research and proposal writing
 - Free **online mentoring** and collaboration
 - Free **resources and training materials**
 - Addressing **gender** inequities in higher education

www.authoraid.info



AuthorAID.info – **17,000 members from 174+ countries**

Moodle – MOOCs trained over 9000 researchers in 100+ developing countries

Mention CSIR

- **Research Writing in the Social Sciences** - 6th April 2020 to 19th May 2020 (6 weeks)
- **Grant Proposal Writing** – June 2020 to July 2020
- **Research Writing in the Sciences** - 8th September 2020 to 20th October 2020 (6 weeks)

These courses are entirely free for participants



On research impact

- [illegible]

Five insights from an academic writing coach – Chris Smith
LakelandCollege.com/courses/2017/17/18/16/counselor/creative-writings-from-an-academic/
 My Online Writing Lab http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/basics_of_writing/oweb.html
<http://www.researchbuddies.org/>
 On to avoiding "predatory" journals (using your critical thinking skills) by Andy Nobles
<http://www.eric.ed/fulltext/ED581111/>
<http://www.theblackboardjournal.org/>
 ↳ How to choose a journal that's right for your research!
<http://www.libraryoftheology.org/2016/06/01/avoid-predatory-journals/>

5 = 'How to choose a journal and write a cover letter'
http://dx.doi.org/10.4153/S0013-792X.0971_10
 on Access Journals (DOAJ) www.doaj.org
 Identifier <http://www.bioservnetics.org/>

g a Communication and Impact Strategy <https://www.researcherstrategies.com/communications-and-impact-strategy/>
Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die, Chip Heath and Dan Heath, 2006, <https://www.farnsworth.com/why-some-ideas-survive-and-others-die/>
Communication, A toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organizations, Inge Hovland, <https://www.researcherstrategies.com/communications-and-impact-strategy/>

ing an impact case study:
<https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/how/communicating-impact/impact-case-study>
 Evaluation findings: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/how/communicating-impact/evaluation-findings>
 KIs and graphics: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/how/communicating-impact/kis-and-graphics>
 n tools: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/how/communicating-impact/n-tools>
 Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning toolkit:

on getting research into policy
to Policy Engagement and Policy Influence <https://www.oak.oaktrust.org/view/How-to-get-research-into-policy>
to how to influence policy <https://www.oaktrust.org/view/How-to-get-research-into-policy>
ed Policy Making Toolkit <https://www.oaktrust.org/view/How-to-get-research-into-policy>
Building Capacity for Evidence Use: lessons from the SCURE programme
<https://www.oaktrust.org/view/How-to-get-research-into-policy>
For evidence use, but how exactly? <https://www.oaktrust.org/view/How-to-get-research-into-policy>

ing and evaluating policy influence: <https://www.odl.org/sites/odl.org.uk/files/odl-research-files/5551.pdf>

Monitoring and evaluation framework for a policy research project:
<https://www.odi.org/publications/13284-how-design-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-policy>
 Monitoring and evaluating policy influence: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-publication-files/13453.pdf>

[in 2008/01/11/every-proposal-needs-six-elements-who-what-where-when-why-and](#)

ip: Why and How?
hannahdunstall.org/essays/justify-stay-at-home-and-how/
 10 tips for writing a successful application (The Guardian)

1515) - How to write a grant proposal
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
 andbook (Based on a book by Gary Crowley and Janet O'Sullivan)
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
 Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals - Robert Porter
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
 (I Give Me the Money) University of North Carolina
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
 grant writing and book review (I Give Me the Money)
 is look for a research proposal - Sue Kim & Malcolm McLeod
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
<https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>
 Writing a Grant Proposal - The Basics - Wadsworth Writing Center (includes associated
 writing grant proposal) <https://www.medicaljournal.com/submit>

[in Case Studies](#)
[ref.aljazeera.net/](#)
[evid - Fast Track Impact website](#)
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326032363">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326032363](#)
[ng called 'Theory of Change 7 - USAID Learning Lab](#)
[research.org/en/topics/what-things-called-theory-change](#)
[@ Research database](#)
[ans/](#)
[gilit](#)
[Link to search/impact toolkit/](#)



Your Feedback

What have you
found most useful?

What can we
improve?



Exit cards



Keep in touch!



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