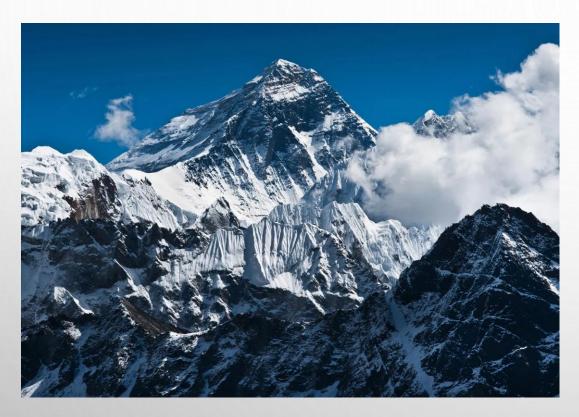# HOW TO WRITE A GOOD GRANT PROPOSAL: STRATEGIC PLAN, FUNDER'S INTERESTS AND KEY INDICATORS

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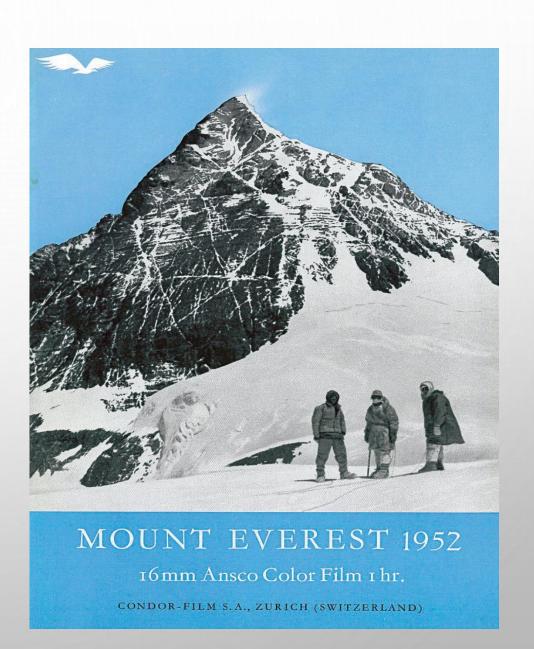
HOW BEGINNERS SEE GRANTS AT FIRST GLANCE
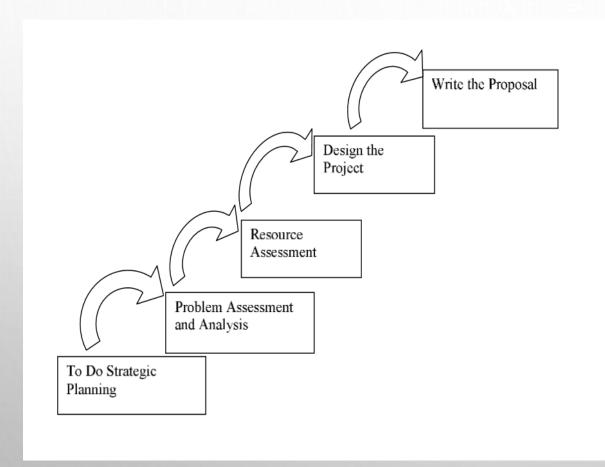
Only 5% - 15% of all proposals get funded

Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world

Will you attempt to climb this mountain?

Yes, you Can

MOUNT EVEREST 1952
16mm Ansco Color Film 1 hr.
CONDOR-FILM S.A., ZURICH (SWITZERLAND)

DEVELOP A PLAN BEFORE YOU START WRITING A GRANT PROPOSAL

What is Strategic Planning?

➢ **Strategic Planning is the process of determining what an organization or individual, intends to be in the future and how it will get there.**

➢ **Problem Individual intends to solve (Research is all about solving problems)**

➢ **Identify an important problem in your society, field of study**

➢ **How do you intend to achieve this? – How do you intend to solve this problem**

➢ **Design an action plan**

PROBLEM ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS
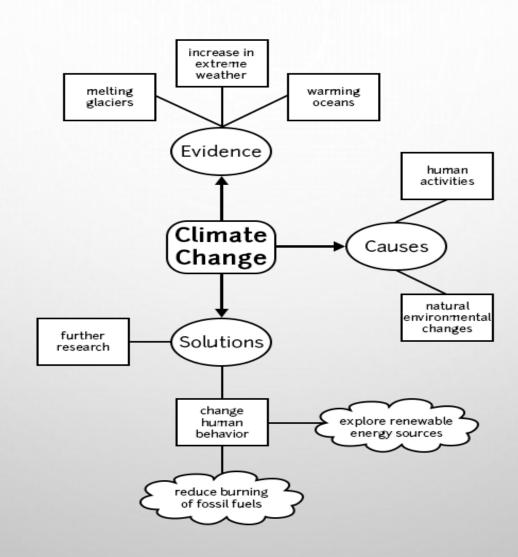
PROBLEM ASSESSMENT TOOLS:

➢ PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

➢ OBSERVATION

➢ MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

➢ QUESTIONNAIRES (PILOT STUDIES)

➢ STATISTIC DATA ANALYSIS

➢ DIFFERENT REPORTS

➢ FIELD WORK

➢ LITERATURE REVIEW

➢ LABORATORY WORK ETC

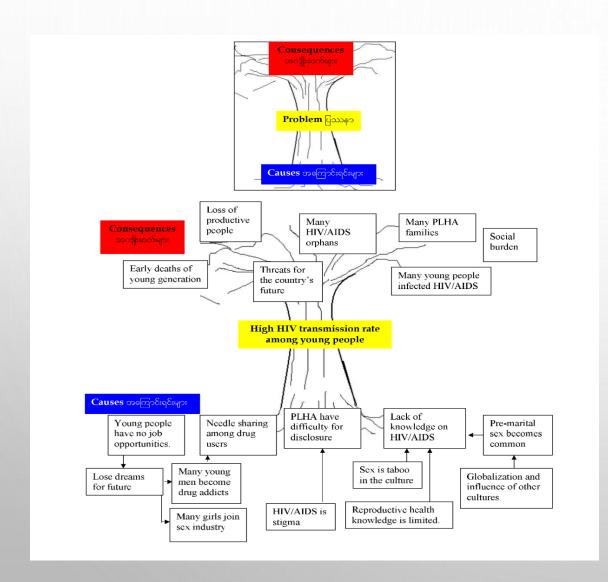**TOOLS FOR PROBLEM ANALYSIS**
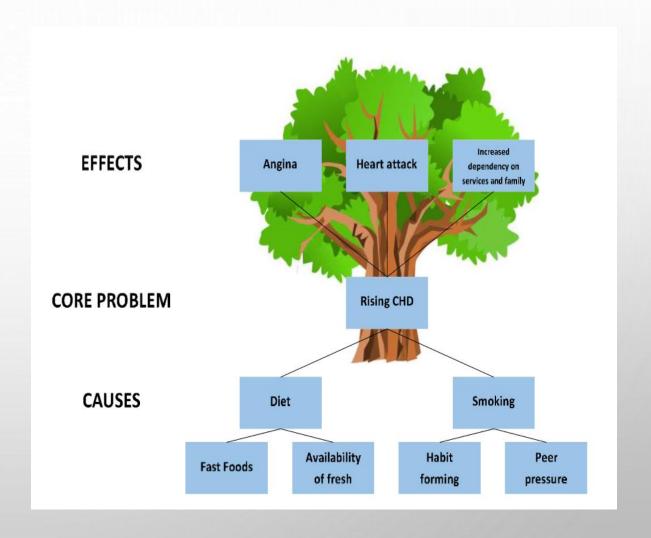
➢ CONCEPT MAPS

➢ PROBLEM TREES

CONCEPT MAPS

PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS

PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM IN YOUR FIELD OF STUDY

- CHOSE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OR MOST FEASIBLE PROBLEM TO ADRESS

- ASSESSING PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT (E.G. MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH).

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF THE PROBLEMS

- WHICH OF THE CAUSES ARE MORE IMPORTANT AND RELATES TO YOUR FIEALD OF STUDY

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROBLEM

- CHOSE THE MOST PERTINENT OF THE **CONSEQUENCES** THAT HAVE DIRECT IMPACT TO THE SOCIETY OR ENVIRONMENT OR LIMITING TO DEVELOPMENT AND ARE DIRELY LINKED TO THE **CAUSES**

- IMPEDES ADVANCEMENT OF YOUR DISCOVERY OR PRODUCT

- AFTER PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS, MAKE A CHOSE

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

HUMAN RESOURCES

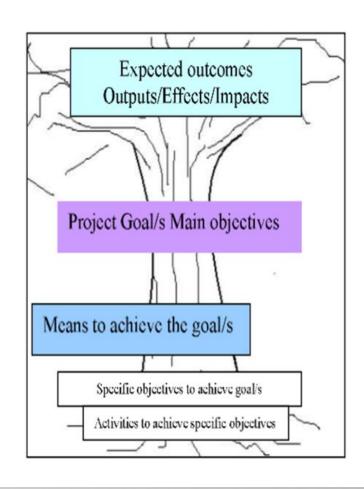➢ does the research require just an individual or a team

➢ If a team, who to include in the team

➢ If the research is multidisciplinary- the team must be diverse

➢ For example; assessment of covid-19 on the physical, biological and mental health of nigerians

➢ Team include: epidemiologist, biostatistician, psychologist, medical doctor, nurses, laboratory scientists, molecular biologist, virologist etc

➢ Are the individuals qualified with sufficient experience (where CV is important for past records)

MATERIAL RESOURCES (TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL)

➢ For scientific research, do we have laboratory and necessary equipment in place

➢ Research office or materials for field work

➢ Literature search sources available or needs to be purchased

➢ Storage office or facilities of materials?

➢ Stable sources of electricity and water

➢ Can some of these equipment or materials be provided by the identified grant?

DESIGN THE PROJECT

- **Lay a causal hypothesis**

➢ The causal hypothesis is a concise statement of the logic behind the project.

- **Setup your GOAL : aim and objectives**

➢ These are set of **inputs and activities (methods)** which will result to address the cause of the problem

- **Outputs (results) -** findings of the cause of the problem

- **Effects** - desired impact of the findings.

METHODS

- BRAINSTORM TO IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE DESIGN AND METHODS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM BASED ON YOUR OBJECTIVES

- OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE SMART:

- S – SPECIFIC

- M – MEASURABLE

- A – ACHIEVABLE

- R – REALISTIC

- T - TIMELY/TIME-BOUND

Steps
Brainstorming
1. Ask the participants:
   o What is goal?
   o What is objective?

Then write the meaning of SWOT on the flipchart:
S	–	Strengths
W	–	Weaknesses
O	–	Opportunities
T	–	Threats

OBJECTIVE TREE

OBJECTIVES

Reduction in patients reporting symptoms of

Decrease in prevalence of heart attacks

25% increase in people living independent lives

AIM

Reduce CHD

ACTIVITIES

Mass media campaign to promote healthy

Increase awareness of dangers of smoking via campaigns

Cooking classes

Fresh food delivery in poor areas

Nicotine replacement therapy

Peer education

RISK ASSESSMENT OF YOUR OBJECTIVES/METHODS

- **SWOT** WILL HELP AS A GUIDE TO SELECT THE APPROPRIATE METHODS

Then write the meaning of SWOT on the flipchart:

S – Strengths
W – Weaknesses
O – Opportunities
T – Threats

E.g.
Goal: to reduce HIV transmission rate among young population

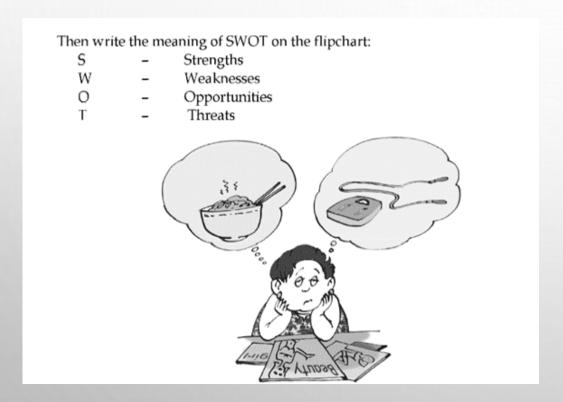| Internal forces	External forces
Good things (Strengths) ○ skilled trainers who can train peer educators well ○ staff who understand HIV/AIDS issues in targeted areas and vulnerable groups ○ good network to get needles and condoms with cheap prices ○ committed potential peer educators	Positive factors (Opportunities) ○ donors' interests ○ capacity building program of INGOs ○ other INGOs want to help the organization ○ HIV/AIDS gets attention from the government
Bad things (Weaknesses) ○ limited number of staff ○ lack of staff who can take a lead for counseling center ○ limited budget ○ not registered	Negative factors (Threats) ○ targeted groups go underground ○ other GONGOs are working on the same issue ○ new NGOs guidelines

COMPONENTS OF A GRANT PROPOSAL

➢ ABSTRACT OR SUMMARY

➢ BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

➢ PRELIMINARY DATA ON THE SUBJECT

➢ PLOBLEM STATEMENT/QUESTIONS/HYPOTHESIS

➢ SPECIFIC AIMS

➢ RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

➢ **PLAN OF ACTIVITIES**

➢ EXPECTED RESULTS

➢ BUDGET

➢ LITERATURE CITED

IS THE PROPOSAL ALONE SUFFICIENT TO WIN A GRANT?

ANSWER : **YES** OR **NO**

- So what other aspects are essential to change your story

➢ Grant funders requirements and interests are also important

- REMEMBER, ALL GRANT FUNDERS ARE PEOPLE WITH UNIQUE INTERESTS, PRIORITIES, PECULIARITIES AND RELATIVE DEGREES OF POWER OVER GRANT MAKING DECISIONS.

➢ Address founders specific questions to convience them you can **execute** the project and it will have **impact**
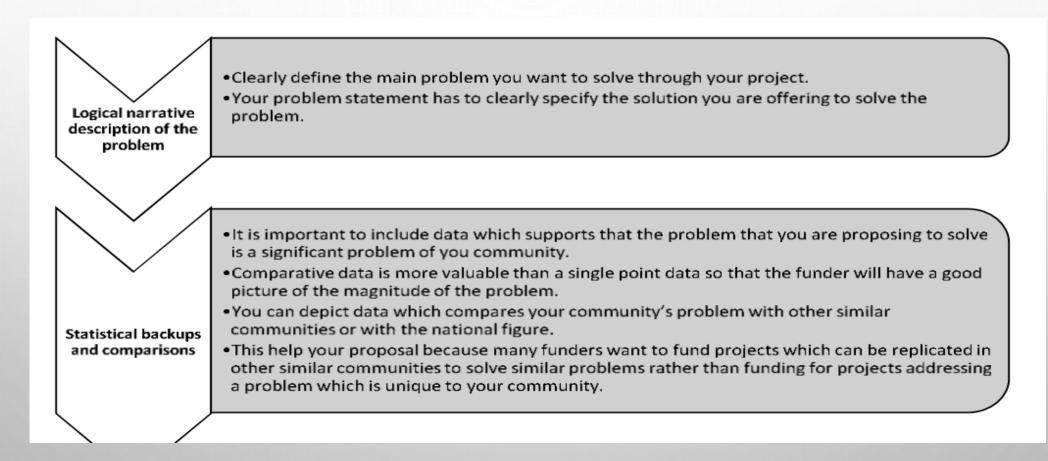
STANDARD OUTLINE FOR EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROJECTS

- SECTION 1: **EXCELLENCE** (proposal, novelty, gender, multidisciplinary, transfer of knowledge etc) – 50%

- SECTION 2: **IMPACT** (dissemination, communication, future career prospects) - 30%

- SECTION 3: **IMPLEMENTATION** (work plan, management structure, risk management, infrastructure) - 20%

SOME OF THE KEY ASPECTS/QUESTIONS GRANT FUNDERS WANTS YOU TO ADDRESS

- **A CLEAR PROBLEM STATEMENT**

- A problem statement describes the problem you are intending to solve by designing a project.

Logical narrative description of the problem
- Clearly define the main problem you want to solve through your project.
- Your problem statement has to clearly specify the solution you are offering to solve the problem.

Statistical backups and comparisons
- It is important to include data which supports that the problem that you are proposing to solve is a significant problem of you community.
- Comparative data is more valuable than a single point data so that the funder will have a good picture of the magnitude of the problem.
- You can depict data which compares your community's problem with other similar communities or with the national figure.
- This help your proposal because many funders want to fund projects which can be replicated in other similar communities to solve similar problems rather than funding for projects addressing a problem which is unique to your community.

Results of Local Needs Assessments

- It is good to include a study done by local group or your organization (if any) regarding the problem you want to address.
- This is important because it will show the grant maker that some degree of effort has been applied by your organization or another group to solve the problem which will ensure the sustainability of the program after the funding runs out which eventually will.

Historical Data

- Include any historical data which shows how the problem you are going to address has been created.
- This will clarify the problem and the reader can have a clearer image of the situation.

Statement of Impact of Problem

- It is important to include the impact of the problem if there is no intervention done to solve it.
- Conclude you problem statement by showing the impact of the problem.
- Describe what the social, medical, psychological or physical impact of the problem is if not solved timely.

NOVELTY/INNOVATION OF PROJECT

Tell us the innovation of the study: What is new about the project

➢ Is it a new research question no one has addressed (in your locality, region, country etc

➢ Is it the study design, what method or design is different from other studies,

➢ Are you using a unique statistical analysis tool,

➢ Is it a more sensitivetive method your are using to address the problem

➢ Is there a new technique to recruit participants or analyse samples,

➢ Is it going to lead to a new paradigm or theory

➢ Are you using or developing a new technology

DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS/OUTCOME OF PROJECT

Inform **some** funders on how you intend to make the findings/outcome of the project reach the target audience.

Diserminate

- Article publication, review article, chapter, books, conference proceedings, patents

- tv, radio, news page, social media platform (facebook, twitter etc), newspapers

Communication:

Conférences, workshop, seminars, stakeholders meetings,

Target audience:

students, policy markers, researchers or scientists, investers, industries, policy makers, the government etc

Duration of dissemination:

how long, periodical etc

BENEFITS (IMPACT) OF THE PROJECT

Funders want you how beneficial this project will be

• This has to be adressed from 2 perspectives:

The scientific benefit; that is contribution to the field of study

• Demonstrate the importance of the outcome (results) of the study

• Will it justify some theoritical positions that have been controversial?

• Contribute to new discovery

• Is it confirming or disputing a theoritical position or concept?

• Perspective of future studies

The societal benefit

• Capacity building of the researcher and future career prospects

• Future grants

• Implimentation of policity or useful to policity makers

• Attract investors

• Contribute to the development of the society

FUTURE FUNDING PLANS / PLANS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- Funding agencies often want to see a long-term plan for the self-sustainability of a project.

- Future career protects of the researcher

- Capacity building of staff or students with knowledge acquired from the grant

- who will benefit from the capacity building (staff, community, country)

- Demonstrate transfer of knowledged (tok) or exchange of knowledge –two way transfer

- Perspective for further study

- Acquire *new* grants or contracts for funding

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk

This aspect is to address some challenges you will phase during the study which may affect the study:

➢ Not enough participants are recruited by the end of the study

➢ Loss of participants due to follow up

➢ A member leaves the team

➢ participants exposure to chemicals or

➢ participants exposure to infectious organisms (occupational health and insurance)

➢ lost of samples due to transportation

➢ if there is risk, what is the mitigating measure put in place

➢ for all the risk you have to give a clear response on how to manage it

MAJOR ERRORS IN GRANT APPLICATION,

- One of the problem we face in winner grants, especially beginners

1. We identify grant call first before writing a proposal

➢ Have a plan and develop your proposal first before search for funders suit it

2. We do not respect founder's instruction

- Font size

- Margins

- Word counts

- Page limitations (every grant is different)

- Submission deadline etc

3. We start to prepare our proposals very late (very close to submission deadline)

FIVE KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SUBMITTING A GRANT PROPOSAL:

- Am I eligible?

- Do I have or can I create a project that stands out amongst others?

- Does my project align with the goals and priorities of the funder?

- Can I address all of the required elements of the proposal?

- Do I have the band-width to develop a proposal under the stated deadline?

- Can I execute the grant if I were awarded the funding?

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

How do you intend to manage or minimise cost but still be efficient to attain your study goal

This could be achieved by

- No administrative cost (office space, electricity, water, laboratory and/or stationaries) provide by the institution

- Key equipment available inlaboratory

- Biography sources available eg hinari, provest, pubmed, web of science already subscribed

- Proximity of institute to study site-minimal transportation cost

- No cost required to transport participants

PROSPECTING TAKE-AWAYS

"DON'T CHASE THE MONEY"

"DON'T FIT A SQUARE PEG INTO A ROUND HOLE"

"CONDUCT EFFECTIVE RESEARCH"

"BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH FUNDERS"