

GRANT CHALLENGES

WRITING BETTER FUNDING PROPOSALS

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DID YOU KNOW?

Only 15-25% of proposals are funded

Peer reviewers give different marks to the same proposal written in different formats

85% of grant reviewers feel they are not sufficiently trained

There is a relationship between highly ranked proposals and patents/citations/impact of the subsequent research



GOALS

Help you write better grants

Encourage you to submit more proposals

Inform you about ORS support



AGENDA

International funding at FTM

Request For Applications

Anatomy of a proposal

Tips & tricks

ORS Support

INTERNATIONAL FUNDING AT FTM

Setting the stage

FTM WANTS TO HELP YOU GET INTERNATIONAL FUNDING

Vision: Become a world leader in Tropical Medicine

- Research funding is a component in most ranking criteria
- Grant-funded research tends to have higher citation index
- KPIs include international funding proposals submitted

Resources:

- Specialised staff responsible for international funding support
- Training
- Post-production / Editing support

INTERNATIONAL FUNDING AT FTM

Applications submitted:

2013: 10

2014: 20

2015: 7 (14 by June)





FTM IS VERY ATTRACTIVE TO SPONSORS

Unique location

Regional education hub

Experienced researchers

First-class hospital, labs, and facilities

International network

Excellent track-record

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Exercise: Where do you look to find funding opportunities?

SOME INTERNATIONAL SPONSORS

TropMed Research Funding Blog

- <http://tropmed-ors-funding.blogspot.com/>

Grants.gov

Horizon 2020

Wellcome Trust

BBSRC

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Medical Research Council

APMEN

Medicines for Malaria Ventures



TYPES OF SPONSORS

Public

- Tax funded - proposals usually must have positive impact in their region

Private

- Priorities vary – understand the organization's goals

Know your sponsor!



REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Purpose

Every RFA is different

Eligibility

Understand purpose and
evaluation criteria

Funds

Follow instructions fully

How to apply

ORS will help with details

Evaluation criteria

Contact info

FIRST STEP: MAKE A PLAN

Gather information:

- Sponsor information (RFA, guidelines, deadlines,)
- Project particulars

Determine roles

- Who does what part of the proposal?
 - PI – Technical Proposal, Protocols, Abstract, Budget
 - Research Administrator – Coordinate, editing and assembly, budget, biosketch
 - Collaborative Research – Define roles/responsibilities, ensure all parties agree

Communicate with all involved

Agree on Deadlines!

ANATOMY OF A PROPOSAL

Abstract, Goals, Strategy,
Team, Compliance, Budget,
etc.

ANATOMY OF A GRANT PROPOSAL

Abstract

Goals/Scientific Strategy

Research team

Compliance

Budget



ABSTRACT

Statement of objectives + methods

Significance of your project

Unique features, expected results

Impact on other research areas

Non-primary reviewers will rely heavily on the abstract!

GOALS/SCIENTIFIC STRATEGY

Be realistic, specific, measurable

Make it easy to follow:

1. Give background
2. ID current knowledge
3. ID knowledge gaps (impact)
4. Propose your solution
5. Define goals





RESEARCH TEAM

Expertise

Seniority level

Facilities (of their institution)

Appropriate work contribution

Ensure all are on the same page

Letters of support from all key personnel/institutions

Consultants?

COMPLIANCE

Human Subjects



Vulnerable Populations

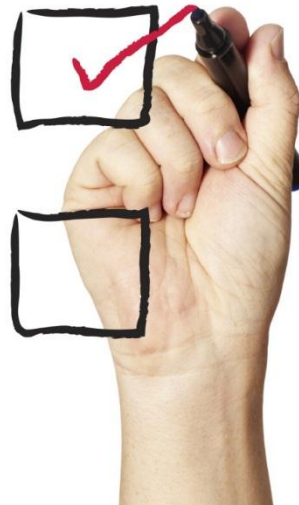


Animal Subjects

Conflict of Interest

Intellectual Property

Data Management



COMPLIANCE

Human Subjects

Vulnerable Populations

Animal Subjects

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Data Management



Voluntary informed consent

Minimization of risk

Qualified investigators

Appropriate research design

Freedom to withdraw

Fairness in participation

Privacy/confidentiality

Conflict of Interest

COMPLIANCE

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Animal Subjects

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Data Management



Children, women, refugees,
groups with different
language, or limited literacy

Informed consent may require
additional steps

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Proper care and proper treatment of animals

Use as few as necessary, and as 'simple' as necessary for the experiment

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When individual can influence a decision/policy/purchase where they might directly/indirectly receive financial benefits or improper advantage

Full disclosure is the main idea – usually it can be worked around

If present, individual can be removed from decision making, or 3rd party is included to ensure fairness

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Who owns IP if the project leads to patents/products?

PI / Institution / Sponsor?

Different grants have different policies, make sure you know what they say

Mahidol has IP office in Salaya

COMPLIANCE

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Data must be safe, and confidentiality ensured

Address this in the application as needed

Budget for cost of this

BUDGET

Complete

Adequate to cover scope of work

Within the Sponsor's norms

Consistent with the narrative of the project

Justified clearly

Follows institutional guidelines

Market-value bids with negotiation



ALLOWABLE COSTS

Eligible?

Reasonable?

- Is the expense necessary to fulfil the project goal?
- Is it normal for this type of expense to be charged on similar projects?

Assignable?

- Was the cost incurred solely for the advancement of the project?
- Can the expense be clearly identified with the project?
- Assigning inappropriate expenses is FRAUD

DIRECT COSTS

Personnel

- Based on Institutional Base Salary
- Effort level

Equipment

- Usually >\$5,000
- Must usually be used exclusively for this project
- Justify, and include quotes

DIRECT COSTS

Supplies/Materials

- Must be specific to project
- Personal computers, admin support, is usually not allowed (justify each item)

Travel

- Sponsor guidelines
- Justify

DIRECT COSTS

Subcontracts

- Scope of Work
- Budget
- Commitment to perform (with authorized signature)
- Should not be doing >50% of the work!

Consultants

- Justify contribution to the project/budget
- Include all costs incl. per diem
- Include their CV

DIRECT COSTS

Other Direct costs

- Communications
- Publications/knowledge dissemination activities
- Animal care/human subject costs
- Patient care
- Computing services
- Rental of facilities/equipment
- Patent costs
- Supplies

INDIRECT COSTS

Costs that cannot be identified specifically with a particular sponsored project

Some institutions have negotiated rates (Mahidol does not)

Sponsors tend to state the indirect cost rate in the RFA/terms and conditions

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Personnel

- Cost rates
- Escalation factor

Supplies

- Application to the Project

Travel

- Purpose
- Relation to project

Equipment

- Description
- Cost supported by quotes

Dissemination Costs

- Publications/Websites/Conference

Human Subjects

- Payment Structure/rate determination

Animal Care and Use

- Facilities/Care/Feeding

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Consultants

- Application to project

Subawards

- Application to project is discussed in proposal
- Cost and justification provided by each recipient

Patient Costs

- Rate Determination

Anything else included in the budget

BUDGETING KEY POINTS

Be realistic!

Reflect scope/goals of the project

Use real prices/quotes

The budget reflects your capability to lead the project

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Usually peer-review

Based on clear criteria:

- EU:
 - Science excellence
 - Impact
 - Implementation
- NIH:
 - Overall impact
 - Significance
 - Investigators
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Environment

Outcomes:

- Approved
- Approved with modification
- Rejected with comments
- Rejected no comments

Success rate: <25%

TIPS & TRICKS

Writing Better Funding
Proposals

FUNDING PROPOSALS ARE BUSINESS PROPOSALS

Do:

- Give background to the current state of our knowledge, and ID knowledge gaps
- Explain how your project addresses these
- Provide exciting/promising preliminary data
- Explain why you/your team are the best person(s) to address this
- Concise, Clear, Complete
- Make it easy to read: photos/figures – more freedom than in a scientific document

Don't:

- Go in to too much detail
- Try to do too much in one project
- Use hyperbole or rhetoric – stick to facts and support your claims

OTHER TIPS & TRICKS

Become a grant reviewer

- Sign up at EU horizon 2020 (Participant Portal > Expert Registration)
- Sign up at NIH (Early Career Reviewer Program, or Scientific Review Officer: crsvolunteer@mail.nih.gov)

Become a journal reviewer

Leave plenty of time to prepare

Get other people to read the proposal

Grow and use your professional network

Apply!

You are not alone

ORS SUPPORT

How we can help you
throughout the process

ORS SUPPORT

Pre-award:

- ID opportunities
- Proposal development
- Institutional documents
- Review proposal for compliance
- Submit Proposal
- Liaise with sponsor, faculty, PI, and collaborators

Post-Award

- Manage award
- Financial management/support
- Reports



CASE STUDY: NIH PROJECT

Pre-Award: (May-July 2014)

- Coordinated application
- Liaised with Collaborators in USA and Thailand
- Helped with budgeting, documentations, etc.

Just-in-time docs (January 2015)

- Ethics review
- Other compliance documents

Post-award (Feb 2015 ongoing)

- Work with PI to set up a financial reporting system
- Liaison between NIH and PI
- Ensure salaries and cash flow to project account
- Central contact point between the different sub-award organizations
- Central records

SUMMARY

How you write your proposal influences your chance of success

Make a plan, and know your sponsor

Allow plenty of time

You are in a unique institution and in a field with (relatively) much funding available

ORS offers support throughout the entire funding process

Questions?

THANK YOU!

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