

Writing a Grant Proposal – Part 1

Here you can learn how to:

- **improve the chances that a grant proposal will be successful.**

This information sheet is structured around questions that need answering when writing a grant proposal. Each funding agency or call for proposals will have different criteria, and the exact questions will differ. This information sheet is divided into two parts: Information Sheet 14 (this information sheet) and Information Sheet 14a (details below).

Background Information

Generally, funding agencies require the following information in a grant proposal:

- Abstract, title page, background (causes of problem), activities, goals and objectives, beneficiaries. Some of these details are covered here.
- Scheduling, budgeting, disseminating, monitoring, describing researchers and research organisation(s), appendices. Some of these details are covered in Information Sheet 14a). Further information may also be required.

Who are you writing for?

Before you write your proposal, you must know the funding agency and the call for proposals in detail. Your proposal must cater exactly for the needs of that agency and the call. Consider the funder's aims, clientele, and limitations, e.g., regarding costs and timing.

Tips:

- If possible, make personal contact with the funding organization or any agency representing it (telephoning is better than simply writing a mail).
- Ensure that you know the reviewing process and contact any other organizations that might be involved.
- Highlight key words in any relevant text and reuse them in your proposal, in particular in the abstract/executive summary.

What goes into the abstract?

Much the same as the abstract to a paper, a grant proposal abstract must supply the reviewer with the information needed to understand the basics of



what is going to be researched and why it should be funded – the importance of the work. The abstract is sometimes called an executive summary. Sometimes the both texts are required – the abstract for the reviewer, the executive summary for the funding agency/review board.

Tips :

- If there is no pre-defined structure for the abstract, the OCAR structure could be useful (see *Information Sheet 15: Giving a Paper a Narrative Structure*).
- If possible, end your abstract with the importance of your work both for the funding agency and for all beneficiaries.

What are you intending to research and why are you researching it?

Answering this question provides the text for much of the **background** to your research. You need to ensure that the potential funder knows the importance of the research for any direct beneficiaries and for a wider audience.

Tip:

- The ABT method of developing a narrative can be useful here (see *Information Sheet 15: Giving a Paper a Narrative Structure*).

How will you do the research?

Answering this question provides the text for your **activities** and the related targets – also known as **goals** (the broader aims) and **objectives** (the specific, measurable steps to achieve those goals). These activities and targets must be aligned with the benefits expected from your research.

Tip:

- Have realistic and measurable objectives with short- and long-term goals.

Who will benefit?

In answering this question, you must describe both specific **beneficiaries** (e.g., meteorologists) and the wider audience that may benefit (e.g., eventually, better forecasting for the general public) even if your research is only one step in achieving this goal.

Tip:

- Indicate that you have good contact to any direct beneficiaries and preferably how they have been involved in planning the proposal.