"Give me the money!" how to ask for research funding

Pre-conference workshop to the EUSPR annual meeting 2016

FACILITATORS: KIMBERLEY HILL & ANGELINA BROTHERHOOD

Introductions

- Briefly introduce yourself:
  - Name?
  - Where are you from?
- What are you hoping to get out of today?

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Overview of today

9.00 – 9.30	Welcome and Opening Words (30 mins)
9.30 – 10.15	**Funding: an Overview** (Introductory session: 45 mins)
10.15 – 10.30	Break (15 mins)
10.30 – 12.00	**Challenges of Seeking Funding** (Panel discussion: 90 mins)
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch (60 mins)
13.00 – 14.00	**Judging Applications** (Practical activity: 60 mins)
14.00 – 14.15	Coffee Break (15 mins)
14.15 – 14.45	Judging Applications cont. (Feedback from group discussions: 30 mins)
14.45 – 15.45	**Sitting on the Review Committee: an Insider's View** (Keynote: 60 mins)
15.45 – 16.00	Closing Session & Workshop Evaluation (15 mins)
16.00	**Close**

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Ground Rules

- Sharing personal experiences
  - Reflections
  - Proposal ideas
  - Funding plans
- Making the most out of today
  - Dialogue – *the more put in, the more get out*
  - Confidentiality – *everything stays in this room*
  - Integrity – *no stealing!*

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Funding: an overview

THE WHAT'S, WHERE'S AND HOW'S OF RESEARCH FUNDING

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This session

Three questions:

- **What** kind of funding?
- **Where** to look for funding?
- **How** to apply for funding?

- Just an overview!
- Career & funding structures vary by country!
- Not (just) a lecture – we want to hear about your views & experiences!

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What kind of funding?

… AT WHICH STAGE?

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From "Apprentice" to Independent Researcher ….

Researcher without PhD	During PhD	Post-Doc (0-3 yrs)	Post-Doc (2+ yrs)
Funded position			
	Stipend		
	Mobility grants & reintegration grants		
Research projects		Research projects	
			Specific grants to set up your own research group

From "Apprentice" to Independent R

"Scholarship", "Studentship", "Fellowship", "Project researcher", … terminology can be confusing

Researcher without PhD	During PhD	
Funded position		
	Stipend	
	Mobility grants & reintegration grants	
Research projects		Research projects
		Specific grants to set up your own research group

Example: Post-Doc (0-3 yrs)

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships

→http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/

- **What kind of funding:** Combines stipend, employment and mobility grant
- **Requirements:** Doctoral degree **or** 4+ years' full-time research experience (special eligibility conditions for those re-entering academia after a career break)
- **Duration:** Europe 1-2 years, Global 2-3 years; can also include secondment period of up to 3/6 months in another (non-academic) organisation in Europe
- **What it covers:** living, travel and **family costs** as well as host institution overheads
- **Host:** You choose your host institution (university, research centre or a company in Europe or globally) -> they receive the money & pay your salary/expenses
- **Deadline: Call closes usually once per year in September**
- **More information & advice:** Internet; National Contact Point

Especially for you!


Examples of funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships in prevention and related fields

11.5.2016

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Example: Post-Doc (2+ yrs)

ERC Starting grants (European Research Council)

→https://erc.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/funding-schemes/starting-grants

- **What kind of funding:** Combines stipend, employment and (optional) mobility
- **Requirements:** 2-7 years after completing PhD (min. 2 years work experience) & scientific track record showing "great promise" (e.g. **at least** one major publication as first author / without PhD supervisor)
- **Duration:** up to 5 years
- **What it covers:** equipment etc.; also your own **team members**!
- **Host:** You choose your host institution (public or private research organisation in EU or associated countries) -> "Host Commitment Letter" -> they receive the money & pay your salary/expenses
- **Deadline: Call once per year** (last deadline 18 October 2016)
- **More information & advice:** Internet; National Contact Point

Past grantees

ERC Starting Grant 2016
Submitted and selected proposals by domain

	Submitted Proposals	Selected Proposals
Life Sciences	869	99
Physical Sciences and Engineering	1288	146
Social Sciences and Humanities	778	80
Total	2935	325

Success rate ~ 11 %

- https://erc.europa.eu/document-library (accessed 19 October 2016)

A few aspects to consider

- How exactly do you expect this to **improve** your career prospects? Is it a 'career development' grant or a 'service provider' position?
- How much space will there be for **your own research ideas**?
- How well will you be **integrated** into the host institution?
- How much time will you be expected to spend on activities such as **teaching, committee work**, etc.?
- What additional **opportunities** will this offer (e.g. training, management experiences, international scope)?
- How **prestigious** is this award (but also: how **competitive**)? Do you meet the requirements (e.g. track record, contacts)?

A few aspects to consider (2)

- **What** can be funded (e.g. University fees, living allowance, salary, travel, training, equipment, additional staff, family allowances …)?
- Does it fit in with your own working style and your ideas regarding **work-life** balance?
- Does it fit in with your **long-term (career) plans**?
- What **security** does it offer (e.g. duration of contract; social security / health insurance)?
- Can you **resubmit** if your first submission is unsuccessful?
- …

Don't forget about

Awards & grants to fund (e.g.):

- Short-term fieldwork abroad
- Conference attendances
- Training courses
- Publishing costs (e.g. printing, editing, translation, open access)
- Other expenses (e.g. software, equipment, transcription, participant payment)

as well as Awards & grants for:

- Academic excellence
- Financial need

"**Start small**" – develop your grant-writing skills over time

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Where to look for funding?

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Funders at different levels

For example:

- European Union (MSCA; ERC; Erasmus, …)
- Scholarships etc. offered by institutions in other countries
- National research councils, ministries
- Charities, private organisations, companies
- Local government grants
- Universities, research institutes (e.g. PhD scholarships, small grants, 'seed' money, travel grants)

Help is also available at different levels

For example:

- Specialised websites
- Mailing lists
- Your peers (check funding statements)
- (Printed) Funding guides
- The funders themselves
- Seminars on funding
- Your funding office (individual counselling, seminars)
- Your colleagues
- Your current / prospective supervisor

Keep your eyes & ears open & don't be afraid to ASK!

Help is also available at different levels

Peers = the other people at this conference! Introduce yourself, talk to them!

- Mailing
- Your peers (check funding statements)
- (Printed) Funding guides
- The funders themselves
- Seminars on funding
- Your funding office (individual counselling, seminars)
- Your colleagues
- Your current / prospective supervisor

Keep your eyes & ears open & don't be afraid to ASK!

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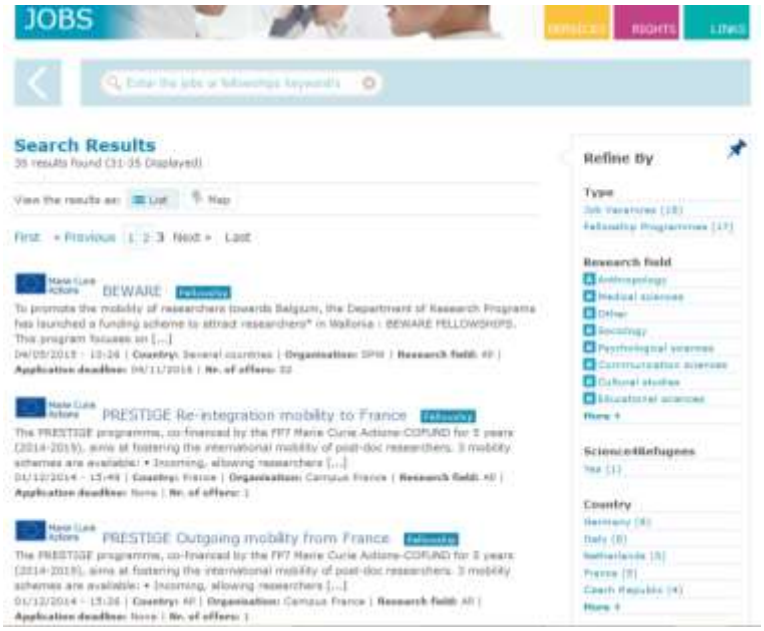
Examples of resources

- EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion: http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/
- KoWi - Information, advice, training on EU funding: www.kowi.de/en/
- Study funding and beyond:
  - European Funding Guide: http://www.european-funding-guide.eu/
  - PhD scholarships: www.findaphd.com (mostly UK but also others)
  - http://scholarship-positions.com (undergraduate -> post-doc; international)
- National databases
  - e.g. Germany: https://www.stipendienlotse.de, www.academics.de; Austria: www.grants.at; www.scholarships.at; USA: www.grants.gov
- Mailing lists specific to your University, discipline, topic
- Funding guides as booklets



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Examples of resources

- EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion: http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/
- KoWi - Information, advice, training on EU funding: www.kowi.de/en/
- Study funding and beyond:
  - European Funding Guide: http://www.european-funding-guide.eu/
  - PhD scholarships: www.findaphd.com (mostly UK but also others)
  - http://scholarship-positions.com (undergraduate -> post-doc; international)
- National databases
  - e.g. Germany: https://www.stipendienlotse.de, www.academics.de; Austria: www.grants.at; www.scholarships.at; USA: www.grants.gov

Your country?

- Mailing lists specific to your University, discipline, topic
  e.g. mailing list of the EUSPR Early Careers Forum ☺
- Funding guides as booklets

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How to apply for funding?

AFTER IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

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Applying for funding

- Sounds easy, right?
- Only about 20% are successful, expect to submit several times to succeed!
- Challenging:
  - Even if your idea could change the future of prevention
  - More than just a well-written proposal – most are

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What is being reviewed?

What do we think?

- Yourself?
  - Experience, competencies, qualifications, citations
  - Research location, facilities, resources
  - Credentials of collaborators (inter-disciplinary?)
- Your project?
  - Innovation, impact, outputs, deliverables
  - Well-defined, valid methods, logical aims
  - Fund-worthy, manageable, achievable within schedule

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When should we start?

Hands up! Why?

2 weeks before deadline	1 month before deadline	2 months before deadline
3-4 months before deadline	6-8 months before deadline	1+ year before deadline

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When should we start?

- Earlier the better: never enough time!
- Min 3-4 months of dedicated effort
- First proposal takes longest, but practices and procedures often differ
- Writing takes days, but thinking about writing takes much, much longer
- Ideas need time to mature

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The Grant Application

- Read and follow instructions (!)
- Familiarise: formats and length
  - Applications from 1-30 pages (any longer?)
- Typically:
  - Proposal (with strategic subheadings)
  - Schedule
  - Budget (separate - not today) and resources
  - Personal information

Some tips

- Don't aim for a perfect draft – designs/ methods (etc.) change throughout
- Grant proposals are drafts to guide research, not scripts to dictate it!
- But remember: spelling/ grammatical errors distract viewers from important content
- Write it and put it away, come back with fresh eyes to spot errors

The Research Proposal

- Consider:
  - What do we need to know? Why is it important?
  - How answered? What can be done with the answers?
- Do not overcomplicate: terminology/ methods, clear and concise writing style
- Convince the reader: front-load with important information then justify, repeat key messages

Who should be involved?

What do we think?

Do not work alone:

- Experienced researchers or supervisors review and feedback on all aspects of application
- Friends/ family: 'lay explanation' and 'selling yourself'
- University or organisation financial administrators help budget reasonable financial costs
- Often signed off by a senior official – give notice!

Reviewer Feedback?

Anyone happy to share past experiences of grant reviewer feedback?

- Reviewers are (usually) your friends!
- Respond to feedback (if received), revisions strengthen proposal and likelihood of future funding
- Odd meticulous reviewer leads to clearer justification of ideas – why didn't they get it??
- Can educate reviewers – support points with published work
- Ask for feedback if none received

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Key Points

- Showcase yourself and your project
- Start early: don't expect a perfect draft straight away
- Emphasise project significance and feasibility
- Use clarity and concision to convince the reader
- Adhere to instructions and format
- Seek review and feedback from colleagues
- Be persistent!

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References & further reading

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Starting points

- What are your experiences of applying for funding? (i.e. challenges/ successes)
- What is the next type of funding you would apply for?
- How do you feel about applying?

10 MINUTES, IN GROUPS

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Challenges and lessons learnt

PANEL DISCUSSION

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Question Cards

- Workshop participants each have a card
- As panellists provide opening statements, please **all** write down 1-2 questions on your card
- Think about specific challenges that you have faced and what you would like to know
- Questions will be posed to the panel

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Panel Members

Name	Affiliation
Boris Chapoton	Project Manager, Hygée Center for Cancer Prevention, France
Prof Rosaria Galanti	Adjunct Professor in Epidemiology, Karolinska Institute, Sweden
Dr Jeremy Segrott	Lecturer in Public Health, Cardiff University, UK
Prof Marie-Hélène Véronneau	Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Canada

- Brief opening statement on grant experience (5-10mins)
- Issues identified by workshop participants (cards, Q&A)

Early-career pre-conference funding workshop

7th EUSPR Conference and Members'Meeting

30th of October, Berlin, Germany

Challenges of seeking funding: lessons learnt

Boris Chapoton

Contact :
boris.chapoton@icloire.fr

icln INSTITUT de CANCEROLOGIE de la LOIRE LUCIEN NEUWIRTH

hygée centre régional de prévention des cancers

Funding in a non-academic organisation

What is the difference with an academic organisation?

- Both have a similar content…
  - Attention to the request itself,
  - Link with public priorities,
  - Realistic, …
- Is it in the request funding we are applying for?

hygée

Funding in a non-academic organisation

Where to apply?

Dedicated organisation linked to a specific subject

- Regional Cluster in Oncology "CLARA"
- French National Cancer Institute "INCa"
- French Association against cancer "La Ligue"
- "Arc" foundation for the research against Cancer

General or Specific public health organisation

- French Public Health Research Institute "GIS-IReSP"
- Regional Health Agency (ARS)
- Specific foundations (against tobacco, alcohol,…)

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Funding in a non-academic organisation

Stronger competition

- Why?
  - Insist on the results expected
- How?
  - The way results will be produced
- Then?
  - Insists on the future
  - What's going to happen next

- Want to be reassured

➢ Need of **collaboration**
  - Experiences
  - Multidisciplinary perspective
  - Inter-sector partnership (private, academic, non-academic, associations, …)

– Challenging within a European context –

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Thank you for your attention!

hygée

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Karolinska Institutet

Prevention research in a Medical University: who cares?

Maria Rosaria Galanti, MD, PhD
Adjunct Professor in Epidemiology
Dept. of Public Health Sciences, Karolinska Institutet

Karolinska Institutet

Keywords

Cutting edge research

Excellence

Bibliometry

Discovery

High Impact Factor

Karolinska Institutet

Typology of funding agency (%) in 50 studies recently published in four KI departments

Departments	External grants (private, for profit or not)	External grants (statal agencies)	Institutional/ Public Authority funding
Public Health Sciences	31.5	26.0	42.4
Medicine	39.8	27.6	32.7
Molecular Medicine and Surgery	31.3	33.7	34.9
Laboratory Medicine	25.3	36.1	38.6

Karolinska Institutet

The Macchiarini's case

- Deviation from institutional rules for recruitment
  - Self-promoted reputation/carisma
- Unclear borders between health care and research
  - Cutting edge surgery or unwarranted human experiments?
- Ethical scrutiny avoided
- Close and devote group

Karolinska Institutet

My keywords translation for prevention research

Cutting edge research =high translation potential+ sound methodology

Excellence= good research environment, open, progressive, humble

Bibliometry= Revised criteria

Discovery= Innovation

High Impact Factor= Weights for #authors and discipline

Success factors for (early career's) applications

External factors

- Potential for media attention
- Endorsement of authority
- Relevance of the problem in the population

Research-specific factors

- Research group's/supervisor's trustability and competence
- Innovation
- Feasibility
- Translational potential
- Developmental potential

In a nutshell

- Follow your heart: propose something out of the schemes, with potential for development
- Write as if you already done the study (you just lack the results)
- A pilot study to show feasibility is always precious
- Put forward your excellent network
- Do not waste time to show you are good. Show how you want to progress if you get the grant

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DR JEREMY SEGROTT

LECTURER IN PUBLIC HEALTH, CARDIFF UNIVERSITY, UK

Panel session: Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Marie-Hélène Véronneau
Associate professor, Psychology
Université du Québec à Montréal

UQÀM Faculté des sciences humaines

Brief bio

- 1998-2001
  - Undergraduate degree (B.A.)
  - McGill University (Montreal, Canada)
- 2001-2007
  - Master's (M.Sc.) and doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees
  - Université de Montréal (Canada)
- 2007-2011
  - Postdoctoral fellow
  - University of Oregon (U.S.A.)
- 2011-now
  - Assistant / Associate professor
  - Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada)

[redacted]

Experiences applying for funding

Student / Postdoc

- University entrance fellowship
- Fellowships for graduate students and postdoc
  - Provincial and federal fellowships
- Small grant applications
  - National Institutes of Health
  - W. T. Grant Foundation

Faculty

- Early-career
  - Internal grant
  - External grant for new researchers
  - Junior career award
- Moving into mid-career
  - Competing with senior scientists
  - Grant reviewer
  - Student fellowship committee

[redacted]

Lessons learnt

- You learn by doing it
  - Regardless of the outcome: valuable experience
    - New connections
    - Application asks for more at every level
- Have a Plan B if rejected
  - More than one application on similar topic
  - Know where to resubmit (same agency or not)
- What to improve?
  - Critical look at your own work
  - Reviewers' feedback

International grant applications

- First look at options in your own country
- Grant from another country
  - Some residency requirement
  - Partnering with local co-applicants may help
  - Some grants can be moved to another institution
    - Bureaucratic
    - Little experience from staff managing international grants

[redacted]

Do's and Don't's

Do! ☺

- "Just pretend" if necessary
- Learn about success rate
- A bad plan is better than no plan
- Use available services
  - Office of research
  - Internal review committee
- Use informal network
  - Other faculty
  - Congrats your peers … and ask for their application
  - Be ready to share yours
- Make internal attributions for successes (you deserved it!)

Don't! ☹

- Think you cannot get it
- Overlook formatting
- Write as if everyone knows about your topic
- Procrastinate
- Make internal or stable attributions for failures
- Dismiss the learning experience

[redacted]

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Judging applications

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

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Three real applications

Proposal A – Diffusion of novel psychoactive substances (NPS)

- Application to an internal funding scheme for a PhD scholarship
- Career level: Senior researcher / PhD

Proposal B – Sedentary behaviour in leisure time and at the workplace

- Application for an Individual Fellowship (IF) under the MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS of Horizon 2020
- Career level: Post-Doc

Proposal C – Family-based interventions to address alcohol misuse and prevent cancer in later life

- First-stage application to a national funding body interested in cancer prevention
- Career level: 3-8 years post-PhD

Please remember ethical ground rules!

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Take your pick!

Suggested allocation:

Proposal A – Diffusion of novel psychoactive substances (NPS)
- If you are planning to undertake or supervise PhD studies

Proposal B – Sedentary behaviour in leisure time and at the workplace
- If you are currently doing a PhD or recently completed your PhD

Proposal C – Family-based interventions to address alcohol misuse and prevent cancer in later life
- If you are 2+ years post-PhD

Form groups of 3-4 people

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Your task (before the break)

1. **Read the proposal** (ca. 25 min)
   - Make some notes about potential strengths and weaknesses
   - Use your 'gut feeling'
2. **Discuss the proposal as a group** (ca. 15 min)
   - Compare notes
   - Identify strengths and weaknesses (green & orange cards)
   - Refer to the proposed criteria
3. **Agree on a recommendation** (ca. 5 min)
   - Should it be funded or not??
   - Agree on a spokesperson

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Your task (after the break)

4. **First group: summarise the proposal & your discussions** to the entire group (max. 5 min)
   - What project was proposed?
   - Strengths and weaknesses?
   - Your recommendation
5. **Second group: add your own comments**
   - Strengths and weaknesses?
   - Your recommendation

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Proposed criteria

- Will the project **advance** the scientific field? Is it innovative?
- Does it clearly aim to **benefit** target populations?
- Is the proposed **methodology** sound?
- Does it address potential **ethical** problems?
- Is there a strategy in place to ensure **dissemination** of results?
- Is the **resource allocation** (e.g. time) realistic?
- Is the **applicant** sufficiently qualified and skilled?
- Can the **supervisor/host institution** offer the necessary support?

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Feedback from the groups: What the groups liked

- Clear presentation (e.g. tables, work packages)
- Policy/practice relevance; potential for informing policy/practice
- Applying an existing theory/concept/approach to a new area
- Credible and relevant dissemination plan
- Career development aims and strategies of the applicant clearly outlined
- Impressive track record (e.g. previous research, publications, presentations, involvement in scientific community) – applicant seems qualified and skilled, confidence that will deliver results
- Team members, supervisors, host institution have relevant expertise, it is credible that they will support the applicant and ensure high quality of the research and its end products
- Low risk (feasible, well planned-out timeline, risk management strategies, monitoring procedures)
- Collaboration with external experts
- Links up with the specific requirements of this grant scheme

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Feedback from the groups: What the groups questioned

- Unclear focus (proposing several different things that are not connected, essential for each other)
- Methods section lacking or vague -> feasibility unclear (this can be partially compensated for by at least outlining different options/approaches that could be taken)
- Unclear how differs from previous work by the applicant or other prior studies (what is new?)
- Not ambitious enough, does not seem to offer good value for money
- Too ambitious (doubts about whether it can be achieved)
- No mention of team members, unclear what support will be available
- Doubts if it meets the specific requirements of this particular grant scheme (think about who the funders want to give this money to and why?)

What the actual reviewers thought…

Proposal A – Diffusion of novel psychoactive substances (NPS)

- Application to an internal funding scheme for a PhD scholarship
- Career level: Senior researcher / PhD

Decision:

- Successfully funded
- No narrative feedback provided as part of this funding scheme

What the actual reviewers thought…

Proposal B – Sedentary behaviour in leisure time and at the workplace

- Application for an Individual Fellowship (IF) under the MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS of Horizon 2020
- Career level: Post-Doc

Decision:

- Still under review … !
- Decision expected in December 2016 or early 2017 – we'll let you know

What the actual reviewers thought…

Proposal C – Family-based interventions to address alcohol misuse and prevent cancer in later life

- First-stage application to a national funding body interested in cancer prevention
- Career level: 3-8 years post-PhD

Decision:

- Not funded
- Narrative feedback provided

What the actual reviewers thought…

Proposal C – Family-based interventions to address alcohol misuse and prevent cancer in later life

"The Committee considered that your research proposal **lacked detail**, which rendered it **difficult to determine the value** of the proposed work. It was **not clear** to the Committee what the proposed work entailed, for example, **what would the inventions to be piloted consist of**, and **how they would address** alcohol-specific and broader dimensions of parenting."

"The Committee also expressed concern that **cancer prevention did not appear to be the focus** of the application."

"… the Committee considered that candidates invited to progress further had submitted **a stronger combination of research proposal and track record**."

(emphasis added)

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Sitting on the review committee

AN INSIDER'S VIEW

CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEECH

An insider's view of the grant review process

Workshop: "Give me the money!": how to ask for research funding
EUSPR – 2016, Berlin, Germany

Zila M Sanchez, PhD
Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology
Department of Preventive Medicine
Universidade Federal de São Paulo

Who Am I? And Why I'm here?

- I´ve been reviewing scientific grants for the past 3,5 years in Brazil -
- Some of the most important Brazilian Scientific Research Agencies: FAPESP (the "wealthier") = Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa no Estado de São Paulo (São Paulo State Research Foundation)
- CNPq (federal level) = Conselho Nacional De Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento (National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development) – National Level (prioritize poor regions)
- And several State level Research Foundations (5 states)
- Working as reviewer (first stage) and board (second stage) in the area of drug abuse (observational and experimental epidemiology and qualitative studies - "prevention studies")
- Also PI for 6 research grants in the past 4 years (plus fellowships for MSc, PhD and Post doctoral training, bursaries to travel for conferences and grant for conference organization)

What are we going to talk about?

- What does the review process look like on the inside?
- How do reviewers make decisions?
- What distinguishes better from worse applicants?
- What is evaluated by the reviewer? And by the review panel board?

Getting funded isn't a lottery!

- Doing GOOD SCIENCE is a **necessary** condition to receiving any grant from ANYONE.
- But it is **not sufficient.**
- Getting a grant is not a game:
- It is a skill, just like writing a good paper or giving a good talk.

Review panel categories.

POINTS THAT WILL BE EVALUATED

1) PROJECT
- FEASIBILITY, QUALITY AND TIMESCALE

2) MANAGEMENT
- PERSONNEL & OTHER RESOURCES

3) BUDGET
- JUSTIFICATION
- LIMITS

Review criteria include

Significance. Does the study address an important problem?

Approach. Are the methods appropriate to the aims of the project?

Innovation. Does the project employ novel concepts or methods?

Investigator. Is the investigator well trained to do the work?

Environment . Does the environment contribute to success?

Usually there are two rounds of review

Study Sections

- Scientists/Professors from universities and research institutes. Determine the scientific **MERIT** of applications. YES X NO. Usually more than 1 – decide alone.

Advisory Councils

- Scientists/professors from universities and research institutes, as well as other experts, approve the study section reviews and recommend to the institute director which applications to fund. **RANKING** = YES.
- They seat together and discuss.
- THEY HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN VERY GOOD APLICATIONS.

You have to play by the rules

Eligibility requirements

The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include: objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the PI's project; and relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, to work in progress by the PI under other support and to work in progress elsewhere.

The Project Description should outline the general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provide a clear description of experimental methods and procedures and plans for preservation, documentation, and sharing of data, samples, physical collections, curriculum materials and other related research and education products. It must describe as an integral part of the narrative, the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activities, addressing one or more of the following as appropriate for the project: how the project will integrate research and education by advancing discovery and understanding while at the same time promoting teaching, training, and learning; ways in which the proposed activity will broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.); how the project will enhance the infrastructure for research and/or education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships; how the results of the project will be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding; and potential benefits of the proposed activity to society at large. Examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts are available electronically on the NSF Website[20].

The Scientific Project: What will be considered by the reviewers?

- Technical merit
- Creativity and Innovation
- Potential benefits to society
- Grant reviewers want to fund projects that are feasible.
- *** quality of writing and format details***

- Back up what you propose to do with what you've already done: A funded proposal must describe **work that doesn't yet exist**, but at the same time, **the reviewer must be convinced you can do it**. EVEN FOR EARLY CAREERS INVESTIGATORS.
- Show enthusiasm for your work: **if you don't love it, neither will the reviewers**

Readability is important

- A typical reviewer (on a panel) is reading a lot of similar grants in a short amount of time
  - Make his/her life easier!
  - Highlight key points
  - Repeat things you want them to be sure of
  - Use figures/graphs where they can help make an obscure point understandable

The insider's view

Team

- How well qualified is the proposer (PI)
- How well qualified is the team to conduct the project?

Do not simply say "See resume."

Highlight the expertise of all key personnel

Who are you (team)? Why should we give you the money?

- This is where you demonstrate that you are the right person to do this project.
- Convince the funding agency the you are capable of accomplishing what you say you can accomplish
- Include experience you have had managing other projects
- Weak qualifications or inexperience in some cases can be compensated for by adding appropriate consultants. Include why you need consultants and how you chose them.
- If you don't identify a person, summarize the job description or qualifications required and how you will find that person
- Indicate responsibilities of all, and level of effort.

Choose the right collaborators: Who are they?

- Experts that bring to the project something you do not have – and will really help you.
- Collaborators who are researchers and have written papers in the field
- Collaborators who get the work done and are easy to work with
- Ask your mentor or other senior investigators about potential collaborators

ALWAYS IMPORTANT – BUT ESSENTIAL FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

If you have a gap, fill it with an expert

- You might have some great ideas, but you need to show you have the capacity to get the research done.
- Shore up any weak areas with a collaborator.
- If you do not have experience in a technique you are proposing to do or if your background is weak in a critical area of your grant, find someone to collaborate with you.
- Have that person write a letter of support indicating what role they will provide for your research.

Present on your CV and team CV

Publications in the area of the proposal or related areas.

Evidence of relevant training or certification.

Submitted papers, conference presentations in the area – if is the case.

Early career

Institution's qualifications

- Why should the award be made to your institution?
- The institution will help you with the information in this section (or not)?
- Highlight institution's capabilities.
- Facilities, support, library, computer, lab, etc.

Budgets

- A smaller grant is ALWAYS easier to get than larger.
- START SMALL!!!
- Be rational and honest: 1) You need it? 2) DON'T INFLATE THE NUMBERS.
- Read the call – can all the itens be funded?
- Don't ask for more than you can realistically spend
  - On the first grant don't ask for the most expensive options for the itens you need:
  - For example: computer, statistic software (for example – SAS), etc
  - If you are paying researchers, use the mean $ per hour (investigate how much your colleagues are paying for research assistants, consultants, statistician, etc)
  - Budget per year: Years don't have to be equal

If You Need the Money, Ask for It

- Many grants put a limit on the amount of money you can request. And it is tempting to write your grant to fit this budget. But you don't **have** to do this.
- Unless otherwise indicated, you can request money to buy a special piece of expensive equipment or to hire an specialized team for a large data collection – but use the usual values. Do not estimate more than you really need.
- If your merit score is high enough to be funded, then your budget will be looked at more closely. At this point you can work through any budget issues.
- Reviewers may ask you to reduce your budget, or only give you half of the money, but your grant will still be funded.

ANOTHER ISSUE: BE VISIBLE

- Too many young scientists avoid "time wasting" things like program committees, editorial boards, workshop/symposium organization, outside talks, media interviews etc.

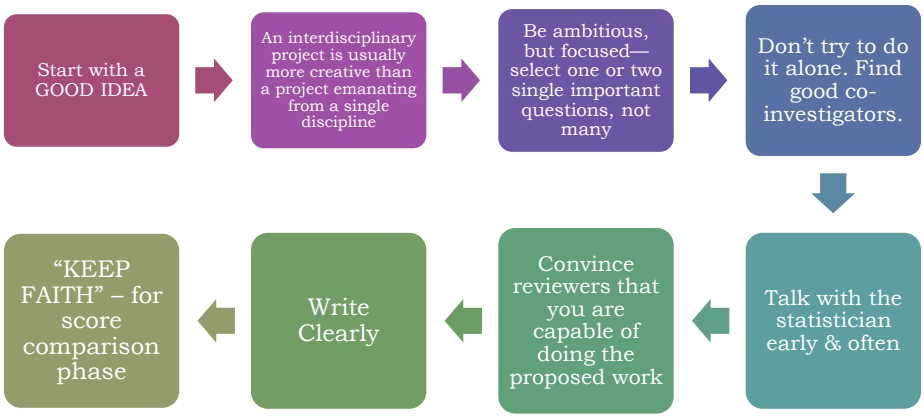
Save some of your time for these!

- name recognition is important
- a reputation as someone who "gets things done" looks great on a review form

COMMON MISTAKE: Don't Give Reviewers an Easy Reason to Dismiss You

- Reviewers read a large number of grants for each session. Then, they are required to write a review and assign a preliminary score for a subset of them (often 3–5 grants).
- These scores are used to determine which grants are actually discussed during the review session (the majority are not discussed).
- You can think of it as a triage system—only those that seem like high priority get the attention.
- You don't want to give your grant reviewer an easy out—make it hard for them to dismiss your grant.
- Check, double check, your spelling and grammar—sloppy writing is an immediate turn off
- Check the math on your budget; make sure you didn't add an extra 0 by mistake
- Avoid grandiose plans that can't be accomplished

Summary

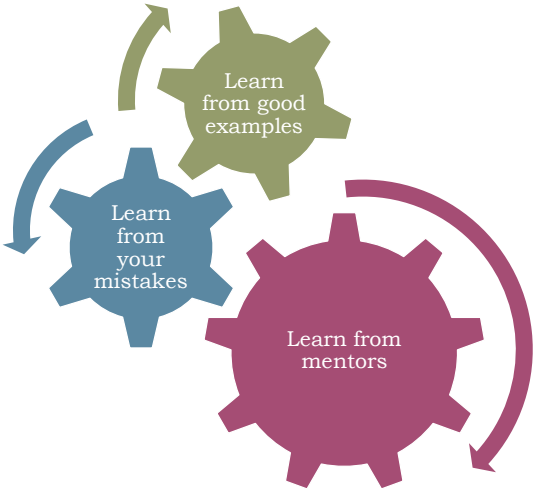


Other aspects

- Who are the reviewers? And the review panel board? How are they selected?
- How decisions are made (limit of budget? Only merit?) – depends on the call for proposals, agency, etc.

Publication and number of grants counts a lot for the review board

There is no magic on writing a good grant, it is a skill that can be learned



Some extra points

- Experimental epidemiology such as a RCT – sometimes takes more time than the grant can cover (2 years grant) – problem on prevention studies.
- Think about the institution where you are in – try to be in one of the best.
- Start small – experience on managing money counts – don´t forget to explain what you have previously done.
- In Brazil, the reviewer continues to review the project advances during the grant duration (review the annual reports)
- Read 3 times the grant call – don´t be reject because you missed the "small words"

And if at first you don't succeed

Consider revising key aspects by incorporating reviewers feedback and TRY AGAIN!

GOOD LUCK!

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EU SPR
Early Careers Forum

Close & workshop evaluation

EU SPR
Early Careers Forum

Key points from workshop evaluation forms

- 9 evaluation forms submitted; 7/9 participants were very satisfied
- What did participants learn/gain?
  - Important tips; learning from other people's experiences; confirmed that they were "on track"
  - Aspects to consider in career planning
  - Motivation to apply for research funding
  - Procedures are similar across countries – don't be afraid to apply abroad
- Participants particularly enjoyed:
  - Practical activity of judging applications (6/9); Presentation by Prof Zila M Sanchez (5/9); Panel discussion (4/9)
- Suggestions for improvement
  - Less general overview, more talking about own experiences
  - Attendees should come with prepared questions
  - Printed copies of presentation to facilitate note-taking
  - Suggestions for future workshops: continue and deepen this topic; multi-level analysis using statistical software

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Thank you for attending

ANY QUESTIONS?