

GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

ERASMUS+ FRAME

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www.helsinki.fi/languageservices

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- To demystify the grant application & funding process
- To develop a framework for grant-writing success and improving one's odds of accessing funding

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

- Selecting and submitting to ***appropriate*** donors
- Understanding ***grant applications*** and their components
- Developing and demonstrating an appropriate ***scholarly track record***
- Drafting and developing ***fundable*** proposals

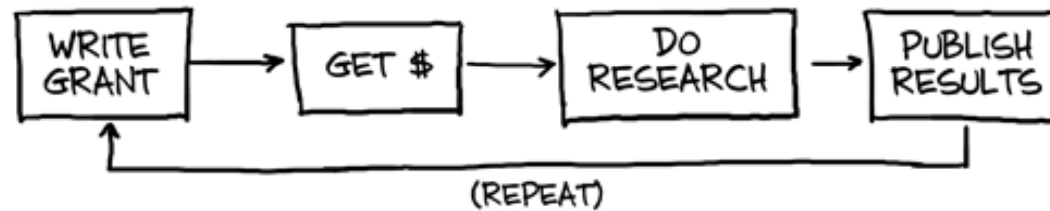


Introduction

GRANT-WRITING HUMOUR

THE GRANT CYCLE

HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK:



HOW IT REALLY WORKS:



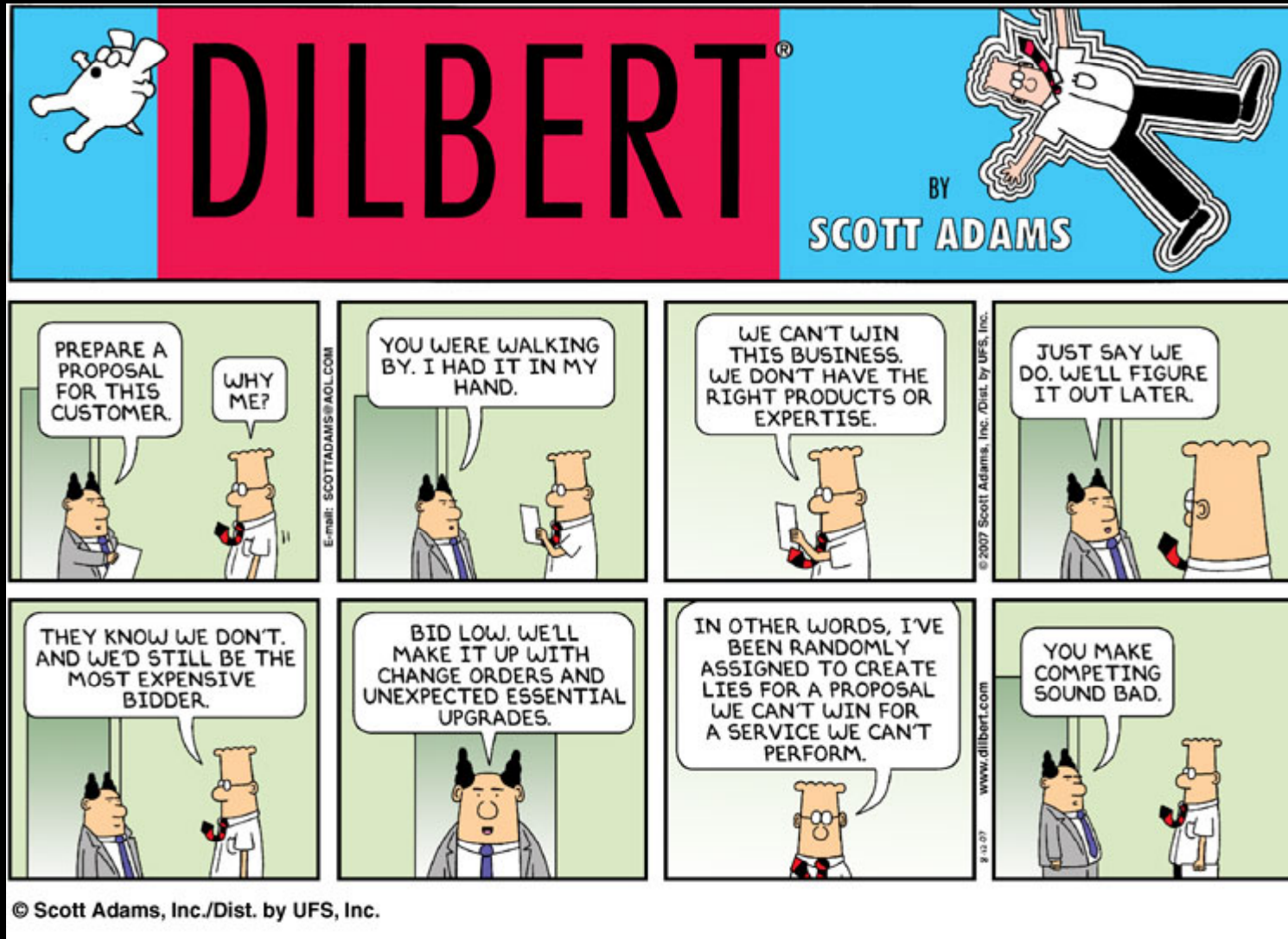
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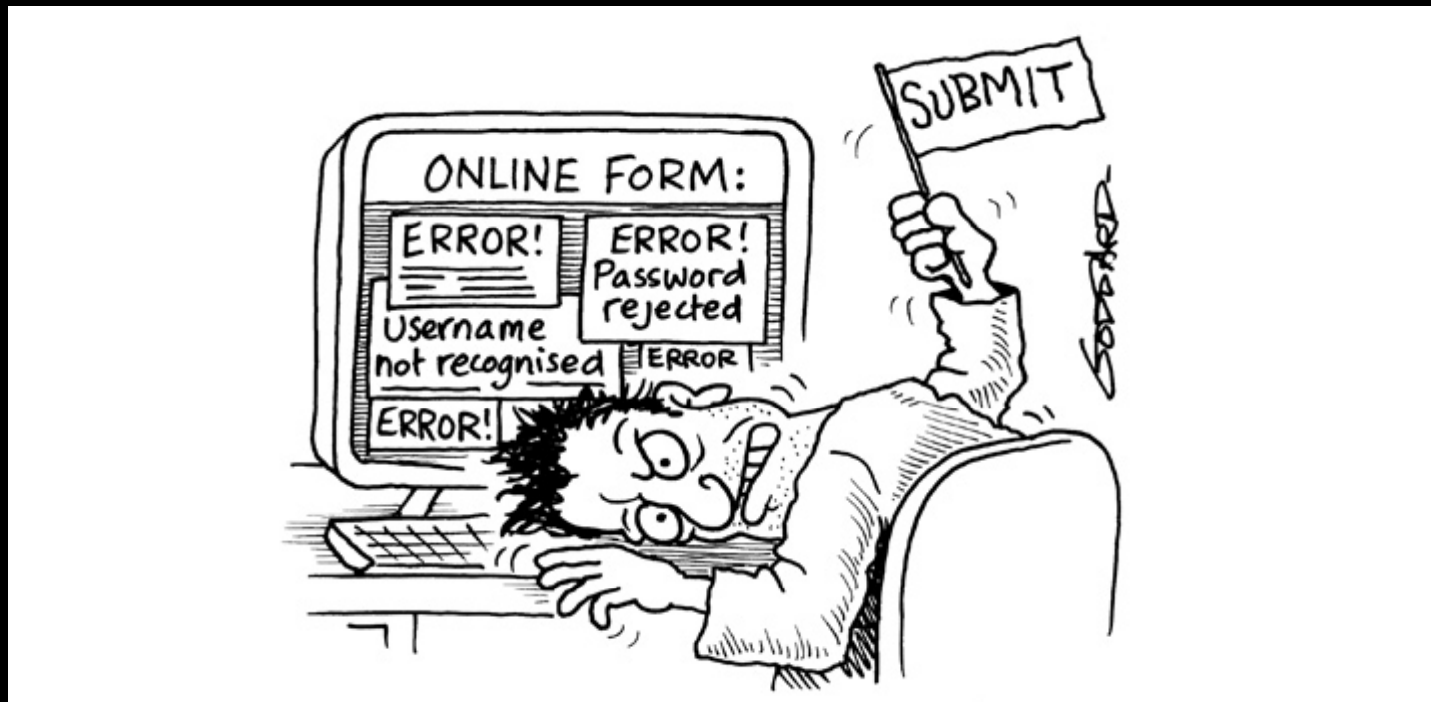
GRANT-WRITING HUMOUR



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GRANT-WRITING HUMOUR



SECTION I: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Getting started
- Relevant schemes and donors
 - Practical considerations

FINDING FUNDERS: WHAT TYPE OF DONOR?

- Thousands of donors and funding agencies
 - Public vs private sector agencies
- Know the topic / specific focus to target **appropriate** funding agencies
 - Research vs programmatic vs core funding
 - Institutional (e.g., university- or department-specific)
 - Municipal (city and/or regional service providers)
 - National (e.g., governmental, national-level agencies, research councils, academies of sciences, etc.)
 - International (e.g., European Commission, European Research Council, Fulbright, etc.)

FINDING FUNDERS: WHAT DO YOU NEED FUNDS FOR?

- Studentships and bursaries
- Travel or conference grants for dissemination or collaboration
- Small grants for research-related travel, assistance or modest expenses
- Collaboration to support interaction between 2+ countries
- Project funding
 - Full project costs on a topic specified by the applicant
 - Full project costs on a topic specified by the funding agency
- Fellowships
- Conference, seminar or network funding

FINDING FUNDERS: WHAT DO YOU NEED FUNDS FOR?, CONT.

- Large programme grants (3- to 5-year projects)
- Interdisciplinary research grants, managed programmes or network funding
- Knowledge transfer schemes and industrial partnerships
- Research funding for practitioners, artists or clinicians to develop their academic research potential

FINDING FUNDERS: WHAT TYPE OF GRANTS DO YOU NEED?

- **Elite research grants**

- Fellowship format
- Full-time researcher
- Discretionary funds for research & travel and full-cost project funding
- Awarded based on your talent, previous achievements and potential as well as your proposal

- **Full-cost project or programme grants**

- Peer reviewed
- Comprehensive funding including some overhead
- Very competitive, rank highly for academic prestige
- Winning = successful researcher and valuable scholar

FINDING FUNDERS: WHAT TYPE OF GRANTS DO YOU NEED?, CONT.

- **Partial-cost research grants**
 - Incidental or partial funding
 - Conference attendance
 - Collecting pilot data
 - Used to produce publication to advance careers
 - Lower prestige, but may help to improve your standing for future applications
- **Commissioned research contracts (tender bids)**
 - Public sector or industry-specific
 - Government / private-sector tender bids
 - Different set of criteria:
 - Outputs result in a social or economic benefit (impact)
 - Research outputs should be lucrative

FINDING FUNDERS: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Do you or your project meet the **eligibility requirements**
 - What are the requirements?
 - Do you match **all** of them?
 - Do you need to?
- Is there a **cap** or **lower limit** to the amount of funding available?
- Are your costs (budget items) **eligible** for funding
 - E.g., staff costs, administrative costs, consultants, research assistants, etc.
 - Overhead expenses
- Are there requirements for **matching** funds or **institutional commitments**?

FINDING FUNDERS: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, CONT.

- **Deadlines & timelines**

- Can you put together a **solid** proposal in the time you have?
- Does the application include much **additional / supplemental material**?

- **Bureaucratic demands** of the application process

- For a particular application?
- For a particular donor?
- What does this mean in terms of **additional work**?

FINDING FUNDERS: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, CONT.

- **Success rates**

- How *competitive* is a particular funding agency?
- Most are **<20%**, some even lower

Example:

ERASMUS+ programme (two calls, 2020)

Total applications received	4430
Total projects contracted	1201
Proportion funded	~27%

FINDING FUNDERS: WHY PROPOSALS FAIL?

- Deadline not met
- Topic was not appropriate to funding agency
- Guidelines / application form was not followed
 - Proposal content, format and/or length did not meet requirements
- Nothing new / innovative proposed (e.g., research question, study design or method)
- Proposed area of study was not a priority for funder
- Unclear proposal
- Incomplete description of the proposal / study

FINDING FUNDERS: WHY PROPOSALS FAIL?

- Incomplete / inadequate review of literature
- Insufficiently demonstrated capacity of applicants / investigators
- Inappropriate method for the proposed study
- Unrealistic / unjustified budget
- Excessive budget vis-à-vis the potential benefit
- Partisan position on issues (e.g., bias) from investigators
- Poorly written
- Unreasonable number of mechanical defects reflecting carelessness and inattention to detail

FINDING FUNDERS: WHY PROPOSALS FAIL?

- ***The donor's perspective***
 - Insufficient funds to accept every application
 - Request falls outside the funder's interests
 - Applicant didn't follow application guidelines

If you don't qualify, don't apply.

FINDING FUNDERS: THE FUNDING HIT LIST

TARGETING APPROPRIATE DONORS & PLANNING FOR RFPs

THE FUNDING HIT LIST

- List **any funding you received** and the agency granting it for your current projects
 - Which are external to your university or department
- List any agencies that fund the **principal activity** upon which your current project is based
- List any agencies funding **your supervisor**
 - Which are external to your supervisor's university or department

THE FUNDING HIT LIST, CONT.

- List up to **5 close collaborators** & research mentors
 - Current country of residence & citizenship
 - List any external funding they receive
 - Indicate the geographic location of the funding agencies
- List the funding agencies **for research you cite** or refer to in your own work
 - Pick up to 5 pieces you consider most important
 - Look at the most recently published works first
- List any **conference presentations** you found interesting and the funding they received

THE FUNDING HIT LIST, CONT.

- List the **national research councils** which fund research in your discipline
- List any **national or international learned societies** or charities that fund your area of research

If you cannot fill in most of this information, re-think your research topic and consider re-focusing your topic.


You may also need to consider broadening the scope and/or adopting a collaborative approach.

RESOURCES

Template Funding Hit List

Funding Opportunities / Databases

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



Log in

With your university account

Aalborg University ▼

Log in

With your *Research Professional account

Username:

Password:

Remember me ☒

Log in

[Forgot password?](#)

[Trouble logging in?](#)



SECTION II: FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH

FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH

- Research aims
- Research questions
- Research hypotheses
- Aims & objectives

FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH, CONT.

■ *What's the difference?*

■ **Research aims**

- Indicates the overall purpose of your study
 - Main goal
 - Formulated on a more general, introductory level
 - Typically followed by research objectives
 - Indicates a change from pre-project to post-project outcomes
-
- Example:

To improve our understanding of the relationship between exposure to UV light and skin cancer

To reduce the incidence of skin cancer due to exposure to UV light

FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH, CONT.

■ *What's the difference?*

■ **Research objectives**

- Active statement about how the study answers a specific research question
 - Often include outcome measures
 - Primary, secondary level objectives
 - How will you achieve your aim?
-
- Example:

To determine the effect of exposure to UV light on the incidence of skin cancer

To develop guidelines to prevent skin cancer associated with UV light exposure

FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH, CONT.

■ *What's the difference?*

■ **Research questions**

- Use a single question around which you focus your study
- Defines what you hope to learn
- Guides & structures data and analysis, and depends on your approach
- FINER criteria:

Feasible

Interesting

Novel

Ethical

Relevant

Example:

Is UV light exposure related to skin cancer?

FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH, CONT.

■ *What's the difference?*

■ **Research hypothesis**

- Driven by research question
- Developed from research question
- Reasonable guess / educated conjecture
- Relationships you test through analysis
- Guides research → collect the right kinds of data / analyses
- Example:
If skin cancer is related to UV light, then individuals with a higher exposure to UV light will exhibit higher frequencies of skin cancer.

RESEARCH AIM VS RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

■ Aims:

- Overall purpose of the study
- Broad statements of desired outcomes
- What you hope to accomplish (not how)
- Clear link between project and bigger theoretical / practical question(s)

■ Objectives:

- Specific research actions
- Define the structure of the research project
- Clear link to the aims and outcomes

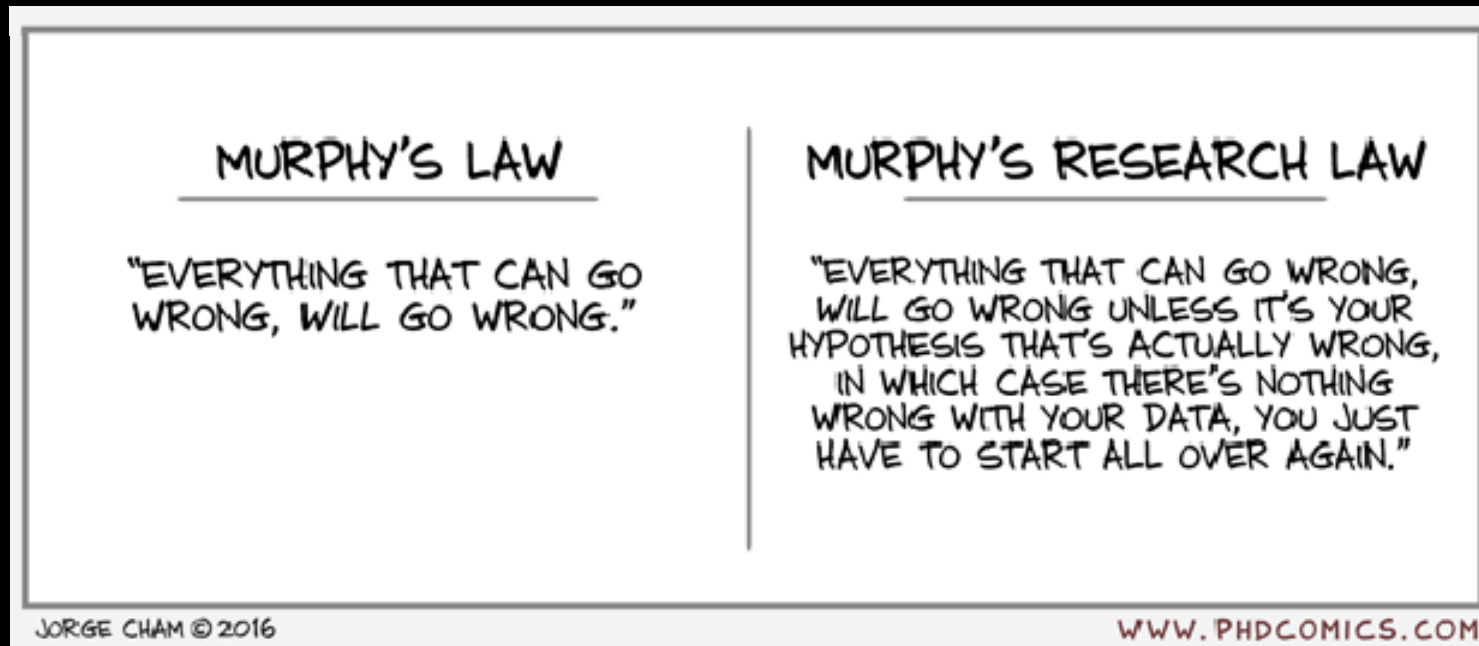
SECTION II: GETTING STARTED

GETTING STARTED

- Knowing your motives
- So what and who cares?
- Drafting your generic template

GETTING STARTED: KNOWING YOUR MOTIVES

WHY ARE YOU APPLYING FOR FUNDING?



GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

DRAFTING YOUR APPLICATIONS

- Saying what needs to be said (the generic template)
 - Application building blocks

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

- Draft text to **adapt and use** for multiple applications
- Create and replicate **high-quality** research proposals efficiently
- Start with your **aims / objectives**:
- Text supports the following **4 propositions**:
 - **Importance** → proposal asks/addresses an **important question**
 - **Success** → project is likely to **answer this question**
 - **Value** → likely gain is **worth the investment**
 - **Competence** → **applicant and team** are **competent** to complete the project

This is all you need to say!!!

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 1: Getting your foot in the door (20%)**

- No slow build up, but **powerful beginning**
 - First sentence is crucial (typically your **research aim**)
- Supports the **importance** & **success** propositions
- Objectives:
 - **Excite** readers about the project
 - Provide a **preview** of the finer details to come
- Three stages:
 - Grab readers attention & orient
 - Establish importance
 - Preview the project → encourage more in-depth read

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 1:** Getting your foot in the door (**cont.**)

■ Corresponds to, e.g.,:

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| - Summary | Project Outline | Abstract |
|-----------|-----------------|----------|

■ Content & evidence should include:

- Primary research question / hypothesis
- Importance of your research question
- 3–5 things we ‘need to know’
- Preview of project structure and principal resources
- Summary of outcomes

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 2:** We have a problem (30%)

- Provide evidence for this problem, scholar and project
- Supports the *importance, success & competence* propositions
- Objectives:
 - **Problem** needs solving
 - Demonstrate that you have the **skills** & **experience** to solve it
 - This is the **best way** to solve it

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 2:** We have a problem (30%)

■ Three stages:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| - Why this problem? | → | be realistic, provide evidence |
| - Why you? | → | self-citation & knowledge of field |
| - Why this project? | → | linked elements / phases |

■ Corresponds to:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| - Introduction | Rationale |
| - Research Questions | Aims & Objectives |
| - Track Record | CV |

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 2:** We have a problem (**cont.**)

■ Content & evidence:

- Restate the main research question
- Provide evidence as follows:
 - Why the problem needs solving
 - Why you have the skills
 - Why the project offers the best solution
- Include 3–5 sub-questions that support the primary research question
 - Why each needs to be answered
 - Methods & approach to address each sub-question
 - How these methods & approach will succeed

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 3:** This project is the solution (**50%**)

■ Explain your project & its outputs

- Full project description
- How you will communicate the results / knowledge

■ Supports the **success**, **competence** & **value** propositions

■ Objectives:

- Overall research design & methods
- The 'how' for each individual component
- Timing / duration of each component and project management
- What will you do with knowledge produced

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 3:** This project is the solution (**cont.**)

■ Stages:

- Overall research design & methods
- Specific components
 - Research sub-question (what you need to know)
 - When activity takes place & for how long
 - Who, where and which resources for each activity
 - Detailed description for each sub-question activity
 - What the activity tells & how you process the information from it
- Plans for dissemination

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 3:** This project is the solution (**cont.**)

■ Corresponds to:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| - Plan of Investigation | Research Activity | Study Design |
| - | | |
| - Dissemination | Beneficiaries | Impact |
| | Public Engagement | |
| - Budget | Justification of Costs | |
| - Project Management / Timetable | | Ethics |
| | Technical Annex | |

GETTING STARTED: DRAFTING A GENERIC TEMPLATE

■ **Section 3:** This project is the solution (**cont.**)

■ Content & evidence:

- Restate the main research question
- Summarise the overall approach & methods
- Describe each activity component for each sub-question:
 - Methods & conduct
 - Timing
 - All project / institutional resources
- Describe the timetable
- Project management arrangements
- Other funding agency requirements (public engagement / ethics)
- Information on project outputs

GETTING STARTED: BUILDING BLOCKS – DRAFT STAGE 1

Core elements

- Research question / hypotheses
- Plan of study
- Dissemination
 - Academic
 - Non-academic
- Budget

Format

- What you're attempting to answer
- Supplement with short list of hypotheses or sub-questions for each phase or study component
- Main section of your proposal
- Detailed account of methods and analysis
- Communicating your findings
 - Journal articles, conference presentations, etc
 - Who else will you involve (user groups, public, etc.)
- All associated costs (application-specific)

GETTING STARTED: BUILDING BLOCKS – DRAFT STAGE 2

Core elements

- Background / literature review

- CV

- Ethics / compliance

Format

- Concise introduction to your topic

- Provide evidence that the question is important

- Introduce your sub-questions / phases, etc.

- Tailored to the application

- Relevant achievements for each member

- Defend your corner

- Evidence demonstrating compliance with accepted standards

- Human subjects?

- Safety regulations / guidelines?

GETTING STARTED: BUILDING BLOCKS – DRAFT STAGE 3

Core elements

- Abstract / Summary / Introduction
- Objectives
- Budget justification
- Bibliography
- Project timetable
- Appendices

Format

- Write last
- Write exceptionally well
- Bullet points of expected achievements
- Summary of why each resource is necessary
- Works cited in the proposal
- Graph, table or GANTT chart of project time line
- Technical / legal requirements
- Attachments

GETTING STARTED: SMART FORMULATIONS

Additional considerations



■ Be **SMART**

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-bound

GETTING STARTED: SAMPLE TIMELINES

Basic Project Timeline



Legend

Activity Example

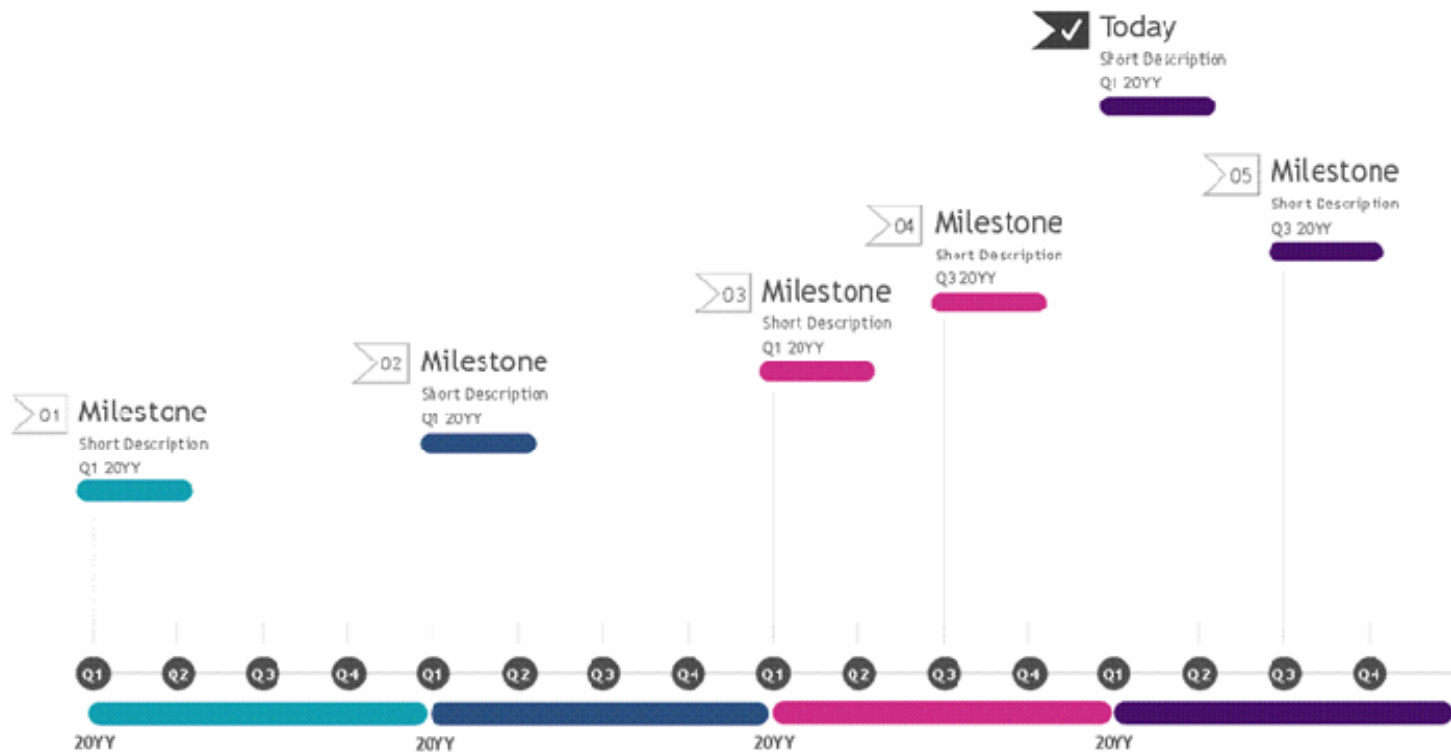
SAMPLE TIMELINES

Insert your title here ● ● ● ● ●



SAMPLE TIMELINES

Product Roadmap



TIMELINE RESOURCES

<https://templates.office.com/en-us/Timelines>

<https://creately.com/blog/diagrams/timeline-templates-online/>

<https://www.officetimeline.com/timeline-template/project-timeline-download>

<https://www.edrawsoft.com/timeline-templates.html>

<https://www.template.net/editable/timelines>

<https://www.freetemplatedownloads.net/timeline-templates.html>

<https://www.freecreatives.com/design/timeline-template.html>



FOR NEXT TIME....

- *Questions?*
 - Volunteer CVs to review?
 - Volunteer sample proposals?

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