Pacific Islands Workshop on
Grant Proposals Development – DAY 2

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Qualities of Effective Grant Writing

- Quality of the idea and its appeal to the funding source
- The ability to communicate clearly and concisely
The Process

A good idea
A good institutional fit
Assemble a team
Match the idea to a sponsor
Read the Guidelines
Read them again

• Contact the sponsor
• Plan in detail
• Develop the budget from the detailed plan
• Read the guidelines again with narrative in mind
• Be persistent - revise and resubmit
More Questions to Ask

• Does the funding agency share your goals?
• Is the funding agency interested in the same populations?
• Has the funding agency funded projects similar to yours?
• Have they made awards to institutions similar to ours?
• Does the agency require matching?
• When will the award be made?
You have to Play by the Rules

• GET the guidelines

• READ the guidelines

• FOLLOW the guidelines
Following the Guidelines

• You must follow the guidelines exactly.
• Respond to all sections.
• Adhere to any format restrictions.
• Topics must be covered in order presented in guidelines.
• Use headings that correspond to the guidelines.
Call the Program Officer!

✓ The major variable in getting proposals funded is contact with the program officer prior to submission of a proposal.
**Technical Issues to Consider Before you Write**

- Conflict of Interest?
- Human Subjects?
- Due date - received or postmarked
- Page limit
- Do you need letters?
- Group Projects - Gant Chart
Appropriate Writing Style

• Write to the funding source
• Write in the correct language of the field - but no jargon
• **Never** write in 1st person
• Clarity
• 5 W’s

• Write to inform
  – don’t use language that is biased
• Write to persuade
  – data from reputable source
  – use current data
  – establish credibility
  – No unsubstantiated opinions
Parts of a Grant Application

- Project background and justification
- Motivation
- Innovation
- Project Objectives
- Project beneficiaries
- Project methodology
- Technologies to be used
- Project Outputs
- Project Monitoring
- Project sustainability
- Specify how continuity to be sustained
- Budget
A Grant is not an Idea

• It is a Plan
Parts of a Grant
The Title

- The title is important

- It should convey what the project is about

- It is often used to assign review groups
Two Examples

• Acculturating Human Rights is Human Responsibility Imaged in the Humanities HELP BY ICT

• Developing a Computer Model for Interdisciplinary Humanities Curriculum in the Context of a RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Abstract

• Should be able to stand alone
  o it may be all the reviewers read
• Publishable quality
• Clear, concise, one page, single space
• Avoid 1st person
• Do not refer to proposal in the abstract
• Cover all key elements in order
The Needs or Problem Statement

In God we trust in needs statements ... all others bring data
The Task You Face

- Critically important, and often poorly written
- Convince the funding source that you understand the need and can help them solve the problem
  - Prove the need
    - cite evidence
    - illustrate with graphs and charts
  - Demonstrate that the need is pressing
  - That the problem is an important problem to be solved
  - How your project will address the problem and what gaps will it fill
The Problem Statement: Framing the Need

Don’t assume that no one else has ever thought of your idea. The **Problem Statement** establishes a framework for the project’s goals, objectives, methods, and evaluation. Provide a thorough explanation of your need.

- Test assumptions
- Anticipate questions of others
- Incorporate proposal guidelines

Begin with a framing statement then provide documentation.
A Good Problem Statement Should:

• Show that you understand the problem
• Demonstrate that this is an important problem to solve, not only at Vanuatu, but regionally and nationally as well
• Clearly describe the aspects of the problem that your project will address, and what gaps this will fill
• Describe the theoretical or conceptual basis for your project and your knowledge of the issues surrounding your proposed project
• Include statistical data, if appropriate
• Demonstrate that your approach is creative or innovative
• Describe how this project fits into the already existing goals of the organization
Questions to Ask, Things to Know

- What significant needs are you trying to meet?
- What is the current status of the needs?
- Will this project help meet the need?
- What really needs to be done?
- What services will be delivered? To whom? By whom?
- Is it possible to make some impact on the problem?

- What gaps exist in the knowledge base?
- What does the literature say about the significance of the problem, at a local, state, regional, national level?
- Is there evidence that this project will lead to other significant studies?
- What previous work has been done to meet this need? Was it effective?
- What will be the impact of this study?
Check your Assumptions
Appropriotic (uh PRO pree ah tick): adj.

- Of or pertaining to the penchant to overuse the term “appropriate” in a proposal when the guidelines call for measurable objectives and outcomes (ie the writer hasn’t the foggiest idea what to do). It produces such sentences as: “the project director will take appropriate measures to seek appropriate levels of support for the delivery of appropriate services.”
Dissecting a Problem Statement

- The first sentence is the problem.
- Then clarify the problem by defining both the behavior and what is normal.
- States that this is a pressing need which is hopefully the need the funder is addressing.
Documenting the Problem Statement

• Rooted in factual information
  o must document that your initial statement is correct.

• Show you know what’s going on in the field, what the basic issues are

• Use national and local information
  o showing that the local problem is also a national one
Documentation

- Cite current literature
  - 6-10 key references
  - 1-2 of works should be yours
- Key informants
- Case studies

- Statistics - objective
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Use relevant graphs and charts
What was used to prove need?

• Statistics
  – # of students without books
  – # number who worry about literacy
  – # eligible for special services

• References
  – Impact of reading on younger students
  – Post-school problems
Organizing and Writing the Needs Statement

• Go from the foundational statement
• Build your case with the data
• Follow the guidelines
• Follow the guidelines
• Be succinct and persuasive
• Tell your story and build your case drawing to a logical conclusion that leads into the project goals and objectives
Ending a Needs Statement

- Emphasize the significance of the project
  - what will be the result
  - what impact will it have
  - will the impact continue
- You might present your project as a model
- Always address the priorities of the funding agency
- Forecast the usefulness and importance of the results
The Goal

• Both the goals and objectives should flow logically from the statement of need.
• Goals convey the ultimate intent of the proposed project, the overarching philosophy, **A CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT.**
• The opening statement of this section should begin with “the goal of this project is to...”
A Well Thought-Out Project:

- Will have
  - one or two goals
  - several objectives related to the goals
  - many methodological steps to achieve each objective.
The objectives state the essence of the proposed work in terms of what will be accomplished.

Break the goal down to specific measurable pieces, the outcomes of which can be measured to determine actual accomplishments.
Objectives

- Objectives discuss *who* is going to do *what*, *when* they will do it, and *how* it will be measured.
- Discuss desired end results of the project.
- But not how those results will be accomplished.
- They are action oriented and often begin with a verb.
- Arrange them in priority order.
- In a research proposal the objectives are the hypotheses, they are less specific, but reinforce that the project is conceptually sound.
Is this an Objective?

• Getting people from SOMOA and FIJI to interact to improve the economy. (goal).
• To construct a under seas Fiber Cable
• “To improve e-trade (what) within five years (when) between residents of SOMOA and FIJI (who) as measured by each nations’ s economic development indicators related to interisland commerce (measure).”
Research Objectives

- Generation of new knowledge
- Hypothesis or research questions
- generally short
- Example:
  - determine the impact of internet access of the women on the island of Tanna
  - identify the needs of the women for internet based communications and information ie health, economic, family, etc
Methodology: The “How”
Plan of Action, Project Design, or Methodology

• Usually, this is the area allotted the most points.
• Often poorly written or missing altogether.
• 2:5 proposals are turned down because the methodology is unsound.
Methodology, Project Design, Plan of Action

• Often the most detailed and lengthy section
• What specific activities will allow you to meet your objectives
• Task oriented, specific, detailed
• Essential that you demonstrate all the steps necessary to complete project with each flowing logically from the previous to the next.
Questions for Methodology

- Walk the reader through your project
- Describe the activities as they relate to the objectives
- Develop a time line and/or and organizational chart
- How will the activities be conducted?
- When?
- How long?
- Who?
- Where?
- What facilities?
Quality of Key Personnel
**Who Are these People, and Why Should we Give them our Money?**

- This is where you demonstrate that you are the right person to do this project.
- Do not simply say “See resume.”
- Convince the funding agency the you are capable of accomplishing what you say you can accomplish
- Highlight the expertise of all key personnel
- 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.
In Key Personnel Section Address...

- Publications in the area of the proposal or related areas.
- Evidence of relevant training, certification, or clearance.
- Papers & conference presentations in the area.
Institution’s Qualifications

• Why should the award be made to your institution?
• The Grants Office will help you with the information in this section.
• Highlight institution’s capabilities, relation of the project to mission.
• Facilities, support, library, computer, etc.
Evaluation

• Formative evaluation of objectives
  o how the project will be evaluated as it progresses

• Summative evaluation of objectives
  o how the project will be evaluated when it is finished
Evaluation design

• Explanation of the methods.
• What was the impact?
• Descriptions of record keeping, surveys, and assessment instruments.
• Consider what would count as evidence that your project succeeded or failed?
• If you were someone else who wanted to replicate the project what would you need to know to determine if you would benefit
• What form should that information take to be sufficiently credible or useful?
Evaluation Design - Questions To Ask

- **Evaluation for GRANT Development Workshops**
- **Formative**
  - Who participated?
  - Were they organized and attended as planned?
  - Were materials available?
  - Were they of high quality?
  - Was the full range of topics actually covered?
  - Too few, too many?
  - Problems?
  - Modification?
  - Timing?
- **Summative**
  - Did attendees change their grant practices?
  - Did this vary by island or student characteristics?
  - Did teacher use up to date information?
  - What obstacles prevented implementing change?
  - Were changes made in the curriculum to improve?
  - Were students more interested in class work?
A Good Evaluation Plan:

- Covers both process and product
- Tells who will perform the evaluation and how they were chosen
- Defines the criteria by which the program will be evaluated
- Evaluates the achievement of each objective
- Describes data gathering methods
- Explains assessment instruments, questionnaires, and other materials
- Describes data analysis procedures
- Relates evaluation findings to a plan for program improvement
- Describes evaluation reports to be produced
Reporting Plan Should Include:

• Which results will be reported?
• What audiences will be reached?
• How the results or products will be disseminated, e.g., email, video tapes, conference presentation, professional journals, blog, web site?
REPORTING Plan Should Include:

• Which results will be reported?
• What audiences will be reached?
• How the results or products will be disseminated, e.g., computer networks, video tapes, conferences, professional journals, or publication of books, chapters, or monographs?
A Reviewer Friendly Grant
A Readable Style

• Scannability

• Look at each introductory sentence of a paragraph, it is the most important part, it is all they may read
Editing your Grant

• After you have finished your draft:
  – set it aside for a day
  – revise
• Have someone else read it without taking notes

• Have them tell you what your project is about
• Edit for clarity and conciseness
• No jargon
• No first person
Writing in Plain English

- Grant Writing is a form of technical writing
- Put sentences in logical sequence
- Use action verbs
- Never write in first person
- Use lists when you have several items

- Use the active voice
  - avoid “to be”
  - subject first
- Use parallel construction
- Avoid noun strings
- Go on a “which” hunt
- Avoid openers with There is, There are, and It is - try “ing”
The FACT IS

One Hour before the grant needs to go out, the Internet will go down. Leave enough time!
Remember

• Get Ready
• Read requirements
• Follow
  o The Guidelines
• Contact
  o The Program Officer
Recycle your Rejected Proposal

• Success means having one in three grants funded
• A rejected proposal does not always mean the idea was rejected
• Obtain reviewer comments
• Call the program officer
• Rewrite, revise, resubmit
The Biggest Mistake of All

Is to not write a proposal