



**ESCP - PASCAR 2026
JOINT CONGRESS**

July 31 - August 2, 2026
Interluxury Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

"How to write a successful grant application"

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Vice-President South PASCAR 2025-2027
Chair RHD and PANPACH task-force PASCAR 2017-2021
Director Children's Heart Disease Research Unit| Paediatric Cardiologist
Vice-President South African Medical Research Council



1

fellowships and grants support the
research, study and training needed to **open**
doors, provide **academic currency**
and **gain independence**

2

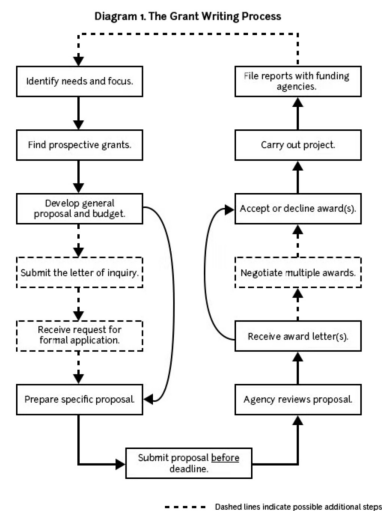


3

Outline today

Build evidence, grow your team, and increase impact with each funding stage.

- Hard facts
- Money follows good ideas
- Is this the right fit?
- Title
 - Background
 - Aims and objectives
 - Methods
 - Theoretical framework
- Ethical considerations
- General writing tips
- Common mistakes
- Final thoughts



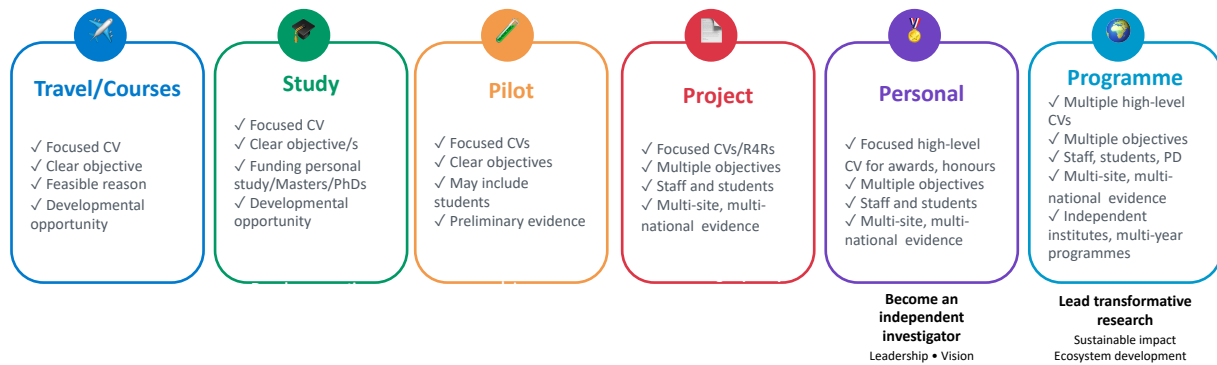
Successful applications tell a compelling story:

Important question → Strong team → Preliminary evidence → Feasible methods → Meaningful impact.

4

A Successful Grant Funding Journey

Build evidence, grow your team, and increase impact with each funding stage.
A progression from early career opportunities to sustained research leadership



Successful applications tell a compelling story:
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5

Hard facts

Build evidence, grow your team, and increase impact with each funding stage.

- Both small and large grants get rejected
- Every rejection hurts, because every grant application is a massive amount of work
- Every grant application needs to be as perfect as it can be
- “The only real deadlines are grant deadlines”

Being a renowned scientist doesn't ensure success.
On the same day that molecular biologist Carol Greider won a Nobel prize in 2009, she learnt that her recently submitted grant proposal had been rejected.
Rejection may well be redirection.

Successful applications tell a compelling story:
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6

Money follows good ideas



Key questions to ask oneself

What is the research question being addressed?
 How important, or how big is the identified knowledge gap?
 Why is this research project needed?
 What previous literature is available on this research topic?
 How innovative is the grant proposal compared to already published or ongoing research?
 What would the impact of the study results on healthcare, economics and society be?
 What research is being done by other groups?
 What type of methodological approach would be required in an ideal world to address this issue?
 What is needed to bring this research project to a wider audience?
 Does the researcher and team have all the relevant skills, techniques, and knowledge?
 Am I ready to be a principal investigator or should I be a co-investigator?

7

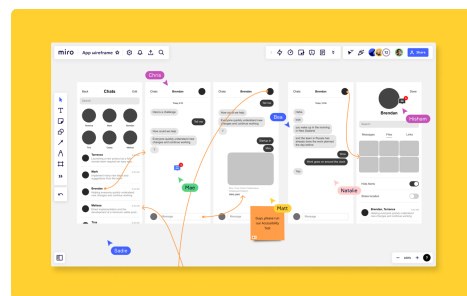
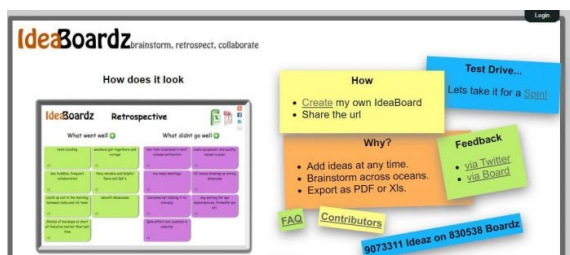
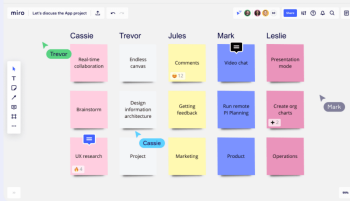


8

Online Brainstorming for Creative Teams

Unleash your creative ideas on an infinite canvas and collaborate in real time from any location. Think in many formats with sticky notes, diagrams, and more.

[Sign up free →](#)



<https://bit.ly/3TwWThK>

9

4 CHARACTERISTICS of Brainstorming

FOCUS ON QUANTITY

Put a priority on collecting as many ideas as possible.

PIGGYBACKING

Build on other people's ideas.

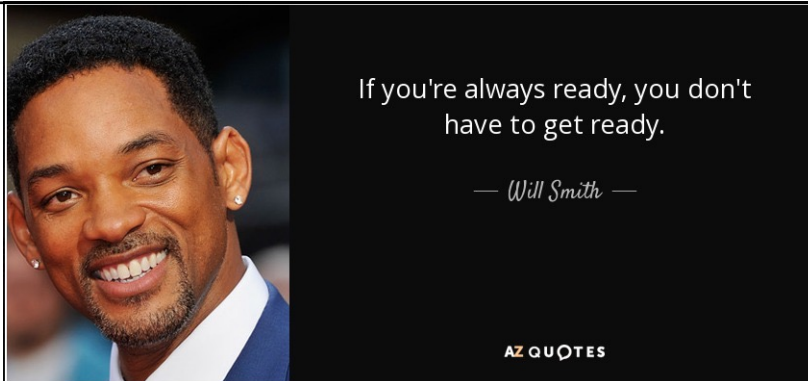
FREEWHEELING

Be willing to share even impractical ideas.

NON-EVALUATION

Avoid giving feedback to ideas, positive or negative.

10



Always have your elevator pitch ready
 Make sure you have a handy one-pager
 Read around your subject to create potential linkages
 Network and discuss
 Take and make your chances
 Know what you need
 Update your CV every month

11

Is this the correct fit?

Look at what kind of projects were funded by this funder before
 Try to find someone who has already been funded under this grant call
 Think like the funder:

What work are they interested in
 What the gaps are
 Potentially get in touch with existing grant holders
 Try and look at successful grant applications

BILL & MELINDA
 GATES foundation

Gates
 Foundation



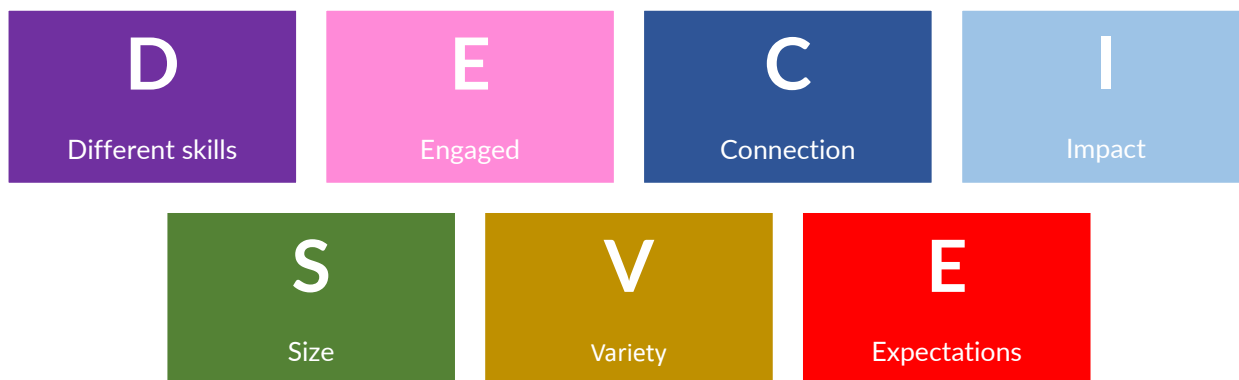
12

The collage features seven posters:

- SAHRI Fellowship (2026-2029):** Applications are NOW OPEN for the Sub-Saharan Africa Health Research and Innovation Fellowship (SAHRI Fellowship). It is a fully funded, 3-year program designed to empower mid-career researchers from sub-Saharan Africa to become leaders in biomedical innovation and clinical research tackling infectious diseases across the region.
- Sustainable Funding for Medical and Scientific Research in Africa:** A virtual event on October 27th at 7pm CAT. Panelists include Prof. Richard Gordon, Prof. Gauthier Biondo, and Abel Wilson Wabwire. Moderators are also listed.
- The Clinical ResEArch Training fellowship with Industry involvement (CREATIVE Fellowship) 2026:** For early-career researchers. The fellowship offers a 30-month opportunity to gain hands-on clinical research experience, complete an MSc, and secure industry exposure. Funded by the EU via Global Health EDCTP3, it aims to build research capacity in six African nations.
- 2026 RESEARCH FUND ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE:** Health human resources & financing policies in sub-Saharan Africa. Organized by Africa Health Collaborative and Mastercard Foundation.
- PRESERVE Consortium:** Secures funding to strengthen epidemic preparedness and clinical research capacity in Central Africa. Focuses on preparedness, research, and surveillance network for infectious diseases.
- CVREP African Grant 2026:** Turn your research into impact. Prof. Wael Al Mahmeed African Grant 100,000 AED. Who should apply? African-based cardiology researchers & clinicians under 45 years old, cardiovascular or clinical cardiology projects conducted within Africa, and the applicant must be affiliated with a university or foundation in any medical field.

13

Is this the correct fit?



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14

“If you fail to prepare,
prepare to fail”
Benjamin Franklin

The most important research first

THE RFA

Research the grant application itself thoroughly
Regarding of how big or small

15

"Success is
ninety-nine percent
perspiration
and one percent
inspiration"

Thomas Edison

- Read all the guidelines
- Read them again
- Read them once again
- Highlight key pointers eg. DATES, % overheads, inclusion and exclusions
- Be ruthlessly pragmatic
- Highlight areas you are unsure about
- Speak to program officers/attend all webinars
- BLOCK off time
- BLOCK off more time
- There is always something you missed
- Check check and double check
- Finally, word count, dates and closing TIME

16

British Heart Foundation Sign in/Register

FOR PROFESSIONALS CORONAVIRUS SEARCH

Information & support How you can help Shop What we do [Donate items](#) [Donate money](#)



The Big Beat Challenge

A single research award of up to £30 million for the world's greatest minds to tackle the world's biggest killers.

[Find out who won >](#)

WHAT TIME IS MIDNIGHT?



17

  Help Opportunities

[I AM A\(N\)](#)  [APPLICANT OR AWARDEE](#)

ProposalCentral for Applicants & Awardees

ProposalCentral enables researchers to tap into funding, get their work seen, and realize the full potential of their scientific efforts.

Application for Translational Research Project (TRP) Two-Pager Template

The goal of the two-pager is to convey a project idea to address a problem and capture the attention of funders and other stakeholders. The two-page proposal should generally address the following questions, though headings can be tailored to your specific audience.

- What is the problem to be addressed?
- What have others done to solve the problem?
- Why has the problem not been solved? What is the gap?
- What will you do to fill the gap? What is the innovation?
- Please include tangible deliverables, a timeline, and an exit strategy.

Creating grant application videos doesn't need to feel overwhelming or expensive.

After working with charities on their applications, we've seen how video can transform the way funders connect with your work.

The thing is, most organisations think they need professional crews and big budgets to make compelling videos.

But that's not what wins grants.

What wins is authentic content that shows your genuine impact and lets funders see your work in action.

18



UK Research
and Innovation

Résumé for Research and Innovation

1. → The Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) is a flexible template designed to allow you to showcase relevant skills and experience. The 4 modules provide a framework for inputting these.

2. → General guidance on filling out your R4RI can be found on the [UKRI website](#). However, each application is different and the R4RI template can be used in assessment in multiple ways. Please refer to **the specific funding call guidance** for details on how it will be assessed.

Module 1 – Contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies or knowledge

Module 2 – The development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

Module 3 – Contributions to the wider research and innovation community

Module 4 – Contributions to broader research/innovation-users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit



19

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Build evidence, grow your team, and increase impact with each funding stage.

• Nitty-gritty of application elements.

- Title
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TITLE

Should clearly describe what the study is about
Concise, convincing
Accurate, unambiguous, complete
Relatively short and catchy, specific
Appealing: spark interest in readers so they want to learn more
Use professional language (avoid rarely-used abbreviations)
There might be requirements on the title length

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20

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BACKGROUND

What is the current state of the field
Present the knowledge gaps
Include relevant preliminary data if available/applicable
End with what you/your study/your course will do

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21

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End with what you/your study/your course will do

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22

Grant writing pearls

- Be realistic
- Make it easy for the reviewer
- Multiple drafts- read and re-read
- Get someone to read for you
- In general, the more red marks a grant receives before it is submitted, the more likely it will succeed.
- Check word counts, **spelling and grammar**
- **Check all attachments**

23

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Have a clear research question (study aim)

This should not be too long and should be focused on the key theme(s)
It does not need to include the objectives under it – these can be stated separately.

Have well-defined objectives: Create specific aims and well-defined criteria to quantify success, and keep it concise.

Work Packages work well to compartmentalise the approach

Successful applications tell a compelling story:
Important question → Strong team → Preliminary evidence → Feasible methods → Meaningful impact.

24

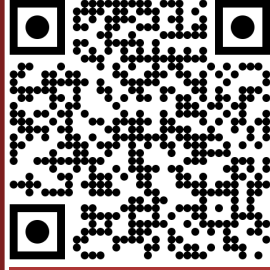


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STRong Heart

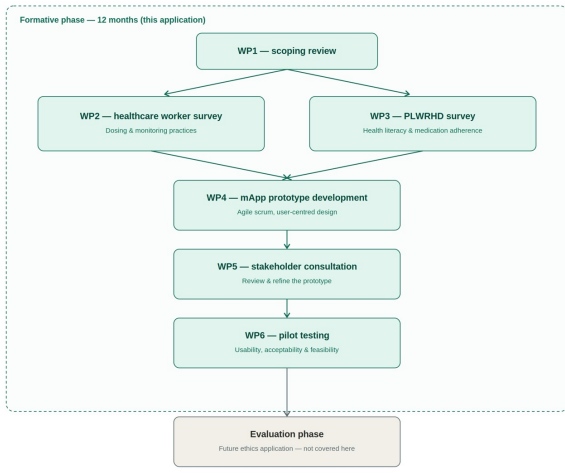
Strengthening Trials and Research
for Rheumatic Heart Disease



strongheart.samrc.ac.za

Figure
STRong Heart study phases

Development and evaluation of a remote monitoring approach using mHealth application in individuals with rheumatic heart disease on oral anticoagulation



Source: STRong Heart ethics application, Formative Phase protocol, South African Medical Research Council, 2020.

25

Outline today

Build evidence, grow your team, and increase impact with each funding stage.

- Nitty-gritty of application elements.

- Title
- Background
- Aims and objectives
- Methods
- Theoretical framework

METHODS

Have a clear research question (study aim)
 This should not be too long and should be focused on the key theme(s)
 It does not need to include the objectives under it – these can be stated separately.
 Have well-defined objectives: Create specific aims and well-defined criteria to quantify success, and keep it concise.
 Work Packages work well to compartmentalise the approach

Successful applications tell a compelling story:
Important question → Strong team → Preliminary evidence → Feasible
methods → Meaningful impact.

26

Research the grant application process

Table 1 Summary of the key elements of the experimental design, methods and expertise

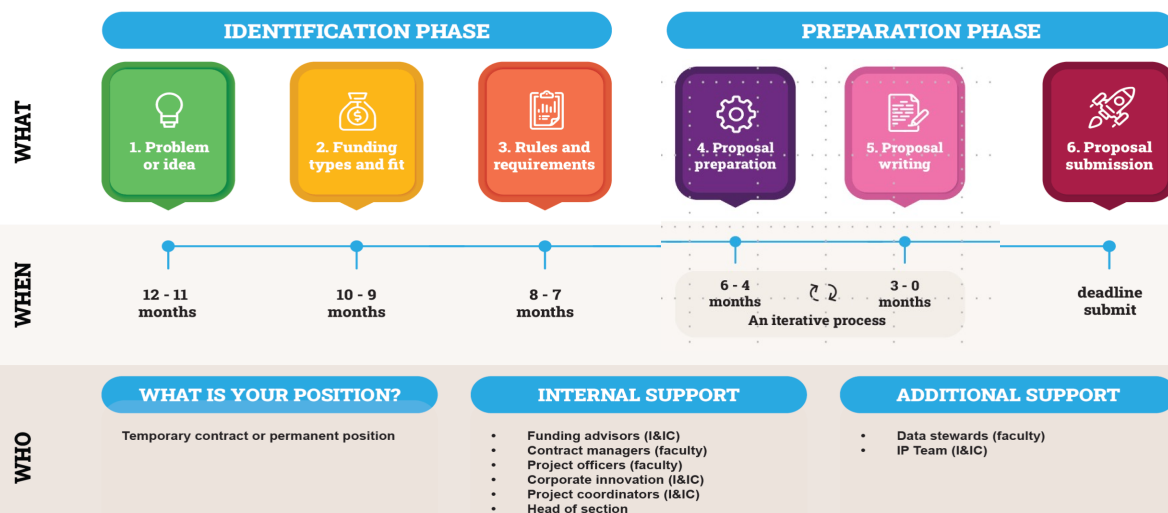
Key elements of experimental design, methods and expertise

Study design	State, justify and explain the study design and methodology.
Setting	Where will the study be conducted? Explain and justify the setting.
Target population	What is the study population? What are the inclusion and exclusion criteria?
Sampling, sample size	Is sampling required? If so, what is the sampling approach and sample size needed?
Recruitment	What is the approach for recruitment?
Data collection	What is the plan for data collection? How are tools to be developed, tested and piloted?
Outcome measures	What is going to be 'measured' (noting that the term 'measure' is different in qualitative studies)? The outcome measures should directly relate to the specific research questions/ objectives.
Validity, reliability, trustworthiness	What steps are planned to maximise data validity and reliability (and possibly responsiveness) for quantitative studies and trustworthiness for qualitative studies?
Analysis	What are the plans for analysis? The analysis plan must relate directly to the research question (s)/ objective (s).
Monitoring	What are the milestones and key performance indicators for the study? Depending on the funding body and the nature of the study, a monitoring and oversight/ advisory committee may need to be established.
Limitations, mitigation	What are the risks? What could go wrong? It is imperative to highlight these and plan mitigation measures.
Expertise	The research team must have the appropriate level of experience and expertise from relevant disciplines to give the reviewers confidence that the study will be delivered as planned. It is not mandatory for all team members to be highly experienced, since developing research capacity is also important, however all team members should have defined roles.
Patient and public engagement	Depending on the funding body it may be very important to thoroughly consider patient and public involvement in the study design, development of the research aim planning of the study design, written grant proposal and participation in the proposed study [22]. Engaging the public in the research can improve the quality and impact of the research proposal [23].
Ethics and governance	Details of ethics board approvals including to be obtained for the study are crucial as are details of all governance measures followed.

27

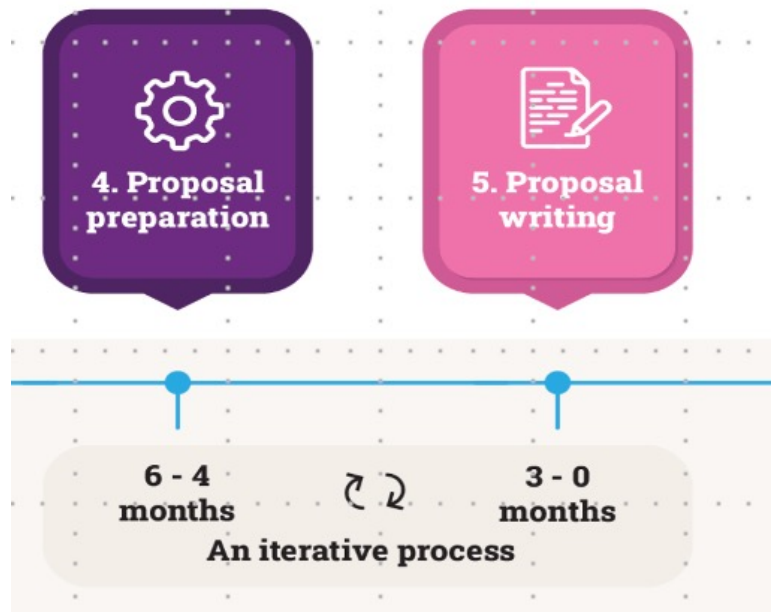
Develop an action plan for your research grant

PROPOSAL WORKFLOW FOR RESEARCHERS



28

Write the first draft, follow the rules, be concise, repeat.



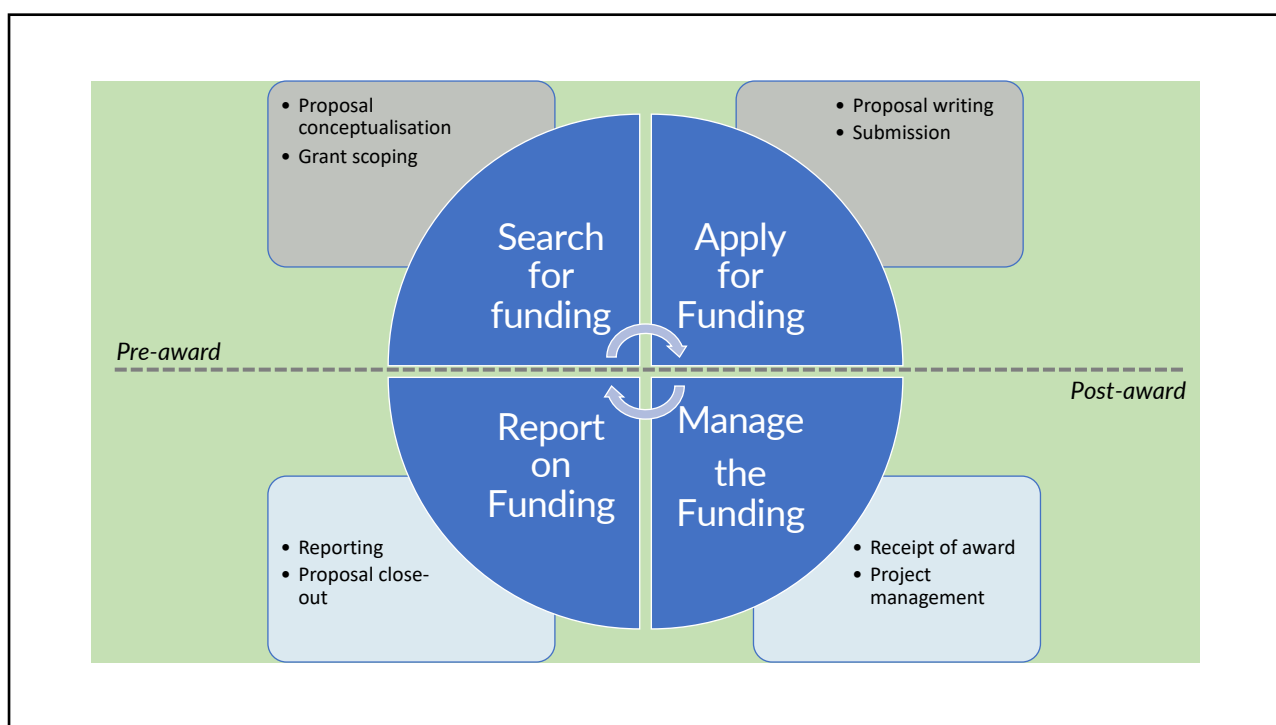
29



30



31



32

Outline today

- Ethical considerations
- Extra items



THE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK

A guide for understanding, implementing, and measuring lived experience leadership across the spectrum of engagement

WRITTEN BY:
Chris Ash and Sophie Otiende
Co-Founders of Collective Threads Initiative



Training Course On Good Clinical Practice (GCP)

Application Link
<https://training.icddrb.org>

COURSE CONTENTS

- Overview of ICH-GCP
- Clinical trial design, registration, protocol development and investigator's brochure
- Ethical principles in clinical research
- Roles and responsibilities of different players in clinical trial
- Informed consent and documentation
- Clinical safety monitoring and reporting
- Confidentiality and data integrity
- Audit, legal aspects, regulatory process and data safety and monitoring board (DSMB) at icddr,b and Bangladesh
- Supply and handling of the investigational product(s)

DATE & VENUE

28 - 30 January 2024
Sasakawa Seminar Room-1, icddr,b, Dhaka

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

Personnel associated with clinical research including researchers, clinicians, regulators, academicians, pharmaceutical personnel, monitor, teacher etc.

LAST DATE OF APPLICATION

21 January 2024

COURSE FEE

For Nationals: USD 10,000
For Internationals: USD 300

icddr,b
Technical Training Unit

Successful applications tell a compelling story:

Important question → **Strong team** → Preliminary evidence → Feasible methods → Meaningful impact.

33



Sustainability

[sa-'stā-na-'bi-lā-tē]

The ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time

Investopedia



Last year, we launched Wellcome's sex and gender in health research policy.

Now, every scientist we fund must consider these factors throughout their work.

New focus areas:
ESG

- **Digital and Electronic Submission:** Using specialized online portals (like institutional eRA systems or cloud-based platforms like Fluxx) instead of paper forms.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** Providing clear plans on how projects reach diverse communities and offer fair opportunities.
- **Stronger Impact and Evaluation Metrics:** Showing exact, measurable goals and detailed methods for tracking project success over time

34

Application writing tips

- Read all the instructions very carefully especially eligibility criteria
- Check all the items needed to be included
- Never rush a grant application
- Time the grant application- some can take months!
- Short precise, not complicated language
- Be clear
- Formatting – white space, paragraphs, bold headings, illustrations
- No spelling errors, grammatical slips and lengthy proposals
- Add in figures, tables, preliminary data, resources already established

35

Common mistakes

- Not the correct fit
- Not enough planning , preparation, and research
- Simple admin errors eg PI, time zone.
- Be focused specific and to the RFA
- Too much detail / Not enough detail
- Leaving out essential information
- Budget: Under-budget, over-promise leads to under-delivery
- Leaving out key details of methods

36



37

Hi Liesl
Thought of you when I saw this call.

Hi Liesl,
I am on this listserv from USAID about climate change and maternal and newborn health (the connection between heat exposure and CHD brought me on it). This lecture may be of interest to you too! Let me know if you would like to be added to the list too. they have quarterly meetings, I have been only in one so far, but I think the goal is to develop interest in USAID and potential future grants to address this issue.
B

Subject: [MNH and CC Interest Group] Aug. 24 Inaugural Lecture - Climate Change and Maternal Health in Africa: from Thermal Physiology to Public Health and Advocacy

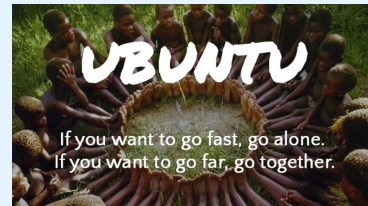
RE: INVITATION TO LECTURE

Wits RHI cordially invites you to the Inaugural Lecture of Professor Matthew Chersich.

Title of Lecture: Climate Change and Maternal Health in Africa: from Thermal Physiology to Public Health and Advocacy

- Tell people your areas of interest.
- Listen to their areas of interest and send them tips, hints and potential opportunities.
- Values-aligned team members
- Share webinars, grant-writing seminars and recordings.
- Soon enough, it will come back to you.

38



Offer to assist your colleagues with proofreading
 Bring on a colleague to proofread your grant applications
 Offer a co-I role to emerging researchers/post-docs
 Create interview panels for grants you have won
 Help highlight the pitfalls in the ones you haven't
 Save and then share questions from panels
 Present protocols and ideas to journal clubs

39

Many times the favourite doesn't win.



Many times competition is not constructive

Competition is often a useful source for fuel. In our scarcity-driven world, looking for external metrics might be a productive way to focus our energy or gather resources.

But it's also a trap.

A trap that seduces us into accepting someone else's priorities.

A trap that causes us to forget what got us here and to ignore our good fortune.

Rejection may just be redirection.



40

Writing a successful grant is a skill, not an inherent talent.

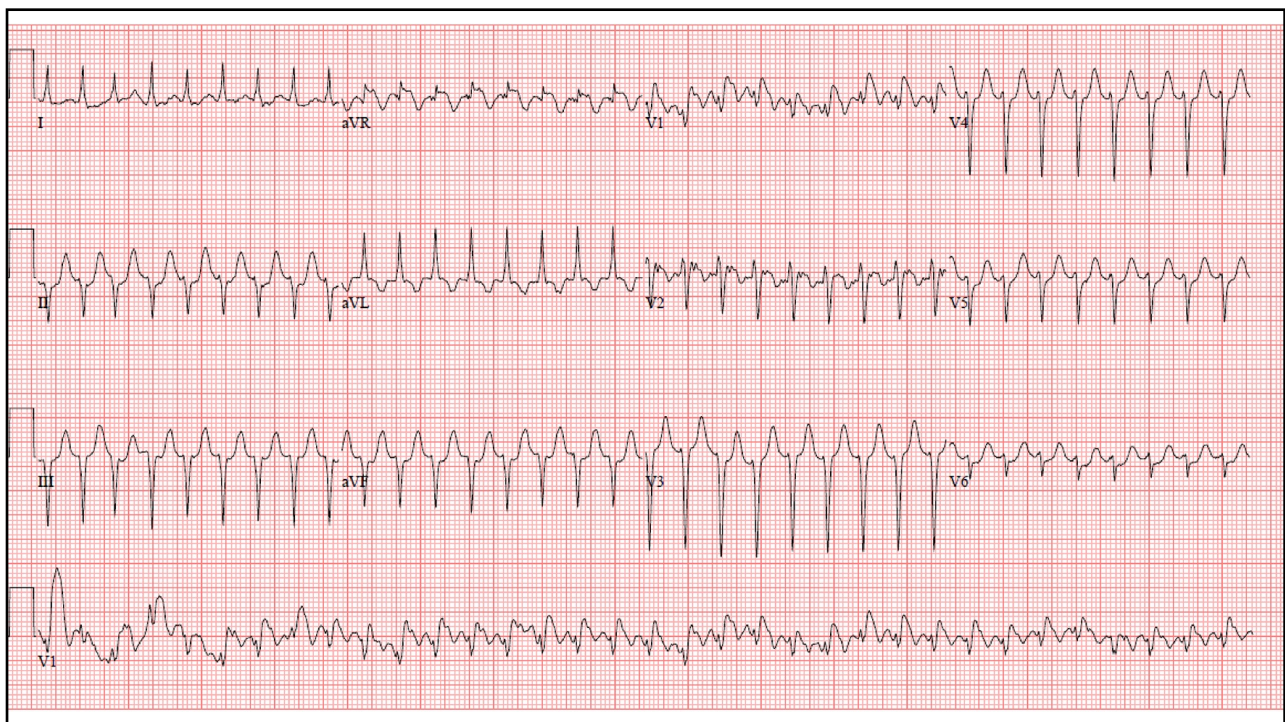
- Know your mission
- Start with the question
- Do your research to find partners and match goals
- What does the funder want to fund?
 - Topic
 - Team
 - Values and Friendship-aligned
 - Amount
 - DECISIVE traits
 - Practical points
- Balance facts and feeling
- Build a realistic budget
- Measure true outcomes
- Plan backwards
- Plan forwards
- How can I do this with this team, with this amount of money, in this timeframe, in this community to answer this question?

- Tell the story
- Be authentic, detailed, precise and pragmatic
- Plan your submission
- AI in grant applications
 - Spell and grammar check
 - Figures, tables and Gantt charts
 - Be careful
- Revise and reread
- Recheck the budget
- Submit in time
- Remember computer glitches, laptop issues
- Save your progress throughout.
- Recheck if submitted ☺
- Accept rejection with grace
- Pay it forward if successful

Successful applications tell a compelling story:

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41



42



43

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STRong Heart

Strengthening Trials and Research
for Rheumatic Heart Disease

Scan the QR code to access our website, or type
the website address into your web browser

strongheart.samrc.ac.za

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

44