NUTRITION SOCIETY OF NIGERIA
OSUN STATE CHAPTER

WEBINAR SERIES

WRITING A GRANT WINNING RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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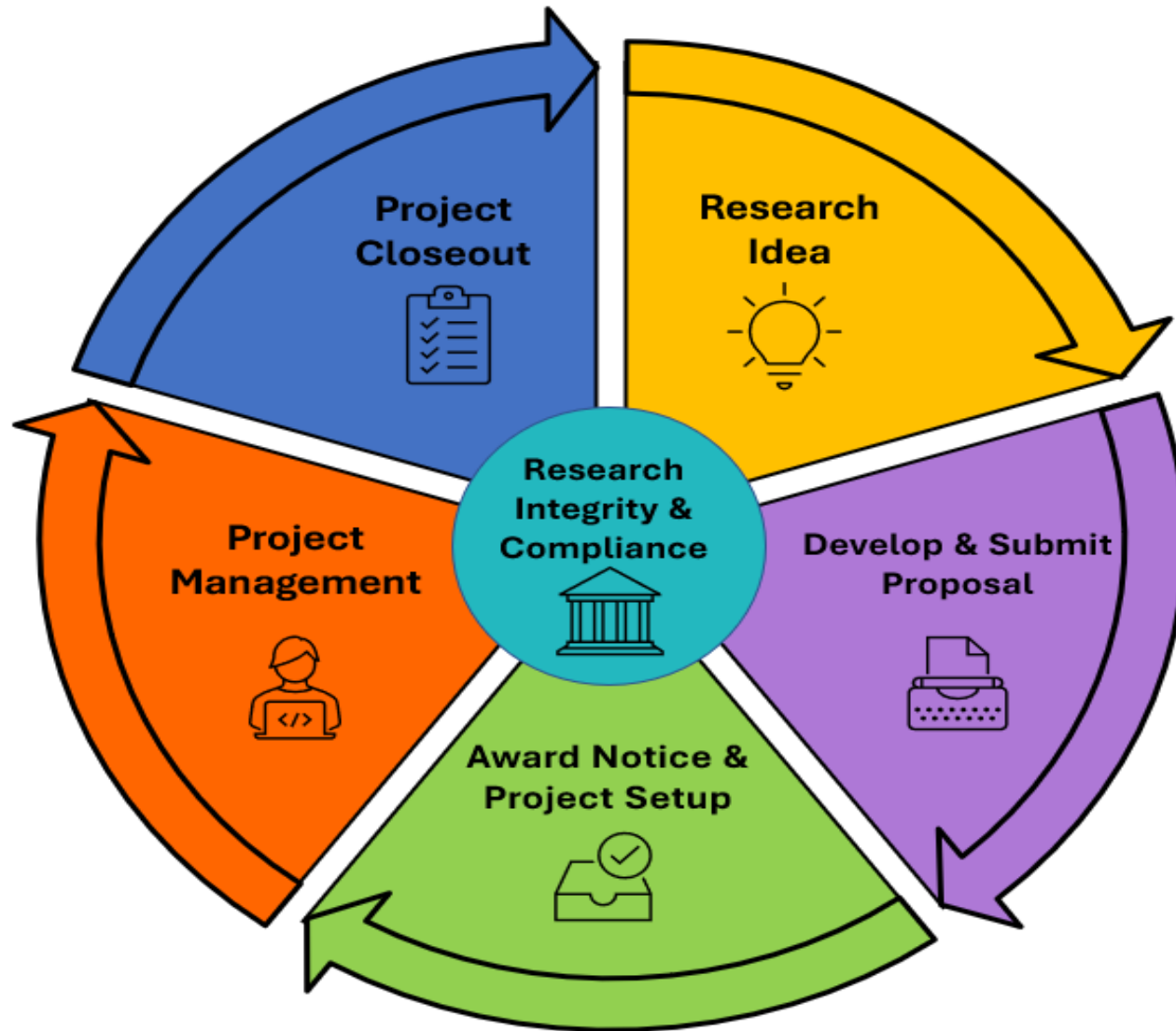**OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA**

Outline

- Introduction: Research Project Lifecycle
- Definition of Research: 4Ws
- How of the proposal
- Structure A Research Proposal
- Conceptualization
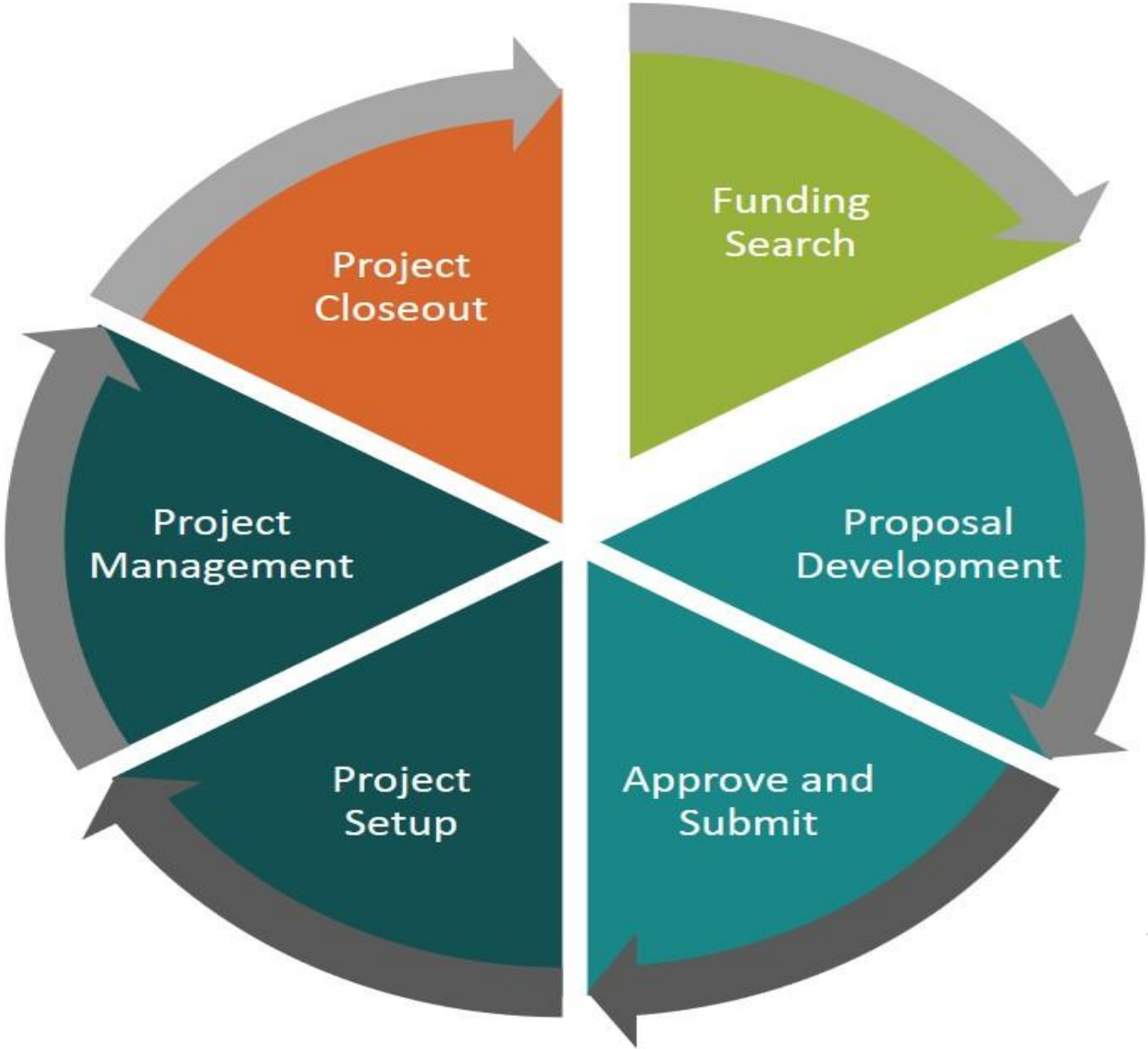- The Scholarship of Me'
- Support System

Introduction

Intro. Contd.

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What is a research proposal?

A structured, formal document that explains:

❑ **what** you plan to research (your research topic),

❑ **why** it's worth researching (your justification), and

❑ **how** you plan to investigate it (your methodology).

The purpose of the research proposal

❑ **convince** your sponsor that your research

❑ **suitable** and

❑ **manageable**

The most important word here is

"convince"

Your research proposal needs to *sell* your research idea to whoever is going to approve it.

4Ws

Clearly articulate your research topic.

- ❑ **What's** being investigated
- ❑ **Why** investigate
- ❑ **Who** it involves
- ❑ **Where** will it be done (In what **context**)

Don't start writing your proposal until you have a clear topic in mind

Example

"**Barriers** associated with EBF Practice among **teenage mothers** in **SW, Nigeria**"

What?   Who?   Where?

WHAT?

❑ needs to be **specific** and **unambiguous**.

❑ should make it clear exactly what you plan to research and in what context.

WHY?

❑ You need to **justify why your topic is original**.

❑ What makes it **unique**?

❑ What gap in the current literature does it fill? it needs to be fresh.

❑ **Originality** alone is not enough, you also need to justify why your proposed topic is **important**.

❑ What **value** will it add to the world if you achieve your research aims?

WHO?

❑ Beneficiaries

❑ Target audience?

WHERE?

❑ Location

❖ National

❖ Region

❖ State

❖ LG

❖ Community

THE HOW OF THE PROPOSAL

It's all good and well to have a great topic that's original and valuable

- You're not going to convince anyone to approve it without discussing the **practicalities**

- **How** will you actually undertake your research (i.e., your methodology)?

- Is your research methodology **appropriate** given your research aims?

- Is your approach **manageable** given your constraints (time. money. etc.)?

HOW?

- Will you take a **qualitative**, **quantitative** or **mixed**-method approach?

- What **sampling** strategy will you adopt?

- How will you **collect** your data (e.g., interviews, surveys, etc)?

- How will you **analyse** your data (e.g., descriptive and inferential statistics, content analysis, discourse analysis, etc, .)?

- What potential **limitations** will your methodology carry?

Structure of a Research Proposal

1. A rich **introduction** and background to the proposed research

2. An initial **literature review** covering the existing research

3. **Aim and Objectives**

4. **Expected outcomes**

5. An overview of the proposed **research methodology**

Conceptualization

The process of formulating a defensible, researchable problem **and fundable proposal.**

It is more than simply generating a list of interesting topics

❑ Identify and conceptualize a research topic

❑ Formulate a research problem

❑ Anticipate potential 'Who cares?' questions

❑ Conceptualization, the art and practice of discovery, is the first and some may argue the most difficult part of research.

❑ Good conceptualization involves moving from a general topic to a clear research problem.

STEP BY STEP OF CONCEPTUALIZATION

❑ **Step One:** What is the topic? The first step of any project is to determine what you want to study.

❑ **Step Two:** What is the problem?

▪ Why should anyone care about the problem?

▪ You must then establish the problem your project

hopes to solve

✓ filling in a gap or

✓ extending the literature in a new and exciting direction.

❑ **Step Three:** Start a project with a topic that is inspired by your discipline, subfield, or event.

❑ **Step Four:** Identify key theories, terminologies, concepts, methods, data and interpretations presented in the literature.
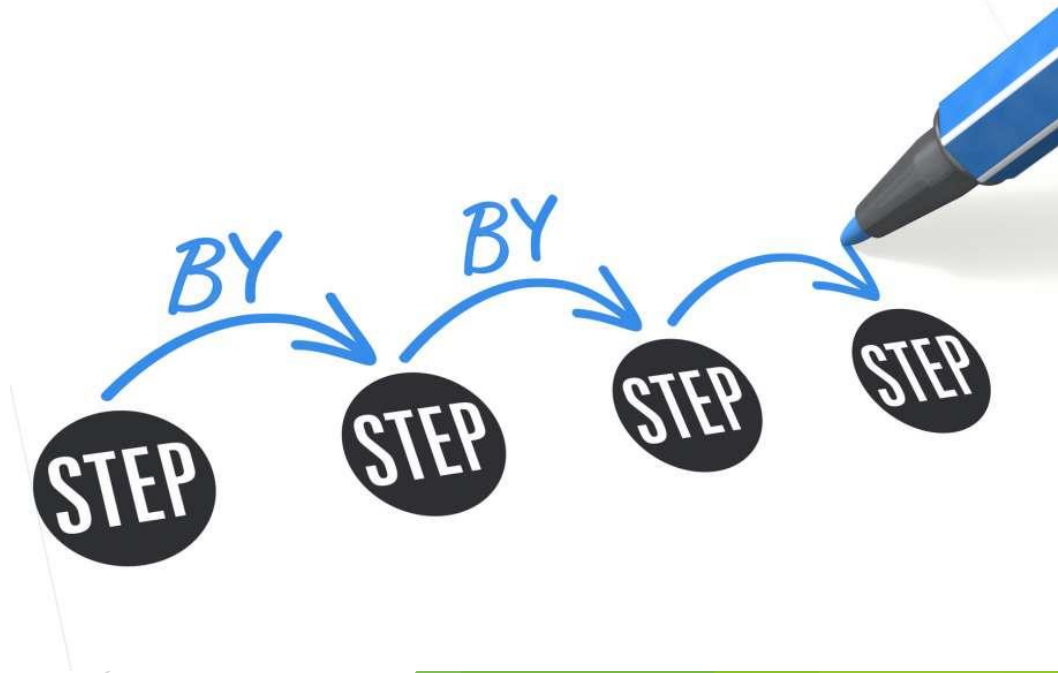
❑ **Step Five:** Identify what is not known, missing or problematic findings in the literature.

- What questions have been asked about my topic?

- What questions have not been asked on my topic?

- Is there a time, geography, or location dimension to these questions and if so, what would happen if I altered it?

- What would happen if I turned dominant questions around?

- What if I turned positive questions into negative questions (or negative into positive

Use brainstorming exercises at the early stages of conceptualization to articulate what is known about a topic, and to identify relationships, processes, concepts or missing information.

Step Six:

- Identify the intended audience and desired contribution.
- Articulate the foundation of your research problem and address the inherent limitations of that approach

Step Seven: What is my intention?

The nature of the problem formulation will be very much shaped by

the kind of contribution you hope to make,

a particular approach to research

your intended audience. You have to seriously evaluate whether your intended audience is really interested in what you eventually hope to 'sell'

Are you hoping to contribute to the academic or professional literature?

Evaluate a policy or programme?
Contribute to social reform?

And what does your intended audience already know or want to know.

Only you can answer these questions!

'The Scholarship of Me'

❑ Author is emotionally invested in the topic based on his/her personal experience or identity.

❑ A personal problem is not the same as a research problem unless you are able to communicate its wider scholarly significance.

❑ In short, you must find a way to transform a 'scholarship of me' project into 'scholarship' in its own right.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

1. Create the right proposal writing team

2. Read the solicitation carefully

3. Create a realistic budget

4. Dedicate sufficient time to proposal development

5. Invest in software to identify funding opportunities.

Building a Support System

Finding a funder/sponsor

Understand

- missions,

- objectives and

- goals;

- rules and regulations.

Each proposal must be tailored to the requirements of the sponsor and speak directly to the impacts the *funder* wants to achieve.

Proposals often fail because they focus on what the research team want to do!

Think of a research proposal as a ***business plan*** to a prospective investor and business partner. A good proposal will convince the funder that:

- You have a good idea.

- Your project will further the funder's mission.

- You have the capacity to perform the work.

- You have the management skills to complete the project.

Proposal development should not be a solo effort

❑ creating a collegiate environment for proposal development

❑ bringing together proposal development team

❑ establishing internal peer review panels

Advantage of working in a team

❑ improves the quality of research proposals,

❑ helps to build a positive research culture,

❑ opportunity for researchers to learn from one another.

Congratulations, you've won a research grant!

ACTION POINTS!

❑ Create a research proposal writing club

❑ Organise members into cohorts based on research interests

❑ Conceptualize a research proposal topic

❑ Spend an hour to write per person/day

❑ Spend an hour/week as a cohort