



# **“FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT: PRACTICAL SKILLS IN EFFECTIVE GRANTSMANSHIP”**

*Building capacity to transform concepts into competitive,  
fundable, and impactful projects.*

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**Pre-Conference Workshop**

**September 15, 2025**

**Port Harcourt , Rivers State**

**Nutrition Society of Nigeria**

# The Pathway:

## Section I

- Getting prepared for a Grant
  - **Individual Activities – 1,2,3**
- A research grant defined – Success Stories

## Section II

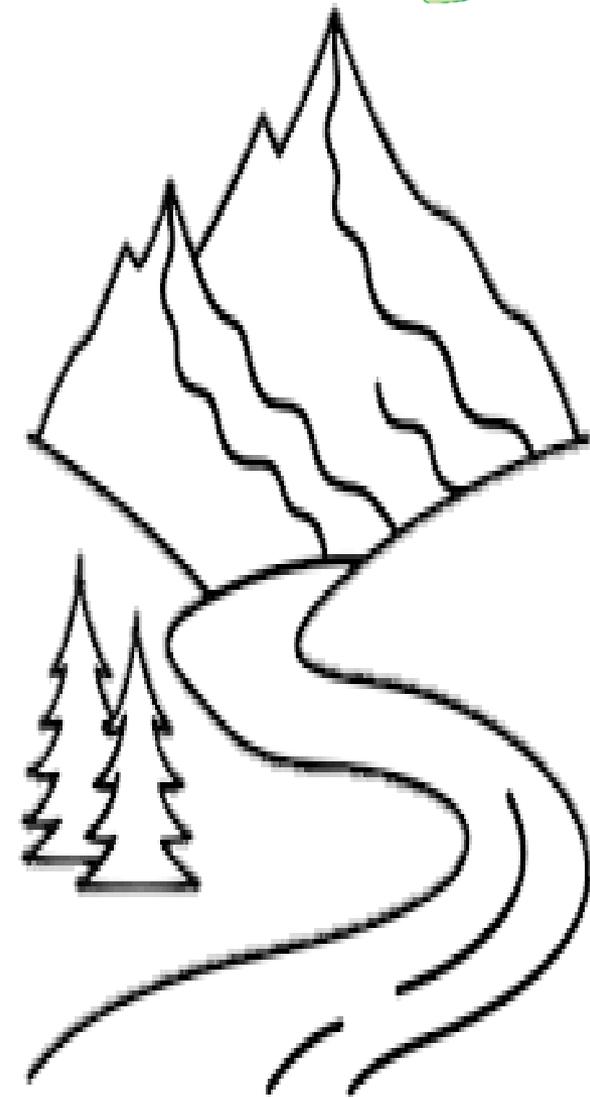
- Overview of Key Steps in Grant Writing
  - **Group Activities – 4,5**

## Section III

- Your image matters
- Grant Management

## Section IV

- Interaction
- Conclusion



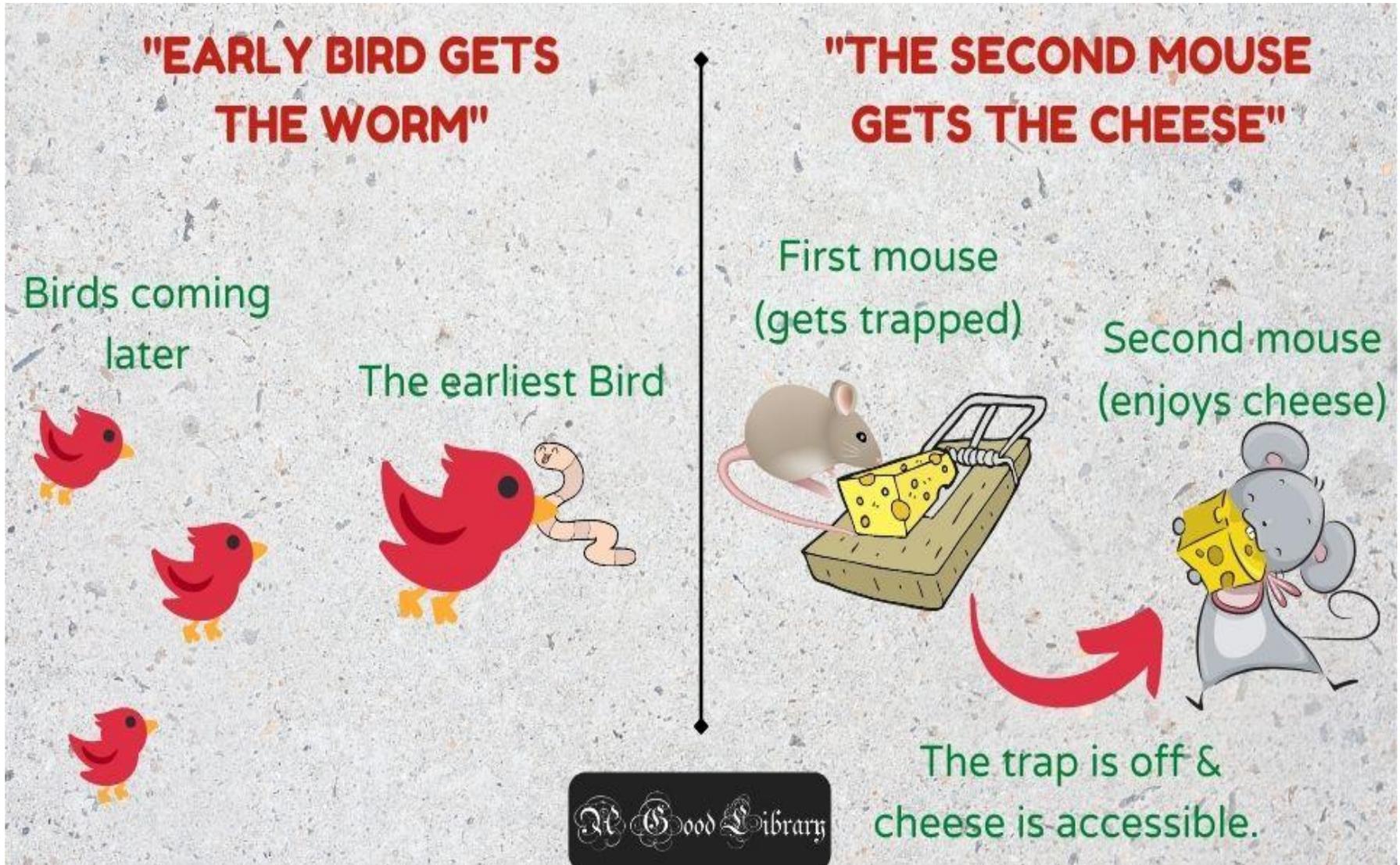


# SECTION I

**Getting Prepared For A Grant**

**A Research Grant Defined**

# Getting to know you – Self Evaluation and Reflection



# So what are you?

**Early bird**



**Second Mouse**



**Defines**

**Area of Specialization  
(Expertise)**



**AREA OF SPECIALIZATION**

**RESEARCH INTEREST**

**TYPE OF PROBLEMS YOU CAN SOLVE**

**GRANTS OPPORTUNITIES**

**ABILITY TO WIN A GRANT**



## Activity 1

### Individual activity... Self evaluation and Reflection



Write the following on the sticky paper with A, B and C

**A:** Your area of specialization (Expertise)

**B:** Your major research interest for the next 5 years

**C:** One problem you intend to solve

### We want to know:

- what are we working on,
- what skills do we bring, and
- what connections do we need?"



## Activity 2

### Digital Live Polling

Using Microsoft Teams/Mentimeter / Slido / Padlet:



- **Q1 (Word cloud):** What area of nutrition are you working on?
- **Q2 (Open text list):** What skills or expertise can you offer to others?
- **Q3 (Open text list):** What skills, expertise, or networks do you need?

→ *Live visualization projected on screen (creates excitement + immediate insight).*

## Activity 3



### Marketplace Wall

- Two sticky notes are given to each participant and they write on them:
  - Note 1: “I Can Offer...”
  - Note 2: “I Need...”

→ Retrieve sticky notes and place them on the boards in a strategic location.

builds a physical record of collaborations.

This stays throughout the conference

- **Board 1:** “I Can Offer...”
- **Board 2:** “I Need...”
- **Icebreaker**



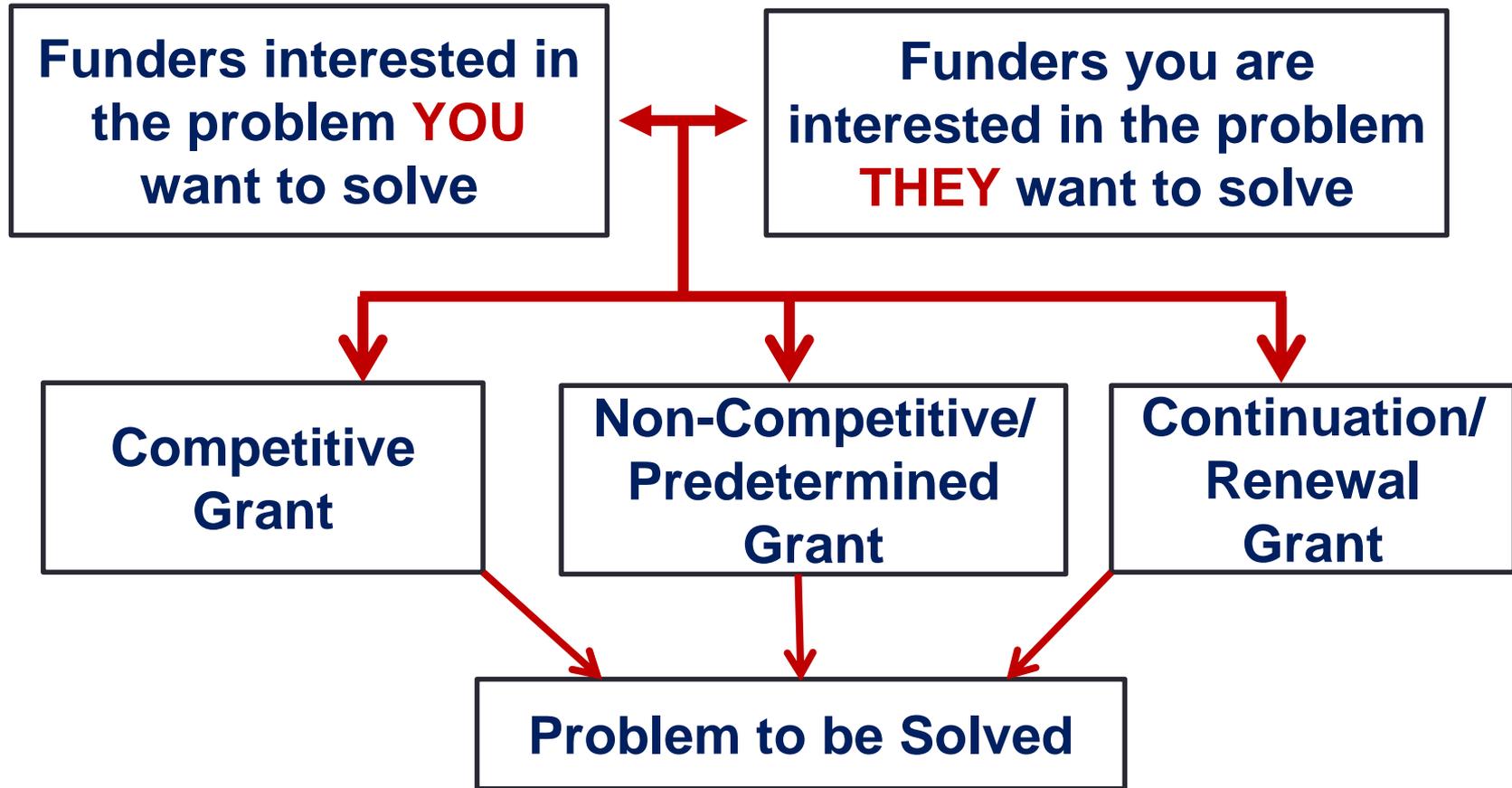
## A Research Grant Defined

A research grant is a non-repayable financial award given to an individual or organization to conduct a specific research project.

These grants are awarded based on merit through a competitive application process and come from sources such as government agencies, private foundations, and corporations.

The goal is to support scientific advancements and address global challenges (solve problems) by providing the necessary funds for researchers to explore new ideas and develop innovative solutions.

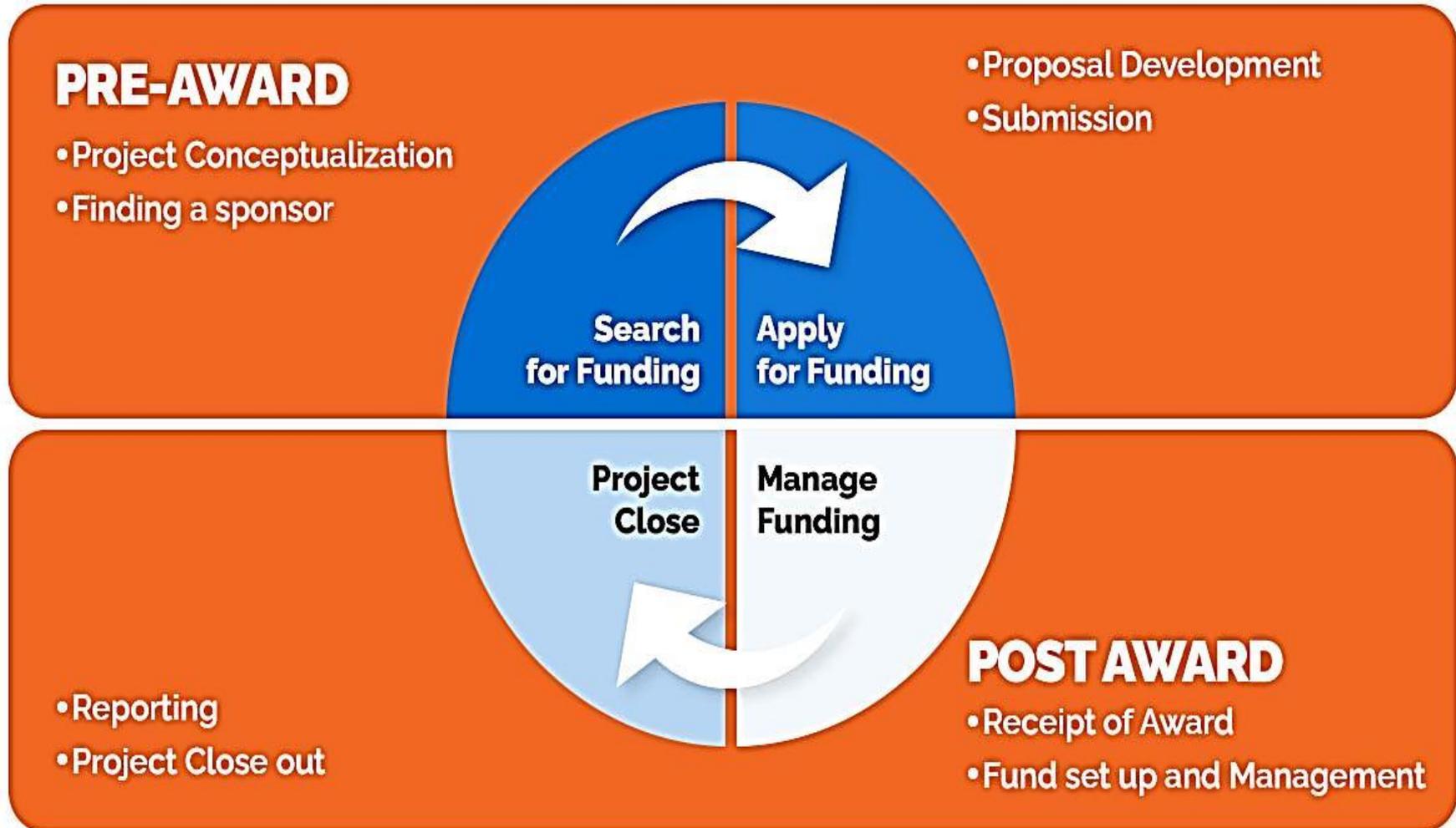
# GRANTS OPPORTUNITIES AND FUNDERS



If you can't solve a **PROBLEM**... You can't get a **GRANT**



# Pre and Post Grant Award Activities



# Success Stories:





# TEA BREAK

The text "TEA BREAK" is written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. To the right of the word "TEA", there is a small icon of a teacup with steam rising from it. To the right of the teacup icon is a black silhouette of a person sitting and holding a cup to their mouth, drinking. The person's legs are crossed at the ankles.



# SECTION II

## Overview of Key Steps in Grant Writing



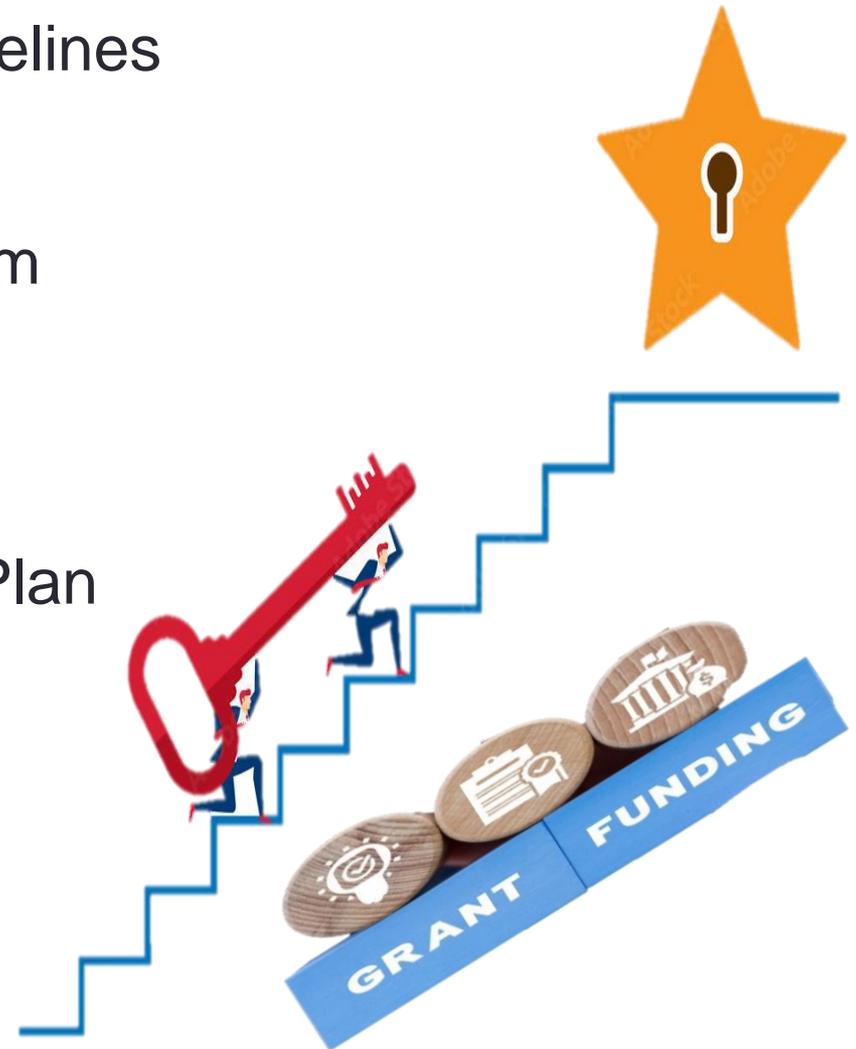
# EFFECTIVE GRANTSMANSHIP

## Three Core Components of Effective Grant Writing “3 Cs”

- **Concept**            (*Idea/Problem to be solved*)
- **Company**           (*Team*)
- **Content**            (*Proposal write up*)

# Overview of Key Steps in Grant Writing

- Understand Funders and Guidelines
- Concept Development
- Forming the Grant Writing Team
- Writing the Proposal
- Developing the Budget
- Evaluation and Sustainability Plan
- Final Review and Submission



# 1. Understand Funders and Guidelines

**Understanding funders in a research grant is critically important because it allows applicants to tailor their proposals to align with the funder's specific mission, priorities, and funding criteria. .**

- Tailoring your proposal to align with these priorities increases chances of success.
- Research funders' priorities and requirements
- Read the RFP (Request for Proposal) carefully
- Follow application instructions precisely



*Some funders don't fund researches that involve use of animal for experiments*



## Practical Steps to Understand a Funder

- Review their website, calls for proposals, and strategy documents.
- Study their past funded projects to see trends.
- Attend funder webinars, workshops, or networking events.
- Reach out to program officers for clarifications.
- Network with previous grantees to learn funder expectations.

**A great idea can be rejected if it doesn't align with the priorities, values, or style of the funding body.**



## 2. Concept Development

***This is the foundation of any grant proposal.  
Before writing, you need a clear, fundable idea.***

- Identify the problem or need
- Define clear project goals and objectives
- Align project with funder's mission and priorities
- Develop a theory of change or logic model:
  - Inputs (resources you need)
  - Activities (what you'll do)
  - Outputs (tangible products or services delivered)
  - Outcomes (short- and long-term changes you expect)



## Quick Formula for Idea Selection:

A good grant problem is:

- **Relevant** (affects many or is urgent)
- **Evidence-based** (data supports it)
- **Funder-aligned** (fits their priorities)
- **Actionable** (you can realistically address it with your expertise and budget)



## Building Personal Capacity to Develop Fundable Concepts:

- **Lifelong Learning Attitude (Growth Mindset)**
  - Self-Motivation and Curiosity
  - Sensitive to your environment
  - Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
  - Collaboration and Communication
- **Professional Exposure and Experience**
  - You can be exposed without gaining experience
  - You cannot gain experience without being exposed
  - For experience to be gained there must be intentional exposure
- **Strong Theoretical and Practical knowledge**
  - Knowledge of evidence around you e.g. national surveys (e.g., NDHS, SMART surveys), WHO/UNICEF reports, local health facility data.
  - Knowledge of community, national and global priorities (policies)
  - Ability to identify trends: rising malnutrition, poor maternal health indicators, food insecurity, diet-related NCDs.

## What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?

FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
 <p>✗ This is too hard, I give up</p>	 <p>✓ I will persevere &amp; keep trying</p>
<p>✗ I made a mistake</p>	<p>✓ Mistakes help me grow</p>
<p>✗ I don't know how</p>	<p>✓ I can learn how &amp; improve</p>
<p>✗ This isn't working</p>	<p>✓ I'll try a different way</p>
<p>✗ I'm not good enough</p>	<p>✓ I will put in my best effort</p>



www.irleducation.org.uk

## Transforming your Growth Mindset into Fundable Concepts

### Identify Opportunities Instead of Barriers

*Growth mindset:* "Challenges can be solved with effort and collaboration."

### Turn Curiosity into Research Questions

*Growth mindset:* Curiosity drives learning.

### Emphasize Collaboration and Capacity Building

*Growth mindset:* "I can learn from others and build stronger teams."

### Show Resilience Through Pilot Evidence

*Growth mindset:* "Failure is feedback."

### Align Vision with Funders' Priorities

*Growth mindset:* Flexible adaptation to context.



### 3. Forming the Grant Team (Company)

***Grant writing is rarely a solo activity.  
A strong team increases chances of success.***

- **Key Roles:**

- ***Principal Investigator / Project Lead:*** Oversees project vision and execution.
- ***Grant Writer:*** Drafts and coordinates the proposal.
- ***Subject Matter Experts:*** Provide technical input.
- ***Finance/Budget Officer:*** Ensures accurate costing and compliance.
- ***Partners/Collaborators:*** NGOs, universities, government agencies, or community organizations.
- ***Evaluator:*** Designs monitoring and evaluation plan.

- **Teamwork Tips:**

- Hold a kick-off meeting to clarify responsibilities.
- Create a timeline with deadlines for each section.
- Use shared tools for collaboration (Google Docs, Trello, MS Teams, etc.)

## 4. Writing the Grant Proposal

## (Content)

***A typical grant proposal has structured sections.  
Always follow the funder's guidelines.***

- Use clear, concise, and compelling language
- Use data and evidence to support need
- Show the impact and feasibility of your project



### ***Typical sections of a grant proposal:***

- Cover Page / Abstract
- Background and Problem Statement
- Goals and Objectives
- Methodology and Work Plan
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Sustainability Plan
- Budget and Justification





## 5. Developing the Budget

## (Content)

**The budget must reflect and support the activities described.**

**It's both a financial plan and a demonstration of accountability.**

- Align budget with project activities
- Include direct and indirect costs
- Match the scope of work to the budget.
- Avoid under- or over-estimating (**especially on personnel cost**)
- Ensure compliance with donor's cost rules.
- Include co-funding/matching contributions if required.
- Justify significant expenses clearly –
  - ✓ Explain why each cost is necessary.
  - ✓ Be transparent and realistic.

- **Typical Budget Categories:**

- *Personnel:* Salaries, stipends, consultants.
- *Fringe Benefits:* Health, retirement, etc.
- *Travel:* Field visits, conferences, training.
- *Equipment:* One-time purchases (computers, lab equipment).
- *Supplies:* Office, field, training materials.
- *Other Direct Costs:* Workshops, printing, data collection.
- *Indirect Costs:* Overhead/administrative costs (often a % allowed by the funder).





## 6. Evaluation Plan (Content)

**Including evaluation in a grant proposal proves that your project is results-driven, accountable, and evidence-based. It assures funders that their investment will be measured, reported, and used to improve future programming.**

- **Demonstrates Accountability** - outlines how you will measure the effectiveness of the project, ensuring that you are accountable for the outcomes.
- **Measures Success** - provides a framework for assessing whether the project's objectives are being met.
- **Informs Decision-Making** - helps in gathering data that can guide future decisions.
- **Enhances Credibility** - funders are more likely to invest in projects that have a clear method for assessing their effectiveness.
- **Facilitates Communication with Stakeholders** - offers a basis for communicating progress and results to stakeholders, including funders, team members, and the community.



## To develop Evaluation plan:

- Define measurable outcomes by defining clear metrics and indicators
- Include evaluation methods and timeline
- Explain how results will be used for improvement

## Types of Evaluation Common in Grant Proposals:

- **Formative Evaluation:** Done during project design to refine plans.
- **Process/Implementation Evaluation:** Tracks how activities are carried out.
- **Outcome Evaluation:** Measures short- and medium-term results.
- **Impact Evaluation:** Assesses long-term, broader changes.

**Evaluation Plan strengthens your case for scaling up or expanding the project**



## 7. Sustainability Plan (Content)

**A sustainability plan explains how the project outcomes will be maintained or scaled up even after external funding ends. A well-written sustainability plan increases chances of funding approval.**

- **Builds donor confidence** — they want to see lasting impact beyond the grant period.
- **Ensures long-term impact** – project not dying off without lasting benefits.
- **Encourages local ownership** - promotes empowerment and builds capacity of local stakeholders.
- **Diversifies funding** - reduces over-reliance on a single grant.

**A sustainability plan proves that your project is not a one-off intervention but a long-term solution with community ownership, diversified support, and lasting results.**



**Funders often score sustainability highly in evaluation.  
A well-written sustainability plan can set your proposal  
apart from competitors.**

### **Examples of Sustainability Strategies**

- Embedding project activities into government programs or policies.
- Training community volunteers to continue services.
- Establishing income-generating activities to support operations.
- Partnerships with private sector or NGOs for co-funding and uptake.
- Capacity building so beneficiaries can manage activities independently.

**A good sustainability plan is a concept for more grants in the future**



# 8. Developing the timeline

# (Content)

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL TIMELINE GANTT CHART **TEMPLATE**

Visual planning tool outlining research tasks, milestones, and timeframes effectively.

### Gantt Chart

Task Name	Q1 2019			Q2 2019		Q3 2019
	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	Jun 19	Jul 19
Planning	[Task Bar]					
Research		[Task Bar]				
Design			[Task Bar]			
Implementation				[Task Bar]		
Follow up						[Task Bar]

# Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Content Development

AI offers powerful tools for grant professionals:

- **Research Assistance:** Tools like ChatGPT streamline research into funding opportunities.
- **Proposal Drafting:** AI can create drafts tailored to specific funding agencies, improving alignment with solicitation requirements.
- **Data Analysis:** AI identifies trends in funding, competitive landscapes, and key performance metrics, guiding strategic decisions.



**Reminder:** It is the grant professional's responsibility to always verify the information generated by AI.



## Key Ethical Principles for AI Use:

- **Transparency:** Disclose the role AI plays in the grant-writing process to maintain trust with funding agencies.
- **Accuracy:** Validate AI-generated content to ensure it meets scientific, technical, or regulatory requirements.
- **Confidentiality:** Use secure platforms, especially when handling proprietary or sensitive information.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure AI tools meet industry standards and do not introduce compliance risks.

for more information please see: <https://ai.gov/>.

## 9. Final Review and Submission

**Review and Refine  
your Project before  
submission**



- Proofread and edit thoroughly
- Obtain necessary approvals and attachments

**Submit your proposal before the  
deadline.**

**SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL**

**Submit before the deadline with all required  
attachments**



## Activity 4:



### "From Idea to Proposal: Hands on Grant Writing"

- Participants will be given numbers during registration based on their affiliation – 1 (academia), 2 (Hospital), 3 (Govt. MDAs), 4 (Dev. Partners/donors), 5 (Corporate organisations)
- Each group will be made up of members with each number – 1,2,3,4,5
- Each group are given 4 different Request for Proposals (RFPs)
  - Nestle Foundation RFP
  - Grand Challenges Nigeria RFP
  - Nutriset Development RFP
  - xxxxxx
- Each group will develop a grant proposal (using the steps presented) **(1hour)**





## Activity 5

### Proposal presentation and Peer review of grant proposal

- Presentation of proposal: Each group will present their proposal **(10min)**.
- Peer review: Other groups will be given an assessment template to score the presenting group.
- Feedback will be given based on the review criteria
- Interaction

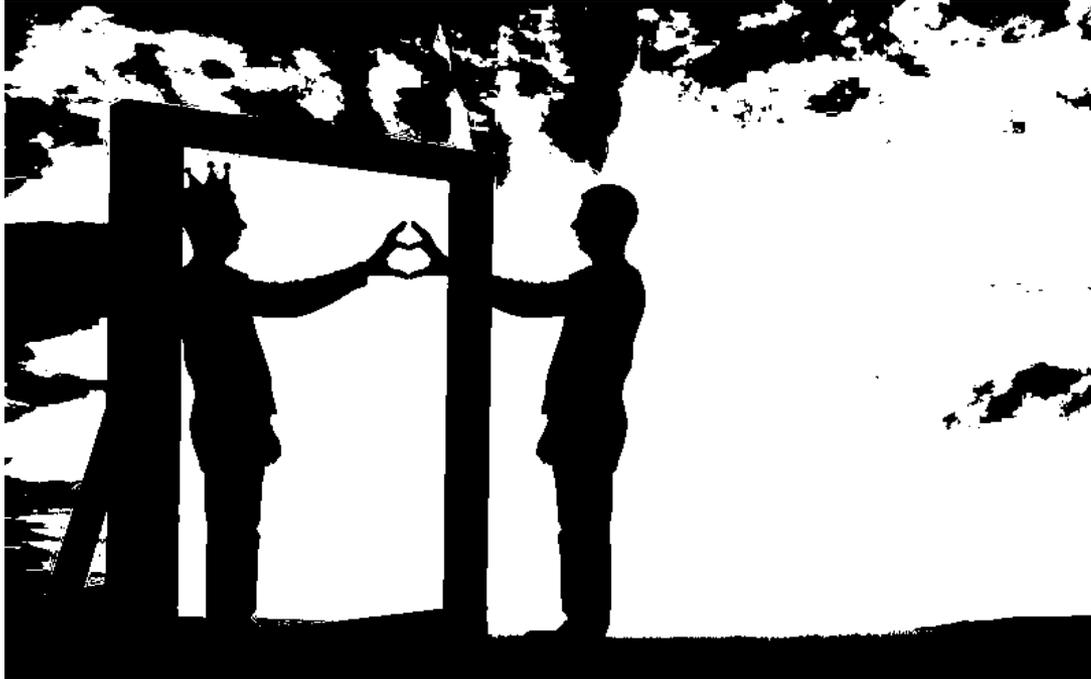


# SECTION III

**Your Image Matters**

**Grant Management**

# Your Image Matters



**your image (as an organization or individual applicant) plays a huge role in whether a grant is awarded. Funders don't just fund ideas, they fund the people and institutions behind them.**



## Why your image matters in winning a grant:

- **Credibility and Trustworthiness** - A professional image (presentations, online presence, publications, track record) builds donor confidence.
- **Demonstrates Capacity** - Your past achievements, qualifications, and organizational experience show that you can deliver results.

### Funders often ask:

*“Can this team actually carry out what they are proposing?”*

- **Long-Term Relationships** - Funders don't just look at the current proposal — they see whether you could be a future partner.

**Your image - credibility, professionalism, track record, and alignment with donor values - can make or break your grant application.**

**A well written grant proposal may fail if the researcher of institution fails the due diligence check**



# Grants Management Overview

**Pre-Award Management**

**Post-Award / Implementation Management**

**Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting**

**Communication and Stakeholder Engagement**

**Grant Closeout**



## Pre-Award Management

Activities before receiving the grant:

- **Understanding the grant agreement** – reviewing donor guidelines, terms, and conditions.
- **Compliance planning** – identifying financial, legal, and reporting requirements.
- **Capacity assessment** – ensuring the team, systems, and structures are ready to manage the grant.



## Post-Award / Implementation Management

- Day-to-day administration after the grant is awarded:
- **Project Start-Up**
  - Setting up financial systems and workplans.
  - Orienting the project team on donor requirements.
- **Financial Management**
  - Budget tracking and control.
  - Ensuring eligible and allowable expenses.
  - Maintaining proper financial records and audits.
- **Programmatic/Technical Management**
  - Implementing project activities as per the workplan.
  - Monitoring outputs, outcomes, and impact.
  - Adjusting activities when needed (with funder approval).
- **Compliance & Risk Management**
  - Adhering to donor rules, procurement standards, and ethical guidelines.
  - Identifying and mitigating risks.

# Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:

- **Progress Monitoring** – comparing actual results with planned objectives.
- **Evaluation** – assessing effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
- **Reporting** – preparing narrative and financial reports for the donor (monthly, quarterly, annual).



## Communication and Stakeholder Engagement:

- Keeping funders, partners, and beneficiaries informed.
- Sharing success stories and lessons learned.
- Managing relationships with the donor to build trust for future funding.

### BENEFITS OF **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**



## Grant Closeout:

# WHAT IS GRANT CLOSEOUT?

- Final financial reconciliation and audits.
- Submission of final programmatic and financial reports.
- Documenting lessons learned and best practices.
- Ensuring sustainability of project outcomes beyond the grant period.



# SECTION IV

**Interaction**

**Conclusion**

# INTERACTION



# Conclusion

## *To win a grant:*

- Develop a strong concept backed by evidence
- Build a skilled and collaborative team
- Write a clear, compelling, and funder-aligned proposal
- Prepare a realistic, transparent, and justified budget

**Grant success = Preparation + Clarity + Strategy**





# Research Grant

**APPROVED**

*Thank You*