

# How to Choose your Topic and Bootstrap your Project

Avoiding the trap of the never-ending grant application

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Which of the four propositions help us choose the project?

Project Bootstrap - CV Question

Project Bootstrap Institution and Agency

Subproject checklist

## Which of the four propositions help us choose the project?

- ▶ **IMPORTANCE:** The research problem is important to the funder, as defined by their remit.
- ▶ **SUCCESS:** The project offers a realistic promise of a solution
  - ▶ Research Design
  - ▶ Dissemination
- ▶ **VALUE:** The resources requested are:-
  - ▶ Necessary
  - ▶ Sufficient
    - ▶ Appropriate to the scale of the problem
- ▶ **COMPETENCE:** PI, team and institution are capable of carrying out the project.

## Project Bootstrap - CV Question

- ▶ What kind of research activity do you want to do?
- ▶ Do you have publications that demonstrate that you have successfully used the necessary techniques?
  - ▶ If not, consider
    - ▶ Changing to an area where you have appropriate publications.
    - ▶ Collaborating with a colleague who has the techniques?
    - ▶ Applying for a training grant or travel grant to learn the techniques and publish?
    - ▶ Applying for grant funds or institutional funds for someone who has the techniques to visit and work with you?
    - ▶ Collecting pilot data?
    - ▶ Building a research team with people who have appropriate publications (Would you be a credible PI?)

## Project Bootstrap Institution and Agency

- ▶ Does your institution have the basic infrastructure for this activity?
  - ▶ If not, consider
    - ▶ Changing activity
    - ▶ Applying for a travel grant or fellowship to visit (or move to) an institution that does have the infrastructure.
    - ▶ Applying for funds to establish the infrastructure?
- ▶ Do the agencies to which you are considering applying support this type of activity?
  - ▶ Discuss with agencies and consider changing type of activity.

## Subproject checklist

### Questions about the description of the sub-project

- ▶ Does the description of the sub-project say what kind of research activity it will involve and what new knowledge it will tell us?
  - ▶ Does it do this in a single sentence?
  - ▶ Does the sentence come at the beginning?
- ▶ Does it list specific research activities?
- ▶ Does it say who will undertake each activity?
- ▶ Does it say when the activity will be done?
  - ▶ Or does it refer to a schedule or Gantt chart?
- ▶ Does it describe methods directly?
  - ▶ Or refer back to a methods section?
  - ▶ Or refer to published literature?
- ▶ Does it say how long it will take?

## Subproject Checklist:- Resources

- ▶ Does it say what resources will be used?
  - ▶ Including staff time
    - ▶ Including the PI's time
- ▶ Does it say which resources will be provided by the institution and which by the grant?
- ▶ Does it describe the processes that will lead from the research activity to the new knowledge?
  - ▶ Does it say how the new knowledge will be disseminated?
  - ▶ Or does it say where dissemination will be discussed?

## Subproject Checklist: Questions to be noted and resolved elsewhere.

- ▶ Will it be easy to make the case that the new knowledge is important?
  - ▶ Add it to the list of discoveries.
- ▶ Are the new resources going to be good value for money?
  - ▶ Add them to the list of resources to be requested.
- ▶ Are the institutional resources (including PI time) going to be available?
- ▶ Does the PI have publications that demonstrate competence in the methods to be used for research and data analysis
  - ▶ Add them to the list of competences.