UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

INNOVATION EXCHANGE AMSTERDAM

Navigating the Funding Landscape

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AGENDA

1. Introduction to IXA
2. The importance of grant applications
3. The funding landscape
4. How to approach grant writing
5. How to structure your proposal
6. Common pitfalls
7. Application procedures
8. Q&A

INNOVATION EXCHANGE AMSTERDAM IXA

1. INTRODUCTION TO IXA

Innovation Exchange Amsterdam is the knowledge transfer office for Amsterdam's universities.

How We Support UvA Researchers?

- Support for Research Grants
- Facilitate Collaborations with External Partners
- Valorization of UvA Scientific Results
- Support Spin-off and Start-up Initiatives
- Provide Legal Advice



IXA UvA

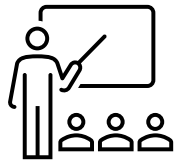
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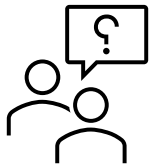
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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GRANT ADVISORS

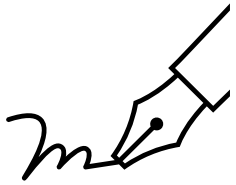
- Pre-award (not involved during project implementation)
- Research applications (no teaching / travel applications)
- National and international grants
- Individual and consortium applications (with UvA researcher as PI)



- Read proposals & rebuttals, make suggestions, provide feedback (no writing, no project management activities)
- Give feedback for grant interview presentations
- Organize mock-interview training sessions
- Provide post-evaluation analysis



2. THE IMPORTANCE OF GRANT APPLICATIONS



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HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR A RESEARCH GRANT BEFORE?

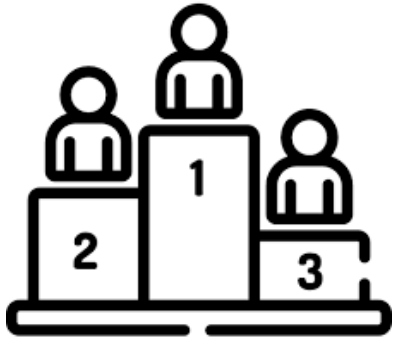


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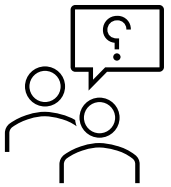
IMPORTANCE OF APPLYING

Competition is high !

- ERC Starting Grant Success Rate: Approximately 14.2% in 2024
- ERC Consolidator Grant Success Rate: Approximately 14.5% in 2023
- NWO Veni Success Rate: Around 13% in 2023
- NWO Vidi Success Rate: Approximately 12.3% in 2023
- EIC Pathfinder Success Rate: Approximately 10%



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF RESEARCH FUNDING?

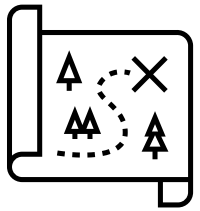


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BENEFITS OF RESEARCH FUNDING

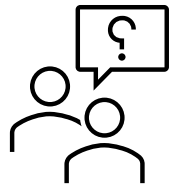
- RESEARCH: Consolidation of existing research lines. Establishment of novel, exciting research lines.
- NETWORKS: Emergence of new (inter)national and/or (inter)disciplinary collaborations. Strengthening and deepening of pre-existing collaborations.
- IMPACT: Attainment of broader scientific, societal, technological or economic impact.
- SKILLS: Acquisition of project management and leadership skills. Mastery of new techniques or analyses.
- CAREER: Accelerated career progression. Acquisition of prestige, reputation and visibility.

3. THE FUNDING LANDSCAPE



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WHAT KIND OF PROPOSAL ARE YOU CONSIDERING?



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SHAPES, SIZES & FLAVOURS

- Individual or collaborative?
- Top down or bottom up?
- National or international?
- Pre-proposal or full proposal?
- Short-term or long-term funding?
- With or without non-academic partners?



ENSURE ALIGNMENT!

- Whatever your reasons for applying for funding, ensure that on paper your motivations align with those of the funder!
- Each funding agency has specific **underlying policy priorities** (e.g. EU/EC, NWO, ZonMw).
- These often vary per call and are usually defined explicitly in the call for proposals. Take the time to read this!
- How do they relate to national (e.g. NWA) or international (e.g. UN's SDGs) policies?
- Where do you and your science/plan fit into this picture? Is there a clear match?
- Is this a good moment?

DUTCH FUNDING LANDSCAPE





NWO

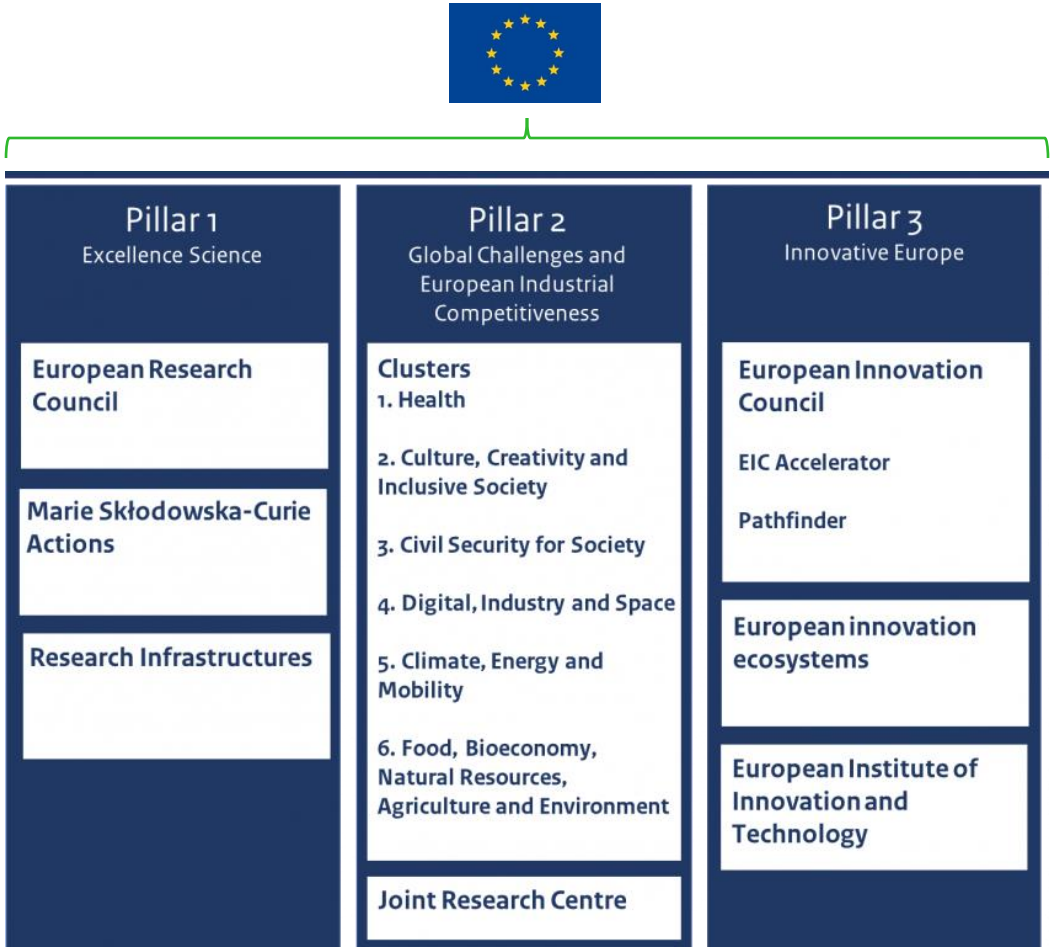
ZonMw

	Personal or Collab?	Bottom-Up?	Pre-proposal?	Short term?	Non-academic partners?
Veni, Vidi, Vici		✓	✓	✗	✗
Open Competition		✓	?	?	✗
Rubicon		✓	✗	✓	✗
NWA ORC		✗	✓	✗	✓
Gravitation		✓	✗	✗	✗
KIC		✗	✓	✗	✓

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EUROPEAN FUNDING LANDSCAPE: HORIZON EUROPE

- EU's flagship R&D programme 2021-2027 (€95.5B)
- Pillar 1 (Excellent Science): aims to bring and keep science in Europe at the highest level
- Pillar 2 (Global Challenges): focuses on the major challenges the EU and the world are facing
- Pillar 3 (Innovative Europe): focuses on innovations that strengthen the competitiveness of the EU



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EUROPEAN FUNDING LANDSCAPE: SELECTED GRANTS

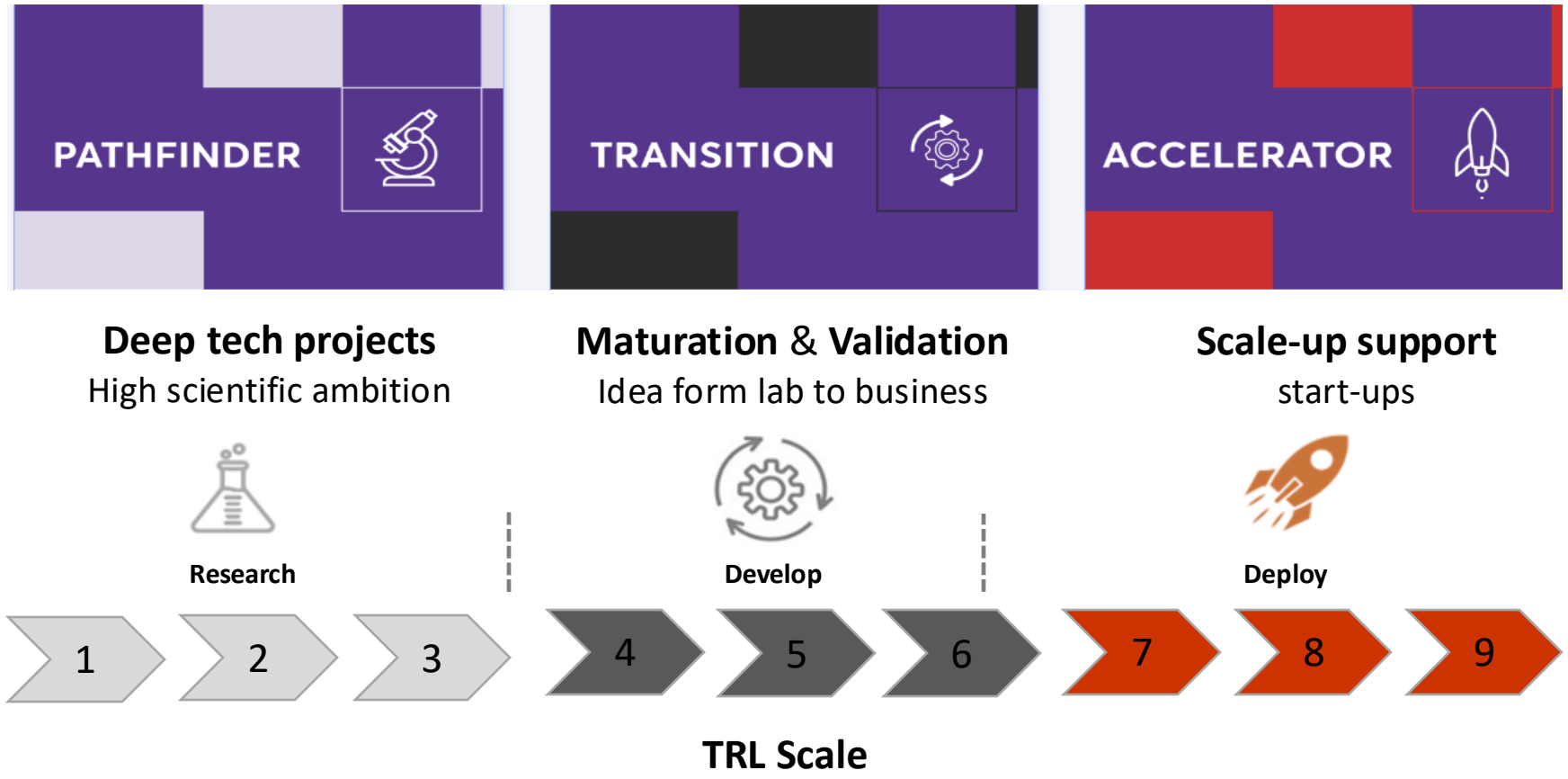




	Personal or Collab?	Bottom-Up?	Pre-proposal?	Short term?	Non-academic partners?
European Research Council StG, CoG, AdG, SyG	Personal	✓	✗	✗	✗
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships	Personal	✓	✗	✓	?
Pillar 2: Global Challenges	Collab	✗	?	✗	✓

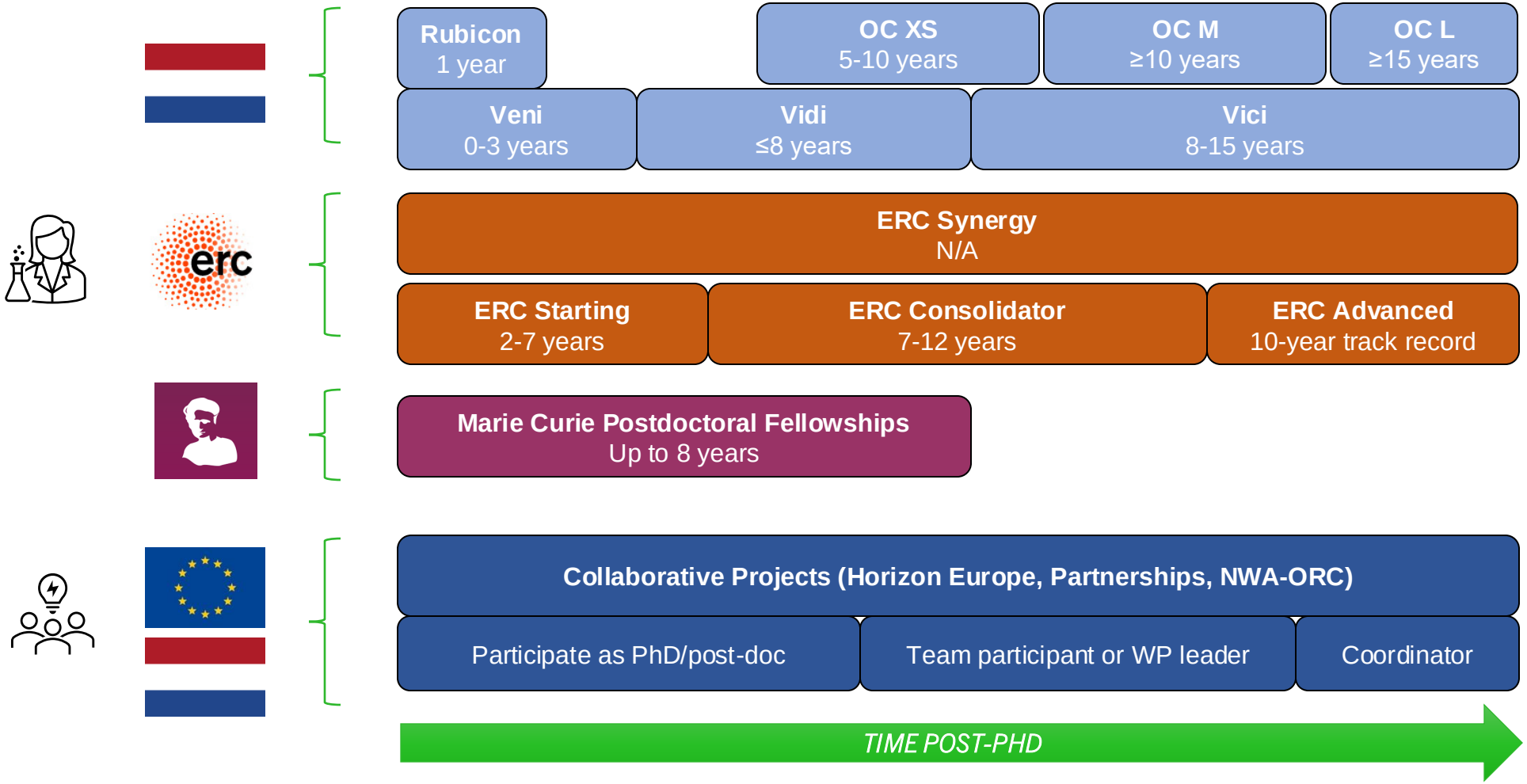
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EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL (PILLAR 3)



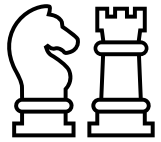
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ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS



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4. HOW TO APPROACH GRANT WRITING



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START BY ARRANGING SUPPORT

- TIMING: Start as early as possible and don't forget bureaucracy. Ideally 3 months in advance or longer for more complex proposals (e.g. ERC).
- GRANT ADVISORS: Plan for several rounds of feedback from your grant advisor(s).
- COLLEAGUES: Leave time for your colleagues to read your proposal drafts. Their expert input complements the overview provided by your grant advisor(s).
- EXAMPLES: If possible, learn from colleagues by reading successful proposals from the same scheme.

START WITH THE FORMALITIES

- EVALUATION CRITERIA: Consider the weighting of the criteria
  - Marie Curie: Excellence **50%**; Impact **30%**; Implementation **20%**
  - Veni Pre-Proposal: Candidate Profile **100%**
- REVIEW PROCESS: Read the call for proposals. Is there a 1-step (e.g. OC-XS), 2-step (e.g. ERC StG) or 3-step (e.g. ERC SyG) evaluation? Is there a rebuttal? Is there an interview? When will you know the results of each stage?
- PANEL: Do your research on the correct panel. Where do your proposal and your profile fit best? Who's been on the panel in the past? With whom are you competing? Have proposals in the same area been granted recently? What is the added value of your idea?
- BUREAUCRACY: **Notify your project office and financial controllers**. Do you need an embedding guarantee or host institution letter? Start discussions early!

CHOOSING THE TOPIC AND TITLE

- The topic should be of a reasonable scope and scale, appropriate for your career stage and what you propose.
- Look to the future. This is what you are going to do in the coming years. Will it still be important or relevant in 4-5 years?
- Be strategic and take control of your career line by considering your ambitions for the future.
- Your title should not be a mouthful. Simplicity sells.
- A catchy acronym is useful, but a coherent proposal weighs more heavily.
- Don’t underestimate the importance of a good abstract.

KEEP THE AUDIENCE IN MIND

- BALANCE: Consider that it will be read by both *experts* and a *broadly composed* assessment committee. Language and explanations should therefore also be understandable to non-experts.
- It should be convincing for experts and understandable for non-experts!
- HELP THE EVALUATORS! Follow the template's exact structure and put everything where the evaluators expect it.
- Use a clear layout and highlight the essentials using sub-headings to break up the text. Start each paragraph directly with the most important message. Write confidently, using direct language.

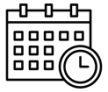
6. COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID



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MISSING DEADLINES OR ADMINISTRATIVE ERRORS

Challenges:



Overlooking submission deadlines or time zone differences.



Incomplete forms or missing mandatory documents.

Solutions:

- Use a detailed checklist and submission timeline.
- Double-check guidelines and required attachments.
- Submit early to account for technical issues.

WEAK IMPACT SECTIONS

Challenges:



Failing to clearly demonstrate the societal, scientific, or economic relevance of your project.

Generic or vague descriptions of impact.

Solutions:

- Highlight specific, measurable outcomes (e.g., publications, new technologies, policy influence).
- Address how the project benefits stakeholders beyond academia.

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POORLY JUSTIFIED BUDGETS

Challenges:



Budget discrepancies or lack of clarity in spending allocation.

Costs not aligned with project goals or funder guidelines.

Solutions:

- Provide a clear and detailed budget breakdown.
- Justify each cost item in terms of project deliverables and impact.
- Ensure alignment with funder's financial rules.

SCIENTIFIC WRITING VS GRANT WRITING

Academic Writing

- **Researcher-centered:** Scholarly passion
- **Past-oriented:** Work you have done
- **Expository:** Explaining to the reader
- **Impersonal:** Objective, dispassionate
- **Individualistic:** Usually a solo activity
- **Verbosity rewarded:** Few length constraints
- **Specialized terminology:** "Insider jargon"

"World of ideas'' Thesis, themes, theory…



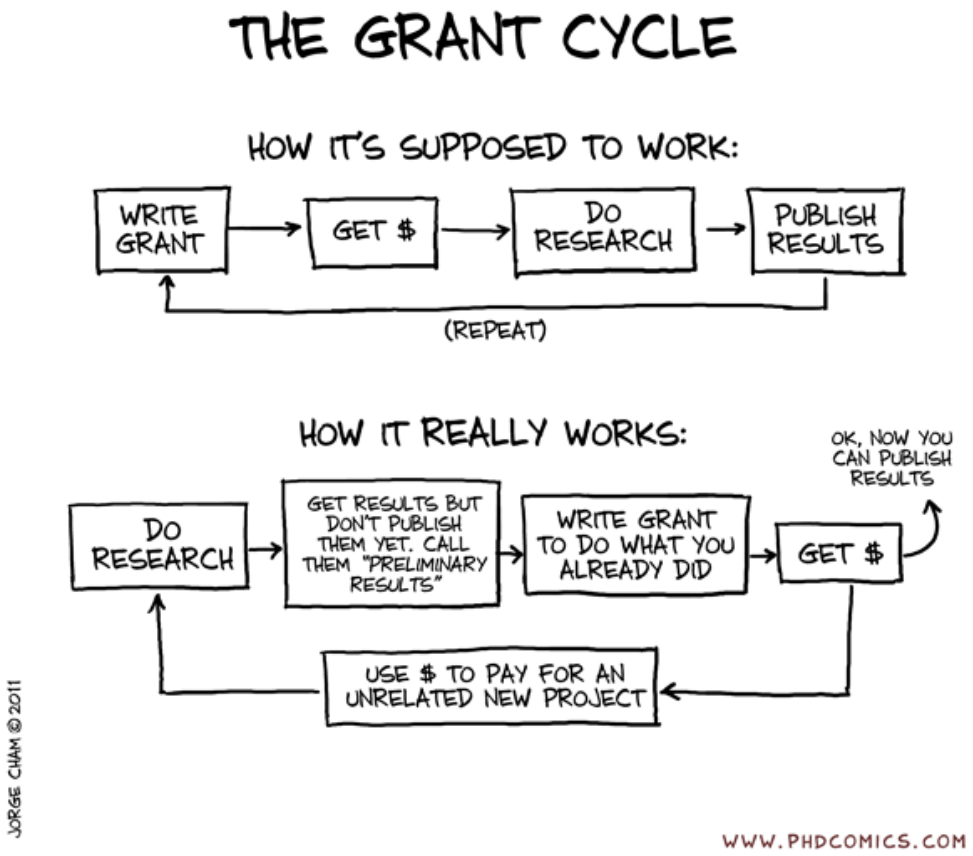
Grant Writing

- **Sponsor-centered**: Service attitude
- **Future-oriented**: *Work you wish to do*
- **Persuasive**: *"Sell"* the reader
- **Personal**: Convey excitement
- **Team-oriented**: Feedback needed
- **Brevity rewarded**: Strict length constraints
- **Accessible language**: Broad audience

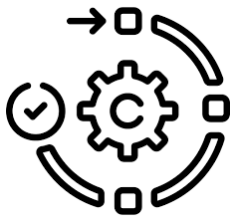
"World of actions" Projects, activities, outcomes…

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REALITY……


THE GRANT CYCLE
HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK:
WRITE GRANT
GET $
DO RESEARCH
PUBLISH RESULTS
(REPEAT)
HOW IT REALLY WORKS:
DO RESEARCH
GET RESULTS BUT DON'T PUBLISH THEM YET. CALL THEM "PRELIMINARY RESULTS"
WRITE GRANT TO DO WHAT YOU ALREADY DID
GET $
OK, NOW YOU CAN PUBLISH RESULTS
USE $ TO PAY FOR AN UNRELATED NEW PROJECT
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7. APPLICATION PROCEDURES



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8. Q & A



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