ADVICE AND TOOLS
FOR YOUR GRANT PROPOSAL

AARHUS
UNIVERSITY

HELP WITH YOUR PROPOSAL

Do you need to apply for funding for your research?

In this brochure, we have collected some useful tips on how to write an effective grant proposal. For example, you will find tips on writing a project description and tools to present your CV and budget clearly and understandably.

CONTENT

FIND **FOUNDATIONS**

Our foundation database www.researchfunding.net can help you find foundations that are relevant for your project.

GETTING STARTED

1. Create a profile in the foundation database ResearchFunding.Net.: www.researchfunding.net/
2. Search for relevant foundations using the database's search functions.
3. For each foundation you are interested in, check whether you are eligible to submit a proposal, and whether the foundation grants money to the kinds of costs involved in your project.
4. Find out what the requirements are for the structure of your proposal as well as any other requirements and guidelines that apply for the foundation in question.

ABOUT RESEARCHFUNDING.NET

- Contains ~800 different Danish and international foundations within all fields of research.
- Contains information about foundations'/funders' focus areas, objectives, deadlines, application procedures, etc.
- Gives you the option of subscribing to news updates about foundations that are relevant to your area of interest
- Gives you the option of receiving a reminder when the deadline for a particular foundation is coming up (60 days before the deadline).

Photo: Jesper Rais.

THE PROPOSAL- AN OVERVIEW

A proposal is typically comprised of the following elements/documents:

- Application form or cover letter
- Proposal summary
- Proposal description
- Lay summary
- CV
- List of publications
- Budget
- Any offers on equipment
- Any statements/declarations of support

The guidelines for the structure and contents of a proposal vary from foundation to foundation. For this reason, you should always check precisely which documents should be included in the proposal you submit to a particular fund

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

If you are not required to include an application form, you can include a cover letter instead. A cover letter should not exceed one page in length. A detailed description of the project should be included in the project description instead.

See an example on how to write your cover letter at www.au.dk/fse under "Advice and tools for your grant proposal"

Photo: Lise Balsby

I **COVER LETTER TEMPLATE**
See an example on how to write your cover letter at www.au.dk/fse under "Advice and tools for your grant proposal" (section "The proposal – an overview) .

THE PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The project summary is a concise summary of the most important points in the project description and should be able to function as an extremely brief independent presentation of the project.

POLISH YOUR SUMMARY – SELL YOUR PRODUCT

In terms of content, the project summary is similar to the lay summary. The major difference is that the target audience of the project summary is not a lay audience. Using scientific/technical terminology is therefore acceptable in the project summary. Nonetheless, you should investigate who will be evaluating your proposal, and you should ensure that the language of your summary is tailored to this particular audience.

Many evaluators read summaries (or the lay summaries) first, using them as a tool to roughly identify

- which projects are eligible for support by the foundation
- which projects sound particularly interesting.

For this reason, it is absolutely essential that you describe your project clearly, concisely and not least persuasively. In short, you must try to 'sell' your project. If you are in a position to quantify how your results will make a difference, this is often an easily understood and convincing sales argument.

. . . .

Examples of measurable effects:
- Optimizing processes in a way that allows a company to save time or money
- Increasing patients' chances of surviving a serious disease
- Reducing pesticide use.

. . . .

Not all projects aim to produce quantifiable results. In such cases, you should explain what effect your project will have on society. If your project has no direct effect on society, explain what secondary or derived effects it might have.

. . . .

Examples of derived effects:
- Paving the way for the development of new research projects
- Removing the bottlenecks from research processes
- Laying a theoretical foundation for later practical applications of your results

. . . .

ANSWER FIVE QUESTIONS

The project summary should answer these questions:

- What is the objective of the project? (This is an excellent place to present your hypothesis/research idea).
- Why are you particularly qualified to carry out the project?
- Why is it important to carry out the project now (and not in five years, for example)?
- How will you solve your problem/test your hypothesis?
- What results will the project deliver, and what effects will those results have? (Perspectives)

THE FORMALITIES

Always follow the foundation's instructions regarding the length of the summary. If clear instructions are not available, you should limit your summary to a maximum length of half a page.
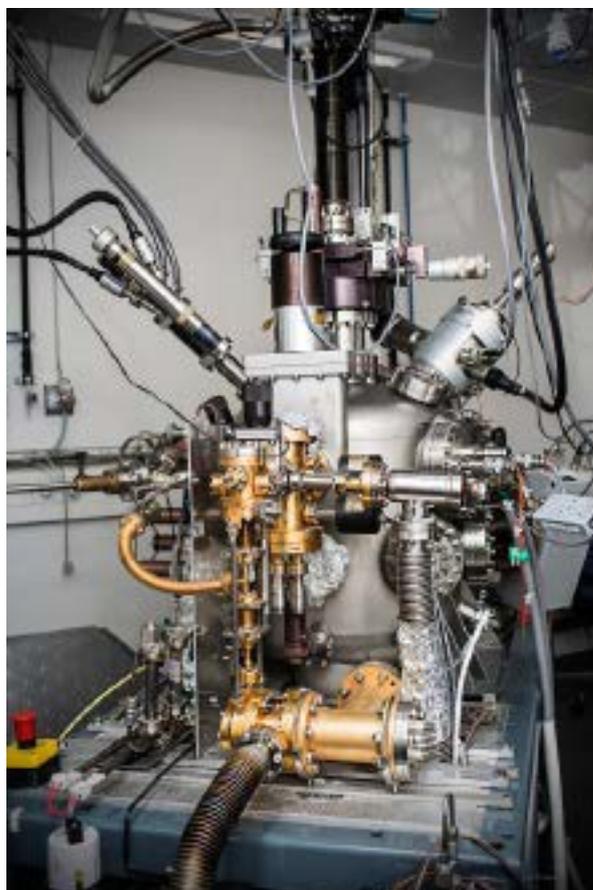

Photo: Lars Kruse.

THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description must describe the objectives, perspectives, background, method and scope of the project. It must also explain why you are the right researcher carry out the project, why it should be carried out now, and why your method is the best one to address the problem addressed by the project.

REMEMBER WHO YOUR AUDIENCE IS
Always keep the identity of your target audience in mind
- Who will be evaluating your proposal? (Laypersons, researchers, experts?)
- What does the evaluator already know about your field?
- What does the evaluator need to know in order to understand and evaluate your project?
- How can you convince the evaluator that your project should be awarded funding?

Always investigate who is on the grant committee and adapt the language of your project description to this specific audience. You should also familiarize yourself thoroughly with the foundation's objectives and any publically available evaluation criteria. Use this information to tailor your project description to the specific foundation.

STRUCTURE YOUR PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Always follow the foundation's guidelines for structuring the project description.

If the foundation does not have specific formal requirements for the proposal, we recommend that you structure your proposal as follows:
- Title
- (Summary/abstract)
- Objectives and perspectives
- Background/state-of-the-art
- Method
- Time and activity plan
- Practical feasibility
- Publication and communication
- Ethical aspects
- References

TITLE
The title is your evaluator's first impression of your project. For this reason, it's important to choose a clear, precise title that succeeds in selling your project without exaggerating.

Remember that your title should be both accurate and appetizing:
- The title has to excite the evaluator's interest.
- The title also has to convey the essential information in the project description.

In addition, your title should sound professional. Avoid trendy or slangy titles.

Good titles are usually simple and direct, and they describe:
- What you want to do (the objective of the project)
- What will come out of the project (result/product/outcome/effect/application....)

For this reason, it's a good idea to use action-oriented verbs in the heading that describe what you intend to do and/or what will result from the project (for example 'develop', 'produce', 'prevent', 'reduce', etc.)

Remember that the title of a proposal does not have to be identical with the title of your research project description/protocol.

SUMMARY/ABSTRACT
You may wish to consider starting your project description with a short summary. The project summary should not be confused with an introduction. Rather, the project summary must be a concise summary of the most important points in the project description and should be able to function as an extremely brief independent presentation of the project.

Polish your summary – sell your product
In terms of content, the project summary is similar to the lay summary. The major difference is that the target audience of the project summary is not a lay audience. Using scientific/technical terminology is therefore acceptable in the project summary. Nonetheless, you should investigate who will be evaluating your proposal, and you should ensure that the language of your summary is tailored to this particular audience.

Many evaluators read summaries (or the lay summaries) first, using them as a tool to roughly identify
- which projects are eligible for support by the foundation
- which projects sound particularly interesting.

For this reason, it is absolutely essential that you describe your project clearly, concisely and not least persuasively. In short, you must try to 'sell' your project. If you are in a position to quantify how your results will make a difference, this is often an easily understood and convincing sales argument.

Photo: Jesper Rais

Examples of measurable effects:
- Optimising processes in a way that allows a company to save time or money
- Increasing patients' chances of surviving a serious disease
- Reducing pesticide use

Not all projects aim to produce quantifiable results. In such cases, you should explain what effect your project will have on society. If your project has no direct effect on society, explain what secondary or derived effects it might have.

Examples of derived effects:
- Paving the way for the development of new research projects
- Removing bottlenecks from research processes
- Laying a theoretical foundation for later practical applications of your results.

Answer five questions
The project summary should answer these questions:
- What is the objective of the project? (This is an excellent place to present your hypothesis/research idea).
- Why are you particularly qualified to carry out the project?
- Why is it important to carry out the project now (and not in five years, for example)?
- How will you solve your problem/test your hypothesis?
- What results will the project deliver, and what effects will those results have? (Perspectives).

The formalities
Always follow the foundation's instructions regarding the length of the summary. If clear instructions are not available, you should limit your summary to a maximum length of half a page

OBEJCTIVES AND PERSPECTIVES
Present your research problem, project objectives and expected results/perspectives in the first paragraph on the first page of your project description (after a summary if included). You should also highlight what is new and unique about the project. This is also a suitable place to present any hypotheses.

In addition, it may be relevant to present arguments for why your project should be carried out precisely now rather than in the future, for example in five years.

Examples: Why should the project be carried out at this precise time?
- The project's research area is an issue that is currently a political priority.
- The project's research focus is the treatment of an illness with high mortality rates.
- The project must be coordinated with unique events such as a solar eclipse or a current awareness-raising campaign.
- An entirely new laboratory technique has just made it possible to investigate and answer the long-standing question of [...].
- An new research breakthrough has just opened up the possibility of investigating new connections between [...].

Grab the evaluator's attention with the very first line

Evaluators seldom have time to read all proposals thoroughly, so you increase your changes of success if you are able to engage the evaluator's interest with your very first line. In other words, you should make particular efforts to demonstrate the importance of your project and your idea on page one.

Tips on the first lines of the project description:
- Avoid starting the description with a long section on background information. That won't sell your project.
- Get to the point – present the research problem and objectives immediately.
- Show how/why your project falls within the scope of the foundation's focus area.
- Show why/how the project is relevant and topical.

Objectives

To formulate the project's objectives in a meaningful way, you must define the problem you want to solve. If possible, it's a good idea to situate the problem in a social perspective and to describe the scope of the problem using figures or facts.

If your project consists of a number of sub-projects, you should formulate the overall objectives of the project before you go on to define the purpose of each sub-project (for example, in a bulleted list, which makes the text easy to grasp).
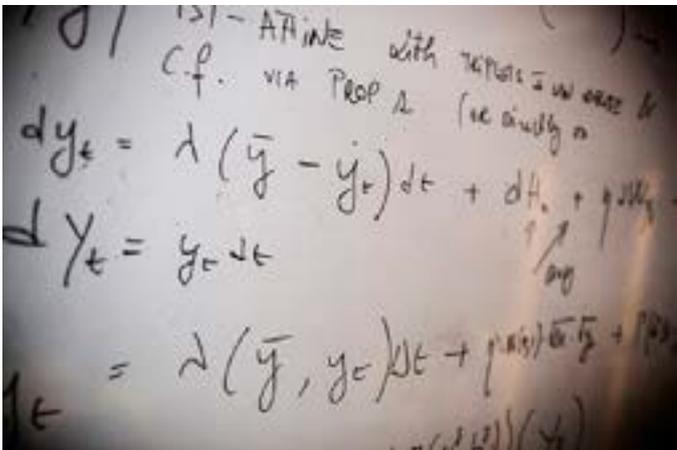

Photo: Jesper Rais.

Perspectives

When describing your project's potential, you need to consider what effects your project's results will have. Be concrete and realistic, and acknowledge that you may not be able to prove your hypothesis or complete your project as planned. In this case, are there parts of the project that would still have value?

Questions to guide you when describing the perspectives of your project:
- Why is it important to carry out the project?
- What difference will the project make?
- What results do you expect to have at your disposal when the project is completed?
- What is the expected outcome of the project?
- What becomes possible when the project's results are applied in practice?
- What effect will the project have for a given target group or society in general?
- Who has an interest in the project and why?

If you are in a position to quantify how your results will make a difference, this is often an easily understood and convincing sales argument.

Examples of measurable effects:
- Optimising processes in a way that allows a company to save time or money
- Increasing patients' chances of surviving a serious disease
- Reducing pesticide use.

Not all projects aim to produce quantifiable results. In such cases, you should explain what effect your project will have on society. If your project has no direct effect on society, explain what secondary or derived effects it might have.

Examples of derived effects:
- Paving the way for the development of new research projects
- Removing bottlenecks from research processes
- Laying a theoretical foundation for later practical applications of your results.

At a minimum, you must always be able to describe what new knowledge your project will produce and for whom it is relevant.

BACKGROUND/STATE OF THE ART

The background section of the project description must account for the scientific and theoretical framework of the project. Rather than providing an exhaustive description of your entire field of research, you should focus on presenting the information needed to understand your project and situate it in a relevant context.

For this reason, you should also clarify what remains to be understood/done in your field. In other words, you should point out 'holes' in existing knowledge – and demonstrate that the aim of your project is precisely to fill these holes..

....

This section must:
- outline the current state of knowledge within your research field ('state-of-the-art') with an emphasis on how your project can fill a hole in the existing research.
- demonstrate the scientific rationale for carrying out the project.
- if possible, present arguments in support of the project being carried out at this particular time.
- if possible, draw attention to your previous contributions to the research field.
- maintain a clear and coherent connection to the project's objectives and perspectives.

....

METHOD

What methods and experimental designs will you use to investigate your research problems? And what makes them particularly well-suited to this purpose?

....

In the method section of the project description, you should:
- Describe how you will carry out the project
- Demonstrate that you have in-depth knowledge of your chosen methods
- Provide the reasons behind your choice of these specific methods.

....

If you wish to use a method you have developed yourself, you should describe how it differs from the conventional approach.

Consider using simple, informative flow charts or diagrams. Graphic presentation of information can often provide a clear overview of your methods and any experimental setups.

SCHEDULE AND AKTIVITY PLAN

The project description schedule and activity plan must describe when the different activities involved in the project will be carried out. Including illustrations such as Gantt charts can make your plan easier to understand for the evaluator.

Gantt chart illustrates the start and finish dates for the different activities involved in the project and can be used to show the dependency relationships between various activities. By including a well-thought-out and realistic schedule and activity plan, you demonstrate that your project has been planned thoroughly.

There must be a clear correlation between the description of the project, the schedule and activity plan, and the budget.

PRACTICAL FEASIBILITY

What makes you/your research group particularly qualified to carry out the project, and why is the host organisation particularly suitable? The section on practical feasibility in the project description must convince the evaluator that the project is realistic and that it can feasibly be carried out within the project period.

....

In this section, you should account for the following:
- Where the work will be performed
- The members and partners of the project group
- Who is responsible for the individual elements of the project
- That the project team possesses the competences necessary to carry out the project
- That you have/the team has access to the necessary infrastructure, etc. (for example, special equipment, good professional networks/community and affiliated administrative staff)
- Any other conditions that are relevant for the completion of your project.

....

I **TEMPLATES FOR GANTT CHARTS**
You will find the templates for Gantt charts at www.au.dk/fse under "Advice and tools for your grants proposal" (the section entitled "Project description, schedule and activity plan").

Proposals often have greater impact if you have a broad network and international partners. However, be careful not to namedrop. Only name the most important partners who you expect will contribute to the project, and describe specifically how each partner will contribute.

PUBLICATION AND COMMUNICTION

In the 'Publication and communication' section of the project description, you should describe where and how you will publish your research results and for what audience.

Consider dividing this section into:
1) scientific publications and other communication to researchers
2) communication to other stakeholders (where relevant).

Scientific publications and other communication to researchers

You should name examples of specific scientific journals in where you expect to publish project results.

You should also describe your plans for presenting your project at conferences, meetings, etc.

Communication to other stakeholders
In this section, you should consider what communication channels you will use to reach additional stakeholders.

Examples of stakeholders:
- patient associations
- industry
- politicians
- the healthcare sector
- the educational sector
- consumers.

Photo: Jesper Rais.

Examples of communication channels:
- Newspapers
- Danish popular science publications for example Illustreret videnskab og videnskab.dk (http://videnskab.dk/)
- The international popular science website EurekAlert! (http://eurekalert.org/)
- Newsletters, for example from patient associations
- Blogs
- The Danish University Extension.

You should be as specific as possible, so that you describe what stakeholders your research is relevant for (for example, C20 companies, general practitioners or Danes under age 40). Next, you should consider how best to reach each target group. For example, you might write that you intend to contact the Danish Cancer Society to get an article on your project in their newsletter/member magazine aimed at Danish cancer patients, or that you intend to contact business-oriented media, for example Børsen in Denmark, in order to get an article on your project published aimed at Danish CEOs. You should also include information on when you expect to communicate about the project – before the project starts, while it is in progress, or/and after the project is completed? Typically, research projects are most interesting to the media when they have produced concrete results. However, in some cases it can also be relevant to communicate about when the project will be launched, for example in cases in which increased media attention might help recruit patients.

ETHICAL ASPECTS

What ethical issues are raised by your research, and what ethical considerations should you take into account? In the final section of the project description, you should account for any ethical issues and considerations arising from your project. Researchers in the health sciences should always address ethics in their proposals.

Examples of ethical issues:
- The use of informed consent
- Research involving human embryos/fetuses
- Research that involves private life (for example, tracking or observing people, the use of genetic or sensitive personal information)
- Research that involves children and vulnerable individuals
- Laboratory experiments involving animals or people
- Research involving developing countries (for example, the use of local resources such as animals and plants, capacity development, etc.)
- 'Dual use' research (potential military applications, risk of misuse by terrorists/criminals)

Examples of ethical issues, continued:
- Research involving environmental considerations (the use of environmentally hazardous products, work on threatened flora/fauna, protected areas, etc.)

All relevant notifications and registrations must be included in the ethics section, and you must include reference numbers for permits already granted. In the schedule for the project, you should include the time it takes to obtain permits. If your project involves sending data or samples abroad, for example in connection with collaboration with a researcher in another country, you should be aware that other ethical guidelines and rules may apply, depending on the country in question.

Read more about ethics and permits
- The Helsinki Declaration describes the ethical principles for medical research on human subjects: http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/index.html.
- The Committees on Health Research Ethics handles applications for approval of health sciences research projects: http://www.rm.dk/sundhed/faginfo/forskning/de-videnskabsetiske-komiteer/.
- The Danish Data Protection Agency ({3>http://www.datatilsynet.dk/<3}{4}) is the central independent authority which ensures that research projects are in compliance with the Danish Act on Processing of Personal Data (Persondataloven). Please note that the procedure for reporting projects containing sensitive personal information was revised in the summer of 2015: It is no longer necessary to report project to the Danish Data Protection Agency. Instead, they must be reported internally to AU, which has overtaken the processing and administration of these reports. The Danish Data Protection Agency now has a supervisory role in relation to the university. Please send your report and any questions about rules and procedures to Senior Consultant Tove Bæk Jensen (tbj@au.dk).
- The Danish Animal Experiments Inspectorate processes applications for authorisation to carry out animal testing: http://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/fvst_ansvar_opgaver/Sider/ Dyreforsoegstilsynet.aspx? Indgang=Dyr&Ind.
- The Danish Medicines Agency processes applications for authorisation to perform clinical trials: http://sundhedsstyrelsen.dk/da/medicin/regulering/kliniske-forsoeg. Before a clinical trial may begin, it must be approved by both the National Committee on Health Research Ethics and the Danish Medicines Agency.

You can get help in planning and performing clinical trials in accordance with Danish legislation and 'good clinical practice' from the GCP units: http://www.gcp-enhed.dk/forside/.

THE **LAYSUMMARY**

The lay summary is a simple, easy-to-understand description of your project. The description must be understandable to laypersons and suitable for publication.

WRITE SO THAT EVERYONE CAN UNDERSTAND YOU – AND SELL YOUR PROJECT

Many foundations use the lay summary as a tool for roughly sorting which proposals fall within the scope of the foundation and which should be considered for funding. At some foundations, your project will never be evaluated by an expert, but solely on the basis of your lay summary. For this reason, it's important that you explain your project clearly, and that you omit scientific terminology and abbreviations.

Imagine that you are writing for a daily newspaper, and remember, that your goal is to 'sell' your project. If you are in a position to quantify how your results will make a difference, this is often an easily understood and convincing sales argument.

Examples of measurable effects:
- Optimising processes in a way that allows a company to save time or money
- Increasing patients' chances of surviving a serious disease
- Reducing pesticide use.

Not all projects aim to produce quantifiable results. In such cases, you should explain what effect your project will have on society. If your project has no direct effect on society, explain what secondary or derived effects it might have.

Examples of derived effects:
- Paving the way for the development of new research projects
- Removing bottlenecks from research processes
- Laying a theoretical foundation for later practical applications of your results.

ANSWER FIVE QUESTIONS

The project summary should answer these questions:
- What is the objective of the project? (This is an excellent place to present your hypothesis/research idea).
- Why are you particularly qualified to carry out the project?
- Why is it important to carry out the project now (and not in five years, for example)?
- How will you solve your problem/test your hypothesis?
- What results will the project deliver, and what effects will those results have? (Perspectives).

THE FORMALITIES

Always follow the foundation's instructions regarding the length of the summary. If clear instructions are not available, you should limit your summary to a maximum length of ½-1 page. If the lay summary is the only document you are submitting, it may be 1½-2 pages in length.

Photo: Lars Kruse.

THE **CV**

The function of your CV is to illustrate that you have the right academic and managerial competencies to carry out the specific project. In other words, it should convince the evaluator that you are qualified to carry out the project.

Obviously, if you are at the beginning of your research career, you can't be expected to possess all of the competencies and qualifications you would expect to find in an ideal CV.

USE OUR CV TEMPLATE TO ORGANISE YOUR CV
Your CV should be concise and easy to follow. Many larger foundations have guidelines for how applicants' CVs are to be presented. You can use our CV template if you are applying to foundations that don't have specific formal requirements for the CV.

GENERAL ADVICE ON YOUR CV
*   Use bullet points. They make the text appear accessible.
*   Present your CV in reverse chronological order. Often your most recently acquired qualifications are the most relevant to the proposal.
*   Prioritize what information is important to include in the CV. You should not send an exhaustive CV. Instead, you should select the information that is relevant to your proposal and the project you propose.

I   **THE CV TEMPLATE**
You can use our CV template to help you structure your CV if you are applying to foundations that do not have specific formal requirements for the CV.
You can find the template at www.au.dk/fse under "Advice and tools for your grants proposal" (the section entitled "The CV").

THE LIST OF **PUBLICATIONS**

The list of publications may only contain works that have been published or accepted for publication.

. . . .

**We recommend that you organize your publications in terms of the following categories:**

- Peer-reviewed publications (include all authors as far as possible, year, title, place of publication, volume number as well as first and last page number or article number and number of pages)
  1. Articles
  2. Monographs
  3. Proceedings with a referee
  4. Book chapters
- Non-peer-reviewed publications, such as monographs, book chapters and the like, and articles (include all authors as far as possible, year, title, place of publication, volume number as well as first and last page number or article number and number of pages)
- Patent references for patents applied for and granted with relevance to your research

These recommendations are derived from the Danish Council for Independent Research autumn 2015 and spring 2016 calls for applications.

. . . .

ADDITIONAL TIPS ON THE LIST OF PUBLICATIONS
- Mark your name clearly in the list of publications (for example, in bold). Evaluators want to get a quick overview of where your name is listed in the list of authors for the individual publications.
- Consider highlighting the title of the work and/or the journal if you wish to emphasize the topic of the work and/or the place of publication.
- Indicate the journal's impact factor if you wish to draw attention to the fact that you have published in a particularly prestigious journal.
- Consider including a short description of your role in the work and the significance it has had under each publication.

If you include your H index, other indexes or citation rates, you must provide information on how you have calculated it/them.
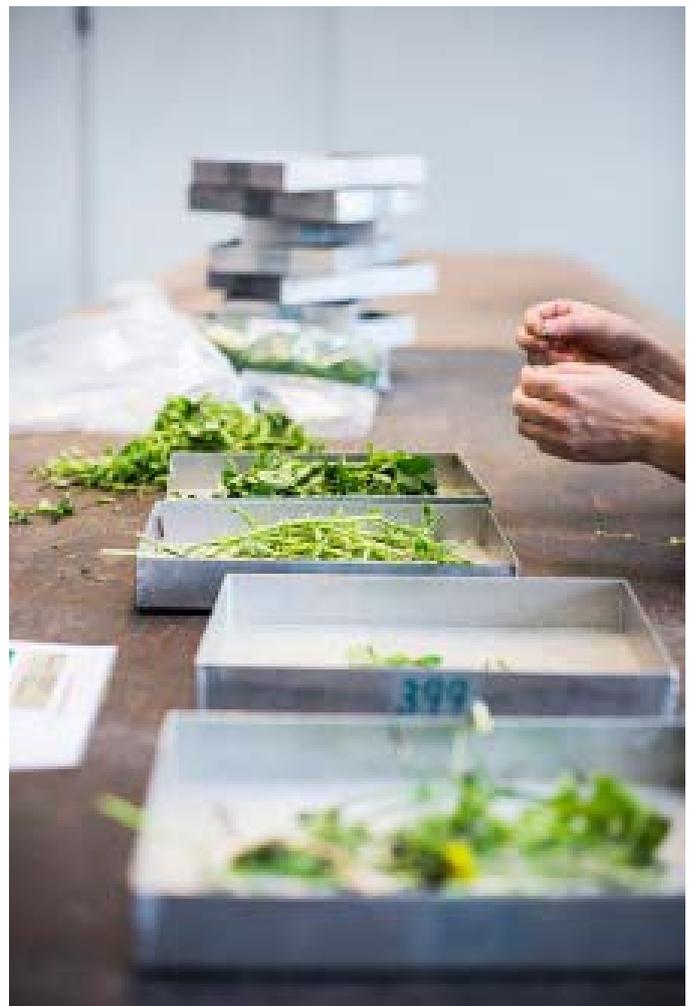
Photos: Jesper Rais.

THE **BUDGET**

Your budget should be as realistic as possible. For this reason, all of the costs that are relevant to your project should be included in the budget. This signals that your project is well-designed and gives a good impression of you as an applicant.

TYPICAL COSTS
The budget is typically divided into:
- Academic staff salaries (VIP)
- Technical/administrative staff salaries (TAP)
- Apparatus/equipment
- Operations (the direct costs of operating the project/project-related costs)
- Overhead (indirect operations, see below).

As a rule, you must itemize VIP and TAP salaried at the level of the individual project team member, and you must itemize operations in concrete budget items (materials, tuition fees, stays abroad, conference participation, publication/communication).

The definition of 'equipment' can vary from foundation to foundation. For example, the Danish Council for Independent Research requires equipment costing less than DKK 500.000 to be itemised as an operating expense.

GETTING STARTED
Larger foundations often have an application form you need to use. At www.au.dk/fse, you'll find examples of budget forms you can use when applying to foundations that don't have specific formal requirements for budgets.

It is important to make sure that there is a correlation between your budget and the project schedule. For example, if your schedule shows that you intend to work abroad in 2018, costs related to your trip should be included in the budget for the year 2018.

SALARIES
As far as possible, you should use actual labor costs in your budget. Remember to take annual pay increases and any promotions into account. Financial Control at Aarhus University recommends that salaries be adjusted upwards by 2 per cent annual in budgets in order to take future pay increases into account.

- Are you applying for salary funding for a person currently employed at Aarhus University? If so, you can get information about payroll costs at the Research Support Unit, Grant Proposals.
- Are you applying for salary funding for an unidentified person who will be employed at Aarhus University? We recommend that you use the average payroll costs for the position in question. For unidentified persons at Health, AU you should use the specially calculated average payroll costs for Health as the salaries here are generally at a higher level than at the other faculties.

Please also note that special rules apply to applications for payroll costs for PhD students employed at the Faculty of Health at AU. You will find the rules on the website of the graduate school at Health.

I **BUDGETING TOOLS**
At our website you will find:
- a list of typical budget items/clarifying questions to assist in budgeting
- examples of budget forms
- a list of average payroll costs for positions at Aarhus University.

Find the tools at www.au.dk/fse under "Advice and tools for your grant proposal" (under the section "The budget").

REMEMBER OVERHEAD

Remember to include overhead in the budget if the foundation permits.

Overhead (sometimes called administrative contribution) is a term for the indirect costs connected with completing your project. Examples might be rent, heat, electricity, office supplies, phone bills, administration etc.

Overhead is calculated as a percentage of the project's direct costs (for example, payroll, materials, tuition fees, stays abroad, conference participation and publication/communication). The percentage varies from foundation to foundation, and can also depend on the institution that is to administer the grant. Always use the percentage indicated in the foundations call for proposals. Many private foundations do not fund overhead.

Danish government foundations/grant makers like the Danish Council for Independent Research provide 44 per cent in overhead to the Danish universities.

Photo: Jesper Rais.

Example:

You apply for a grant of DKK 100,000 for operations specified in three budget items (rat experiments: DKK 50,000; biochemical analyses: DKK 35,000; publication: DKK 15,000). According to its guidelines, the foundation provides 44 per cent in overhead.

This results in the following calculation:
Rat experiments   DKK 50.000
Biochemical analyses   DKK 35.000
Publication   DKK 15.000
Total direct costs   DKK 100.000
Overhead (44%)   DKK 44.000

Total amount applied for: DKK144.000

REMEMBER CO-FINANCING

Is co-financing a requirement?

Some foundations require a certain degree of co-financing before they will grant money to a project. So it's important to include co-financing in your budget.

Co-financing refers to your home institution's financial contribution to the project. It will often contribute to:

- payroll funds for the project's VIP and TAP
- operation and maintenance of equipment
- facilities
- software licenses.

TIPS ON **LANGUAGE**

You can accommodate your reader by making sure that your text is clearly written and that your message is precise. This is important, because evaluators read a lot of proposals.

GET RID OF CONVOLUTED LANGUAGE
Avoid:
- Complex words and long sentences
- Esoteric language and jargon
- Long subordinate clauses in parentheses
- Filler words and imprecision: far too long (how long is that?), to a reasonable extent (what exactly is reasonable?), as far as possible (who decides what is possible?), many, several, a large number of (how many is that?)

MAKE YOUR TEXT RELEVANT
You are asking the evaluator to grant you money. So it's important that he or she can identify with your project. To make this happen, you need to use words that create closeness rather than distance. Passive language and esoteric language create distance, while active language makes the text more personal an approachable.

Examples:
Passive language:
- "The samples will then be analyzed..." is a passive construction that distances the reader. There is no subject performing the action.
Active language:
- "Next, I/we analyze the samples..." draws the reader into the text: there is no doubt about the subject of the action.

MOVE ALONG IN THE TEXT
The evaluator is busy, and wants to move along in the text as quickly as possible. Avoid using word or expressions that slow your reader down.

Examples:

- Demonstrative pronouns:
  Demonstrative pronouns such as 'this', 'that' and 'these' are often superfluous and make your language ponderous. These pronouns lead the reader backwards in the text instead of forwards.
- Abbreviations:
  When you evaluator encounters an abbreviation, he or she must spend time decoding it before continuing in the text. You may economize on letters, but you put brakes on your reader's progress – which may become a source of irritation.

ADDITIONAL TIPS
- Avoid long passages of text without line breaks/paragraphing.
- Divide longer sections into subsections with descriptive headings.

Remember that the evaluator reads a lot of proposals, so it's important that your text is clear and easy to understand. It's a good idea to get a second person to read your proposal before you submit it.

BEFORE SUBMITTING
YOUR APPLICATION

A final check before sending your application

- Are you meeting the formal requirements and rules of the fund? For example, the length of the application, the use of font and size, use of mandatory templates etc.
- Have you attached all relevant documents?
- Do you address all the evaluation criteria of the fund?
- Is there a connection between budget and project description?
- Have you proofread your application?

Photo: Lars Kruse

RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE
We advise researchers how to write applications for external research funding.
Contact your fundraiser at **www.au.dk/fse**

REMEMBER
The sooner in the application process, you contact us, the better we
can help you.