HOLY SPIRIT UNIVERSITY OF KASLIK
Institutional Grants and Projects Office

IGPO Handbook

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Preface

The pursuit of grants is vital for advancing academic excellence, fostering innovation, and enabling collaboration. This handbook from USEK's Institutional Grants and Projects Office (IGPO) offers practical tools and guidelines to help faculty identify funding opportunities, develop project ideas, write strong proposals, and navigate the submission process.

Part I – Getting Started

Chapter One - Understanding Grants and Funding

What is a Grant?

A grant is financial support provided by a funding organization to help individuals or institutions carry out specific projects. Unlike loans, grants do not need to be repaid, but they require accountability and measurable results.

What are the Types of Grants?

- **Research Grants:** Support academic and scientific research.
- **Capacity-Building Grants:** Strengthen institutional infrastructure, staff skills, or training programs.
- **Innovation Grants:** Fund creative solutions, prototypes, or pilot projects.
- **Educational/Community Grants:** Support outreach, workshops, or social impact initiatives.
- **Mobility Grants:** Enable exchanges, internships, or study abroad opportunities.

Why Apply for Grants?

- Advance research and innovation.
- Secure resources for equipment, training, or project activities.
- Build institutional visibility and partnerships.
- Contribute to national and international development priorities.
- Support students and the wider community.

👉 ***Tip: Think of grants not only as funding, but also as opportunities to enhance your professional profile and expand USEK's impact.***

Chapter Two - Searching for Funding Opportunities

Finding the right funding call is the first and most important step in the proposal journey.

Where to Look

- Funding databases.
- Institutional websites.
- Professional networks.
- USEK's IGPO call notifications.

How to Read Calls for Proposals

When you find a call for proposal, check:

- the objectives and priorities of the call.
- its eligibility requirements.
- the budget size and funding rules.
- the application deadline and submission platform.
- the required documents and templates.

Tips for Staying Updated

- Subscribe to newsletters from key funding bodies.
- Join academic and professional mailing lists.
- Follow funders and research networks on LinkedIn/Twitter.
- Check the IGPO's website and the calls regularly shared by email.

👉 ***Tip: Start your search at least 2-4 months before deadlines to have enough time for proposal preparation.***

Part II – Developing Your Proposal Idea

Chapter Three - Using the 5W + 1H Framework

Before you begin writing, you need a clear and structured project idea.

The 5W + 1H method is a simple, yet powerful tool that ensures no key aspect is overlooked.

◇ *Who?*

- Who is involved? (principal investigator, team, collaborators, beneficiaries)
- Who will benefit directly and indirectly?
- Who can strengthen the proposal through partnership?

👉 ***Tip: Funders value collaboration. Mention partners who add expertise or reach.***

◇ *What?*

- What is the project about?
- What problems does it solve?
- What objectives, activities, and results do you plan to achieve?
- What makes your project innovative compared to others?

👉 ***Tip: Always back your "What" with data or evidence that shows the need.***

◇ *Why?*

- Why is the project important for your field, your community, or society?
- Why does it align with the funder's priorities?
- Why now? (timeliness and urgency)

👉 ***Tip: Link your project to national strategies, global priorities like the SDGs, or institutional missions***.

◇ *When?*

- When will the project start and finish?
- When are the milestones and deliverables due?
- When is the submission deadline?

👉 ***Tip: Always prepare a timeline with buffer space for unexpected delays.***

◇ *Where?*

- Where will the project take place (labs, campuses, communities)?
- Where will the outcomes have impact (local, regional, international)?
- Where are your partners located, and how will you coordinate?

👉 ***Tip: Funders appreciate projects with both local relevance and global visibility.***

◇ *How?*

- How will the project be implemented (methods, tools, strategies)?
- How will success be measured (KPIs, evaluation methods)?
- How will resources be allocated?
- How will risks be managed?

👉 ***Tip: Connect each "how" with measurable deliverables.***

Chapter Four - Formulating SMART Objectives

Once your project idea is clear, the next step is to translate it into well-defined objectives. Objectives tell funders exactly what you plan to achieve and provide a roadmap for monitoring progress. Using the SMART framework ensures your objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound; qualities that make your proposal strong and credible.

☑ *S – Specific*

Objectives must be precise and answer the question: "What exactly will be achieved?"

- Weak example: "Improve student skills."
- Strong example: "Provide 10 interactive workshops on digital literacy to 200 undergraduate students across 3 faculties."

👉 ***Tip: Funders prefer objectives that clearly identify the target group, activity, and expected outcome.***

☑ *M – Measurable*

Define clear indicators that allow you to track success.

- Weak example: "Raise awareness about sustainability."
- Strong example: "Increase participation in campus recycling programs by 30% among 500 students, measured through monthly surveys and waste audits."

👉 ***Tip: Always quantify the expected results; number of beneficiaries, percentage increase, or frequency of activities.***

☑ *A – Achievable*

Objectives must be realistic within your project timeframe, budget, and available resources.

- Weak example: "Publish 10 books in one year."
- Strong example: "Publish 2 peer-reviewed articles based on project findings within 12 months, with support from the university research office."

👉 ***Tip: Avoid overpromising. Funders value objectives that are ambitious yet feasible.***

☑ *R – Relevant/Realistic*

Ensure that your objectives align with the funder's priorities, institutional strategy, and societal needs.

- Weak example: "Promote cultural events."
- Strong example: "Launch a Green Campus Initiative aligned with Erasmus+ sustainability priorities, engaging students and faculty in eco-friendly practices."

👉 ***Tip: Reference to the funder's guidelines or national/global priorities (such as SDGs) to show alignment.***

☑ *T – Time-Bound*

Set clear deadlines, milestones, and deliverables to demonstrate planning and accountability.

- Weak example: "Develop a mobile app for students."
- Strong example: "Launch a beta version of the student learning app by month 9 and the full version by month 18, following user feedback and testing."

👉 ***Tip: Include a timeline chart in your proposal to show milestones, dependencies, and team members in charge.***

Mini Checklist: SMART Objectives for Proposals

Before finalizing your objectives, ensure that they:

- clearly specify what you want to achieve and for whom.
- include measurable indicators to track progress.
- are realistic in terms of timeframe, budget, and resources.
- align with the funder's priorities and institutional strategy.
- include deadlines, milestones, and expected deliverables.

Chapter Five - Building Partnerships and Teams

Collaboration is a key factor in successful grant proposals. Funders increasingly favor projects that bring together diverse expertise, institutions, or countries, as partnerships often lead to stronger results, wider impact, and shared resources.

Why Partnerships Matter

- Boost your credibility.
- Share resources and knowledge.
- Expand your impact.

Roles in a Project

- You (Principal Investigator): Lead the project and ensure delivery.
- Co-Investigators (Co-PIs): Provide expertise and support.
- Partners: Add value through skills, experience, or networks.
- Stakeholders/Beneficiaries: Engage those who benefit from the project.

How to Build Strong Partnerships

- Identify partners early.
- Choose complementary skills.
- Define roles clearly.
- Document agreements (MoUs, commitment letters).
- Communicate regularly.

👉 ***Tip: Ask yourself whether every partner genuinely adds value to your project. Funders notice when partnerships are strategic, not just formal.***

Part III – Writing a Strong Proposal

Chapter Six - Proposal Structure and Key Sections

Most funders have their own format, but proposals usually include these core sections. Knowing them helps you organize your content and meet requirements.

1. Executive Summary

- Provide a half-page or one-page overview of your project.
- Include problems, objectives, methods, expected outcomes, and relevance to the funder.

👉 ***Tip: Write this section last; it summarizes the entire proposal.***

2. Background and Problem Statement

- Describe the need or problem which the project addresses.
- Support your case with data, statistics, or references.
- Show gaps in current knowledge or solutions.

👉 ***Tip: Avoid being too general; demonstrate urgency and evidence.***

3. Objectives and Methodology

- State your SMART objectives.
- Explain methodology: research design, activities, tools, and target groups.
- Show logical links between activities and objectives.

👉 ***Tip: Use diagrams or tables for clarity.***

4. *Work Plan and Timeline*

- Present a schedule of tasks, milestones, and deliverables.
- Use a Gantt chart or timeline for clarity.

👉 ***Tip: Align with the required project duration (e.g., 12-36 months) specified within the call.***

5. *Budget and Justification*

- Provide a detailed budget that matches your work plan.
- Include categories: personnel, equipment, travel, training, overhead.
- Justify each budget line: why is it necessary?

👉 ***Tip: Never exceed the maximum budget set by the funder.***

6. *Expected Results and Impact*

- Define short-term outputs (such as workshops and publications).
- Define long-term outcomes (such as improved teaching practices and community benefits).
- Show how the project contributes to broader institutional or national goals.

👉 ***Tip: Highlight sustainability beyond the grant period.***

7. *Risk Management and Sustainability*

- Identify potential risks (delays, staff turnover, political/economic changes).
- Propose mitigation strategies.
- Show how results will last after the funding ends.

👉 ***Tip: Failing to mention risks is a red flag for reviewers.***

Chapter Seven - Tips for Effective Proposal Writing

Follow these tips to make your proposal clear, persuasive, and funder-ready:

1. Be Clear and Concise

- Use simple, direct language.
- Avoid jargon unless necessary.
- Assume reviewers may not be specialists in your field.

2. Use Evidence and Data

- Support every claim with references, statistics, or research.
- Funders value evidence-based reasoning over assumptions.

3. Align with the Funder's Priorities

- Use the same keywords as in the call text.
- Explicitly show how your project supports the funder's mission.

4. Tell a Story

- Create a logical flow: Problem → Solution → Results → Impact.
- Make reviewers "see" the importance of your project.

5. Avoid Common Mistakes

- Vague objectives.
- Unrealistic budgets or timelines.
- Copy-pasting from previous proposals.
- Ignoring the word/page limit.
- Submitting without internal review.

👉 ***Tip: Always let a colleague or the IGPO review your proposal before submission.***

Chapter Eight - Budget Preparation

A strong proposal needs a realistic, transparent budget. Reviewers look for consistency between your plan and your requested funding.

Key Budget Categories

- **Personnel:** Salaries, stipends, consultants.
- **Equipment:** Only essential items for the project.
- **Travel:** Conferences, fieldwork, partner meetings.
- **Training/Workshops:** Materials, logistics, trainers.
- **Indirect costs/Overheads:** Institutional support (if allowed).

Tips for Budgeting

- **Link costs to activities:** Every expense must support a project task.
- **Be realistic:** Avoid under- or over-estimating.
- **Check eligibility:** Some donors exclude certain costs (e.g., construction, salaries).
- **Justify everything:** Clear explanations increase credibility.
- **Plan for co-funding:** Some calls require matching funds.

Budget Checklist

- Does every expense directly support a project activity?
- Is the budget within the funder's limits?
- Are overheads calculated according to rules?

Part IV – Submission and Beyond

Chapter Nine - Submission and Next Steps

Before Submission

- Inform the IGPO early and share call details.
- The IGPO will conduct the necessary review for compliance.
- Secure necessary approvals (Dean, VP, President).
- Perform a final check: attachments, formatting, deadlines.

Submission

- Online portals (such as EU, NIH, and UNDP).
- Email: follow exact format/subject rules.
- Hard copy (rare): stamped/signed.

👉 ***Tip: Never wait until the last day. Technical issues or delays in approvals may block your submission and late proposals are almost never accepted.***

After Submission

- Reviewers assess relevance, innovation, feasibility, and impact.
- Accepted → grant agreement.
- Revisions → adjust details/budget.
- Rejected → learn, improve and repay.
- Request feedback and use it to strengthen future proposals.

Chapter Ten - Managing Success

Winning a grant is a responsibility.

Your Key Tasks

- Financial management: keep records + receipts.
- Timely reports: narrative + financial.
- Visibility: acknowledge the funder.
- Sustainability: ensure results last beyond funding.

👉 ***Tip: Good management today secures funding tomorrow.***