

Proposal Writing

Workshop organized at the
First Caucasus Mountain Forum



Facilitators

Jörg Balsiger, University of Geneva

Robert Atkinson, Sustainable Caucasus

Tbilisi, Georgia, December 1, 2016

Plan for the day

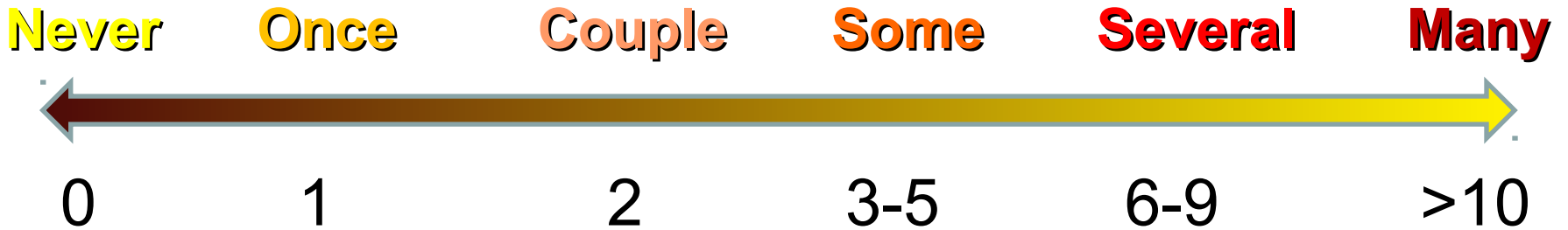
- 09:00 Welcome, Introduction and Workshop overview
- 09:30 **Session 1: Navigating the world of proposals**
- 10:30 *Break*
- 11:00 **Session 2: Crafting proposals for an audience**
- 12:30 *Lunch*
- 13:30 **Session 3: Successful proposal writing**
- 14:45 *Break*
- 15:00 **Session 4: Funding sources**
- 15:45 Conclusions
- 16:00 Closing

Learning outcomes

At the end of the workshop, you will be able to:

- ▶ Differentiate between proposal types and recognize core proposal elements
- ▶ Understand the proposal cycle, from conception to notification
- ▶ Design and implement an effective and efficient proposal writing strategy
- ▶ Identify international funding sources

Experience in the room



Session 1

Navigating the world of proposals

Scientific proposals

Types of projects

- ▶ Career funding, project funding
- ▶ Basic/fundamental, applied research
- ▶ Disciplinary, pluri/inter/transdisciplinary
- ▶ Empirical work, networking
- ▶ Knowledge dissemination
- ▶ ...



Source: <http://www.jmdprint.com/product/project-printing/>

Scientific proposals

Types of proposals

- ▶ Concept notes
- ▶ Pre-proposals
- ▶ Full proposals
- ▶ Proof of concept
- ▶ « Strategic » proposals
- ▶ ...



Scientific proposals

Types of funders

- ▶ Internal / External
- ▶ National science foundations
- ▶ International science foundations
- ▶ Government agencies
- ▶ Foundations
- ▶ Private sector
- ▶ ...



Credit: Helder Almeida

Types of development funds

- Corporate/Business
 - Sponsorship
 - Grants
- Foundations (local, re-granters, international)
- Public (local, international)
 - Grants (negotiated, competitive calls)
 - Tenders (services)

Proposal Landscape



Education Toolkit



Corporate sponsorship

Corporate grant

Local Foundation

International Foundation

Local Public grant (negotiated)

International Public grant (negotiated)

Local Public Grant (open call)

International Public Grant (open call)

Local Public Tender (services)

International Public Tender (services)

Development Project

Scientific Research



Session 2

Crafting proposals for an audience

Research and its objectives

“**Research** is a combination of both experience and reasoning and must be regarded as the most successful approach to the discovery of truth.”

Objectives of research

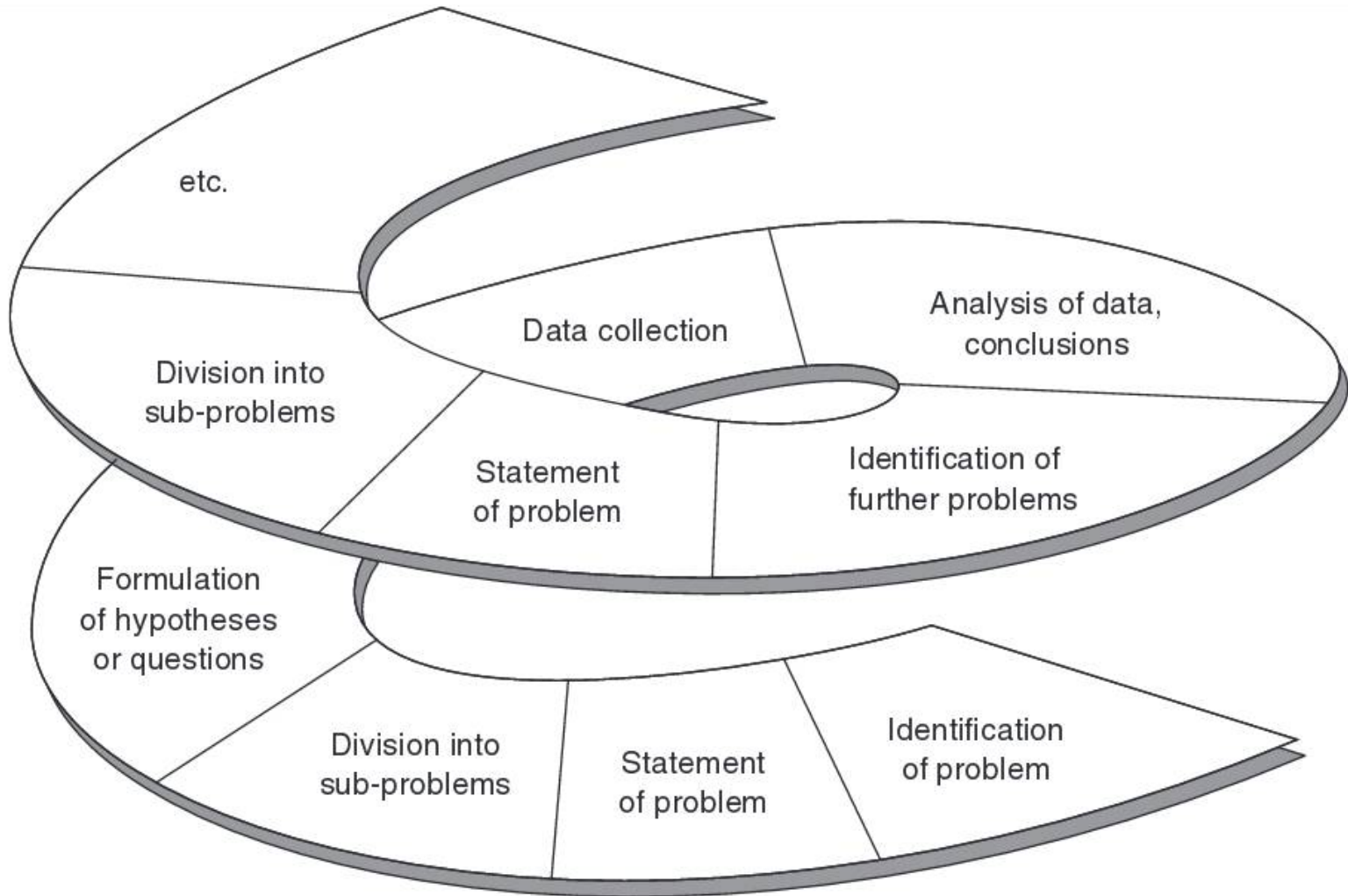
- Categorization
- Explanation
- Prediction
- Creating a sense of understanding
- Providing potential for control
- Evaluation

The research process



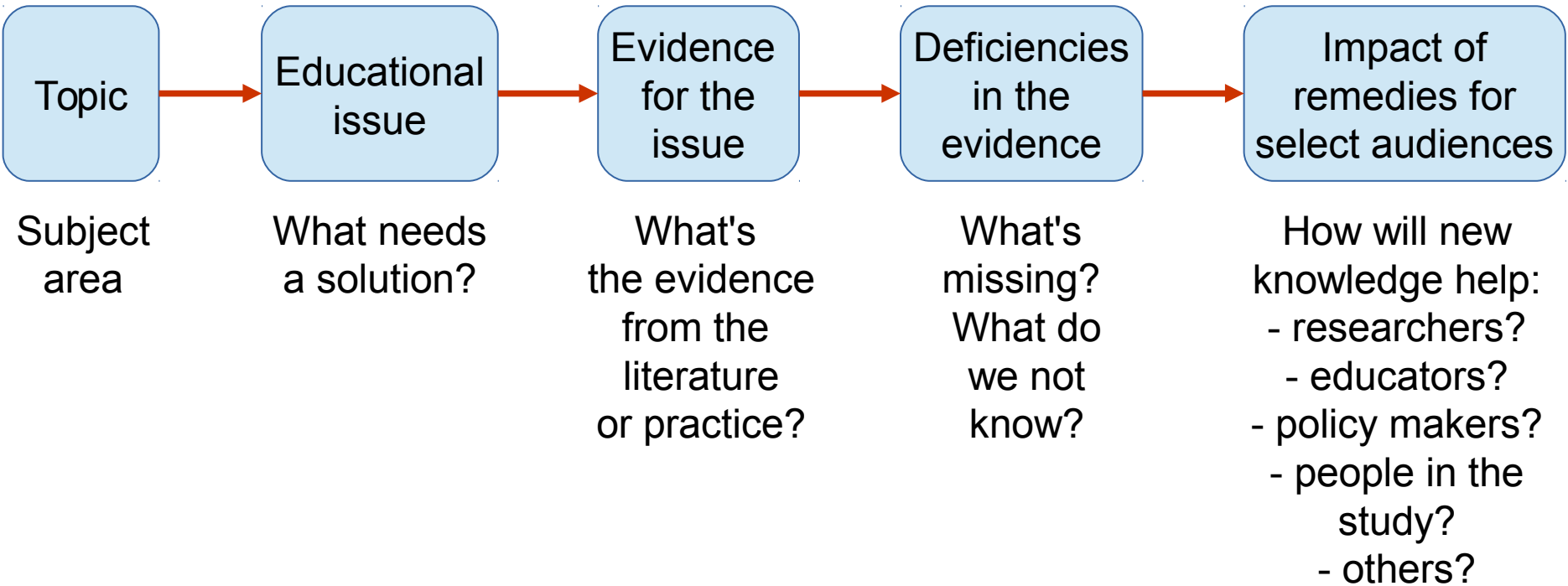


The research process

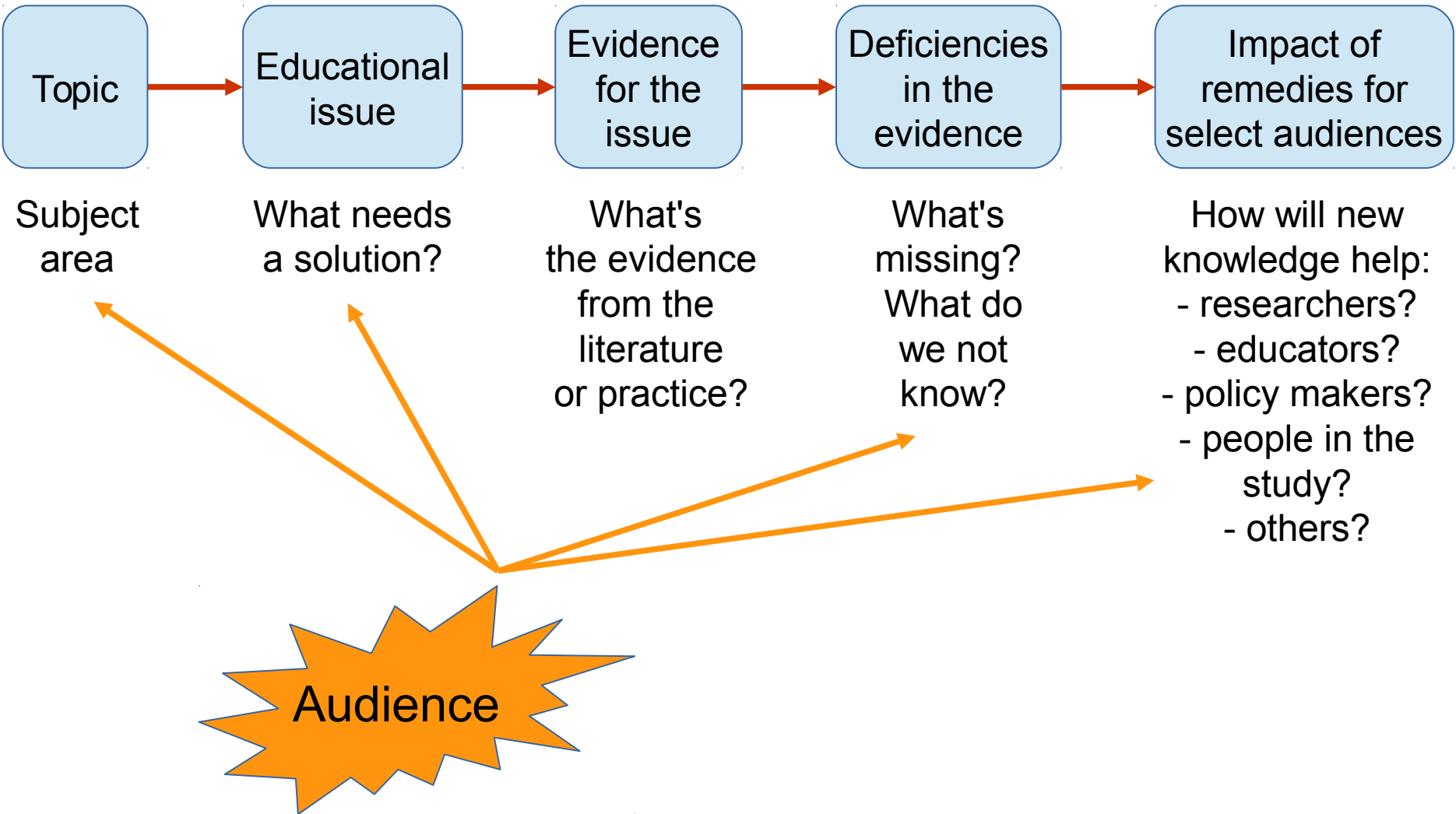


Source: Leedy, 1989

Addressing your (scientific) audience



Addressing your (scientific) audience



Some common mistakes

- Excuse to expand your own knowledge → data to be analysed and conclusions to be drawn have to be of wider interest

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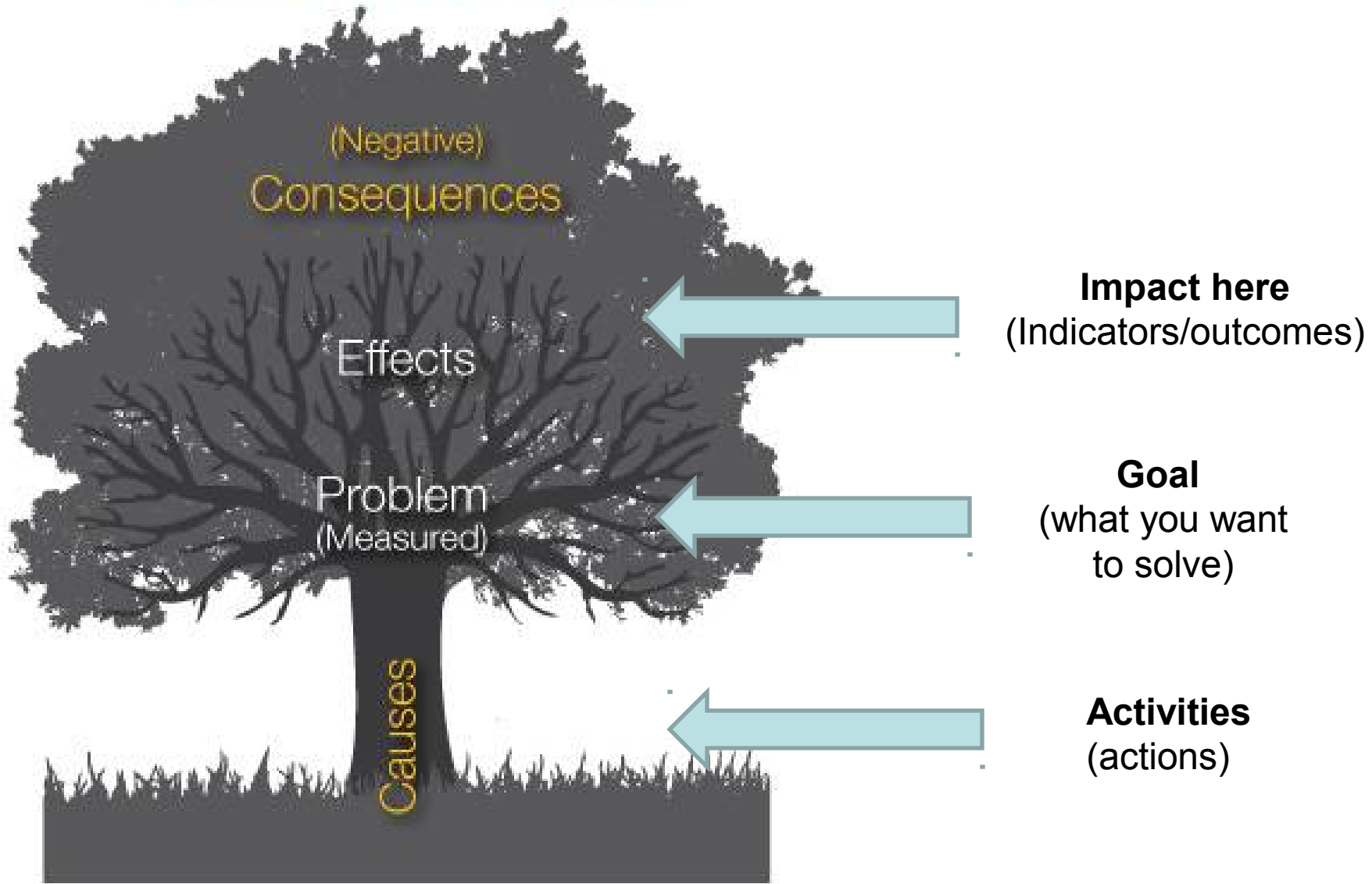
Some common mistakes

- Excuse to expand your own knowledge → data to be analysed and conclusions to be drawn have to be of wider interest
- Formulating a problem that involves merely a comparison of two or more sets of data → the objectives for comparing have to be clear
- Confusing correlation with causation → what is the link?
- Defining a problem to which the answer can be only yes or no.

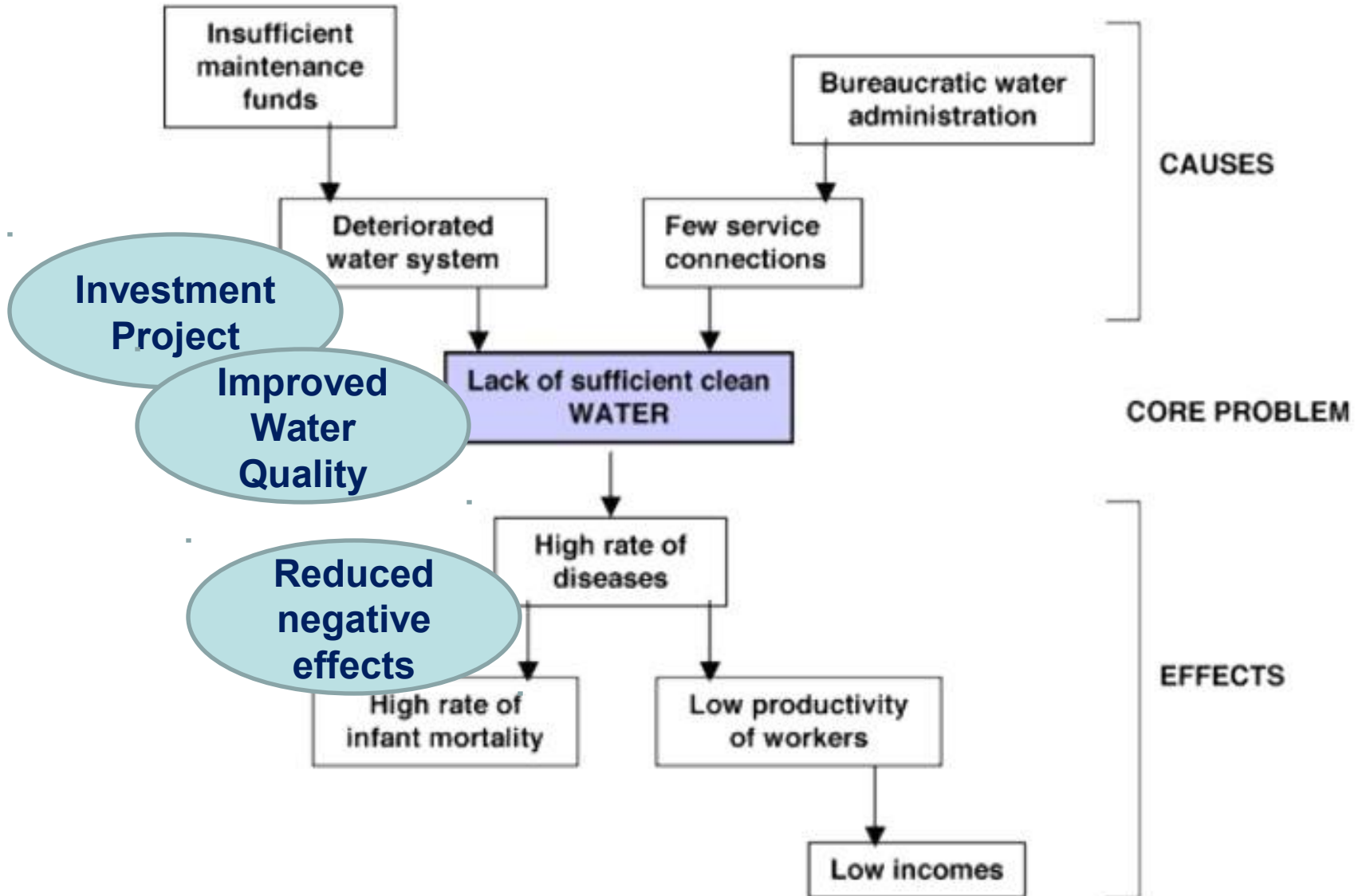
Development Objectives

- Your project plan should reflect:
 - Your understanding of the context and how this is reflected in your mission and strategy;
 - The specific circumstances in the context that created the problem that the project is meant to address and what that problem is;
 - The objectives of the project; and
 - The process intended to achieve the objectives.
- **Problem Tree to Logframe Approach:**

Problems Tree



Problem Tree



Into the Logframe

Healthier population

Reduced negative effects

Improved Water Quality

Investment Project

Project Description		Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Goal	What is the overall broader impact to which the action will contribute?	What are the key indicators related to the overall goal?	What are the sources of information for these indicators?	What are the external factors necessary to sustain objectives in the long term?
Purpose	What is the immediate	Which indicators	What are the sources of information that	Which factors and conditions are
Output	objectives?	expected results?		schedule:
Activities	What are the key activities to be carried out and in what sequence in order to produce the expected results?	Means:	What are the sources of information about action progress?	What pre-conditions are required before the action starts?
		What are the means required to implement these activities, e. g. personnel, equipment, supplies, etc.	Costs What are the action costs?	

TESTING THE LOGIC OF WHAT YOU WANT TO DO (Theory of Change)



**"Un bon croquis
vaut mieux qu'un
long discours"**

"A good sketch is
better than a long
speech"

Instructions

Conceptualising your proposed idea:

- Draw a picture of your research idea (15mins):
 - Try to avoid using words, use colour/symbols.
- Split into groups:
 - Discuss each picture (5mins p/p)
- Write down your idea (10mins)

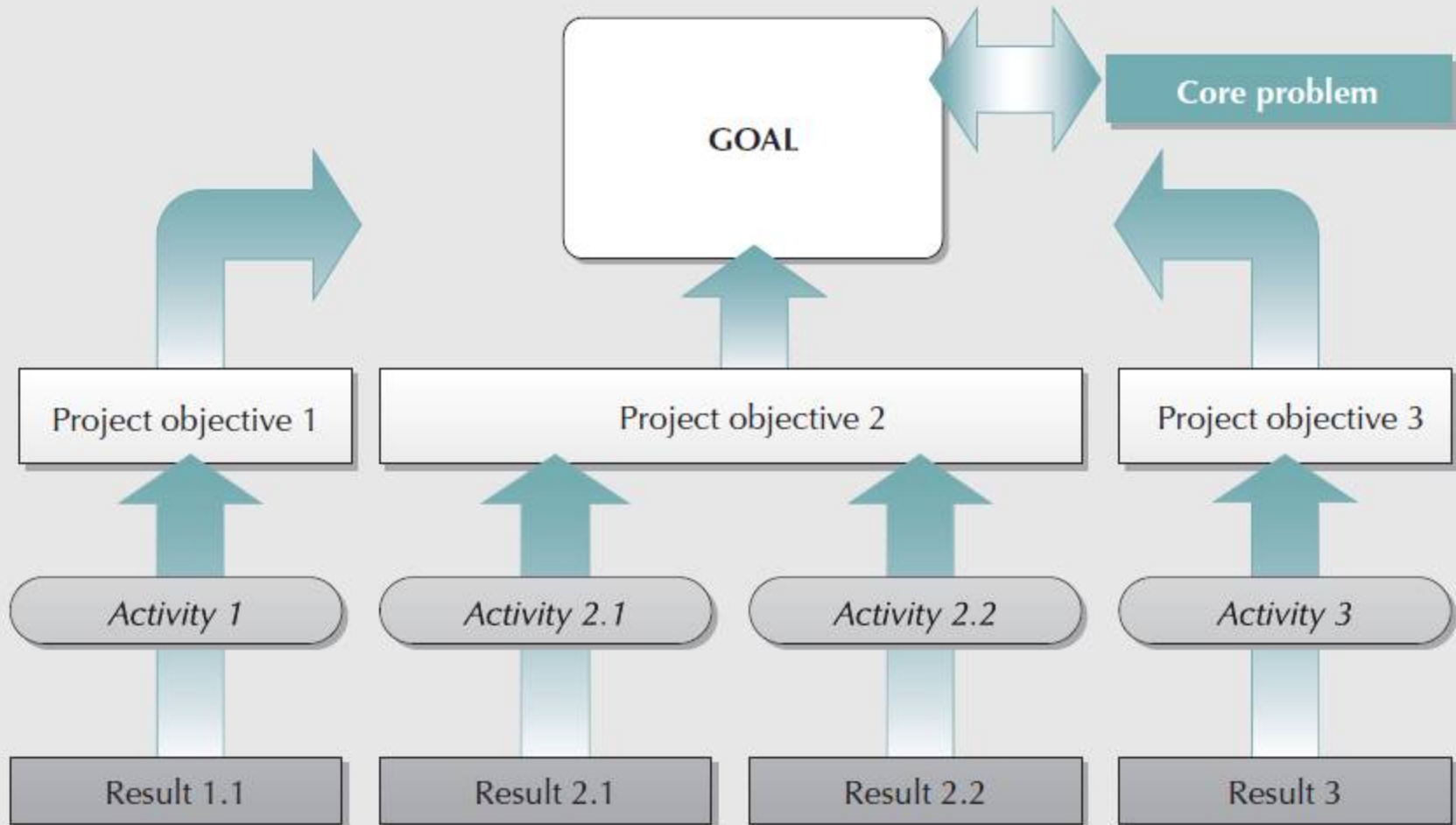
Session 3

Towards a strategy for successful
proposal writing

The Project Cycle

- **Phase 1:** Assess relevant research needs and opportunities.
- **Phase 2:** Identify the project idea.
- **Phase 3:** Design the project.
- **Phase 4:** Finance the project.
- **Phase 5:** Implement the activities.
- **Phase 6:** Evaluate the results.

Hierarchy of Goal, Objectives, Results and Activities



Step	Activity	Considerations
1	List all project activities	Develop a single list of all activities planned.
2	Break activities into manageable tasks and sub-activities	Break activities first into sub-activities and then into tasks. Each task is assigned to an individual who assumes it as a short-term goal. The main consideration is getting the level of detail right. The most common mistake is to break activities into too many details. Planners should stop breaking the activities down any further as soon as they have sufficient detail to estimate the resources required.
3	Clarify sequence and dependence	Relate activities to each other in order to determine their sequence and dependence. Is the activity dependent on the start-up or completion of any other activity? For example, building a house consists of a number of separate, but inter-related actions: first comes digging and laying the foundation, then the walls are erected, etc.
4	Draw up a timeline for each task	Each task should be given a start-up date, a duration and a completion date. The schedule should then be followed as closely as possible.
5	Summarise the scheduling of main activities	Having specified the timing of the individual tasks, the next step is to plan (summarise) the timing of the entire main activity.
6	Use milestones	Milestones are key events that provide a measure of project progress and targets for the project team to aim for.
7	Define expertise	The level and type of expertise needed should be decided for each task separately.
8	Allocate tasks among the team	Distribute responsibilities in consultation with the members of the team.

Scientific proposal writing – tips and tricks

- **Before you start:** study the guidelines (structure, length, font, etc.)
- **Abstract:** jump the “so what?” hurdle



Scientific proposal writing – tips and tricks

- Before you start: study the guidelines (structure, length, font, etc.)
- Abstract: jump the “so what?” hurdle
- **Introduction and problem statement:** Use keywords from call for proposals
- **Methods and data:** propose what's feasible



Scientific proposal writing – tips and tricks

- Before you start: study the guidelines (structure, length, font, etc.)
- Abstract: jump the “so what?” hurdle
- Introduction and problem statement: Use keywords from call for proposals
- Methods and data: propose what's feasible
- **Expected results:** link impact to call
- **Project organization:** propose advisory boards
- **Dissemination:** thing broadly and creatively



Planning Considerations

1. Beneficiaries of the project.
2. Project team and co-operative partners.
3. Success criteria.
4. Goal and objectives.
5. Methods chosen to achieve project goal.
6. Costs and expenditures.
7. Own contribution.
8. Potential funders.

Now try defining your own (25mins)

Session 4

Funding sources

Scientific funding

European sources

- Horizon 2020
- Marie Curie Actions - Funded projects
- European Research Council
- Joint Research Centre - External Staff Recruitment Application
- European Commission - DIGITAL AGENDA/DG CONNECT
- European University Institute
- EURAMET - European Association of National Metrology Institutes - Researcher Grants
- Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual & Culture (EACEA) - Erasmus Mundus Joint DOCTORates (EMJDs)
- Bilateral EU Cooperation in Science (BILAT) – Funding
- Euratom Energy - Fusion - Funding opportunities
- Executive Agency for Health and Consumers – Funding
- COST Actions

Scientific funding

Swiss National Science Foundation

Funding schemes

Projects

- › Projects in all disciplines
- › Innovations in project funding

Programmes

- › NRP
- › NCCR
- › Temporary ERC Backup Schemes
- › Sinergia – interdisciplinary, collaborative, breakthrough
- › Longitudinal studies
- › SCOPES
- › r4d programme
- › Bilateral programmes
- › ERA-NET
- › precOR
- › IICT
- › PIRE
- › COST
- › BRIDGE

Infrastructures

- › Infrastructures
- › R'Equip
- › BioLink
- › FLARE
- › Editions

Careers

- › Innovations in career funding
- › Doc.CH
- › Doc.Mobility
- › MD-PhD programme
- › Early Postdoc.Mobility
- › Advanced Postdoc.Mobility
- › MHV grants
- › Ambizione
- › Ambizione Energy
- › SNSF professorships
- › AP Energy Grants
- › International Short Visits
- › PROMYS

Science communication

- › Agora - taking research to the public
- › Media courses
- › Media training
- › Writing workshop
- › Scientific conferences
- › Int. Exploratory Workshops
- › Publication grants
- › OAPEN-CH
- › SNSF Scientific Image Competition

Supplementary measures

- › Mobility grants in projects
- › 120% support grant
- › Gender equality grant
- › Lead Agency
- › Money follows Co-operation Line
- › Money follows Researcher
- › Protected Research Time for Clinicians
- › ERC/SSH: Temporary measures for women

Calls for proposals

Documents & downloads

Discontinued funding schemes

Large Foundation Characteristics

Positives:

- Have large sums of money to give.
- Staff are professional, understand the issues and civil society concerns.
- Clear guidelines on what is funded and the process for getting funding usually provided.
- Willing to share international experience.
- Financial reporting requirements usually low.

Negatives:

- Process for application can be (very) lengthy.
- Requirements for applications can be complex.
- Priorities may change.
- Funding decision-making is often opaque.

Small Foundation Characteristics

Positives:

- Trustees often form close relationships and have a personal commitment to an organisation.
- More flexible on format and process.
- More flexible on what they fund.

Negatives:

- Staff not always as professional as that of bigger foundations.
- May not have so much money.
- Personal contacts very important (can also be an advantage).

Contacts, contacts, contacts...

- Remember you are writing the proposal to *persuade* someone to give you money for your project.
- Usually two types of people to persuade:
 - The decision-maker who will make the final decision, based on your proposal. Sometimes there may be more than one decision-maker, with someone at a project officer level making the initial decision to support the proposal and someone at a more senior level, or a committee, making the final decision.
 - A technical expert who will assess the technical competence of the proposal and write a report to the decision-maker(s) but not make the decision.

Know the foundation

Most want a range of things. These include:

- To make an impact or a difference – they want their money to count, they want the work they fund to be successful, they want to be seen to be successful.
- To acquire knowledge, understanding, information.
- To share knowledge, understanding, information, and, in so doing, add value to their chosen interventions.
- To increase their influence in addressing what they consider to be the problems of the world, the region, the country, or a particular area.

Some Caucasus foundations

- Open Society Foundations: Armenia, Georgia, Europe, Middle East.
- SDG funders/SDG Philanthropy platform:
<http://sdgfunders.org/mdgs/region/central-asia/lang/en/>
- American Research Institute of South Caucasus: http://arisc.org/?page_id=143
- Eurasia Partnership Foundation: <http://www.epfound.ge/>
- European Foundation Centre: <http://www.efc.be/>
- Caucasus Foundation: <http://caucasusfoundation.ge/main/index.php?lang=en>
- Eurasia Foundation:
<http://www.eurasia.org/Programs/caucasus-research-resource-centers>
- Heinrich Böll Foundation, South Caucasus: <https://ge.boell.org/>
- Berghoff Foundation: <http://www.berghof-foundation.org/programmes/caucasus/>

Note to self

- **Envelope:** Address it to yourself.
- **Note paper:** *To make my project idea a reality I will...* (commitment to the practical steps you will take).
- **Return to us:** Six months from now we will post it to you.

SNC-mt Research Agenda Topics

B.1 Climate change

B.2 Biodiversity

B.3 Forest Resources

B.4 Water resources management

B.5 Land use and land cover change

B.6 Desertification

B.7 Mineral Resources

B.8 Natural hazards and risks

B.9 Population

B.10 Tourism and recreation

B.11 Socio-economic development

Bibliography

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