

What can Go Wrong in FRGS Proposals

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A. Comments made by reviewers at ministry level:

- Different sections of proposals
 - Title
 - Executive Summary
 - Research Background
 - Objectives
 - Methodology
- Element of FRGS
- Quality of Proposal
- Others

B. Analysis of causes of rejection at ministry level (recent proposals)

TITLE

- does not reflect a fundamental research
- does not reflect fundamental FRGS study
- does not reflects a fundamental research
- does not sound fundamental
- does not reflect fundamental research
- lack of fundamental elements in the title
- not fundamental
- little address on fundamental issues
- does not reflect fundamental research. No new theories generated from this research
- does not reflect fundamental issue, no novelty could be derived from the study

TITLE Continued...

- does not reflect the mechanistic questions of the research
- focuses more on mode of action instead of mechanisms of action investigated area
- does not relate to any theory
- not fundamental, sounds more of applied research
- not fundamental. More toward instrumentation testing
- more likely an applied research
- more relevant to applied research
- sound applied, not fundamental
- involves fabrication and testing
- reflects development work
- potential applied research in nature
- there is an element of potential applied or even applied in the title
- does not reflect fundamental research. Recommended for applied research as no new ideas or principals generated from this research

TITLE Continued...

- Not very clear
- Not clear
- Not very clear
- can be made more brief
- not specific
- too general
- too generic
- too long
- too long and vague
- vague
- very general and needs to be refined
- Title was not elaborated clearly.
- Title very general and the problem statement did not reflect
- broad and not novel
- should be straight forward
- The title is too short that i think does not reflect the study as a whole

TITLE Continued...

- Routine work
- did not match the executive summary and methodology
- only reflects the first objective
- does not really reflect the overall research
- does not specifically reflect the proposed detailed ideas in the proposal
- wrong spelling of ‘...’ in the title

TITLE Continued...

- not novel since **numerous studies have been reported globally more recently** in (“other country”)
- previous FRGS research by **the same researchers have quite similar content and approach**
- ...are well investigated and reports are widely available
- Not a fundamental project since this **project is modification or continuation of the project already funded** in Science fund (as member). Prototype of the project already obtain

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Not an FRGS study
- What's new"?
- **does not contain novelty**
- Not an FRGS study
- **does not reflect a fundamental research**
- What is the fundamental aspect need to be solved?
- does not reflect not a fundamental research.
- Problem statement fails to identify novel fundamental issues
- The proposed project is prone to **application research**
- Rather trivial problem statement and not fundamental enough
- ...not fundamental research.
- Problem statement was not addressing fundamental issue
- Research activities listed almost all **involves fabrication** and experiment
- Objectives and approach sounds a bit too general and not fundamentally sound

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Continued...

- No problem statement
- **Weak problem statement**, no methodology been presented in the executive summary section
- **no discussion on the novelty aspect and significance** of the study.
- No indication of how serious ...hence the significance of such studies other than providing basic data on this condition
- outcome of this project is easily being predicted
- need to read the latest findings to find the gap
- **What is the significance** output from the research project?
- Research questions are too many some of them already resolved and reported in recent publications
- **Problem statement is too general**
- **no significant output** could be derived from the study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Continued...

- poorly written
- poorly written, objectives should have been written and described (not cut and paste from item "...").
- Executive summary **not properly written**
- **incomplete** executive summary
- Poor presentation of executive summary. ~~A good executive summary must be with~~ **problem statement, objectives, research methodology, expected output/outcomes /implication, and significance of output from the research project.**
- what do you mean?
- not comprehensively written
- should be written in **single paragraph**
- introduction,
aim and objective and methodology, significant contribution to the body of knowledge ?
- not well elaborate expected output and its significant.
- executive summary does not include expected output and significance of output

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Continued...

- methodology is not available in the executive summary
- missing statement on research methodology
- methodology was not described well in the executive summary
- missing statement on research methodology
- methodology was not described well in the executive summary
- methodology, expected output and its significance not written in the executive summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Continued...

- Out of context totally
- **mismatch** between the **subject studied** and the expected **outcome**
- The **objectives** are **not in sync with** the proposed **objectives** Section (c)
- The following statement is dangling and incomplete
- **references** use in problem statement is **old in 2009 and 2010**, which may indicate no cutting edge elements
- Literature review seem **copy paste from thesis**, where there are many subsection (like thesis) and also many **references in list not been cited in main text**.
- too many literature not cited in text.
- **Significance of output is not linked to national agendas**
- **research towards economic growth is also not well-articulated**
- **fail to excite the reader**
- Lack details and specifics

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

- **Not fundamental**, more of applied research. No theories discussed
- not FRGS
- should highlight the fundamental issue that need too be resolve rather than the ad opting other method which also has been carried out elsewhere.
- The novel fundamental issues to be addressed are not clearly identified in view of various reports available on similar studies
- -Very recent references are not properly cited.
- -No specific national agenda is clearly mentioned

RESEARCH BACKGROUND Continued...

- literature review is too long , yet it does not properly identify research gaps leading to the proposed work.
- Proper background not written
- Only few references from government website and not even own study
- Poor background review, references outdated-
"..." et al (2016) ; "..." et al (2016) and plenty more recent studies that have covered the hypotheses and objectives of this proposed study. NONE is cited in the literature review?
- mediocre reviews
- The second sentence in the third paragraph is also the same. Serious literature review need to be done in order to determine the novelty of this work.
- Literature review not adequately concluded with issues to be solved.
- not adequately covered in the literature review.
- Several key references useful as background information not cited
- No theories mentioned

RESEARCH BACKGROUND Continued...

- Very few recent references
- the latest references (2014 onwards) are clearly lacking in the references.
- **Outdated references.**
- only one citation of last 5 years,
- There is no reference to any published report...
- majority of the references are outdated (**not within the last five years**).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND Continued...

- No hypothesis is given
- not necessarily a good problem statement
- not clear on the problem statement
- hypothesis is not a hypothesis Literature review: too short
- No hypothesis. No 'Why' and 'How' type questions
- The problem statement does not clearly stated.
- Problem statement and research questions are more applied in nature. For fundamental study, research questions should start with 'why' or 'how' Objective: 'to produce' clearly indicates that this is potential applied or applied based in nature. ... Suggest to submit to ScienceFund
- Inadequate problem statement
- The problem statement is poorly written
- More research questions can be introduced.
- Research questions are unclear. in order to emphasise that the proposal is fundamental in nature, the research questions should focus on 'why' or 'how'
- Very brief explanation and there any many missing important information in the hypothesis.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND Continued...

- Relevance to government policy is not filled.
- low impact
- No previous study by researcher pertaining to the similar study and
- There is no well elaborated discussion on the importance of the output of the research.
- There are several errors in the sentences used
- Grammatical errors here and there.
Where are the research questions?

OBJECTIVES

- objectives reflect an applied research
- do not reflect a fundamental research
- not fundamental
- too general, does not relate to introduce fundamental theories
- not FRGS objectives
- Not a fundamental research
- does not reflect the "how" or "why" questions but are more inclined towards methodological aims
- What are the different of this proposed project from the Science fund project (as member) entitle
- Not clear problem statement.... related to fundamental issues.
- Does not constitute new knowledge

OBJECTIVES Continued...

- not clearly stated
- It is unclear of how to achieve the objectives
- not following SMART
- It is too broad
- must be specific
- not clear
- to refine the objectives refine the research questions
- NOT CLEAR. EACH OBJECTIVE SHOULD SPECIFY MEASURABLE PARAMETERS
- not SMART
- Unclear
- not specific
- Not SMART
- Too many objectives
- Too many objectives...even methodologies become objectives
- Objectives and problem statement does not distinctively match
- Too many objectives that would not make it possible in two years
- rather unclear and not in accordance to standard format -
- Must be clear and confirm with the objective function intended to be used in the proposed optimization technique.

OBJECTIVES Continued...

- grammatical error in objective 2
- general, no contribution to new discovery or research theory
- not solving the problem raised in the proposed study
- not well written and does not reflect fundamental research
- Not relevant and not described in methodology
- does not co-relate with the research questions

METHODOLOGY

- not well written and does not reflect fundamental based methodology
- methodology is poorly written
- Unclear
- Brief
- too brief
- Need to detailed out
- does not really discussed the proposed approach
- shallow
- very brief
- Not clear

METHODOLOGY Continued...

- lack descriptions
- Not clear no specific parameters
- Data collection not being described in details
- no detail explanation
- No clear methodology
- not adequate
- inappropriate
- poorly presented and not in details
- No specific approach were proposed
- Method are very simple and not detailed out
- Overall methodology was unsatisfactory described
- failed to mention how the process will be carried out.

METHODOLOGY Continued...

- PI is not meticulous enough in proposing the methods to answer the specific objectives
- Not provide quotation for professional service(RM95K)
- Method partially able to achieve objectives
- not in-line with the given objectives
- not clear on which methodology answers the objectives. Clearly indicate the methodology that answer the objectives
- methodology does not directly support the objectives

METHODOLOGY Continued...

- how the instrument for the survey is developed and **no explanation on sampling techniques**
- not clearly described. The first part was described to achieve the whole
- **flow chart is too simplistic**
- **milestone should be set within six months or less.**
- **Methodology also seem been copy paste from thesis**

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B. Analysis of causes of rejection by MOHE (recent proposals)

ELEMENT OF FRGS

- Expected output and outcome from this project do not sound very significance/outstanding
- no novel contribution
- not clearly discussed what exactly the proposed methods are
- No novel contribution
- applied research
- Not fundamental but more of applied research
- Low novelty & very expensive
- No novelty
- weak outcomes, such as lacking theory development/modification/enhancement/ model creation/index
- Not that novel anymore. The similar study has been conducted in the previous FG
- not a fundamental research
- lack of novelty
- truly applied
- Not fundamental
- merit of fundamentals is low
- Not in the cutting edge and high impact research
- Not really cutting edge research proposal
- Proposal not well written in term of problem statement for novel and cutting edge as FRGS criteria

QUALITY OF PROPOSAL

- should thoroughly explained and presented the methodology section. It is **too brief**.
- Details research methodology is needed
- Weak methodology
- Can be further improved especially on the research methodology
- **Not meticulous**
- Unclear research methods.
- Proposal not free from grammatical and technical error
- Poorly written
- **Several English and formating problems**
- **similarity showed 35% similar to another proposed from another institution**
- **Much errors detected from languages**
- Not very clear

OTHERS

- does not reflect the fundamental issues
- There are on going projects related to this project
- One of the internal IPT panel/examiner not satisfied with the amendments made by the researcher
- One of the internal/IPT still not satisfy with the correction in proposal after re-submission
- Internal/IPT panel commented that the work proposed has been completed as described in research background. Not much extention proposed in fundamental theories
- Unable to identified specific fundamental research contribution.
- Research methodology was not well written and does not reflect fundamental based methodology
- unclear how different this project is with the funded projects (PPP and e-Science) which are ongoing as listed, as they have basically the same titles.
- more of applied research. The research lacks fundamental elements.
- approach for the proposed research is not new (e.g. see “...” et al, 2014).

OTHERS Continued...

- More elements of applied research than Fundamental research
- An applied research
- milestones are also very poorly written
- principal investigator has no experience in ... There are no previous work to indicate this
- methodology was unsatisfactory
- Methodology, flow chart, gantt chart, activities and milestones were not clearly described and presented to meet objectives of the study

ANALYSIS OF REJECTION AT MINISTRY LEVEL (366 proposals 2017)

Faktor Penolakan	Kuantiti
Study design/methodology	152
Not fundamental	115
Not specific/vague	92
No novelty	75
Poorly-written	71
Track record	56
References	42
Not of high impact	40
Budget	30
Others (no comments/limited funds)	29
Milestones	9
Technical knockout	6

Thank you very much indeed

and

Best of luck with your FRGS proposal