

# The Process of Proposal Development

**Stage 1:**  
Developing  
the Proposal

**Stage 2:**  
Writing the  
Proposal

**Stage 3:**  
Improving the  
Proposal



## Development: Start Early

- Identify your key partners and work with them to move your idea from conception to proposal
- Clarify the logic of the project and partnership:
  - *What* is the overall **goal and vision** of the partnership?
  - *What* **objectives** will achieve that goal?
  - *What* specific **activities** will fulfill your objectives and lead to outcomes?
  - *Why* are the chosen partners complementary and how will they be **meaningfully engaged**?



# Writing: Make it Easy for Reviewers

## Know your audience

- For PEG, PDG and PG Stage 1, not all reviewers will be experts in your field.
- Reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee:  
**“includes relevant expertise from the academic community, as well as research expertise from the public, private and/or not-for-profit sectors.”**
- Write in a jargon-free style aimed at an educated non-specialist.



# Writing: Make it Easy for Reviewers

## Target the proposal to meet the guidelines

- Use the headings in the guidelines as headings in the proposal.
- Ensure that the content in each section addresses the evaluation criteria.
- Where possible, use the language of the criteria in subheadings.



***Give reviewers the information they need to write you a good review.***

# Tips: Summary of Proposal

(PEG, PDG, PG: 1 page maximum)

## The summary is the first impression you make on reviewers

Use clear, plain language to summarize the fundamental elements of your proposed partnership/project:

- challenges or issues to be addressed
- overall goal and objectives of the proposed partnership
- breadth of the partnership and the meaningful engagement of the partners

***The summary should cover the 5 W (+ H) questions.***



# Tips: Goal and Project Description

(PEG & PDG: 5 pages max; PG Stage 1: 8 pages max)

## Significance and Impact

- *What* challenges and issues will your partnership address?
- **Why** are these issues important?
- *Who* will benefit (contributions to SSH, KM, training)?
- Emphasize strategic investments/priorities and institutional research capacity.



# Tips: Goal and Project Description

## Objectives

- Briefly present your objectives in a clear and precise manner—the scope of the partnership/project should be evident.
- Use minimal introductory context.
- Indicate the relevance of objectives to partners.
- Deliverables/outputs are *not* objectives (e.g., completing a book on “X” is not an “objective” in the sense intended).



# Tips: Goal and Project Description

## Context

- Be explicit about the importance, originality, and contribution to knowledge.
- Clearly state the problem to be addressed and the goals and anticipated outcomes.
- Include a concise but comprehensive literature review.
- Remember your audience:
  - Underlying assumptions should be made explicit and justified.
  - Define all key terms.





# Tips: Goal and Project Description

## Theoretical Framework:

- Clearly describe the theoretical or conceptual framework.
- Define key theoretical concepts (for a multidisciplinary audience).
- Show engagement with theory.
- Explain the relationship between theory and the selected method.



# Tips: Goal and Project Description

## Methodological Approach

- Clearly describe the research activities and methods.
- Explain how your methodology fulfills the stated objectives.
- Describe who will work on which questions/themes.
  - Consider table or figure linking activities, partners, and objectives.
- State when major activities and milestones will take place (progress indicators).
  - Consider a figure showing timelines.
  - Justify the duration selected.
- SSHRC encourages data management plans.



# Tips: Description of Formal Partnerships

(PDG: 4 pages max; PEG & PG Stage 1: Goal&Proj)

*Demonstrate that this is a genuine partnership:*

- Why is a partnership approach appropriate and how does it add value?
- How will the partners benefit?
- What role will partners play in intellectual leadership? How will their expertise be integrated?
- What are the anticipated challenges and how have you addressed them?
- What will the governance structure look like?  
(Consider including a chart or figure.)



# Tips: Training and Mentoring

(PDG: 1 page maximum; PEG & PG Stage 1: Goal&Proj)

## Nature of training

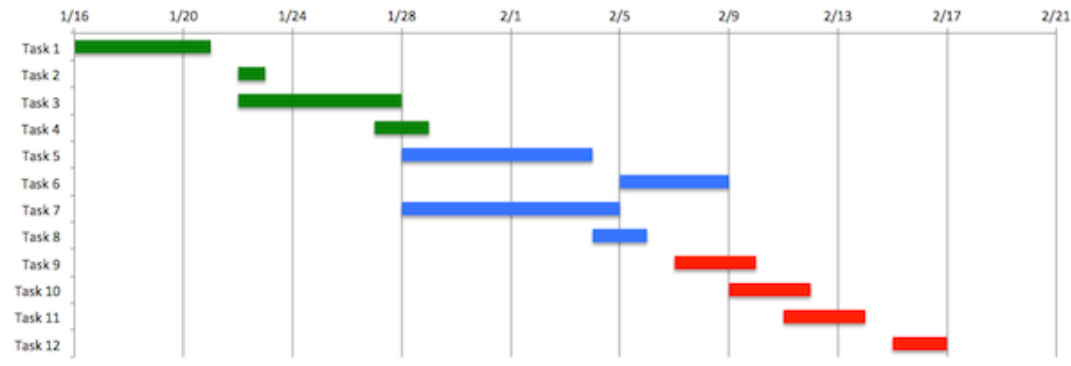
- How many trainees? Include anticipated number and level.
- How are trainees linked to the project activities? Describe specific roles and responsibilities.
- Trainees should be meaningfully engaged in all stages of the partnership project.
- What is the team's expertise and experience training HQP?



# Tips: Training and Mentoring

## Skills and career development

- What skills and opportunities are provided?
- Emphasize transferrable skills (cross-disciplinary, beyond academia).
- Highlight unique experiences (career development opportunities, international fieldwork, datasets or equipment).
- Consult SSHRC Guidelines for Effective Research Training.
- Consider including a figure (e.g., a Gantt chart).



# Tips: Knowledge Mobilization

(PDG: 2 pages maximum; PEG & PG Stage 1: Goal&Proj)

## Your plan to increase flow & accessibility of knowledge

What are your objectives and plans for the co-creation of knowledge, multi-directional exchange, and dissemination beyond academia?

- Who is the audience and how will they be engaged? How will they access research results?
- Consider both traditional and innovative approaches, taking advantage of digital technologies.
- Include a realistic schedule for KM activities (linked to objectives and outcomes).
- Consult SSHRC Guidelines for Effective Knowledge Mobilization.



# Tips: Expected Outcomes

(PEG & PDG: 1 page maximum; PG Stage 1: Goal&Proj)

- Elaborate on the anticipated outcomes and benefits of your research.
- Address the impact within and beyond the SSH research community
- Identify targeted audience(s) and stakeholders.
- Include a plan for evaluating outcomes or describe methods for measuring impacts/benefits.

A red rectangular stamp with a distressed, ink-like texture. The word "IMPACT" is written in bold, white, sans-serif capital letters, slanted slightly upwards to the right.

# Most Frequent Criticisms

- “Premature” proposal: project insufficiently developed and/or its feasibility inadequately articulated or demonstrated.
- Incomplete or outdated review of related debate/discourse.
- Weak justification of project’s original contribution to knowledge.
- Underdeveloped or weak theoretical framework.
- Lack of detail and justification in methodology and discussion of research activities.
- Unclear link between the conceptual framework and the methodology.





# Most Frequent Criticisms

- Lack of specificity and justification in the budget.
- Team required additional expertise.
- No plan to evaluate outcomes or assess impact.
- Inauthentic relationship with partners.
- Governance structure or research design were not collaborative and collegial.



# Improving the Proposal

- Allow enough time to revise your text.
- Use the program guidelines as a checklist to be sure you have addressed all evaluation criteria.
- Have your partners and peers review the proposal for academic content. Are there successful award holders who can take a look?
- From an editorial perspective, the most common revisions concern
  - **Coherence** (the logical and organized flow of sentences, paragraphs, sections, and ideas)
  - **Clarity** (using precise and straightforward language)
  - **Concision** (writing so that every word counts).



# Questions

