PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

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1. How Good And Appropriate Is The Idea?
   - Have you stated it clearly and concisely, in writing?
   - Does it fit your organization's mission and goals?
   - Do colleagues and administrators support it?
   - Is it significant? Timely? Innovative? Unique?
   - Have you fully reviewed the literature?
   - Have you determined who will benefit from the idea, and the extent of their need and/or interest?
   - Have you considered alternative approaches and justified why yours is best?
   - Have you projected the outcomes and determined how to evaluate them?

2. Can You Carry It Out?
   - Do you have the necessary skills, or can you identify and get cooperation from specialists you will need?
   - Can it be done in/by your organization? If not, what do you need?

3. Who Will Fund It?
   - Who has funded similar work?
   - Who has a special interest in your subject, location, methodology, target group, etc.?
   - Who do you contact at potential sponsors, and how?
   - Have you made a preliminary contact, with an abstract? How much encouragement did you get?
   - What quid pro quo might a potential sponsor want? Can you give it?
   - Who else might be interested?
   - What data on sponsors can you get?

4. Plan The Proposal Process!
   - Do you have the sponsor's proposal guidelines, formats, forms, deadlines, etc.?
   - Have you identified the components your sponsor wants in a proposal?
   - Have you re-read, carefully, the sponsor's statement of need or interest?
   - Have you scheduled enough time to write and process the proposal?
   - Have you collected all the data, references and other information you will need?
   - Have you arranged for typing, graphics, and other mechanical support?
   - Have you identified and organized any colleagues, participants, and administrators who will help prepare the proposal?
   - Do you know how to process the proposal through your system, and how long it takes?
   - Will one or more colleagues read the proposal critically, checking for content, mechanics, and clarity and effectiveness of communication?

5. Consider The Overall Proposal!
   - Is it in the format and editorial style required or expected by the sponsor?
   - Is it easy to read rapidly? Does it flow logically?
   - Is the language intelligible to the non-specialist?
   - Do the major points stand out? Have you made appropriate use of titles, spacing, indexing, graphics, and other mechanics?
   - Does it meet the sponsor's limits on length? Typefaces? Type size?
   - Is it persuasive?
6. What's Up Front? And At The Back?
   - Is the title descriptive, imaginative and suitable for indexing?
   - Is the title/cover page on the sponsor's forms, or in the sponsor's format? If none is specified, did you use your organization's format?
   - Is the abstract complete but concise? Will it entice the reviewer to read the whole proposal? Is it comprehensible to the lay reader?
   - Are all of the forms, assurances, and other required items included?
   - Is there a table of contents? Does it help the reviewer find something she wants to go back and check out?
   - Are all the attachments, appendices, vitae, etc included? Are they accurately referenced in the text?
   - Do you have enough originals of photos, brochures, and other nonduplicatable material for all copies of the proposal?

7. Why Should This Project Be Done?
   - Do you show a precise understanding of the problem or need?
   - Do you clearly state your focus at the outset? Do you state clearly what you are not addressing?
   - What is the current state of knowledge or level of need? Do you document this with references and/or data?
   - Who needs what your project will produce? How badly?
   - Is your project output generalizable or transferable?
   - Does the project have a strong theoretical or conceptual base?
   - Is the problem feasible to solve?
   - Does this section of the proposal make the reviewer want to read on?

8. What Are Your Objectives?
   - Have you clearly and concisely stated the objectives or hypotheses?
   - Do the objectives or hypotheses flow from the problem statement?
   - Do the objectives or hypotheses describe the intended project outcomes, and exclude unwanted outcomes?
   - Are the outcomes measurable? How, and with what precision? How can someone else evaluate them?

9. How Will You Do The Project?
   - Have you included procedures to reach each and every objective or hypothesis?
   - Why are your procedures and methodology suitable to your problem and environment and resources?
   - If your procedures are new or unique, have you demonstrated persuasively and in detail their probability of success and their advantages over other procedures?
   - Have you pitched your methodological discussion and detail to the reviewers' level of sophistication?
   - Have you shown why your approach is technically sound?
   - Have you made the best use of tables, illustrations, and other techniques of information compression? Have you avoided cluttering these with too much information?
   - Have you adequately described time lines, project management, and the responsibilities of each individual or position on the project?
   - Have you clearly and precisely described the subjects, populations, materials, or other project subject material?
   - If you select some examples from a universe of subjects, have you stated how and why you will make the selection?
   - Have you clearly and precisely delineated information to be gathered, instruments to be used, and the precision of the resulting data?
o Have you clearly and precisely delineated any analysis you intend to make? Is this theoretically justified?
o Have you shown what the intended results will be, and their benefits and generalizability?
o Have you shown that you have anticipated possible problems and addressed how to meet them?
o Have you precisely described any role the sponsor will play in ongoing project activities or decisions?

10. **Will The Project Be Evaluated?**
o Is evaluation of the process or outcome a component of the project itself? If so, do the budget and methodology cover it?
o Who will evaluate, how and why?
o Does the methodology produce an output which can be evaluated against the stated problem?
o Will external data be needed for the evaluation? Who will gather or provide it?
o Who will report the evaluation? To whom? How?
o Is the evaluation appropriately independent of the project director? Will external consultants be needed?

11. **How Will The Results Be Disseminated?**
o Will you publish in the literature?
o Will you present the outcome at professional meetings?
o Why and to whom will the results be disseminated?
o Will dissemination require special facilities or functions?
o Is the methodology and cost appropriately addressed?
o Is dissemination appropriately the subject of a separate proposal? Have you said so?

12. **Who Will Do The Work?**
o Have you described the roles and responsibilities of each member of the project staff?
o Have you identified each key person by name? Have you demonstrated their capabilities and preparation for this project? Has each agreed to participate?
o Are all the necessary roles and functions provided for?
o What will you do if a key person becomes unavailable?
o How will you select any unidentified staff or consultants?
o Have you identified the roles and sources of any advisory boards?

13. **What Facilities Do You Have Or Need?**
o Where will the project be conducted?
o Are there unique features of the site or environment which facilitate the project?
o Are special facilities or equipment required? Is the sponsor expected to provide or fund them?

14. **Make The Budget Right!**
o Does your project budget anticipate every cost and its source of funding?
o Does the budget submitted to the sponsor show all costs to be charged to the sponsor? Does it show the source and value of other costs?
o Does the budget meet sponsor requirements for detail, format, and description of non-sponsor costs (cost-sharing or matching)?
o Does the budget demonstrate adequate attention to financial efficiency? Are lease-buy and other tradeoffs considered from a cost-benefit standpoint?
o Does the budget reflect an awareness of sponsor and institutional regulations, limitations, and special circumstances?

**PROPOSAL CHECKLIST – 3**
o Are direct and indirect (overhead) costs clearly separated, and have you adequately described what indirect covers?

o Are enough funds requested to cover contingencies? But is all the fat squeezed out?

o Is there adequate justification of unusual costs?

o Does the budget clearly relate to the narrative? Do you have any cross references required?

o Have you adequately accounted for cost increases and inflation, especially salary increases?

15. **Now Get The Proposal Submitted!**

   o Do you know the submission deadline? Will you meet it?

   o Are all of its parts ready, proofread, and assembled in the required order with all the requisite forms, assurances, and other bureaucratic addenda?

   o Do you know your organization's internal routing and checkoffs?

   o Are there enough copies for the sponsor and your organization? For various other reviewers or approvers?

   o How will you get it to the sponsor?

   o Is it personally signed by the Project Director and all necessary organizational officials? Are more than one original signature pages required?

   o Do you have necessary outside expressions of endorsement, support or agreement to participate?

   o Is there an appropriate letter of transmittal?

16. **What Next?**

   o Do you know the sponsor's review schedule?

   o How will you learn about the sponsor's decision? Do you know what is a binding and official acceptance?

   o Do you expect any negotiation? Do you know who in your organization can or must assist in negotiation?

   o Have you thought about how to cut the size of the project and budget if necessary? Are you willing to do so?

   o If you are funded, what must you do to get started?

   o If your proposal is declined, what useful information can you get from the sponsor to improve it? What other sponsor might be interested?

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