



Covenant University

Raising a new Generation of Leaders

The Art of Award Winning Grant Writing

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Outline

- 1. Grant types and availability**
- 2. Sourcing for grants**
- 3. Process and Procedure**
- 4. Writing award winning grants**



My experience with research and research grants

- International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
August 1998 – Dec 2008
 - Billions of dollars of research funds from various sources around the world
- Covenant University Ota January, 2009 - Present
 - Millions of dollars of research grants from various sources around the world



Types of Grants

- Research Project Grants
- Small Research Grants
- Exploratory/Developmental Grants
- Conference Grants
- Career Development Grants

Availability of Research grants

The approximate amount of money globally available as grants annually is?

- A. Over one billion dollars
- B. Over ten billion dollars
- C. Over 100 billion dollars



Money is scarce

Money is plentiful



Competition: I don't stand a chance

Think cooperation and
collaboration



Why cooperation and collaboration

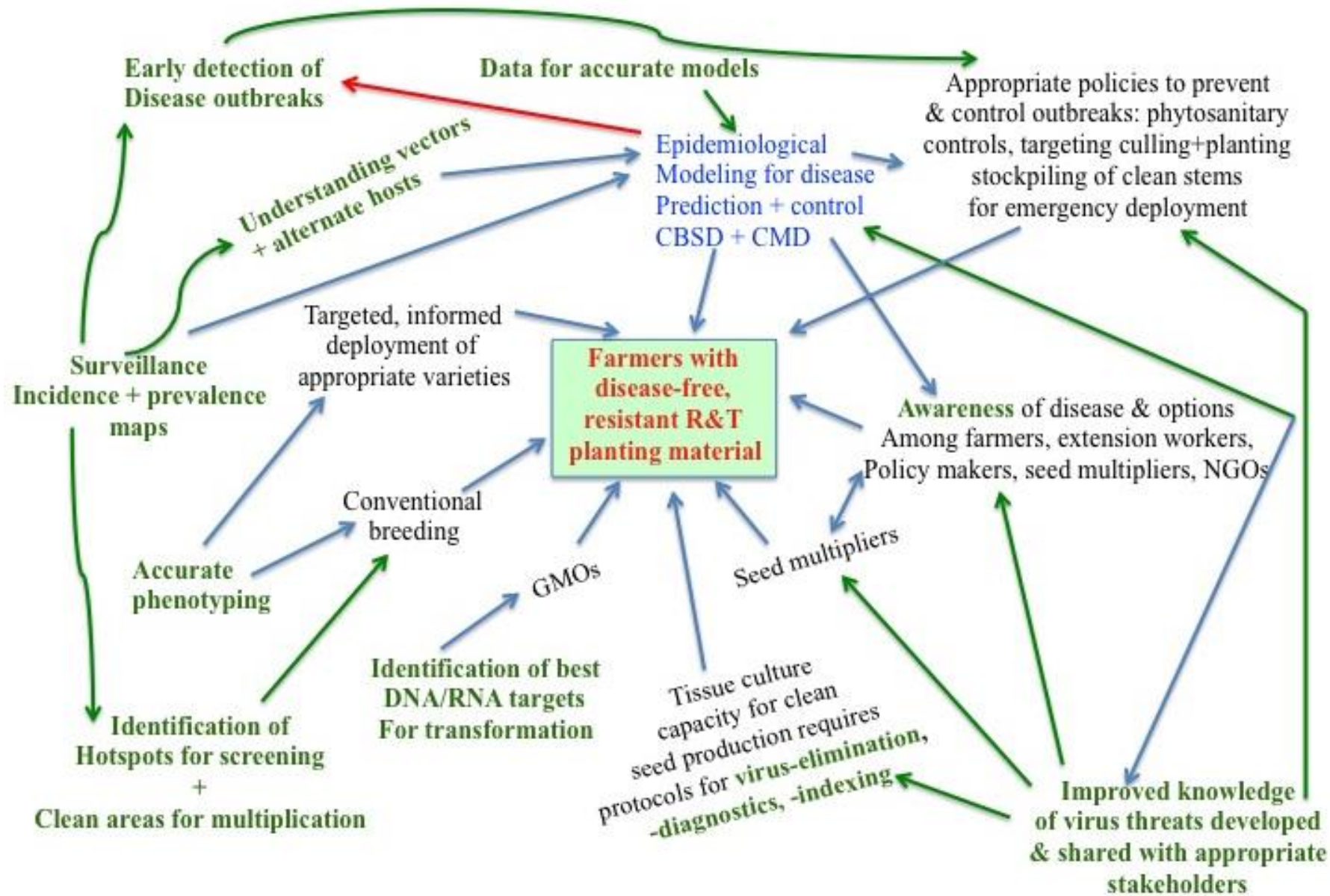
Collaboration
of ideas and

Agricultural Sciences **Biology**
Biochemistry **Chemistry** Clinical Medicine
Computer Science **Economics**

Funding agency want to maximize
their investments

Multidisciplinary researches result in
innovative approaches to problem
solving.





Rich donors/poor and weak me
please give me some money

You are a solution
Donors desperately need
suitable projects to fund



1

- Have the capacity to spend the money within the project timeframe (it's hard work to spend a million dollars)

2

- Accountability for money spent: transparent, robust finance and accounting skills, submit financial reports according to donor format and on time

3

- Can give donor evidence that their money has resulted in measurable change (outcomes and impact)



Variety of funders

- Charities/Foundations
- Research councils
- Government Departments and Agencies
- United Nations Agencies
- Academic Societies
- Corporations/Companies



Process and Procedure

Two major category of proposals can be distinguished;

1. Solicited proposals
2. Unsolicited proposals



Proposal development journey

Unsolicited proposals

Applicant

- Writes an expression of interest (EOI) or letter of inquiry (LOI)

Donor

- Reviews the EOI or LOI
- Invites concept note if project is feasible

Proposal development journey

Solicited proposals

Applicant

- Contacts potential collaborators to get their commitment
- Submits concept note on behalf of team

Donor

- Reviews the concept note
- Invites full proposal if research is feasible, may provides seed grant

Applicant

- Gathers all institutional paper work
- Several people review and ensure that guidelines are fully met
- submits proposal

Concept note (2 to 6 pages)/Full proposal (10 to 30 pages)

1. Title

2. Table of content

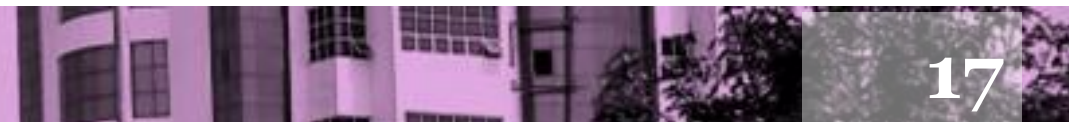
3. Executive summary

4. Introduction/background

- Full literature review
- Problem/opportunity and justification



5. Project description
 - Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Hypothesis/research question
6. Expected results and sharing of results
7. Sustainability
8. Monitoring and evaluation plan
9. Risks and assumptions



- Budget (ballpark figure/**detailed**)
- Timeline
- **Organizational capacity information** (Brief organizational information)
- **Personnel**
- **Financial reputation**
- **Partners**
- **Annexes**



Executive Summary

- Outlines the Project
- No longer than one page
- Gives the first impression
- Be concise, specific and compelling
- Build credibility for your organization
- Reinforce a connection between you and the funder

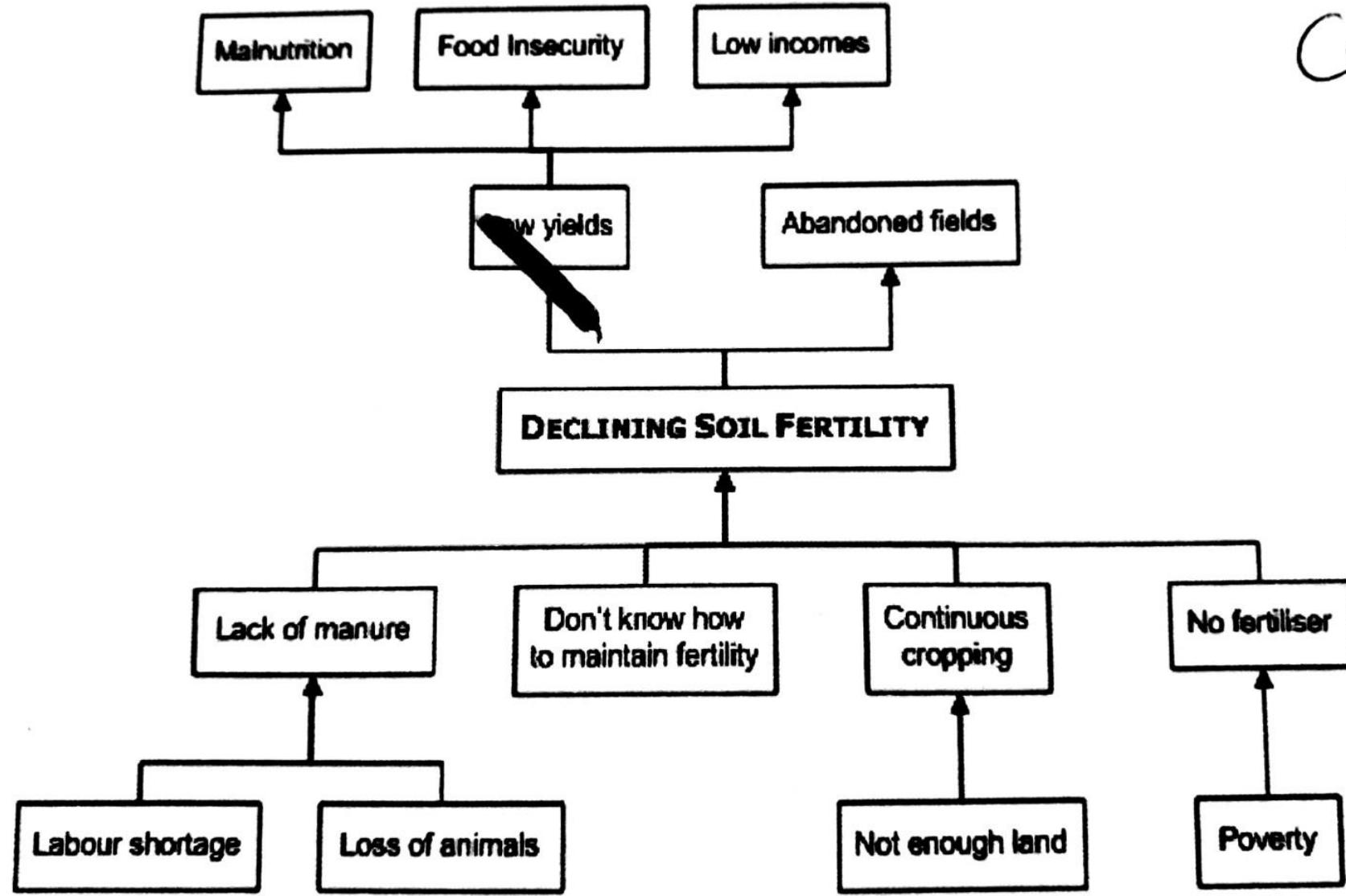


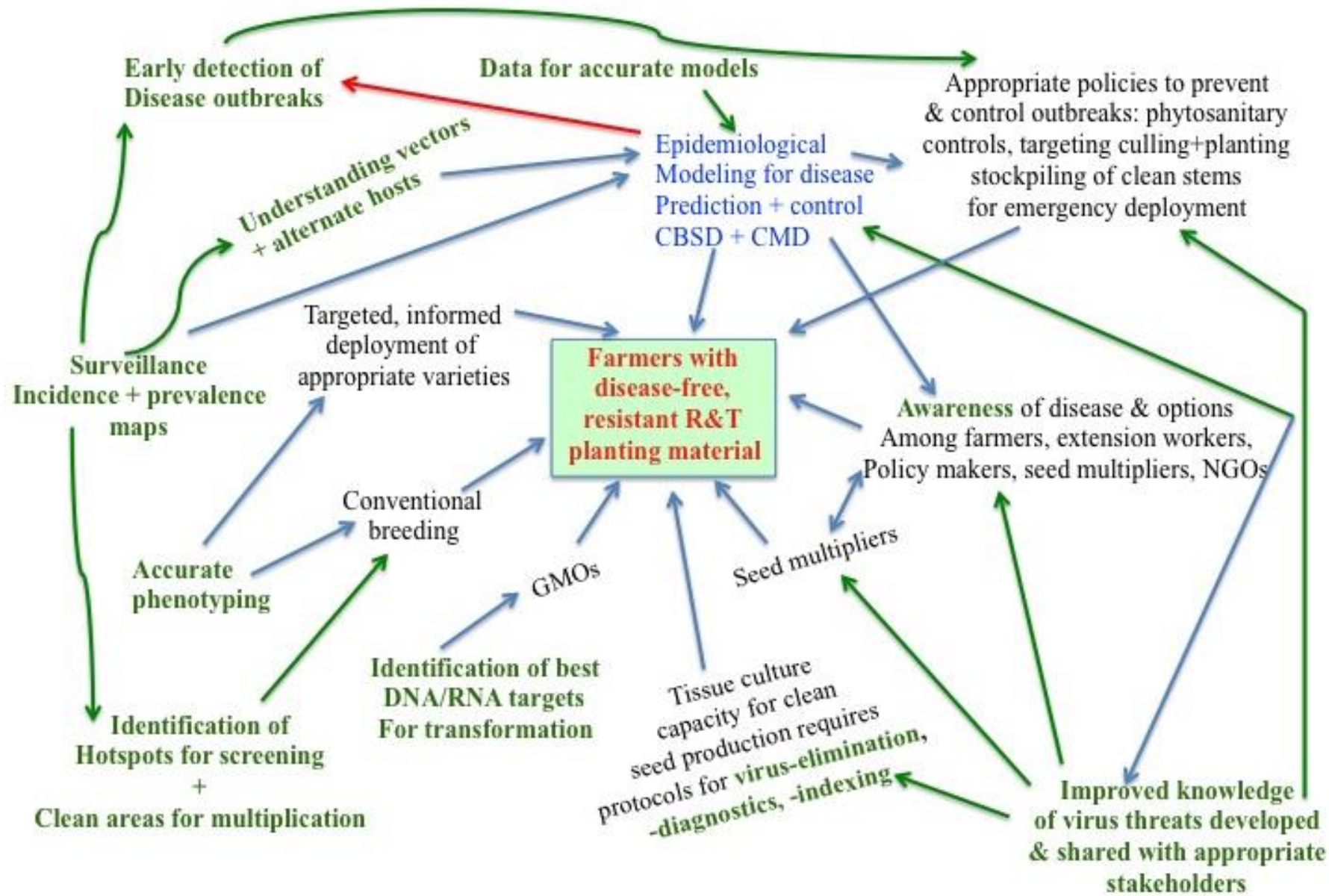
Introduction/background

- Identify a specific problem you want to solve or an issue you want to address
- Use statistics to support existence of your problem or issue
- Make a connection between the issue and your organization
- Make a case for your project locally
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the issue or problem
- Set up the delivery of your goals and objectives



Example of a problem tree





Project Objectives/Aims

- Must be specific with measurable outcomes
- Should be realistic and attainable
- Must solve the problem or address the issue
- Make reference to a number or a percentage and that it is do-able
- Do not confuse objectives with methods



Methodology, Activities, Design

- What activities will take place in order to achieve desired results?
- Make sure your methods are realistic
- Describe WHY you have chosen these activities
- Justify them over all other approaches you could have taken
- Show your knowledge of the bigger picture



Aim 1. Improved understanding of virus threats to roots and tuber crops in six countries in West Africa by 2016.

Activity 1. Host pre-inception workshop to optimize and harmonize protocols for sampling, sample storage, diagnostic protocols and analysis.

Activity 2. Conduct geo-reference field surveys in participating countries.

Activity 3. Analyze the field samples using harmonized adaptation of the diagnostic protocols currently in use in East Africa Virus Diagnostic Project.

Activity 4. Analyze field and laboratory data to generate surveillance maps.

Activity 5. Use phylogenetic and phylogeography approaches to understand root crop virus emergence, evolution and spread in West Africa.

Activity 6. Improve diagnostic tools for routine use in participating countries

Aim 5. Accurate information for identification and deployment of resistant/tolerant root and tuber crops in use by West African breeders

Activity 19. Synergize with breeders to evaluate germplasm in virus hotspots with a view to identify resistant varieties

Activity 20. Make virus species/strains distribution maps available to stakeholders in participating countries to facilitate targeted deployment of different resistant/tolerant materials

Activity 21. Train breeders and field technicians on proper assessment of virus resistance

Activity 8. Develop epidemiological models to inform strategies for monitoring and management of current and emerging cassava virus specie/strains

Modeling objectives and approach

Mathematical models, currently under development at the University of Cambridge for cassava virus disease in Eastern Africa will be integrated with the WAVE proposal together with sampling protocols from Rothamsted Research. The research on modeling in East Africa is led by Prof. Chris Gilligan (University of Cambridge) who will lead on the modeling research for WAVE at no further cost. The project is currently supported by the BMGF (BMGFO1511000086: Epidemiological modeling to inform strategies for: (i) detection, management and inoculum reduction of wheat stem rust: (ii) monitoring and management of current and emerging cassava virus strains) and will not involve further costs to the WAVE proposal.

$$\hat{q} - z_{\alpha/2} \sqrt{\hat{q}(1 - \hat{q})/N}$$

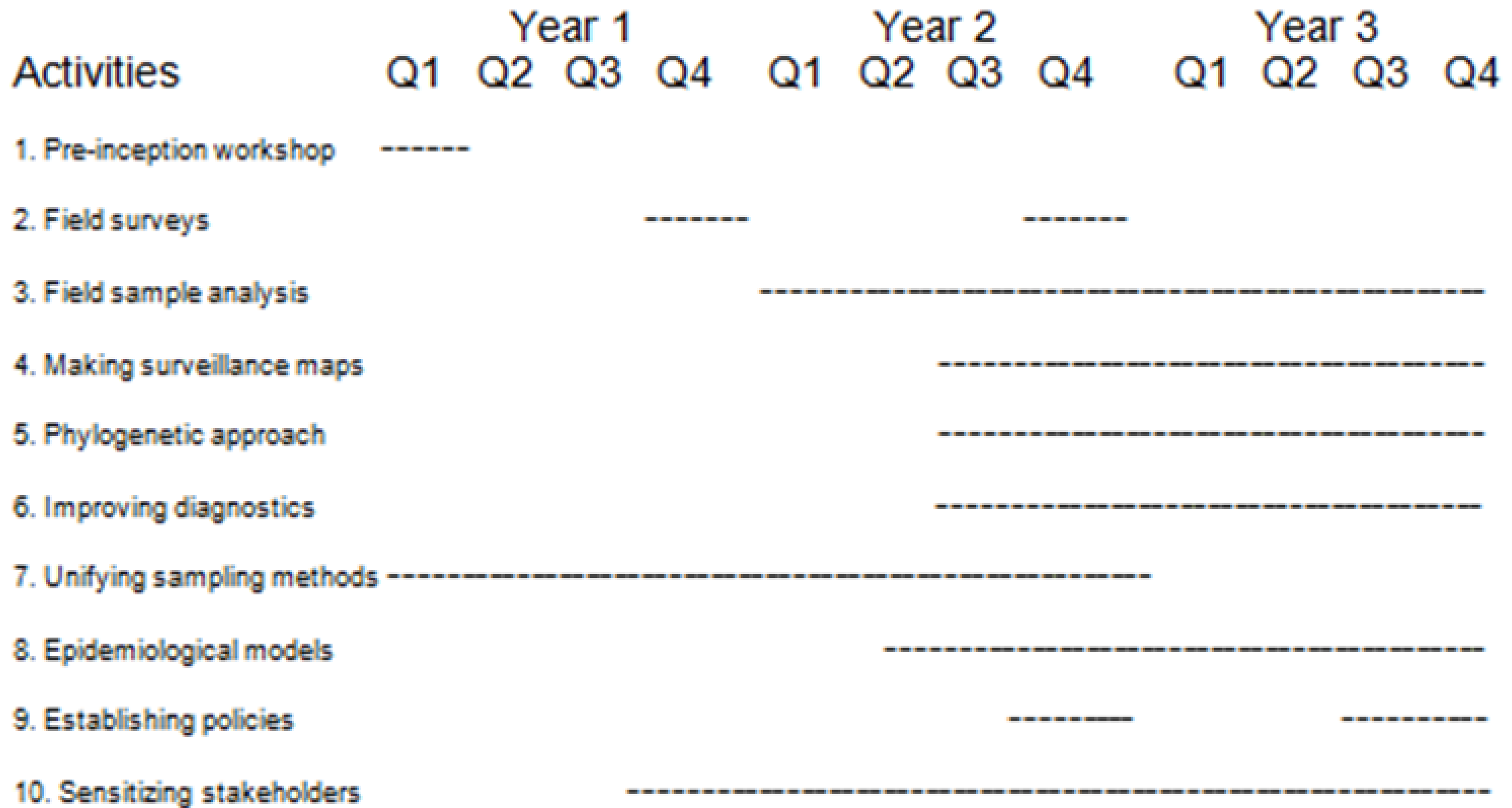
where $\hat{q} = N_{\text{diseased}} / N$ and $z_{\alpha/2}$ is the 100(1 - $\alpha/2$) the percentile of the standard normal distribution and N is the number of samples and N_{diseased} is the number of infected plants/fields in the sample (Madden, Hughes and van den Bosch, 2007).

As for the sampling for disease absence the spatial distribution of the samples in an area and the samples in a country will be determined using the methods developed by Szyniszewska and Parnell (2014).

Timeline

- Start from planning and research
- Make sure it runs chronologically
- Identify key implementation dates
- Identify person responsible
- Tie in evaluation and reporting periods





Sustainability or Future Funding

- Sources of continuing funding
- Other sources and amounts of funding
- Income generating initiatives
- Service fees
- Show that the project is working towards long term solutions which the donor can continue to be associated with



Project Evaluation

- What is the evaluation criteria?
- How does it tie in to your objectives?
- Identify formative and summative evaluation
- How exactly will success be determined
- Ask yourself what you expect to be different once the project is complete



Number	Output Description	Completion Date	Completion Date	Contingency
[1, 2, 3, etc.]		[DD Month YYYY]	[DD Month YYYY]	[Enter "X"]
4.	Geo-reference field surveys in participating countries completed.	30-August-2015 30-August-2016		x
5.	Strategically selected farmers in each of the six participating countries trained on CMD and CBSD symptom identification and prompt digital reporting of suspicious symptoms.	31-August-2015 31-August-2016		
6.	Cassava virus distribution and incidence maps for the six participating countries produced.	31-January-2016 31-January-2017		x
7.	Project links initiated with diverse stakeholders (farmer groups, plant quarantine service officers, extension officers, breeders, policy makers, media NGOs) for future coordination and impact.	Recurring with annual report		
8.	Virus hotspots and low disease pressure sites for germplasm evaluation and clean seed multiplication, identified in the six participating countries and information shared with breeders and seed multipliers.	31-January-2016 31-January-2017		

Dissemination

- Who will the project results be shared with?
- Can the program bring in new partners?
- Will it attract new funding partners?
- Can the project attract positive recognition?



Project Budget

- Show each area of line items that are allowed by the funder
- Make sure each area of personnel, fringe, equipment, travel, supplies are articulated
- Make sure you show the source of matching funds where applicable
- Identify all areas of contracted or consulting services



12	Item Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4
34	Porcelain mortars &	1.0								500			
35	Tabletop centrifuge	1.0								2,600			
36	pH meter & access	1.0								2,500			
37	Water bath	1.0								600			
38	Vortex	3.0								300			
39	Microwave	1.0								300			
40	Pipet sets	4.0								1,200			



Budget Justification

- Each item identified in the budget should have an explanation
- What will the item be needed for?
- Make sure you articulate specific equipment you want to acquire
- Specify the identified uses of contracted services



Academic proposals

- Scholarly pursuit
 - Individual passion
- Scholarly pursuit
- Theme-centered
 - Theory and thesis
- Expository rhetoric
 - Explaining to reader
- Impersonal tone
 - Objective, dispassionate
- Individualistic
 - Primarily a solo activity
- Few length constraints
 - Technical detail rewarded
- Specialized terminology
 - Insider jargon

Development proposals

- Benefits a larger community
- Service attitude, passion for wider impact
- Project-centered
 - Objectives and impact
- Persuasive rhetoric
 - “Selling” to the reader
- Personal tone
 - ✓ Conveys excitement
- Team-focused
 - ✓ Feedback needed
- Strict length constraints
 - ✓ Brevity rewarded
- Accessible language
 - ✓ Simple and crisp



Tips for successful proposal development

- Reviewers are not always or rarely technical experts
- Not all reviewers will read the whole proposal
- Ensure that the first page is stand-alone summary of your proposal (**Clear, Concise and Complete**)
- Be smart-concentrate on the donor's evaluation criteria

Tips for successful proposal development

- Read extensively about the donor's priorities
- Know that writing a good concept note/research proposal is not easy
- Ask several people to help you improve your concept note/proposal
- Be psychologically prepared to revise it several times before final submission

What to consider regarding the donor

- Does the proposal match the donor's priorities and organizational values?
- What kind of projects has the donor funded in the past?
- Where has the donor funded projects in the past?

What to consider regarding the donor

- What are the concept note/proposal guidelines?
- What expenses **do they** and **do they not** fund?
- What are their budget levels?
- When is the due date for concept notes/proposal?

Your personal responsibility to you

- Own your research
 - Read read read – far and wide
 - Watch videos particularly for new concepts and procedures
 - Don't be afraid to try out new things
- Strive for the highest research quality and standards (your location is not a constraint)
- Strive for the highest quality and standards in your publications – they speak in places ahead of you



Your personal responsibility to you

- Strive to present at an international or regional conferences. Ensure to be active and network
- Be familiar with your national and global community of practice (CoP) Be an active player
- Portray positive and constructive attitude always, particularly among colleagues
- Always keep in mind that you are as good as anyone else in the world –your location is an advantage, use it wisely.



Planning for proposal writing

When preparing your proposal, allow sufficient time to:

- Identify and assess your research topic – remember to integrate crosscutting and emerging issues such as economic recession, fluctuations in global food prices, HIV/AIDS, climate change, etc. as appropriate
- Ensure and plan/budget for gender responsiveness (where necessary)
- Review and evaluate various funding opportunities

Planning for proposal writing

- Obtain background information on the donor
- Download application forms
- Become familiar with application instructions
- Create a proposal checklist of your own
- Select collaborators



Collaboration

- Based on funding agency's requirements:
 - determine partners
 - build partnerships/networks
 - agree on terms of engagement:



Further reading

- Bourne, P. E., Chalupa L. M. (2006). Ten simple rules for getting grants. PloSComputBio 2(2)e12
- Kraicer, J. (1997). The art of grantsmanship. Strasbourg: Human Frontier Science Program
www.hfsp.org/how/ArtOfGrants.htm

Thank
You

