Developing an Office of Research Administration in a new Institution

Grants Management experience at the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI)

Functions, Processes and Resources
IDI began in 2002; focus on building capacity of health systems related to HIV

- Now 5 programmes:
  - Prevention, care and treatment
  - Training
  - Research
  - Lab services
  - Outreach

- Over 800 staff (7 grants staff); $17m annual budget

- Research focal areas:
  - opportunistic infections particularly Tuberculosis, Cryptococcus, Kaposi’s sarcoma and other malignancies
  - ART-associated complications
  - HIV prevention (especially in discordant couples and young adults)
  - sexual and reproductive health
  - clinical pharmacology
Projects in progress at IDI

As of Dec 2005
- Cross-cutting: 1
- Prevention and Care: 4
- Training: 5
- Research: 2

As of Dec 2006
- Cross-cutting: 2
- Prevention and Care: 14
- Training: 11
- Research: 5

As of Dec 2007
- Cross-cutting: 4
- Prevention and Care: 27
- Training: 8
- Research: 4

As of Dec 2008
- Cross-cutting: 3
- Prevention and Care: 34
- Training: 7
- Research: 8

As of Dec 2009
- Cross-cutting: 3
- Prevention and Care: 58
- Training: 7
- Research: 8

As of Mar 2010
- Cross-cutting: 3
- Prevention and Care: 58
- Training: 7
- Research: 8

As of Jun 2010
- Cross-cutting: 1
- Prevention and Care: 60
- Training: 8
- Research: 8
Some typical organisational characteristics of a new institution

**Mission**
- Program activities not systematically developed in relation to the mission; "chasing the money"

**Compliance**
- The organisation and/or functional research department (where applicable) may not be in full compliance with registration requirements

**Administrative procedures**
- Non-existence, or limited documentation, of administrative procedures

**Financial procedures**
- Limited awareness of institutional cost recovery mechanisms for sustainability

**Information and Communication Technology**
- Limited use of ICT for structured storage and access to organisational information; too many stand-alone units used for ad hoc tasks
Essential functions of grants management: Pre-award

- Scanning environment for funding opportunities
- Facilitating linkage of concepts and funding opportunities … circulating requests for proposals and generating discussion on bidding prospects
- Coordinating and documenting corporate approval for proposals … checking eligibility to bid, strategic fit, and contribution to sustaining the institution
- Identifying, and linking with, suitable partners where a consortium seems appropriate
### Criteria for choosing grant opportunities to pursue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Would the proposed activity be consistent with, and supportive to, the IDI Strategic Plan? Synergy with other IDI activities?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Does the deadline allow enough time to produce a high quality submission?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Estimated contribution to IDI core costs: overhead? cost recovery?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Chance of success?</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>If bid successful, would strain on all types of IDI capacity be acceptable? For example: office space; clinic space; clinic staff; data entry staff; pharmacy staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Would IDI be the prime contractor and in a position of leadership of the project?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Opportunity cost: Who would be doing most of the proposal writing? IDI effort to respond?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Likelihood of at least one publication resulting?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Will this application strengthen or weaken strategic partnerships?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Would project enhance IDI’s reputation?</td>
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</table>
Essential functions of grants management: Pre-award

- Administrative support for development of proposal content:
  - budgeting and cost recovery (both direct and indirect costs, fees etc..)
  - checking adequacy of staffing and infrastructure … and overall ability to deliver project targets

- Managing the proposal development process:
  - clarity of roles; consortium partner input
  - internal deadlines for stages in proposal development
  - completeness and overall quality of content, and presentation of proposal

- Managing submission … postal; email; online

- Monitoring funder review and award progress

- Creating and managing standard corporate proposal information for re-use
Essential functions of grants management: Post-award

- Contract negotiation … with funders and partners
- Project start up: supporting financial arrangements eg initiating account creation, petty cash imprest arrangements, staffing
- Administrative oversight of active projects: approving major charges to project budgets, and budget control
- Ensuring financial and programmatic compliance with grant and contract terms for each grant/funder
- Managing staff effort charges to projects (timesheets)
- Managing customisation, completeness, quality, timeliness and consistency of financial and programmatic reports to individual funders
- Managing project closure, extensions and/or carry-overs
Essential environmental factors for grants management

- Clearly defined role within the institution’s structure … separate from, but closely linked with, and mutually supportive of, the finance department

- Clearly defined interfaces with major complementary functions including: Finance, Research/ethics, individual project management, and core departments

- Close linkage with Monitoring and Evaluation function … to facilitate project design, proposal writing, project execution and reporting
Grants management team

- **Essential skill sets:**
  - Basic and/or higher level accounting and financial concepts
  - Strong analytical skills … plus good written and spoken communications skills
  - High level manipulation of text, numerical data, graphics and presentations
  
  Plus good general understanding of institution’s business methods and priorities
  … to facilitate cost recovery, negotiation with external parties, and contracting

- **Additional grants staff training:**
  - grants acquisition and management
  - major funder-specific financial and programmatic guidelines
  - project planning & management
  - research and non-research compliance

- Placement and/or staff exchanges with experienced grants offices
Tools and infrastructure for grants management

Tools

- Grants and Contracts Policies and Procedures Manual … cross-referenced with other manuals such as Finance, Procurement, HR
- Succinct notes on start up steps in project
- Quarterly review of status of all IDI grants (Grants Register)
- Brief Project Summary Forms with key information

Essential equipment

- High quality scanner … for electronic documentation and filing
- High quality internet connection … especially for online proposal submissions
- Reliable central server … to host comprehensive database and filing system

Adequate office space
A few of the lessons learned ...

- Strategic focus vital … look to intersect with funders’ strategies and complement (or supplement) strategies of potential project partners
- Cultivate strategic national and international partnerships
- Negotiate to maximise overheads and cost recovery … get (and defend) audited indirect rate … build overheads into direct costs (as allowable)
- Negotiate for efficiency … for example: reporting requirements, financial arrangements (cash flow, bank accounts)
- Try to get priming experience
- Build funder confidence through demonstrably strong internal / external audit and systems
- Broaden funding base to reduce dependency on particular source … IDI: EU, NIH, Gates, Irish Aid, Belgian Govt, Gilead, and others
- Fund a grants management office from projects … 72% of IDI grants and M&E staff costs covered last year
Thank you
About 20 funding agencies contributed to IDI revenue through both direct grants/contracts and sub-grants/sub-contracts with intermediary organisations in the fiscal year ended June 2010.
### Success rate with proposals: July 2009 to June 2010

*as at 30 Sep 2010*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of proposals submitted</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Not yet awarded</th>
<th>% success</th>
<th>Number of successful proposals</th>
<th>Value of successful proposals (year 1)</th>
<th>% of total in $ terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to $200,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>$1.20m</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$200,000 to $500,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>$2.25m</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $500,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>$3.24m</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Value uncertain</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6.69m</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
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