If you were NOT funded

You’ve probably seen the statistics – average funding rates for most projects range from 10-30%. Proposals get rejected more often than not. However, you should be aware that funding rates for resubmitted proposals can be significantly higher – even as much as 50%. Consequently, if you have been rejected on your first submission, you’ll definitely want to consider resubmitting for the next deadline.

The first thing you’ll need to do is take a close look at the reviewers’ comments and evaluate what problems can be easily fixed and which may require more effort. Here are some typical categories of problems:

- Failure to follow the guidelines – did you use the correct forms? Are the sections in the correct order? Did you exceed the page limits?
- Typos, omissions, inconsistencies, and other general errors – is your document riddled with spelling and grammatical errors? Have you included all of the required information? Have you paid attention to the details?
- Insufficient detail and lack of clarity – do the reviewers understand your project plans and objectives? Maybe your writing is not clear.
- Concerns about feasibility, resources, and qualifications – maybe you need to reduce the scope of your project, or add a more experienced collaborator to the project team.
- Project is vague, uninteresting, or unimportant – these are serious concerns and you may want to consider either a major rewrite (check that literature review!) or possibly taking a new direction altogether.

If you do decide to rewrite and resubmit your proposal, make sure to address all of the reviewers’ comments and concerns in the new version.

If you decide that it’s not worth the effort to resubmit your original proposal, what do you do now? Well, it’s basically back to the drawing board. However, keep in mind that you’ve had a valuable learning experience in developing a proposal and are better prepared for next time.

There are several things you can do to improve your chances of being funded:

- Conduct further preliminary studies and activities – apply for an innovation grant to do a pilot version of your project.
- Keep up with the current literature – what are the new developments in your areas of interest?
- Talk to the sponsors about your ideas and find out if there is a receptive audience for them.
- Volunteer to be a proposal reviewer – get first hand experience with the process.
- Explore other funding opportunities and experiences. Consider applying for summer residencies or fellowships. Volunteer to serve as a consultant or
subcontractor on a colleague’s project. Continue to add to your list of qualifications!

- Explore activities that can improve your future funding chances

Work hard, and keep trying!