Case for Support Checks

1 Introduction

1.1 Does it begin with a perfect key sentence 1?

1.1.1 A one-sentence statement that describes the overall outcome of the project

1.1.2 relates it to a big research or societal problem

1.1.3 and adds something distinctive about how it will be achieved?

1.2 Does it then state why the research problem is important (Key sentence 2).

1.3 Does it state the aims (3 or four key sentences)?

1.3.1 These can be stated as separate "We need to know" statements

1.3.2 or as a compound aims statement

1.3.3 But there should definitely be three of them

1.3.4 or four.

1.4 Does it state what kind of project is to be carried out and what the outcome will be?

1.4.1 It should be obvious to a naive reader that this is the same outcome as mentioned in 1.1.1 and approach as mentioned in 1.1.3

1.5 Is there a set of statements of the research objectives?

1.5.1 This is a set of three or four statements, each of which will describe a sub-project in about 10 words

1.5.2 and say what it will deliver in about 10 more.

1.5.3 Like the aims it can be expressed as a compound list of objectives or as separate statements.

1.5.4 The objectives should recognisably deliver the aims and should appear in the same order as the aims they will deliver.

1.6 Does it state how the results will be disseminated?

1.6.1 This is the final key sentence and it should describe an approach to dissemination that will take us towards whatever you have said is important in key sentence 2.

1.7 The length of the Introduction should be less than 20% of the total.

2 Background / Work which has led up to the project.

2.1 Does it begin with a one-sentence statement of the overall outcome of the project ?

2.1.1 It will help if you highlight the sentence now. It should be recognisably the same sentence as in 1.1.

This sentence should head a section that explains in broad terms how the outcome of the project will contribute to solving an important research or societal problem. The whole of section 2 needs to make the case that in order to progress towards a solution to the big problem, we need to know the specific things that will be discovered by the project.

Note that this is the proposition for investment in your research. The problem has to be important enough and the progress towards a solution clear enough for it to be worth the money you request.

2.2 Does it then state why the research problem is important? It will help to highlight the sentence.

2.2.1 This should be recognisably the same statement as in 1.2.

It should head a section that backs up the statement with evidence. The section should introduce the specific questions that will be answered by the project.

2.3 Does it have a set of three or four subsections explaining why we need to know each of the things that will be discovered in the project?

2.3.1 These should be introduced by sentences that are

2.3.2 recognisably the same as those in sections 1.3.1 and following.

2.3.3 and they should be in

2.3.4 the same order.

They should cite evidence from the literature to make the case that the sub- questions are important?

They can incidentally cite evidence that the research team have the necessary skills to carry out all the work packages? Note that MRC, EPSRC, BBSRC and NERC specify that the case for support should have a separate section for information about the achievements of the research team, which would be a place to highlight such evidence.

2.4 The length of the Background should be less than 30% of the total.

3 Description of the Research Project/Programme of Research.

3.1 Does the description of the project begin with a section describing the general research approach?

This should begin with a sentence that is recognisably the same as that in 1.4.. And it should discuss general methods and funder-specific and project-specific requirements, such as:-

- Ethics for work involving animals, human subjects or data about humans.

- Data protection for work involving data about humans.

- Data collection vs existing data resources (ESRC).

- Home-office licences for work involving scientific procedures on vertebrates.

3.2 Does the description of the project break the project down into sub-projects or work packages?

3.2.1 There should be the same number of sub-projects as are identified in section 1.5 and they should occur in the same order.

3.2.2 Each should begin with a clear statement of what each sub-project will discover, or what question it will answer.

- These statements should be recognisably the same as the key statements of objectives in section 1.5

- The description of each sub-project should say what resources will be used.

  - It should identify which resources are to be provided by the grant and which are provided by the institution.

- The description of the project should explain how the project will be managed and how the sub-projects will relate to one another.

3.3 There should be a final section about how the results will be disseminated.

3.3.1 This should begin with a sentence that is recognisably the same sentence as that in section 1.5.1

3.4 The length of the Description of the Project should be at least 50% of the total.