



## Common Reasons for Proposal Rejection

At IFS, we often receive hundreds of applications in a call. The first stage of the evaluations is called pre-screening where applications are assessed on whether they meet a set of basic criteria before being sent out for peer-review. Applicants that do not pass the pre-screening stage are sent feedback on why their application was not accepted. Usually there are a number of reasons that an application is not be accepted. Below we list of some of the common reasons why an application may not be accepted at pre-screening. We are sharing this as a learning tool to allow early-career researchers to understand what the most common mistakes are when applying for IFS grants.

REASON	DESCRIPTION
ADDRESS QUERIES	
Foreign university	You did not provide sufficient detail on the length of your stay at a foreign university and when you plan to return to your home country.
Time in country-abroad during project	You seem to be spending some time during project planning and/or implementation stages at a foreign academic institution. You should have provided details of how much time (and when) you will spend in your home country/ and how much time you will spend abroad while planning and/or undertaking your proposed IFS project. If you are enrolled in a PhD, this should be detailed in your PhD timeline that you have to submit with your application. Please note that IFS cannot support research, or part thereof, that is done in a country that is not eligible for IFS support.
Unclear organisation	We are unable to ascertain exactly to what kind of organisation you are attached. Applicants must be attached to a national research institute (e.g. university, national research institute, or not-for-profit research-oriented national NGO) in an eligible low- or lower middle-income country.
Non-eligible institution	It is not clear if your home institution fulfils the IFS eligibility criteria. Applicants must be attached to a national/regional research institute (e.g. university, non-profit making research centre, or research-oriented national NGO) in an eligible low- or lower middle-income country.  Researchers employed at international research institutes or international NGO's are NOT eligible. However, researchers doing part of their project at an international institute can apply for an IFS grant, if their principal affiliation is with a national/regional institution.
APPLICANT	
Too established	The policy of IFS is to help early-career researchers. Your application indicates that you already are, or well on your way to become, a rather well-established scientist and, therefore, do not belong to the IFS target group anymore. We advise you instead to encourage your students or other early-career researchers to apply.
Lack of experience	You seem to have limited relevant research training and experience in one or more of the topics of your application. If this gap is planned to be covered by other experts at your institute, you should provide more background information about the research that is ongoing at your institute and also indicate who of your colleagues and/or supervisors could provide guidance during your project.

Unclear degree eligibility	It is unclear from the information that you have provided on your academic degree whether you meet the minimum academic eligibility requirements for the IFS grant you are applying for.
Who will do work?	It is not clear who will do the work, i.e. it seems that the project will be undertaken by several people and it is not clear what your specific role in the project will be. You can involve other people in your project, but as the applicant of an IFS project, you have to be the main person carrying out the work. You should not be solely having a supervisory role.
Details missing in publication list	Your publication list in Box 6.1 does not contain the necessary detail for the publication(s) to be retrieved by others.
Details missing on experience	You provided too little detail when describing your scientific background and experience, making it difficult to assess whether you are likely to successfully complete the project. You should provide evidence on the competencies required for your IFS project. If you have any gaps in experience, describe if you have any contacts with the necessary experience who can support you in your project.
Limited scientific contacts	<p>We suggest you try to widen your network of scientific contacts with persons who, if necessary, could help you with the revision of your proposal and maybe during the execution of your project. Expand your scientific network by reaching out to scientists working in your research area. Having a scientific network will allow you to draw on the skills of your colleagues when needed and potentially lead to future opportunities later in your career.</p> <p>There are many resources online that can help you in expanding your scientific network. Most established university libraries have useful information. Below are some examples of resources that you may find helpful:</p> <p>Mentoring and Collaboration Network - Author Aid.  <a href="https://www.authoraid.info/en/mentoring/">https://www.authoraid.info/en/mentoring/</a></p> <p>Article: Turnbull &amp; Gotian. 2020. Five steps to networking during a pandemic. Nature Careers Community.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-03567-9">https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-03567-9</a></p>

**APPLICATION FORM**

Text outside the box	Your text does not fit within the space provided in the boxes. This means that some of your text cannot be seen by the reviewers and so your application cannot be properly evaluated. Before submitting your application, proof-read the PDF version of your application to ensure all of your text is included. If you are preparing your application on a separate document and copying and pasting the text into the online application, ensure that you have kept within the character limit which is stated for sections 6 to 8 in the application guidelines.
Careless application	There are several problems with this application including missing essential information and/or spelling mistakes that suggest that you have not had enough time to prepare this application. If applying for another grant in the future, ensure that you prepare your application well ahead of time, follow the application guidelines with care, and proof-read your application several times before submitting. You are advised to ask a colleague/supervisor to read and comment on your application. Preparing well in advance will improve your chances of success, and should be done for any grant you intend to apply for, not just IFS grants.
Incomplete application	The application cannot be adequately evaluated as it is incomplete and is missing information in certain sections or missing requested files. Ensure you refer to the application guidelines and complete the proposal checklist to confirm that all the necessary information and details have been included and that you have submitted all the requested accompanying documents with your application.
Weak English	The English is very difficult to understand. It is suggested that you seek help with this before you re-apply.
Use of past tense	Sections of the application form are written in the past tense, suggesting that the work, or parts thereof, have been carried out already, or, alternatively have been cut and pasted from already existing publications. You cannot request funds for projects that have been done already.

**BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION**

Justification weak	The background justification to the project is weak. It does not sufficiently well describe the context of the project, i.e. why you are proposing this research, why it is important/necessary, or who will benefit from this research and how.
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Problem/Justification unconvincing or incomplete	Your project justification is unconvincing or incomplete. It needs more references, facts or figures to support your problem statement(s). The reader needs to be convinced of the problem you are describing. There are many resources online on scientific writing and how to write a convincing problem statement. Most established university libraries have useful information. Below are some examples of resources that you may find helpful: Video: Structuring an argument Academic Writing - University of Lund. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvhQ-eNuJ8I">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvhQ-eNuJ8I</a> Video: Research Question and Thesis Statement - University of Lund. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kggDFYQC7mQ&amp;t=37s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kggDFYQC7mQ&amp;t=37s</a>
Too speculative, preliminary work may be needed	Your project seems speculative. You have not provided sufficient information or references to show that the project has a reasonable chance of achieving the stated objectives. You may have to carry out some preliminary work before support for this project can be justified.
<b>BUDGET</b>	
Budget figures not estimated correctly	Not all individual budget items seem to have been realistically estimated. More accurate estimates are required. To obtain a realistic estimate, we recommend that you seek advice from colleagues or your purchasing department (if available). For equipment, you can contact vendors online. For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos: IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a> IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good & Bad Examples of Budgets <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a>
Exceeds maximum	The budget exceeds the maximum amount for the type of IFS grant you are applying for.
Budget over-/under-estimated	Individual budget items seem to be costed unrealistically. For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos: IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a> IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good & Bad Examples of Budgets <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a>
Budget items not explained/justified	Your budget justification is not sufficiently elaborated. All items requested should be justified and explained in box "Budget justification". This is an essential requirement, and is particularly important for the description of the travel costs and the costs for additional manpower. For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos: IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a> IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good & Bad Examples of Budgets <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a>
Not sufficiently related to the proposed work	Several of the requested items are not obviously related to the workplan. For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos: IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a> IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good & Bad Examples of Budgets <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a>

Conference/workshop not permitted	<p>IFS supports the involvement of stakeholders, especially at the early stages of project design, before the application is prepared and budget costs for projects using participatory research can be supported. However, budget items that are associated with the dissemination of research results cannot be approved at this stage, as results have yet to be achieved and peer-reviewed.</p> <p>Therefore the Basic and Renewal Grant does not cover publication costs, poster production, leaflet production, workshop costs, conference attendance, etc. If dissemination is an integral part of the project proposal, we recommend that you find additional funding to cover this activity.</p>
Overheads not permitted	<p>Overhead costs are not permitted. Your home institution is expected to pay for the costs of administering your grant if awarded.</p> <p>For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos:            IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a>            IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good &amp; Bad Examples of Budgets  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a></p>
Co-funding not well explained	<p>Your budget is not balanced, which suggests that additional funding is available. It should be clearly explained what the funds requested from IFS shall be used for in relation to any other funding available for the project. More details should have been provided on additional sources of funding for the same project (components).</p> <p>For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos:            IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a>            IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good &amp; Bad Examples of Budgets  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a></p>
Salaries not supported by IFS	<p>Salaries for scientists and technicians employed by the host institute cannot be supported by IFS, even though payments may be permitted for help with e.g. field trials (e.g. manual labour).</p> <p>For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos:            IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a>            IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good &amp; Bad Examples of Budgets  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a></p>
Budget insufficiently elaborated	<p>Your budget is not sufficiently elaborated. You should provide more detail. Please consult the guidelines for the application form.</p> <p>For more information on how to prepare a budget for an IFS application please watch the following tutorial videos:            IFS Application Tutorial - 1: Preparing a Research Budget  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEwEE_y0VCA&amp;t=3s</a>            IFS Application Tutorial - 2: Good &amp; Bad Examples of Budgets  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH0gojMMhbQ&amp;t=42s</a></p>
HYPOTHESIS/OBJECTIVES	
Unclear objectives	<p>Your objectives are not clear.</p> <p>There are many resources online on developing research objectives. Below is an example of a guide that you may find helpful:            Research Guide: 4.0 Formulating research questions, hypotheses, and objectives - SOAS University of London. <a href="https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#">https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#</a></p>

Not all objectives covered in methodology	Not all objectives are addressed in your detailed methodology. Your methodology, which should be detailed in your project design and research plan, should clearly describe how you will meet each of your research objectives. Referring back to your objectives when writing these sections is a simple way to ensure that all your objectives are covered.
Not all objectives relate to hypothesis	The hypothesis does not clearly link to the research objective(s).
Hypotheses or Research Questions are predictable	<p>The hypotheses or research questions are too simplistic and/or predictable. Consequently, it does not contribute to a useful conceptualisation of an experimental strategy.</p> <p>There are many resources online on developing hypotheses or research questions. Most established university libraries have useful information. Below are some examples of resources that you may find helpful:</p> <p>Research Guide: The Hypothesis in Science Writing - University of Berkley.  <a href="https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=&amp;ved=2ahUKFwigzuKnpajuAhWVAhAIHTQfCrAQFiANegQIjHAC&amp;url=https%3A%2F%2Fberks.psu.edu%2Fsites%2Fberks%2Ffiles%2Fcampus%2FHypothesisHandout_Final.pdf&amp;u sg=AOvVaw2AtuKycv7h1lwAcqvSRUS">https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=&amp;ved=2ahUKFwigzuKnpajuAhWVAhAIHTQfCrAQFiANegQIjHAC&amp;url=https%3A%2F%2Fberks.psu.edu%2Fsites%2Fberks%2Ffiles%2Fcampus%2FHypothesisHandout_Final.pdf&amp;u sg=AOvVaw2AtuKycv7h1lwAcqvSRUS</a></p> <p>Research Guide: Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper. The Research Problem/Questions - University of South Carolina.  <a href="https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/introduction/researchproblem">https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/introduction/researchproblem</a></p>
No new scientific questions asked	<p>It appears that your project does not ask new scientific questions.</p> <p>There are many resources online on developing your research topic and question. Most established university libraries have useful information. Below are some examples of resources that you may find helpful:</p> <p>Research Guide: The Hypothesis in Science Writing - University of Berkley.  <a href="https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=&amp;ved=2ahUKFwigzuKnpajuAhWVAhAIHTQfCrAQFiANegQIjHAC&amp;url=https%3A%2F%2Fberks.psu.edu%2Fsites%2Fberks%2Ffiles%2Fcampus%2FHypothesisHandout_Final.pdf&amp;u sg=AOvVaw2AtuKycv7h1lwAcqvSRUS">https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=&amp;ved=2ahUKFwigzuKnpajuAhWVAhAIHTQfCrAQFiANegQIjHAC&amp;url=https%3A%2F%2Fberks.psu.edu%2Fsites%2Fberks%2Ffiles%2Fcampus%2FHypothesisHandout_Final.pdf&amp;u sg=AOvVaw2AtuKycv7h1lwAcqvSRUS</a></p> <p>Research Guide: 4.0 Formulating research questions, hypotheses, and objectives - SOAS University of London.  <a href="https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#">https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#</a></p>
Hypothesis non-testable	Your hypothesis appears unrealistic or untestable.
Not research	<p>Not all objectives are research oriented.</p> <p>There are many resources online on developing research objectives. Below is an example of a guide that you may find helpful:</p> <p>Research Guide: 4.0 Formulating research questions, hypotheses, and objectives - SOAS University of London. <a href="https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#">https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#</a></p>
Too general	<p>The objectives are described in too general terms.</p> <p>There are many resources online on developing research objectives. Below is an example of a guide that you may find helpful:</p> <p>Research Guide: 4.0 Formulating research questions, hypotheses, and objectives - SOAS University of London. <a href="https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#">https://www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P506_RM_3736-Demo/unit1/page_23.htm#</a></p>
Activities instead of objectives	You have described a list of activities rather than the research objectives of your project. Research objectives describe how you will achieve your research aim. Each objective can be made up of several activities. Your research objectives should be described as detailed and precise as possible, and achievable.

LITERATURE SURVEY	
Literature survey missing or poorly developed	<p>Review of key literature is incomplete/poorly developed. Your research may already have been done by someone else. By building on the results of others, your research must ask new scientific questions. A good literature review reflects work that has been done in relevant countries/regions and work done elsewhere that is pertinent to your project. A critical review helps identify knowledge gaps and in formulating new research questions. There are resources online on how to develop your literature review. Most established university libraries have useful information. Some examples:</p> <p>Video: Get Lit: The Literature Review - Texas A&amp;M University.  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9la5vtz9MmM&amp;t=765s">www.youtube.com/watch?v=9la5vtz9MmM&amp;t=765s</a></p> <p>Research Guide: University of South Carolina.  <a href="http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview">libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview</a></p> <p>This guide is written for social sciences but the advice can be applied to other scientific fields.</p> <p>Video: Why References? Academic Writing - University of Lund.  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7x1t4DLGFI">www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7x1t4DLGFI</a></p>
Literature survey out-dated	Your literature survey seems to be out-dated. This means that your research may already have been done by someone else. By building on the results of others, your research must ask new scientific questions.
Literature survey too narrow/limited	The literature survey is too narrow/limited. Although there may be little literature focusing on your subject in the locality/country where you are going to do the research, or on the problem/community/stakeholder, the organism/compound/ecosystem or the model/theory/policy/concept you are studying, you should also include a global and/or regional perspective of research which is directly relevant to the project or refer to research that has been done on the same or similar issues. If very little research has been done in your area of interest, you should nevertheless include other researchers' references on, e.g. similar species/ecosystems or similar to whatever your research is focusing on.
Literature survey too specific	If very little research has been done in your area of interest, you should nevertheless include other researchers' references on, e.g. similar species/ecosystems or similar to whatever your research is focusing on.
Literature survey suggestions	Your project would benefit from a more extensive literature survey. You may wish to contact your librarian who should be able to check if your institution's library is part of a national library consortium which may have access to publications. You may also have access to scientific literature databases like Hinari, AGORA, OARE, GOALI and ARDI, which are the five programmes within Research4Life ( <a href="https://www.research4life.org/about/">https://www.research4life.org/about/</a> ). Your librarian should be able to give you more information on how to access these databases.
Literature survey unbalanced	The literature review is incomplete and unbalanced in that it does not sufficiently cover the most relevant aspects of your project.
ADDITIONAL FILES	
Additional files missing	<p>You have not uploaded the additional files required for the type of IFS grant you are applying for. When submitting your application you should include the following mandatory files:</p> <p>For all applications (Basic, Renewal, Advanced)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IFS Signature page</li> <li>Research Ethics Checklist</li> <li>PhD Timeline (if you are currently enrolled in a PhD)</li> <li>Copy of Questionnaire/Survey (if used in your project)</li> </ul> <p>Additionally - for Advanced Grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory of Change Flow Chart</li> </ul> <p>For Basic, Renewal, and Advanced Grant Applications, if you are submitting a revised application and received any specific comments on your previous application, you must include a response to reviewers' comments.</p>

ONGOING RESEARCH AT INSTITUTE	
Relevant activities incomplete	There is insufficient information provided on the research activities that are ongoing at your institute. You have left Box 6.3 blank or have entered too little information. If there is indeed no research related to the theme of your project at your institute, or if it does not appear to correspond to your institute's mandate, please explain why you have chosen this area of research and how you expect to be able to carry out the proposed work.
PROJECT	
Outside of IFS	The subject matter of your project does not fall within the research areas supported by IFS. Please read about the Research Areas funded by IFS here: <a href="http://www.ifs.se/ifs-programme/new-research-areas-funded-by-ifs.html">http://www.ifs.se/ifs-programme/new-research-areas-funded-by-ifs.html</a> to find out how you can adjust your topic for IFS support or if you should find other funding sources that are more suited to your project. Alternatively, it might be helpful to search through the titles of the different IFS projects that have been supported in the past to see whether your topic may be eligible for IFS support. You can find the database of supported projects here: <a href="http://www.ifs.se/ifs-grantees/">http://www.ifs.se/ifs-grantees/</a>
Not research	The proposed project falls outside the IFS granting programme since it is not sufficiently research-orientated. IFS does not support projects focussing largely on monitoring, simple inventories, developmental or extension work in the absence of new scientific questions being posed. You may wish to find other funding sources that are more suited to your style of project. Alternatively, you could redesign your projects to make it research-orientated and focus on asking new scientific questions with the data you plan to collect through monitoring, inventories, developmental or extension work.
Not innovative	The proposed project falls outside the IFS granting programme since it does not seem sufficiently innovative. IFS does not support projects which do not ask new scientific questions and which therefore are unlikely to generate new scientific knowledge. Your research may have been done before, or elsewhere. Ensure that you have done a thorough review of the literature to ensure your research idea has not been done before. When using literature to base your ideas on, you should think about how your research will contribute to your scientific field as a whole. Think about how your research will add value to the current scientific knowledge in the addressed field of research.
Simple inventory	Your project is essentially an inventory study which does not provide a springboard for further research which is innovative.
Too speculative	Your project seems speculative. You have not provided sufficient information or references to show that the project has a reasonable chance of achieving the stated objectives.
Lacking information	The proposal is too general in its description and essential information is lacking, making it difficult to assess its feasibility. Ensure you refer to the application guidelines and complete the proposal checklist to confirm that all the necessary information and details have been included and that you have submitted all the requested accompanying documents with your application.
Originality of project is unclear	It is unclear whether your writing is original. You may have not adequately cited, quoted, paraphrased or summarise information presented. When writing about other research, you should ensure that you write in your own words and you should cite/quote the sources from previous studies to ensure the originality of your work and avoid plagiarism. There are many resources online that can help you in developing these skills. Most established university libraries have useful information. Below are some examples of resources that you may find helpful: Video: Why References? Academic Writing - University of Lund. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7x1t4DLGFI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7x1t4DLGFI</a> Video: Avoiding Plagiarism, Writing With Integrity - Texas A&M University Writing Center. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1S1FZ-bn5E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1S1FZ-bn5E</a> Video: Citing Sources in Science Writing - University of British Columbia Science Writing. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6ba9FVFAXg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6ba9FVFAXg</a>

Seek funding from private industry instead of IFS	The type of research you are proposing is highly commercially- and/or commodity-orientated and therefore not a priority for IFS support. You may wish to approach private companies for funding.
Lacking applicability	Although the project may be scientifically sound, it seems to lack applicability. IFS does not support highly fundamental or basic research. You may wish to apply for funding from an organisation such as TWAS, at <a href="https://twas.org">https://twas.org</a> which supports basic research in biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics.
Lacking focus	Your project is lacking focus in that it seeks to address too many issues and/or is described in too general terms. There are many resources online that can help you in developing a focused research topic. Most established university libraries have useful information. Below are some examples of resources that you may find helpful: Video: Four Steps to Narrow Your Research Topic - University of Guelph Library. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpCbSjldXIM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpCbSjldXIM</a> Research Guide: Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper. Importance of Narrowing the Research Topic - University of South Carolina. <a href="https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/narrowtopic">https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/narrowtopic</a> This research guide is written for the social sciences but much of the advice can be applied to other scientific fields.
Too ambitious/unrealistic	Your project is unrealistic since it seems to be over-ambitious in scope. It seems you will not be able to complete the research objectives in the time- and/or budget-frame you suggest. You need to focus more on important specific elements of your proposal.
Relevance not well described	The expected relevance of your project is not well described. Although your project may not have immediate practical applicability, you are expected to describe what the long term relevance of your project might be.
Project already ongoing	Your project seems to be on-going already. It is not clear what has been done and what remains to be done. Your IFS project should be the primary focus of your application. If your IFS project is part of a larger project or further PhD studies, you have to clearly distinguish your IFS project from any other ongoing projects in your application. You should ensure that you provide all the necessary details for the IFS project as requested in the application guidelines.

### RESEARCH PLAN

List of activities	Instead of providing a detailed workplan, you have simply listed the project activities or provided a very general description of the different steps that will be undertaken. It is not possible for the reviewer to know exactly what you are going to do and how you are going to approach key questions and/or experiments. More detail is required. Essentially, there should be sufficient information for another expert to be able to repeat your research. This should include, where relevant, the provenance of biological materials (plants or micro-organisms or other materials) you will use in your project. Please refer to the application guidelines for details on what to include in your research plan.
Plan lacks details	More detail is required in the section describing your research plan. It is not possible for the reviewer to know exactly what you are going to do and how you are going to approach key questions and/or experiments. Essentially, there should be sufficient information for another expert to be able to repeat your research. This should include, where relevant, the provenance of biological materials (plants or micro-organisms or other materials) you will use in your project. If standard well-known methods are employed, these need not be described in detail, but references to the methods may be given.
Research plan does not correspond with objectives	The research plan describes elements that are not reflected in the research objectives. It is helpful if you plan your project before writing your application so that you have a clear overview of all your research objectives and can write your research plan accordingly.
Details missing on organisms and/or compounds	Details missing on the organism(s) or chemical compounds to be studied, i.e. correct Latin names, provenance of species, etc.
Details and justification missing on sampling strategy	More detail is required on the criteria for choosing sites and samples, what sampling methods you plan to use, the number of samples you plan to collect, sample treatments, etc. You should provide adequate detail on your sampling strategy and justify it by making reference and citing the literature which it is based on.

Clarification needed on expertise requirements	You mention certain critical activities/methodologies/experiments in which, according to information in the rest of your application, you might not have adequate experience. You should provide evidence on the competencies required for your IFS project in section 6. If you have any gaps in experience, describe if you have any contacts with the necessary experience who can support you in your project.
Details missing on chemical, physical and biological analytical methods.	More detail is required on the chemical, physical and/or biological analytical methods; conservation, storage and pre-treatment of samples prior to analysis and detailed analytical procedures. Essentially, there should be sufficient information for another expert to be able to repeat your research. If the analytical method is a standard method, then it should not be described in detail, but a reference to the method may be given.
References missing	You should provide full details of the references from which you developed your methodologies, and/or experimental design. If standard well-known methods are employed, these need not be described in detail, but references and/or the names to the methods may be given.
STATISTICS/EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN	
Statistical methods not clear/absent	The statistical methods for sampling and/or analysis are not clear or they are absent. Your project evidently requires careful thought being given to experimental design and data analysis. You may benefit from consultation with a statistician.
SUMMARY	
Summary too short/incomplete	Your summary is too short/incomplete. It does not cover the most important elements of your project. It should contain at least the following: problem/justification, objectives, procedure/methods, any special resource needs, likely outputs and expected benefits/outcomes of your research.
TIME-FRAME	
Unclear time-frame	It is not clear from the timing of project activities what you are going to do and when. Your project activities are meant to show the reviewer the sequence and duration of your main research activities during your project.
Time-frame too short	The time-frame of the project is too short. The minimum duration for an IFS-supported project is 12 months' research.
Time-frame too long	The time-frame of the project is too long. The maximum duration of an IFS-supported project is 36 months.