



Open
Ontology
Repository

OOR Funding Workshop: Rethinking Funding Strategy

Ken Baclawski
Northeastern University

Current Funding Status I

- **NCBO BioPortal Code**
 - Well funded NIH center
 - Specialized for biomedical ontologies
 - Centralized server
- **KEEPER Project**
 - Funded as part of another NIH project
 - Handles gatekeeping, workflow and policy enforcement
 - Not integrated with BioPortal code

Current Funding Status II

- SOCop OOR
 - Funded as part of an NSF project
 - Contains 27 ontologies
 - Contributed code?
- Other projects
 - Support for OOR instances
 - Does anybody know of any other projects that explicitly mentioned OOR in the proposal?

Funding Opportunities

- There are many funding strategies.
 - Seek project funding (e.g., an agency grant)
 - Incorporate (e.g., as a consortium)
- There are many potential sources of project funding.
 - Government Agencies
 - Charitable Foundations
 - For-Profit Corporations
- Incorporation strategy
 - Requires a business plan
 - A funding model is the central part of the plan.

Summary of Experiences

- The rest of the slides discuss experiences with proposals for funding the OOR.
- The focus is on project funding:
 - This is our only experience so far.
 - Any form of funding requires making a case to funding sources.

Obtaining Project Funding

- Merit
 - This has multiple components
- Compatibility with Funding Source Mission
 - Overall funding source mission
 - Specific program mission
- Funding Source Evaluation Process
 - Considerable variation among sources
 - Most sources do not evaluate merit separately from mission compatibility.
 - Vaguely worded mission statements are common.

Merit

- Typical merit categories:
 - Significance
 - Investigators
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Environment
- Auxiliary sections of the proposal
 - Budget with justifications
 - Resource sharing

Results of Past Proposals I

- **Significance**
 - The importance if completed successfully
 - Our proposals have outstanding scores on this criterion: “critical” “fundamental”
- **Investigators**
 - The personnel are well suited to the project.
 - Our proposals have scored highly on this criterion.
 - Possible weakness: graduate students and other personnel are not well specified.

Results of Past Proposals II

- Innovation
 - The novelty of the project
 - Difficult to make a case for novelty of OOR
 - Including OOR as part of another project is one possible solution.
- Approach
 - What the project will do.
 - Our proposals have been weak on this criterion: too much emphasis on requirements, too little on tasks.
 - This is solvable.

Results of Past Proposals III

- Environment
 - Equipment, software, etc.
 - Our proposals have been very good on this criterion.
 - This is seldom an important criterion for software projects.
- Budget
 - What the project will cost and team member responsibilities
 - Our proposals have been weak on this criterion mainly due to the lack of detailed approach.
 - This is solvable.

Results of Past Proposals IV

- Resource Sharing
 - Plan for sharing what is produced
 - Our proposals have been very good on this criterion because it is an open source project and the investigators have experience with open source.
 - Long-term support is a potential weakness.
- Compatibility with Mission
 - This was one of the worst aspects of our proposals.
 - Infrastructure development is seldom fundable.
 - Including OOR as part of another project is one possible solution.

OOOR as Subproject

- **Advantages**
 - One way to address some criteria.
- **Disadvantages**
 - Must be well integrated with project objectives to avoid an adverse impact on evaluation.
 - Support for the main project dictates design choices.
 - Low priority within the main project

OOR as Consortium

- Advantages
 - Alternative solution to some criteria
- Disadvantages
 - Effectively a subproject of many projects, so has the same disadvantages.
 - Different domains have different requirements.
- How much experience do we have for such an approach?

Suggestions

- Funding source
 - Agency
 - Program
- Domain for a subproject
 - Target domain
 - Must be other than biomedical and geospatial
 - Potential investigator/team
 - Project objectives
- Other ideas