ERSA Proposal Template

Although there are many ways to write a proposal, they all need to serve the same purpose, which is to convince the reader:

1. the project is worth doing.
2. the project is feasible.
3. the author (s) is (are) the right person (s) for the job.

We suggest that you keep these goals in mind, when writing the proposal. Moreover, we suggest using the template that includes:

- **Title**. Offer a concise representation of the research project.

- **Abstract**. Using approximately 150 words tell us what is to be addressed, why it is important, and outline the methods (including insight into identification of the issue of interest).

- **Introduction.** This is the main place to convince the reader the project is worth doing. There should be a clear statement of the problem; often, this arises from a clear description of the gap in the literature (which is part of the rationale for the research, although there may be other motivating factors to be discussed, and, of course, these should relate to the call). Provide a clear research question; multiple questions can lead to confusion, so tread carefully in that regard. Be clear and concise, avoiding tangents or other commentary that is irrelevant to these components of the introduction.

- **Background /Stylised facts:** Please, present any relevant data to further motivate the research.

- **Literature review.** Although it is normally appropriate to discuss at least some literature in the introduction, this is a good place for a useful narrative around the literature that is out there. This is the place to begin convincing the reader that the author understands the issues very well, and, therefore, is very well-placed to undertake the research. Discuss the pertinent studies, not the tangential studies. Review them, discussing relevant strengths and weaknesses with respect to the research being proposed. Make the gap in the literature

clear, or at least make a clear case for the research being proposed. Please, do not present a series of paper summaries.

- **Methodology or Research Design.** At this point it is possible to draw on what has been learned from the literature review to outline the appropriate methodologies, describe the required data, and, if it needs to be collected, how it will be collected to meet the needs of the methods. It is also acceptable to include additional literature within the methods section. Be clear how the model (theoretical, simulation, empirical) will identify the effect of interest. Importantly, the section should explain why and how the methods will help the proposer meet the proposed research objective. Be sure to clarify both the scope and the timeframe of the study to fit within the suggested RFP timeframe – it must be possible and plausible.

  It is common for proposers to write down regression models in this section, focusing attention on one of the parameters. We have generally found that proposers do not offer enough with respect to identification in their models. It is important to understand the strengths and the weaknesses of different models and their foundational assumptions. A proposer ought to be able to outline, at least briefly, whether those assumptions are likely to be true, as well as, why, or why not; and, if not, what might need to be adjusted in the design. Providing this information clearly and concisely helps further convince the reader that the proposer is, in fact, the right researcher for the project.

- **Budget.** If requested, please provide a clear budget, and justify the expenditure. This should be done in a spreadsheet or in tabular form. There should be self-explanatory budget items/lines, including amounts, the activity, and a brief justification with respect to where that budget item fits into the methods/design.

- **Conclusion.** A conclusion is not always necessary; however, it can be useful to present a clear and concise summary of the project. One way to think about this is that it is the last place to convince the reader of the proposal and the proposer. Please, do not go into "new" ideas here, focus on the proposal and what is promised within it.

- **References.** There will be scientific references used in the proposal. Please, follow typical Harvard style.

We do hope this helps.