

Attributes of Winning GWB Proposals

Based on a look at proposals that have been awarded GWB projects in recent years and the issues that have led to acceptance or rejection of proposals, the following is a list of attributes that characterize the “ideal” GWB project.

- 1) Human benefit. The GWB charter specifies that projects should benefit communities in need, where applying geoscience is critical to improving conditions of poverty or where dangerous conditions and hazards can be mitigated or removed through use of applied geosciences technology. The greater the need, the more clearly that a need can be described, and the more obvious it is that geoscience can address the need, the more likely it is that the project will be supported.
- 2) Scientific merit. It must be clear that the methods selected are an appropriate choice (presumably the best choice) for addressing the problem and that the proposers can demonstrate an ability to execute the work. GWB is not a research organization, so proposals (however exciting and worthy) for developing new methodologies are not likely to find strong support among reviewers. Recently-developed technologies can be proposed, but they should have demonstrable effectiveness in directly meeting the needs of the target community.
- 3) Teaming. Teams that include in-country participants are viewed very positively by the review committee. If the appropriate expertise can be found in-country, there is no need for the team to include members from outside the country in need. Where in-country expertise is not strong, international partnerships composed of foreign and domestic participants are viewed favorably. Foreign participation can be as simple as playing an advisory role or can involve joint execution in all phases of the project (data acquisition, analysis, interpretation).
- 4) Sustainability. It is a primary goal of the GWB program that every project have a lasting impact. Projects that are designed to provide partial answers, or even those that provide a solution without including a plan for executing the solution (e.g. finding optimal well locations without having a partner who agrees to drill the wells) are open ended, and may end up having no impact at all. The best projects are those which demonstrate a complete plan for meeting a need (even if some components are conducted outside of the GWB project), AND for training persons in-country who can replicate the success at other sites in the country or region where similar needs can be found.
- 5) Student involvement. GWB has a clear goal of providing educational opportunities for students. When students participate in GWB projects, they develop a deeper awareness of the world around them and become better citizens and better scientists. Student involvement can enable more work to be done with the limited funding that GWB can offer.
- 6) Financial transparency. Budgets need to be readily understood and consistent. Equipment purchase is allowed, and some past successful proposals have included significant equipment costs. If this is done, a long-term benefit should be shown by leaving the equipment with trained users in-country. Many equipment manufacturers or leasing firms are willing to loan equipment to GWB projects at little or no cost, and some may even provide shipping costs. Budgets which are dominated by out-of-country salaries and expenses are subject to greater scrutiny.