Funding Landscape for NMR 2014 and beyond

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The current situation:

- Routes to funds
  - Save it up yourself
    - The value of ‘slush’ funds
  - School/Faculty/University
    - Infrastructure budgets
    - ‘Slush funds’ as leverage
  - RC/Government(BIS)
    - Strategic Equipment Process
    - Government Infrastructure Initiatives

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Slush Funds

- *e.g.* Service samples for industry
- Try to roll the cash over (a good fight to win!)
- Using them as leverage for internal funding is a powerful weapon

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School/Faculty/University funding

- State of play varies across the UK
  - Most universities have a large infrastructure/capital committee – find out who holds the purse!
  - Use ‘slush’ funds to leverage purchases
    - Case Study1@Bristol - £5k bought me a £55k probe
    - Case Study2@Bristol - £3k bought me a £30k lab refurb
    - Case Study3@Bristol - £7k bought me a £35k air system
    - Case Study4@Bristol - £12k promised against a £60k robot
  - The importance of a business case

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EPSRC

- Strategic Equipment Process (currently)
  - For 'strategic', *i.e.* non-standard, hardware.
    - UK or regionally 'unique'.
    - Enables new science through access to new instrument
  - Price limits
    - >£134k, funded at 100% of cost (typical bids often >£1M)
    - <£134k, allowed on grants, but only funded at 50% - so needs University support….
  - Two-stage application process
    - 2-page outline Business Case *e.g.* sharing, management, budgeting. **~50% success rate**
    - Full proposal – focus on Business case, 1-2 pages of science. **~60% success rate**
  - For requests >£500k, required to interview in Swindon

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Current NMR bids to SEP

- 3 funded by June 2013
  - One 500MHz ^{13}C cryoprobe system (Bristol)
  - One DNP (Warwick)
  - One low-field (Warwick)
- Any more?

Why not? It's the softest money you'll ever see….

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BBSRC

- Very similar process
  - >£134k Business case threshold
  - But Business case is appended to a Case for Support rather than central to it
- Any Experience?

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EPSRC – the future (perhaps)

Strategic Equipment Process (future ***possibilities***)

- EPSRC and other RCs may have increased Capital budgets from 2015, meaning a loosening of the purse-strings by EPSRC
- Possibly two parallel processes for:
  - Strategic equipment ('UK unique'/worldleading)
  - Underpinning (Regional/Local high-end kit)
- Price Limits to increase
  - >£250k for SEP
  - £134k-£250k on project grants *or* SEP (perhaps), 80% funded by EPSRC
  - <£134k on project grants
- >£500k limit for interview likely to remain (but perhaps increase).

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Government Initiatives

- Short-notice, fast turnaround, LOTS
- Recent relevant calls
  - Core Capability for Chemistry (£15M, rose to £20M)
    - Perhaps coming back to an email near you – late 2014/2015.
  - CDT (Centre of Doctoral Training) Equipment call (£32M)

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BIS Consultation on Capital

- UK-wide call for responses to Capital funding
  - RCUK, learned societies, TSB, Heads of Chemistry, *etc*
  - Asking for a lead on the balance between funding 'large' and 'small' capital
    - Large = LHC, Diamond, telescopes, Arctic explorer ships - >£100M per 'Headline' investment
    - Small = Strategic Equipment, Advanced Materials, CDT bids <£100M per investment.

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So what can you do next?

- Politic internally for infrastructure/capital funding to be diverted from ‘yet another building’?
- Speak to EPSRC Research Infrastructure team about Strategic Equipment (Susan Morrell in the theme lead
- **Have a 1-paragraph business case ready for your next bit of kit (in each of <£134k, £134k-£250k, >£250k)**

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