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## Guidelines to preparing a research concept note

A well-grounded concept note does not have to be a lengthy document to address the essential points relevant to a research study. A five-to-ten-page concept note should be sufficient in most cases. A guideline to the basic elements that can be included in a concept note is provided below.

1. The preliminary **literature study**:
    - Provides the theoretical and applied background through a review of the academic literature relevant to the proposed study.
    - Cites the key publications relevant to the proposed topic.
  2. The **research problem and objectives**:
    - The literature review should lead to a problem statement that outlines an argument to justify the need for the study.
    - This need is addressed by the **research objective(s) or research question(s)**, which formulates the main goal(s) of the study.
    - It is advisable to have one overarching (primary) objective that the study sets out to achieve, which can then be broken down into two or three specific (secondary) research objectives.
  3. The **research design and methodology**:
    - **Data**: For example, quantitative, qualitative or both. The data must align with your research objective(s).
    - **Method(s) for collecting data**: Will the study use primary or secondary data sources (or both)? The data needs to be accessible and there needs to be a limit on the data you are going to collect. The data must be reliable and valid.
    - **Method(s) for analysing data**: What methodologies can be used to extract meaning out of your data to address your research objective(s)?
  4. **Potential contribution**:
    - What is the potential theoretical (academic) and applied (practice or policy) contributions of your study. The contributions need to be highlighted through a clear line of argumentation that ties back to the preliminary literature review.
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