

Main approaches to defining the concept of a Grant

Maryana Kobelya-Zvir

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Ph.D.,

Senior Lecturer at the Department of Entrepreneurship, Trade and Logistics

Lviv University of Trade and Economics

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5627-9408>

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Abstract

The article examines the main issues of evolution and changes in approaches to the definition of the concept of "grant". The definition of the concept of "grant" from domestic and leading foreign dictionaries, namely: Oxford, Cambridge, Merriam-Webster and Interpretive dictionaries, is demonstrated. The definition of the concept of "grant" given by artificial intelligence is given, namely: ChatGPT. Definitions of the term "grant" from several legislative acts of Ukraine are given: ZU "On culture", ZU "On scientific and scientific and technical activity", ZU "On state support of book publishing in Ukraine", Tax Code of Ukraine. The definition of the concept of "grant" in the publicly available free multilingual online encyclopedia "Wikipedia" is demonstrated. It is emphasized that in the scientific and practical literature, the definition of the term "grant" is given in different variations depending on the direction and specificity of the publication.

The definition of grants as resources provided in the form of property, works and services is proposed; financial resources in national or foreign currency with full or partial financing by private, corporate, public, governmental and international grant-makers on an irrevocable and free basis to representatives of authorities and local self-government, micro, small and medium-sized businesses, the public sector and private individuals for implementation target projects and measures of organizational development

Keywords: grants, international technical assistance, EU grants, US grants, Government grants, grant assistance, grant support

Introduction

Ukraine has been receiving grant support from various donors since its independence in 1991. Initially, attention was focused on building infrastructure in Ukraine and bringing it closer to European standards. After 1997, the emphasis shifted toward legal and structural reforms, democratization of society, ensuring sustainable growth, improving the standard and conditions of living in regions, supporting environmental and nuclear safety, and reviving culture and spirituality. Since 2014, grant opportunities have emerged to support European

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integration processes, the activation and development of civil society, and the implementation of decentralization reforms.

Since February 2022, with the onset of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, our partners from both near and far abroad, in the West and East alike, have provided large-scale financial support in the form of grants for the reconstruction of the state, infrastructure, rebuilding the country, and assisting all those affected by the occupiers' aggression [7]. Therefore, today it is extremely relevant to analyze the phenomenon of "grants" at all levels (national, organizational, personal) and the institutions associated with them.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The evolution and changes in approaches to defining the concept of "grant" have been studied by several foreign authors, including Robert Forster, Richard Hoefer, Michael K. Wells, Nancy Burke Smith, Gabriel E., Beverly A. Browning; as well as several domestic scholars, such as Marchenko O.V., Sushko D.O., Kalina K.Ye., Nedria K.M., Rybalko L.S., Trubavina I.M., Sokolovska V.V. At the same time, it should be noted that most of these works, firstly, were performed within certain paradigms, and secondly, do not always reflect a comprehensive approach. There is a noticeable underdevelopment of this issue in Ukrainian science.

The aim of this study is to analyze the main approaches to defining the concept of "grant" and propose an original definition.

Presentation of the Main Material. The current state of all sectors in Ukraine under the impact of the full-scale war requires significant capital investments. That is why our partners at the interstate level provide international technical assistance to Ukraine.

According to the current legislation of Ukraine, international technical assistance (ITA) refers to financial and other resources and services provided by donors under Ukraine's international agreements on a gratuitous and non-repayable basis to support Ukraine. ITA may be provided in the form of any property necessary to fulfill project objectives, imported or acquired in Ukraine; works and services; intellectual property rights; financial resources (grants) in national or foreign currency; and other resources not prohibited by law, including scholarships [11].

These resources have always been, are, and will remain an important support mechanism characterized by practical flexibility. Unlike government programs, grant programs respond much more quickly to the needs of target groups. Grant instruments can rapidly adapt, respond to threats, challenges, and risks, initiate innovations, and change traditional approaches. The use of non-repayable grant resources becomes a real opportunity for many organizations to reach a qualitatively different level of activity. Therefore, it is important to consider grant instruments as a prospect for development and growth, to know how to use this opportunity, and to view potential donors from the perspective of long-term partnership [7].

The English term "grant" translates as gift, subsidy, or scholarship. Grants are generally considered as a set of financial resources provided to designated non-profit institutions or individuals for the implementation of a social project, charitable program, research, education, professional development, or other socially useful objectives, with a mandatory reporting stage on their use.

An important condition for the use of grant funds is not only understanding the specifics of a particular problem but also proposed options for its prospective solution, expected results, and justification for the need for funds.

Examples of Definitions from Ukrainian and Leading Foreign Dictionaries:

- Oxford Dictionary defines "GRANT" as a sum of money given by a government or other organization for a specific purpose [14].
- Cambridge Dictionary defines "GRANT" as a sum of money provided by the state to a person or organization for a specific purpose, e.g., student/research grant, local authority/government grant [13].
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "GRANT" as a sum of money allocated for a specific use by official action [15].
- Ukrainian Explanatory Dictionary defines "grant" as a gratuitous subsidy to enterprises, organizations, or individuals in monetary or in-kind form for scientific or research work, experimental design, education, and other purposes, with subsequent reporting on its use [16].
- Wikipedia defines "grants" as money or other resources provided by citizens, legal entities, foreign individuals, or international organizations for specific scientific research, legislative development, training, and other purposes as determined by the grantor, provided free of charge and non-repayable [2].
- ChatGPT defines a grant as a type of financial support for state and municipal institutions, enterprises, citizens, and external organizations to fund certain projects or activities [18].

International Grants. Most grants fall under Procedure No. 153, while others are regulated by different normative documents [8]. Ukrainian legislation defines the term “grant” in multiple acts:

- Law No. 848 “On Scientific and Scientific-Technical Activity” defines a grant as financial or other resources provided gratuitously and non-repayably by the state, legal or physical persons, including foreign or international organizations, for the development of material and technical bases for scientific activities, specific fundamental or applied research, experimental developments, including payment for scientific personnel [4].
- Law No. 2778 “On Culture” defines a grant as financial resources provided gratuitously to entities conducting cultural activities for the implementation of cultural-artistic projects [3].
- Law No. 601 “On State Support of Book Publishing in Ukraine” defines a grant as financial resources provided gratuitously, interest-free, and non-repayably to business entities or individuals through competitive selection for program/project implementation and institutional support [5].
- Tax Code of Ukraine defines a budget grant as targeted assistance in cash or property provided gratuitously and non-repayably from state or local budgets, international technical assistance, for projects in culture, tourism, creative industries, sports, and other humanitarian spheres [10].

Grant Application Procedures. Procedure No. 153 governs the attraction, use, and monitoring of international technical assistance, including state registration, project monitoring, and accreditation of implementers [11].

Classification Approaches:

1. **From the recipient's perspective:** Recipients can include individuals, legal entities, government authorities, local self-governments, civil sector representatives, SMEs, and educational, medical, and research institutions.
2. **From the donor's perspective:** Donors include Ukrainian state funds, EU and US programs, cross-border programs, ministries of foreign affairs, embassies, corporate entities, and charitable foundations.
3. **From the form/type of grant assistance:** Grants may cover travel, participation in conferences, seminars, forums, exhibitions; education, internships, research, publications; business grants for equipment, raw materials, furniture, advertising; media grants for outreach; and civil sector grants for advocacy [7].

Authors' Definition Proposal. Considering the various perspectives and shortcomings in existing definitions, we propose defining grants as resources provided in the form of property, works, services, or funds in national or foreign currency, fully or partially financed by private, corporate, public, governmental, and international grantors on a gratuitous and irrevocable basis to government authorities, local self-governments, SMEs, civil sector, and private individuals for the implementation of targeted projects and organizational development activities.

Further research should address the classification of grants by types, forms, and categories.

Main Approaches to Defining the Concept of a Grant

Large Findings

The study reveals that the concept of a “grant” is complex and multidimensional, with diverse interpretations across legal, academic, and practical contexts. By analyzing definitions provided in leading international dictionaries, Ukrainian legislation, scholarly literature, and digital platforms, the research demonstrates that the term “grant” has undergone significant evolution over time. The findings highlight that grants cannot be reduced to a single financial category; rather, they represent a flexible instrument of support encompassing financial resources, services, intellectual property, and other forms of assistance.

The research identifies a key pattern: while foreign scholarship tends to emphasize grants as tools for development, innovation, and capacity-building, Ukrainian sources often focus on their role as legal and institutional mechanisms for state and regional support. Importantly, the study demonstrates that grants are increasingly used as rapid-response instruments for crisis management, infrastructure reconstruction, and social resilience—particularly in the context of Ukraine's ongoing war and recovery efforts. This underscores the necessity of treating grants not only as financial assistance but as dynamic instruments of socio-economic transformation and institutional modernization.

Large Actuality of the Study

The actuality of this research is determined by the unprecedented role of grants in Ukraine's socio-economic development and resilience. Since the country's independence, grant support has been a crucial driver of modernization, but its relevance has grown exponentially in the wake of recent crises. The escalation of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022

has elevated the importance of grants from donors, governments, and international organizations, which now serve as a vital mechanism for reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and social stabilization.

Furthermore, global shifts in financing mechanisms emphasize grants as flexible, non-repayable instruments capable of meeting urgent needs while also fostering long-term capacity-building. In contrast to traditional government programs, grant programs are highly adaptive, enabling rapid responses to new threats and opportunities. Against this backdrop, the study is highly relevant, as it systematizes evolving definitions and proposes an updated, comprehensive interpretation of the term “grant” that reflects both international best practice and the urgent realities of Ukraine’s development trajectory.

Ethical Considerations

The study was carried out in strict compliance with the ethical standards of academic research and publication. All sources of information—legislative, scholarly, and dictionary materials—were appropriately cited to ensure transparency and respect for intellectual property. No primary data involving human participants were collected; therefore, issues of confidentiality, consent, or personal data protection did not arise. The author confirms that the work was conducted in full adherence to the principles of academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism, data manipulation, or misrepresentation of information.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. There are no financial, professional, or personal relationships that could have influenced the outcomes or interpretation of this study.

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