

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

SBIR/STTR Protocol

How to apply

1. See what we fund

2. Determine eligibility

Make sure your company meets these eligibility requirements

3. Preview the Project Pitch (optional)

4. NEW Submit your Project Pitch (required)

Find out if your project is a good fit for the program.

Processing time: Up to three weeks.

Upon Invitation

5. Register your company (FREE and required)

If your company hasn't worked with the government before, you'll need to register with these systems. You MUST have completed your SAM registration BEFORE you can begin entering your proposal in FastLane. Start as soon as possible!!

6. Read the call for proposals (solicitation)

We only accept proposals from companies that have been officially invited to submit (via the Project Pitch process). You can check out our current [SBIR solicitation](#) or [STTR solicitation](#) to get a sense of NSF's objectives.

7. Submit your full proposal

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with our [FastLane guide](#).

- Applications undergo merit reviews.

<https://seedfund.nsf.gov/project-pitch/>

Project Pitch

The required Project Pitch allows startups and small businesses to get quick feedback at the start of their application for Phase I funding from America's Seed Fund powered by NSF.

Startups or entrepreneurs who submit a three-page Project Pitch* will know within three weeks if they meet the program's objectives to support innovative technologies that show promise of commercial and/or societal impact and involve a level of technical risk. They will also get additional guidance and feedback from NSF staff.

If your Project Pitch is a good fit for the program, you will receive an official invitation from NSF to submit a full proposal. If you're not invited to submit, you'll be told why your project is not appropriate for the program.

Along with your company information, you'll have to outline four key elements in your Project Pitch:

1. The Technology Innovation. (Up to 500 words)

Describe the technical innovation that would be the focus of a Phase I project, including a brief discussion of the origins of the innovation as well as explanation as to why it meets the program's mandate to focus on supporting [research and development \(R&D\)](#) of unproven, high-impact innovations.

2. The Technical Objectives and Challenges. (Up to 500 words)

Describe the R&D or technical work to be done in a Phase I project, including a discussion of how and why the proposed work will help prove that the product or service is technically feasible and/or significantly reduce technical risk. Discuss how, ultimately, this work could contribute to making the new product, service, or process commercially viable and impactful. This section should also convey that the proposed work meets the definition of R&D, rather than straightforward engineering or incremental product development tasks.

3. The Market Opportunity. (Up to 250 words)

Describe the customer profile and pain point(s) that will be the near-term commercial focus related to this technical project.

4. The Company and Team. (Up to 250 words)

Describe the background and current status of the applicant small business, including key team members who will lead the technical and/or commercial efforts discussed in this Project Pitch.

Visit the [online form](#) to submit your Project Pitch or to preview the required fields. More details about the NSF's new process and eligibility requirements are on our Apply page.

**Each small business can only submit one Project Pitch at a time and up to two Project Pitches per submission window. Any small business with a pending Project Pitch must wait for a response before submitting another Project Pitch. Any small business that has received an invitation to submit a full proposal must wait for a resolution of the full proposal before submitting a new or revised Project Pitch.*