

NSF Project Pitch Guidelines, Requirements, and Rubric

General Guidelines

- The NSF mandate is to fund research and development-intensive “deep technology” projects. For details on the NSF mandate and to determine if your project qualifies, visit the web page [What is Research and Development?](#)
- An NSF Project Pitch is submitted via an online form, found on the [Submit Your Project Pitch](#) web page.
- A explanation of the Project Pitch and require sections is found the [Project Pitch Instructions](#) web page.
- Only one Project Pitch can be submitted at a time with up to two Project Pitches per submission window. Submission windows can be found on the [Project Proposal Timeline](#) web page.

Online Form Instructions

1. Draft each section in a word program. The online form does not spell check. Please note: NSF requires very specific formatting for proposals. While they are not necessary for this submission, it’s good to practice using their required formatting:
 - Single column
 - No more than six lines of text within one inch of vertical space (generally single-spaced)
 - One-inch margins
 - Approved fonts and sizes:
 - ♦ Arial, Courier New, or Palatino Linotype at a font size of 10 points or larger
 - ♦ Times New Roman at a font size of 11 points or larger
 - ♦ Computer Modern family of fonts at a font size of 11 points or larger
2. Word counts: each section has a maximum word count as follows:
 - Technology Innovation – 500 words
 - Technical Objective and Challenges – 500 words
 - Market Opportunity – 250 words
 - Company and Team – 250 words
3. Once content is final, cut and paste from word program to the fields in the form.
4. The NSF is strict about response content. Use the APIOiX Response Rubric (next page) to assure that you’ve covered everything **exactly** as the NSF requires.

Response Rubric

Use this as a checklist to assure that your submission is responsive with all requirements addressed. The response to each checkbox should be 1-3 paragraphs. Use APA writing style, provide straightforward descriptions, write in [active voice](#), and be consistent with [verb tense](#) when writing sentences with sequences. APIOix personnel are available to help clients with review before submission.

Section 1: The Technology and Innovation (500 words)

- Provide a general overview of the following (do not get detailed here – give an “elevator pitch” style explanation):
 - Technical innovation
 - Proposed product or service
- Explain the origins of the innovation
- Explain how the project meets NSF mandate to support unproven, high-impact innovations:
 - What makes the project unproven or technically challenging, and
 - Describe the potential societal impact – how will your innovation impact people

Section 2: The Technical Objectives and Challenges (500 words)

- Describe the proposed R&D/technical work, either step-by-step or by aims. Include details about technical specifications or challenges to success
- Discuss the technical risks of the project with emphasis on aspects that meet the NSF mandate.
- Explain specifics of how the work will:
 - Help prove technical feasibility of the proposed product or service *and/or*
 - Significantly reduce technical risk.
- Describe how this work will impact commercial feasibility and viability.

Section 3: The Market Opportunity (250 words)

- Describe the customer profile. What is the market and what is type of customer in the market that needs this product or service?
- What are the “pain points?” Why does the customer (or society) need this product or service?

Section 4: The Company and Team (250 words)

- Describe the company’s background.
- Describe current status of the company. (Years of operation, number employees, etc.)
- Who are the key team members that will lead the technical and/or commercial efforts?
- What are their qualifications to lead the project?