

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION SUBMISSION**  
**National Science Foundation (NSF) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase I,**  
**NSF Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program Phase I, and NSF SBIR/STTR**  
**Fast-Track Pilots Pre-Submission Project Pitch Forms**

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

**Title of Collection:** National Science Foundation (NSF) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program Phase I, NSF Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Phase I, and SBIR/STTR Fast-Track Pre-Submission Project Pitch Forms

**Type of Request:** Renewal of an information collection (3145-0282)

**Section A. Justification**

The NSF SBIR/STTR programs focus on transforming scientific discovery into products and services with commercial potential and/or societal benefit. Unlike fundamental or basic research activities that focus on scientific and engineering discoveries, the NSF SBIR/STTR programs support the creation of opportunities to move fundamental science and engineering out of the lab and into the market at scale, through startups and small businesses representing deep technology ventures.

In order for small businesses to apply to either NSF SBIR/STTR Phase I or NSF SBIR/STTR Fast-Track programs, they must first submit a *Project Pitch Form*,<sup>1</sup> which is reviewed by the cognizant SBIR/STTR Program Director (PD) and may or may not be invited to submit a full proposal. The *Project Pitch Form*, therefore, is a pre-proposal submission requirement for small businesses considering proposing to either the SBIR/STTR Phase I or the SBIR/STTR Fast-Track program. The data collected in the Project Pitch submission include brief descriptions of the Technology Innovation, Technical Objectives and Challenges, and Market Opportunity, as well as information on the Company and Team. For the Fast-Track Pilot submission, the Project Pitch encompasses the same information but also seeks responses to three key eligibility requirements:

1. NSF lineage;
2. Customer-discovery experience; and
3. Confirmation that the team members are currently in place (as opposed to not yet determined).

This request is to seek approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of this clearance that will allow the SBIR/STTR programs to continue collecting information from small businesses considering proposing to either the *NSF SBIR/STTR Phase I* or the *Fast-Track Pilot Programs*. Only minor wording changes were made to the data collection instrument, and the public burden estimates were slightly revised based on submission data received.

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<sup>1</sup> The Project Pitch can be submitted at any time, but full proposals (to either program) must be submitted within two program cycle deadlines after receiving an official invite to apply.

### **A.1 Circumstances Requiring the Collection of Data**

Motivations behind the Project Pitch process are to:

- **Determine** whether a proposed innovation is suitable for NSF funding, thereby saving potential proposers from expending time and effort on proposals that fall outside the program's defined technical topic areas;
- **Reduce reviewer workload** by limiting the need to read and comment on proposals that are not suitable for NSF funding; and
- **Balance workload** appropriately among SBIR/STTR Program Directors.

### **A.2 Purpose and Use of the Data**

The information collected in Project Pitch will not only allow the programs to achieve the objectives outlined in Section A.1 but also allow NSF to see broad trends in community research interests.

The Project Pitch collects the name of the small business concern, information about the team, the proposed technology innovation, its technical objectives and challenges, and the market opportunity. The form also allows the proposer to select from a drop-down menu, the most relevant technical topic area, ensuring that the submitted Project Pitch is routed to the appropriate SBIR/STTR Program Director. Additional sections collect information on the background experience, individuals who inspired the innovation, prior funding history, and relevant technical references.

For the SBIR/STTR Fast-Track submission, the Project Pitch contains the same questions as outlined in the SBIR/STTR Phase I Project Pitch but also request responses to three key eligibility requirements: NSF lineage, customer-discovery experience and confirmation that key team members are in place (rather than yet to be determined).

### **A.3 Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

All components in the collection will utilize secure electronic forms to minimize data errors and respondent burden. In some cases, NSF Program Directors, staff, and/or authorized representatives may contact the respondents for clarifications or follow-up questions to ensure quality assurance and use these conversations to increase the robustness of the data.

### **A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication**

The data collection does not duplicate other efforts undertaken by NSF, other federal agencies, or other data collection agents.

### **A.5 Small Business**

The proposers submitting Project Pitches are small business concerns. The only impact of this data collection on the business will be the time required for respondents to gather the information, complete the form, and/or engage in clarifying conversations with NSF PDs.

### **A.6 Consequences of Not Collecting the Information**

If the information were not collected, NSF would be unable to (1) provide timely feedback on the suitability of the technology innovation to potential and future full-proposal applicants and (2) meet the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and NSF merit review requirements [as

outlined in the NSF *Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*] for the large volume of (full) proposals being submitted to the program each year.

#### **A.7 Special Circumstances Justifying Inconsistencies with Guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6**

Data collected will comply with 5 CFR 1320.6. First, a valid OMB control number will be displayed at the beginning of the electronic form. Second, the NSF SBIR/STTR programs will communicate clearly—through proposal solicitations and the [America's Seed Fund](#) website, that such collection of information is voluntary, but it is a mandatory pre-submission step to the NSF SBIR/STTR funding application process.

#### **A.8 Federal Register Notice and Consultation Outside the Agency**

As required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), the agency's notice was published in the *Federal Register* on October 3, 2025 at FR Doc. 2025-19400; the public comment period closed on December 4, 2025. No comments were made that were directly related to this data collection.

#### **A.9 Payments or Gifts to Respondents**

Not applicable.

#### **A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality**

Respondents will be informed that any information about specific individuals will be maintained in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974.

Respondents will also be informed that data collected will be available to NSF officials and staff, as well as authorized contractors who manage the data and data collection software. The data will be processed in accordance with applicable federal privacy statutes. Data are collected through *Salesforce*, a FedRAMP-compliant application. The system is designed to limit authorized users' access to personally identifiable information. Data submitted will be used in accordance with criteria established by NSF for monitoring research and education grants and in response to Public Law 99-383 and 42 USC 1885c.

#### **A.11 Questions of a Sensitive Nature**

Information from respondents, including name, affiliated organization, and email address are requested. This information will be used to send follow-up communications and/or invitations to for full proposal submission.

Individual-level and business-level data will be provided only to managing Program Directors, and authorized staff and/or contractors conducting analyses using the data. Any public reporting of the data will be in aggregate form, and all personal identifiers will be removed.

## A.12 Estimates of Response Burden

### A.12.1. Number of Respondents, Frequency of Response, and Annual Hour Burden

Table 1. Respondents, Responses, and Annual Hour Burden

| Collection Title  | Number of project pitch submissions | Number of hours per submission | Annual Hour Burden |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>NSF SBIR/STTR Program Phase and Fast-Track Pilot Pre-Submission Project Pitch Form</i> | 20,000                              | 1 – 2 (90 minutes average)     | 30,000             |
| <b>Total</b>  | 20,000                              | 1 – 2 (90 minutes average)     | 30,000             |

As shown in Table 1 above, the annual response burden for the collections under this request is between 10,000 and 40,000 hours. The respondents are typically Principal Investigators (PIs), founders, co-founders, and/or other key personnel of the small business concerns.

### A.12.2. Estimates of Annualized Cost to Respondents for the Hour Burdens

The following table shows the annualized estimate of costs to PI/Founder/Co-Founder/Business Partner respondents, who are often associate university professors. This estimated hourly rate is based on a report from the American Association of University Professors, "[The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2024-25](#)," Survey Report Table 1.

According to this report, the average salary of an associate professor across all types of doctoral-granting institutions (public, private-independent, religiously affiliated) was \$119,801. When divided by the number of standard annual work hours (2,080), this calculates to approximately \$86 per submission.

Table 2. Annuitized Cost to Respondents

| Respondent Type                                   | No. of Responses | Total Burden Hours | Average Hourly Rate | Estimated Annual Cost |
|---|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| PIs, (co-) Founders, Assignees, Business Partners | 20,000           | 30,000             | \$86                | \$1,720,000           |

## A.13 Estimates of Total Capital and Startup Costs/Operation and Maintenance Costs to Respondents or Record Keepers

Not applicable.

## A.14 Estimates of Costs to the Federal Government

On average, the managing Program Director will take about 30 minutes to review a Project Pitch.

Table 3. Responses, Time to Review, and Total Annual Time Burden for NSF PDs

| Task                          | Number of project pitches | Number of hours to review | Total Time                |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| PDs reviewing project pitches | 10,000 – 20,000           | 0.5                       | 5,000 – 10,000 hours/year |

In addition, the secure web-based form is hosted by Salesforce, a customer relationship management application. Licensing would cost the government \$400,000, and maintenance (which includes help desk support, ad hoc data request and/or reporting, uploading metadata to the system, proposal tracking for due diligence, and other application and platform maintenance) would cost an additional \$525,000.

**A.15 Change in Burden**

Not applicable.

**A.16 Plans for Publication, Analysis, and Schedule**

Not applicable. The information collected is used primarily to assess whether the proposed technology innovation is a good fit for the NSF SBIR/STTR Phase I or Fast-Track programs and whether to invite small business concerns to submit a full proposal to the programs.

**A.17 Approval to Not Display Expiration Date**

Not applicable.

**A.18 Exceptions to Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I**

No exceptions apply.

**Section B**

Not applicable.