



HOW DOES THE NEW “BROADER IMPACT” REQUIREMENT IMPACT YOUR NSF PROPOSAL?

The National Science Foundation FY21 Phase I and Phase II SBIR/STTR solicitations have added a new section called “Broader Impact” to the proposal requirements that already included “Narrow Impacts.”

But what is the difference? How do you *delineate* that difference? Understanding that can be key to writing a compelling National Science Foundation (NSF) SBIR proposal.

This addition is really more of a change in emphasis, rather than a new requirement. NSF has always requested (and evaluated) “Broader Impacts.” The difference now is that there is a specific section, and NSF has provided some guidance on how to approach this section. But what is the difference between Broader Impacts and Narrow Impacts?

“**Narrow impact**” is the specific commercial effect your innovation will have on your chosen marketplace. That impact should be articulated in the Commercial Opportunity section of the proposal.

“**Broader impact**” is the impact your innovation will have beyond the specific commercial impact. Think of it as the “ripple effect” of your technology. Your company does not specifically benefit from it, but society will. Some examples include:

- Reducing carbon emissions
- Using fewer resources in manufacturing
- Building collaborations between academia and industry
- Increasing involvement of women and under-represented populations in science

Think of it this way: Broader impacts do not result in direct income to your company, but your product has a positive impact on the overall economy, environment or society.

[Learn more at the NSF web site.](#)