
OVERVIEW OF PART TWO

Template/Master Plan for Your Proposal

A successful proposal creates advocacy among reviewers for funding it. Our approach to writing a grant application is based on the premise that, to maximize advocacy, reviewers must be converted from persons who have to read your application to those who want to do so. Thus, this part of the *Workbook* will help you to put the conceptual, exciting side of your proposal up front, where it will be used to "hook" the interest of the reviewers. Our intent is to make them want to read the details that will be presented in the rest of the Project Description.

The recommended format for the 15-page Project Description of a standard grant is:

1. Overview and Objectives
2. Intellectual Merit
3. Background:
 - Review of Relevant Literature
 - Results From Prior NSF Support
 - Preliminary Studies
4. Relation to Other Work In Progress:
 - By the Principal Investigator
 - By Investigators Elsewhere
5. Research Plan:
 - Develop each Specific Aim
 - Introduction
 - Research Design
 - Expected Outcomes
 - Potential Problems and Alternative Approaches
 - Timetable
6. Broader Impacts

Part 2 of this *Workbook* will help you craft the template or master plan for the Project Description (Chapters 7 through 9), as well as to maximize the programmatic relevance that your project has to the NSF funding opportunity that you are targeting (Chapter 10).

CHAPTER SEVEN: Overview & Objectives Section: Conceptual Framework for Creating a Bulleted Outline

This part of the Project Description addresses the conceptual approach that underlies formulation of the Overview & Objectives section and will introduce you to the specific purpose of each of the components that collectively comprise this section. After doing so, you will be assisted in creating the bulleted outline that will inform the writing of the O&O section.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Writing the Overview and Objectives Section

This Chapter will take you, step by step, through the development of text for your Overview and Objectives section. This will begin with expansion of the bulleted outline that was generated by your responses to the contents of Chapter 7, which will then be refined to provide an integrated overview of everything that is important and exciting about your proposal.

CHAPTER NINE: Intellectual Merit Section

This Chapter will assist you in writing what is arguably the most important part of your Project Description – the part where you spell out what you anticipate your contribution to advancing knowledge or understanding will be and why that’s significant to the field or across different fields.

CHAPTER TEN: How to Maximize the Programmatic Relevance of Your Application to NSF

No matter how good your idea is – no matter how well you have written the proposal – if it doesn’t mesh with NSF’s programmatic priorities your chance of being funded is greatly diminished. Chapter 10 will help you propose what NSF wants to fund.