

SBIR/STTR - Revisions Needed to Improve Productivity and Competitiveness
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Dear Persons,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide suggestions to enhance and improve the Bioeconomy in the United States.

While Cognosci and myself much appreciate the SBIR/STTR program, part of the NIH specific rules now state that a grant proposal may be submitted followed by one (and only one) revised proposal.

We believe this policy to be regressive and unfair and should be changed.

For example, we propose that as long as a grant application is scored, one should be permitted to revise the proposal (according to the helpful suggestions from the reviewer's on Study Section) and re-submit the proposal for additional review and potential funding. Such an approach would not end promising projects before they had a chance to be properly heard and matured.

In addition, we strongly suggest that Study Sections (organized by the Office of Scientific Review of the Extramural part of NIH), especially those that deal with commercializable matter as seen in SBIR/STTR applications, should be composed of at least 75% of scientists with industry experience. The current constitutions of most SBIR/STTR sections is far less than 50% of persons that come from industrial/pharmaceutical/biotechnology backgrounds. Thus, the criticisms of the SBIR/STTR grant proposals are inappropriately weighted to more professorial/academic concerns, that largely are not part of the commercialization process.

These changes would not cost any taxpayer 1-dime over the current costs of these SBIR/STTR programs. They would, however, improve the likelihood that commercially viable projects in biotechnology fields would have a chance to be funded, to be developed and commercialized, while employing highly skilled scientists and professionals.

Thanks for your time, and we would be happy to answer any questions on this topic if you would like further input.

Thanks,

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