

Annex B: Sample Proposal

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Capitalizing on Science, Technology, and Innovation: An Assessment of the Small Business Innovation Research Program

(Proposal to the National Institutes of Health (Sample))

I. Overview

A. Summary

The Small Business Innovation Research program (SBIR) is one of the largest government-industry partnerships in the United States. At approximately \$1.2 billion annually, it will continue to expand with increases in federal funding for research. In anticipation of this expansion, the relevant Congressional Committees believe that the SBIR program would benefit from an objective review of the program's operation.

As part of the recent renewal of the SBIR program, the Congress mandated (H.R. 5667; Section 108) that the National Research Council (NRC) undertake a comprehensive study of how the SBIR program has stimulated technological innovation and used small businesses to meet federal research and development needs at the five agencies which have SBIR programs larger than \$50 million annually. The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) SBIR program is included within these legislated parameters. The NRC is tasked with carrying out this study and must contract with the relevant agencies no later than 20 June 2001.

To comply with this legislation, the NRC hereby proposes a study of the SBIR program at the NIH, for an initial period of three years.⁷⁰ This study is to be carried out in close cooperation with NIH officials and program managers. Results of the study will be integrated, as appropriate, into a broader report on the contributions of the SBIR program as a whole to federal research and development needs.

B. Statement of Task

The program for the NIH, currently funded at approximately \$410 million annually, is one of the larger components of the SBIR program. Moreover, as the importance of the NIH's SBIR program continues to expand, it can help the NIH maximize the return on its R&D budget.

The study will:

- Satisfy the Congressional mandate for an objective, external assessment of the program;
- Provide an empirical analysis of the operations of the SBIR program, including both quality of research and commercialization of awards, for NIH officials and program managers;
- Address research questions relevant to the program's operation and evaluation that emerge in the course of the study of the NIH SBIR program;
- Contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the program and to Congressional understanding of its accomplishments, challenges, and ongoing contributions.

This study will review the NIH program with regard to parameters such as the quality of the research projects being conducted under the SBIR program, the commercialization of the research, and the program's contribution to accomplishing the NIH missions. To the extent possible, the evaluation will

⁷⁰ The legislation calls for a six-year study. In agreement with the NIH, the NRC proposes an initial three-year effort to be followed by a review and agreement as to the requirements for the second phase of the analysis.