



# POSITIONING FOR SUCCESS WITH YOUR PROJECT SUMMARY

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# DISCUSSION AGENDA

- Positioning through  
Storytelling
- Elements of the  
Proposal Summary
- Preparing your Summary



THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF POSITIONING  
IS SELECTING THAT ONE SPECIFIC CONCEPT  
TO HANG YOUR HAT ON. YET YOU MUST, IF  
YOU WANT TO CUT THROUGH THE  
PROSPECT'S WALL OF INDIFFERENCE.”

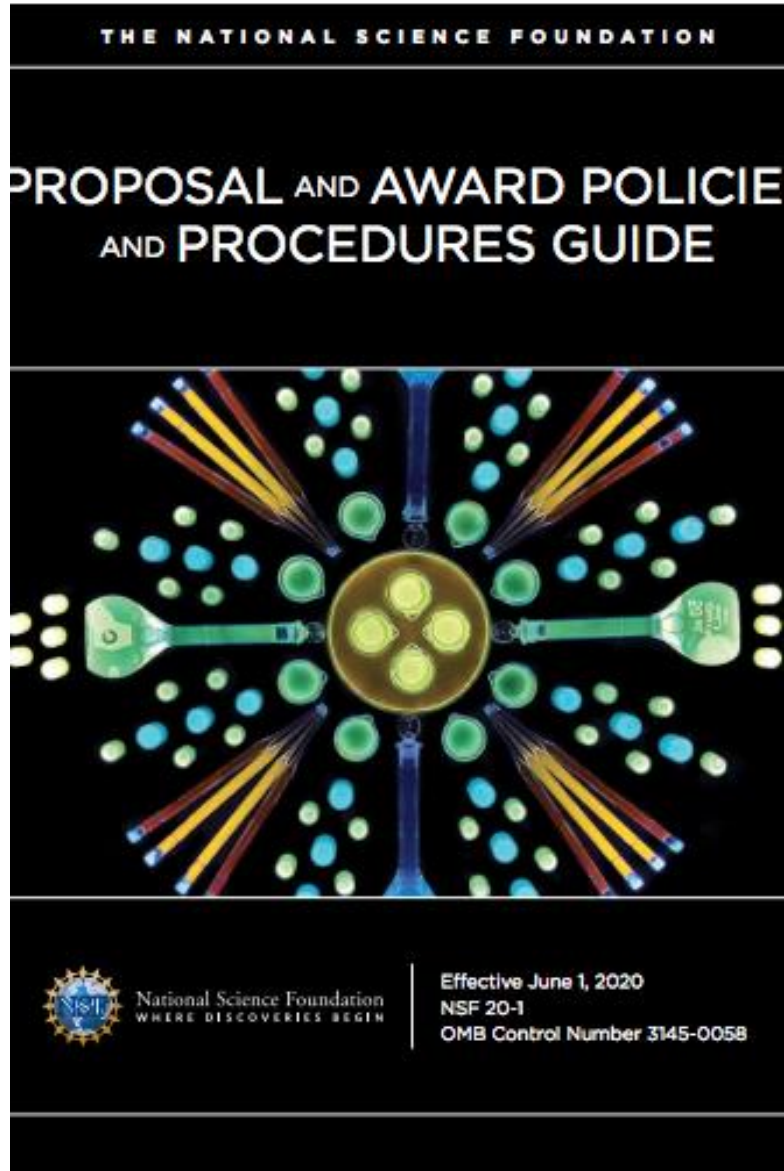
“

AL RIES, POSITIONING: THE BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND

# POSITIONING THROUGH STORYTELLING



- Frame the context
- Know your audience
- Structure your narrative
- Make the impact real



## PROJECT SUMMARY (PAPPG II-10)

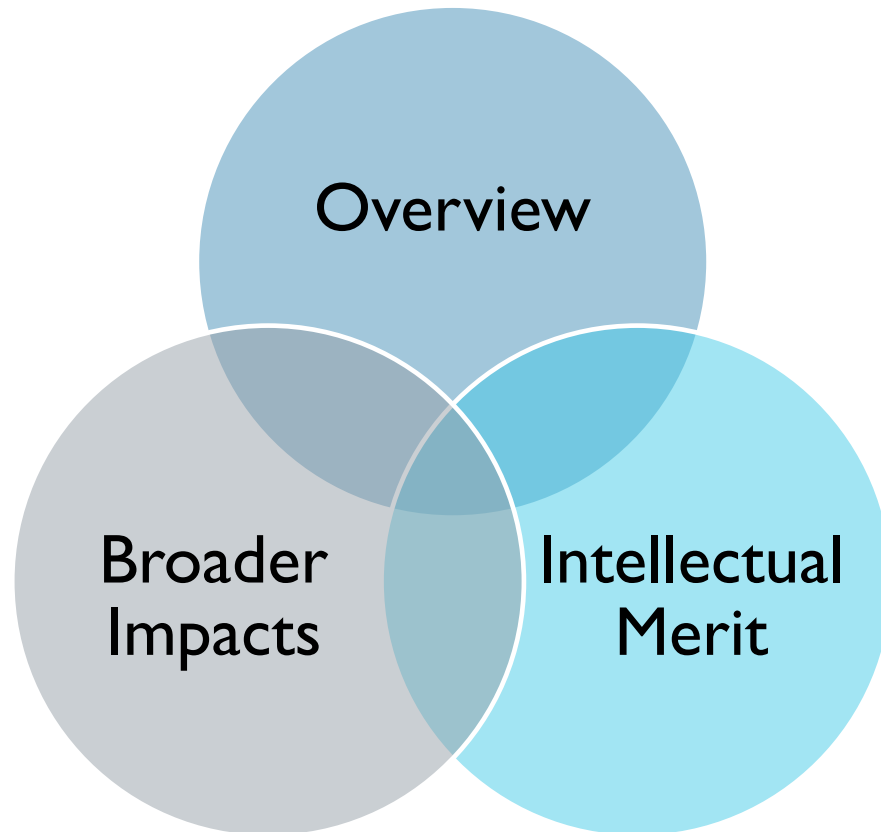
Each proposal must contain a summary of the proposed project not more than one page in length. The Project Summary consists of an overview, a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.

The overview includes a description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge. The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The Project Summary should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, insofar as possible, understandable to a broad audience within the scientific domain. It should not be an abstract of the proposal.

The Project Summary may **ONLY** be uploaded as a Supplementary Document if use of special characters is necessary. Such Project Summaries must be formatted with separate headings for Overview, Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts. Failure to include these headings will result in the proposal being returned without review.

# PROJECT SUMMARY



- ✓ **Covers no more than 1 page**
- ✓ **Includes 3 separate but interrelated sections**
- ✓ **Appeals to a general audience**
- ✓ **If funded,**
  - ✓ **Serves as the public description of your project**

# PROJECT SUMMARY – OVERVIEW



*“A description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded and a statement of objectives and methods to be employed”*

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER – OVERVIEW

## Question

- What is the project motivation?
- What are you proposing to do?
- Why is this project important?

## Action

- ✓ Identify the context and knowledge gaps
- ✓ Explain clearly, without jargon
- ✓ State the purpose



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER – OVERVIEW

## Question

- What are the project objectives?
- How will you accomplish the objectives?
- What is unique in this proposal?
- Why is this the right team?

## Action

- ✓ Include broad and specific
- ✓ Describe the research approach and methods
- ✓ Explain without jargon and hyperbole
- ✓ Provide an overview of the PIs, senior leaders

# PROJECT SUMMARY – INTELLECTUAL MERIT



“Potential of the proposed activity to advance knowledge”

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER – INTELLECTUAL MERIT

## Question

- What are current knowledge gaps within or across fields?
- Where is research in the field heading?
- What will your research contribute to the field?

## Action

- ✓ Discuss knowledge gaps
- ✓ Position your research in the growth of the field
- ✓ Describe your contribution

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER – INTELLECTUAL MERIT

## Question

- Why will your contribution be transformative?
- How will your research enhance or enable future research?
- Why is your research important?

## Action

- ✓ Explain, don't state
- ✓ Identify how the outcomes will advance this and/or associated fields
- ✓ Guide the reviewer to your impact

# PROJECT SUMMARY – BROADER IMPACT



“Potential of the proposed activity to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes”

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER – BROADER IMPACT

## Question

- What are the desired project outcomes?
- Why will people outside your immediate field care about your outcomes?
- How will this project advance DEI priorities?

## Action

- ✓ Describe outcomes
- ✓ Connect outcomes with impact (change, transformation)
- ✓ Be specific when discussing potential impact

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER – BROADER IMPACT

## Question

- What are potential applications of your research?
- How will your proposal benefit individuals outside of your project team?

## Action

- ✓ Contextualize impact
- ✓ Describe potential value to your organization, community, society

# ADDITIONAL CRITERIA TO CONSIDER

- What is the potential for the proposed project to:
  - Advance knowledge within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit);
  - Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
- To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
- Is the approach reasonable, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale?
- How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
- Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?



# BREAKING THROUGH THE WALL OF INDIFFERENCE IN 4,600 WORDS

- **Iterate** – start with your summary, then return to it after you have drafted each section of your project description
- **Share** – include external readers in your development process. Remember that the summary should be accessible by a lay audience
- **Show** – don't say your project is transformative, demonstrate how it will move the field
- **Remember** – first impressions are lasting impressions. You can't win an award with the summary, but you can lose it!



THANK YOU