

# TUTORIAL #23

## What should I do after I submit my LOI?

If you prepared your Letter of Intent (LOI) in the fashion suggested in Tutorial 13, you will have a solid foundation for developing the project narrative. You will have conducted background research in order to better understand the Department of Energy's (DOE) interest. You will have raised any lingering questions that you might have through a phone conversation with the topic manager. You will have begun a literature search and initiated the formulation of your research objectives and projected outcome. Aside from these creative efforts, you will have also registered with the Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS), secured your DUNS number, and your employer identification number (EIN). Now you have to accomplish everything else! And you only have six weeks to do it in!

To be mindful of what lays ahead of you – be sure to download the DOE provided **Proposal Prepa-**

**ration Checklist** and put it next to your computer. This checklist is very helpful and identifies the various components of your application that you must prepare. However, what it doesn't say is that

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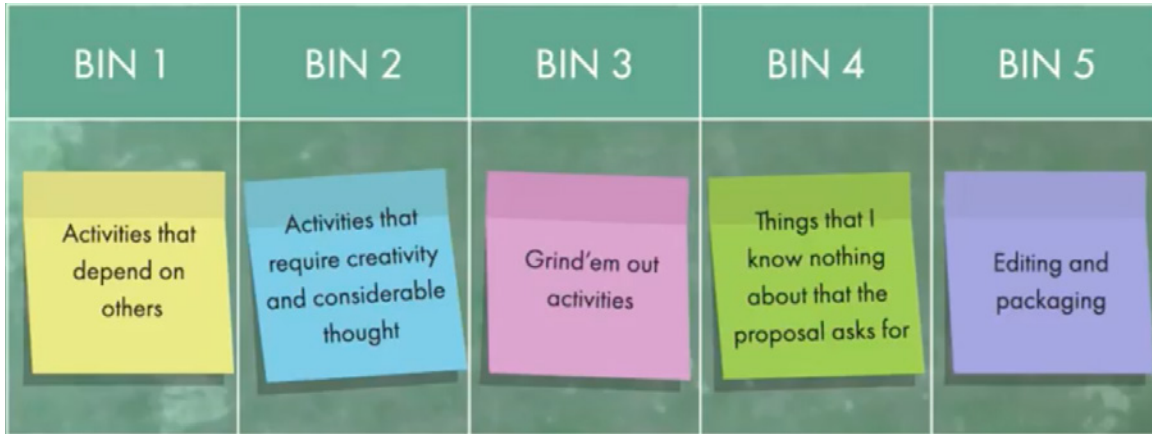
in all likelihood there are still a number of additional registrations that you must complete: that you need to line up reviewers and allow sufficient time to consider and incorporate their feedback; that you must continue to develop your team; work on the financials; and, download the application package from grants.gov! The

question is in what sequence should you tackle these things?

### **Grouping activities and putting them in conceptual bins**

Activities can be grouped into different bins:

**Bin 1:** Activities that depend on others – such as securing additional team members; letters of sup-



port; gaining permission to use someone else's facilities; and registering with other required online systems.

**Bin 2:** Activities that require creativity and considerable thought.

**Bin 3:** Grind-em out activities – such as preparation of biological sketches.

**Bin 4:** Things that one may know nothing about that the proposal asks for – in this case it might be a data management plan.

**Bin 5:** Editing and packaging.

After generating this list, immediately begin to ask yourself where you can get help because in order to do a good job, you may need assistance. People can help in various ways – by assuming some of your other responsibilities (whether they are personal or business), thus giving you more time to work on the proposal. Others can assist by tackling some of the activities that you have identified in the various

bins – such as editing, packaging, and grind-em out activities. Some people stay focused on the merit review criteria that will be used to evaluate the application as well as on generating creative solutions, and on the financials. Others may divide up their time in different ways – but divide it up, you must. Over time, your efficiency at preparing pro-

posals will increase, but at the beginning – in order to give this proposal your best effort – it will take a significant amount of time from you and your ad hoc or formal team.

After assembling your proposal preparation team (formal or informal), it is suggested that you then add constraints to the equation. Consider what needs to be done first. What activities have you been advised will require more time or are critical? The following table contains a list that will work in most situations and starts with a countdown of six weeks beginning with the submission of your LOI.

### SUGGESTED SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

In week six, all time sensitive tasks as well as those that involve others, are addressed. For example, complete all remaining registrations, and focus the rest of your time on putting the technical team together and securing facilities, as needed. In week five, focus on the innovative elements of the project narrative – making sure that compelling information in the section entitled “Identification or Significance of the

Problem/Opportunity, and Technical Approach,” has been provided. Also preview the financial requirements, so you are well aware of what has to be done. In week four, work on the commercialization plan and confirm commitments from members of the team that is being assembled. Commitments are needed so that you can devel-

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op the financials. In week three, circle back and make sure that you are on track and that all of the requirements are being addressed. You may also want to complete the draft of the project narrative and refine it in preparation for a review by others. In week two, engage the red team asking them to review the draft using the merit review criteria articulated in the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). In week one make revisions to the content based on the feedback from the reviewers, and edit and format all of the sections of the application package. You may want to remind the authorized organization representative (AOR) that you will need to submit the proposal 48 hours before the due date and then proceed to do so.

Everyone approaches proposal writing in a different way. The method that has been outlined puts tasks into bins. Make sure to start with those that involve others and are time sensitive – such as some of the registrations that have been discussed – System for Award Management (SAM) and grants.gov in particular. Also, consider who you can turn to for assistance. You may want to focus on the merit review criteria and in developing an innovative solution that is clearly compelling. Don't leave the financials to the last minute because it is always more complicated than anticipated. Utilize a red team and allow sufficient time to revise concepts, based on their feedback.

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**Weeks before application due**   **Task**

<p><b>Week 6</b> Time Sensitive Tasks and Tasks that Involve Others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complete all remaining registrations [See Tutorial 12]</li> <li>» Download the application package from grants.gov</li> <li>» Continue to assemble a compelling technical team and needed facilities [See Tutorials 15 and 16]</li> <li>» Continue to consider whether SBIR or STTR is the most appropriate application type</li> <li>» Contact organizations to see if you can find a proposal reviewer to engage in Week 2</li> <li>» If trying to work with a Federal Lab make sure you understand their protocols and requirements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Focus on your Innovation and preview financial requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Expand your literature review</li> <li>» Start to draft the part of the project narrative entitled “Identification or Significance of the Problem/Opportunity and Technical Approach and the Public Benefits sections</li> <li>» Develop your technical objectives and review Tutorial 22 on developing a good work plan</li> <li>» Provide a format for the biographical sketches to consultants and subcontractors [See Tutorial 25]</li> <li>» Take a look at the Budget Justification Form so that you know what information you will be required</li> <li>» Find individual(s) from whom you can request a letter of support and prepare a draft [See Tutorial 17]</li> <li>» Review the Level of Effort form to assure that you understand what is needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Develop Commercialization Plan and Secure Commitments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Gather information that you will need for the Commercialization Plan [See Tutorial 21]</li> <li>» Begin to draft sections of the project narrative that deal with facilities and equipment, consultants and subcontractors</li> <li>» Negotiate rates with consultants and subcontractors to assure that you can be compliant with the budget restrictions and don't be overly ambitious</li> <li>» Begin to fill in the budget justification form and make sure you understand the concept of indirect rates</li> <li>» Provide team members with a deadline for any information that you will need from them</li> </ul>

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<b>Week 3</b> Take Stock of where you are and make your Project Narrative Compelling	» Review the application guidelines again and make sure that you are on track » Make sure that you have verification that all registrations are complete » Select “win themes” to emphasize in your project narrative » Complete a 1st draft and have a Pink team review for compliance and format [See Tutorial 31] » Assure that Pink team is thoroughly aware of the constraints for the project narrative
<b>Week 2</b> Red Team Review	» Schedule Red Team Review and provide with a next to final draft of the Project Narrative
<b>Week 1</b> Revisions and Editing	» Make revisions in your Project Narrative based on feedback from the Red Team » Develop the Project Summary/Abstract » Finalize financials
<b>Week 0</b>	» Submit the application 48 hours before the due date

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