



TUTORIAL 11

“Apparently Non-Responsive LOIs”

In response to the Letter of Intent (LOI) that you submit to the Department of energy, you might receive a notification of “apparent non-responsiveness,” email. It is important to note that receiving this email does not preclude you from submitting a full proposal on your proposed project, but it is a serious warning that mitigating measures must be taken in order to be responsive to the topic. Our suggestions on that mitigation are:



The choice is yours!

1. Review the topic/subtopic pair again, looking for any obvious explanation for the apparent mismatch. Did you misread or misunderstand the topic/subtopic? Or did DOE not understand how your project would address the topic/subtopic?
2. Then talk with the DOE topic author (TA) to further clarify the perceived inconsistency. Three outcomes are possible after this conversation:
 - a. You still believe that your project is responsive, but you now strive to be clearer in your proposal about the relevancy of your project to the DOE topic and subtopic;
 - b. You conclude you were not responsive to the topic. You decide not to submit a proposal because what DOE wants is not what you can or want to provide;
 - c. You conclude you were not responsive to the topic. You revise your approach to reflect your new understanding of the topic/subtopic, and that approach becomes the basis for your full proposal



If possible, have this conversation via phone as opposed to email, as you are more likely to gain additional insights in a phone call that would not be possible via e-mail. Always maintain a positive and professional attitude during this conversation, to maximize the chance for an honest and productive exchange with the topic author.

To help reduce the chances of receiving an “apparently nonresponsive” response regarding your proposed project, we strongly encourage you to contact the DOE topic author who is responsible for this topic/subtopic before preparing the LOI. If you cannot reach the topic author after a couple of attempts to do so, then send a polite email to sbir-sttr@science.doe.gov and ask for assistance.

Companies can submit more than one Letter of Intent, if they are uncertain which topic/subtopic pair is best or they plan to submit more than one application package.

It is important to remember that DOE ONLY sends out “Apparently non-responsive LOI letters” and does NOT send out notices of encouragement. The date when the

Non-responsive LOIs are to be distributed is always clearly noted on the DOE SBIR FOA website. Therefore, if you do NOT receive a letter on or around the specified date, you can assume it was responsive.

It takes considerable time to develop a responsive Phase I SBIR/STTR application package. Therefore, once you submit your LOI continue to actively work on your application. Do NOT stop working – do not wait until after the Non-Responsiveness e-mails are distributed before you start working again as you will not have enough time to do a good job.