

## 2008 Call for Applications

### Application Deadline

May 16, 2008



# SSTI Excellence in TBED Awards 2008

## Overview

SSTI, a national nonprofit organization that leads, supports, and strengthens efforts to improve state and regional economies through science, technology, and innovation, is pleased to announce the *2008 Excellence in TBED Awards*. The awards are designed to celebrate exceptional achievement in technology-based economic development (TBED). TBED fosters a climate where innovative companies that develop and adopt technology will thrive.

TBED programs tend to focus on several elements that have been found in successful technology-based economies, including: a research base that generates new knowledge, mechanisms for transferring knowledge into the marketplace, an entrepreneurial culture, sources of risk capital, and a technically skilled workforce. SSTI's *Excellence in TBED Awards* recognizes exceptional achievement in addressing these elements, plus improving the competitiveness of existing industries and an integrated strategy toward TBED.

SSTI's *Excellence in TBED Awards program* is designed to celebrate exceptional achievement in TBED and offer practitioners and policymakers examples of successful approaches that are being employed by others. In celebrating exceptional achievement in TBED, the awards program: requires applicants to provide a clear explanation of the need for the initiative, a logical approach to addressing the need, and demonstrable results; is highly selective with applications reviewed by a committee of distinguished current and former practitioners; and, is rigorous but fair in its evaluation. Awards will be presented only for exceptional achievement; therefore, SSTI reserves the right not to issue an award in a particular category if no applications are deemed as meeting the standards of the award.

## Eligibility

Any TBED program or practitioner is eligible to apply. This includes, but is not limited to, nonprofit organizations, local and state governments, colleges and universities, federal agencies and labs, industry associations, economic development councils, and other organizations that promote innovation and technology-based economic development.

While SSTI encourages its members to apply, you do not need to be a member of SSTI to enter or receive an award, and your membership status will not affect the judges' evaluation of your application.

## Award Categories

The awards celebrate exceptional achievement in approaches used to help foster a climate where new and existing companies that develop technology and continuously innovate will thrive. Because these approaches can take many forms (e.g., programs, incentives designed to spur action, partnerships between organizations), we refer to them as initiatives rather than programs. Applicants are encouraged to think beyond traditional programs in approaches being used to address a specific element; for example, applicants for the "increasing access to capital" category could include a variety of approaches, including an angel investor

## 2008 Awards Timeline

- **March 19, 2008**  
Call for applications
- **May 16, 2008**  
Deadline for applications
- **October 15-16, 2008**  
Winners recognized

## Application Fee

- \$95 SSTI members
  - \$125 non-members
- 
- Awards will be presented at SSTI's annual conference on October 15-16, 2008 in Cleveland.

[www.ssti.org/awards.htm](http://www.ssti.org/awards.htm)

## Contact

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group, a tax incentive that encourages investment, a seed fund managed by a state agency, a CAPCO, a venture forum, a program connecting companies with investors, etc. Examples that are provided below should be viewed as illustrative rather than restrictive.

- **Expanding the Research Infrastructure:** Initiatives that strengthen the capacity to conduct research in universities, federal labs or the private sector. This may include initiatives to expand research facilities, recruit eminent scholars, or increasing research funding through R&D tax credits.
- **Commercializing Research:** Initiatives that promote the conversion of research (from universities, federal labs or other research institutions) into technologies and products with high commercial potential.
- **Building Entrepreneurial Capacity:** Initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship and support entrepreneurs, including enriching the skills and ability of entrepreneurs, increasing the capacity of entrepreneurs to successfully start and grow companies, and improving the environment for entrepreneurial development.
- **Increasing Access to Capital:** Initiatives that enhance the ability of companies to access start-up capital or fill other critical stages of capital formation in order to bring products to market and to grow.
- **Enhancing the Science & Technology Workforce:** Initiatives that seek to expand the science and technology workforce, improve the skill levels of science and technology workers, or assist industry in finding and maintaining a globally competitive science & technology workforce.
- **Improving Competitiveness of Existing Industries:** Initiatives that expand the innovation capacity of existing companies or industries to develop new leading edge products or services or significantly enhance the competitiveness of their existing operations.

## Entry Guidelines

Each entry must include a completed application form, a narrative, and payment of entry fee. The narrative document must be typed on a maximum of five 8.5" by 11" pages using a minimum font size of 10 points.

Many TBED initiatives can cross into multiple categories. Nominations can be submitted for more than one category; however, each entry is considered a separate nomination and requires a separate application form, narrative, and application fee. It is up to the applicant to determine under which category the initiative they are nominating is competing; entries with no award category or multiple categories marked will not be considered.

Entries should be submitted as PDF documents with the application form attached as the cover sheet via e-mail to [awards@ssti.org](mailto:awards@ssti.org) with a return receipt requested to [awards@ssti.org](mailto:awards@ssti.org) or the entry may be mailed along with payment to: Awards Entry Fee, SSTI, 5015 Pine Creek Drive, Westerville, OH 43081. To pay with a credit card, visit <https://www.ssti.org/Awards/registration.htm>.

**Deadline for applications and payment is 5 p.m. EDT May 16, 2008.**

A confirmation e-mail will be sent to all entries upon receipt of application at SSTI. If you do not receive confirmation of entry within three business days, please contact Rhiannon Skipper at SSTI at 614.901.1690.

*Celebrating  
exceptional  
achievement in  
technology-based  
economic development*



## Selection Committee & Process

Each application will be reviewed by a committee of distinguished current and former practitioners with knowledge and experience within a given award category. Selection committee members are chosen each year by SSTI based on their experience, knowledge of the field, and accomplishments.

If a member of a selection committee has a conflict of interest (including, but not limited to, being a past or present employee, contractor, consultant, board member, or investor) with an application, that member must immediately recuse himself/herself from any discussion or evaluation of the application.

SSTI receives applications in confidence. Each member of selection committees are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of the applications and the evaluation of applications, and are required to sign a nondisclosure statement.

The selection committee will evaluate applications based on a set of weighted criteria, which can be found on the next page. Evaluation criteria may be modified from year to year; however, the criteria will not be altered after call for entries are announced.

If no application in an award category achieves the level of excellence contemplated for the award, the committee may decide not to make an award in that category. The selection committee will determine winners, and decisions of that committee will be final. All applicants will be notified of their status when winners are announced.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to a qualitative scoring system with a set of weighted criteria based on the application's ability to clearly demonstrate the following:

### 45% of the evaluation score will be based on:

- The initiative's potential for successful transferability for others.
- The impact of the initiative, the ability to communicate that impact, and the appropriateness of the impact measures for the problem being addressed.

### 30% of the evaluation score will be based on:

- Demonstration of effective partnerships and leadership.
- How the initiative stands out among others in its field.

### 25% of the evaluation score will be applied to:

- The context for the initiative adjusting for variables such as geography (e.g. rural v large metro) or overall TBED activity in a region.
- The ability to sustain or successfully complete the initiative.

*Recognizing efforts  
to improve our economy  
through  
science,  
technology &  
innovation*

# Evaluation Form

This is a sample evaluation form that committee members will use to evaluate each application.



Overall Application				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

## Section 1 (45% of the evaluation score)

Criteria	Reviewer comments			
<p><b>The initiative's potential for successful transferability for others.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What aspects of this effort qualify it for a “best practice?”</li> <li>• Is this effort structured in such a way that others can learn lessons and apply them to their region?</li> <li>• Does the effort connect to traditional economic development or other efforts that broaden TBED reach?</li> </ul>				
<p><b>The impact of the initiative, the ability to communicate that impact, and the appropriateness of the impact measures for the problem being addressed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this effort have quantifiable metrics/measures? Are the measures and the methodology for determining the impact appropriate? Has the application shown the impact to be directly related to the initiative?</li> <li>• Does the initiative have a regular means by which it communicates the outcomes or impact of its efforts to stakeholders, leadership or the public?</li> </ul>				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

## Section 2 (30% of the evaluation score)

Criteria	Reviewer comments			
<p><b>Demonstration of effective partnerships and leadership.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has this project shown it has support of key leadership within its topic area?</li> <li>• Does the initiative promote long-term or broad reaching partnerships and collaboration?</li> <li>• Does the initiative effectively leverage the resources and expertise of various organizations (does it connect the dots) in such a way as to maximize its goals and outcomes?</li> </ul>				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

# Evaluation Form cont.



## Section 2 cont. (30% of the evaluation score)

Criteria		Reviewer comments		
<p><b>How the initiative stands out among others in its field.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the effort significantly improve the quality standard for this TBED area?</li> <li>• Was there new or out-of-the-box thinking used in developing or implementing the initiative?</li> <li>• What makes this effort stand out among others in its field?</li> </ul>				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

## Section 3 (25% of the evaluation score)

Criteria		Reviewer comments		
<p><b>The context for the initiative adjusting for variables such as geography (e.g. rural v large metro) or overall TBED activity in a region.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the application demonstrated how it fits into the overall TBED and economic development efforts of its region?</li> <li>• Is the size and scope of the project meaningful to the geography in which it operates?</li> <li>• Are there other aspects of the application that demonstrated that it can be successful within the context it operates?</li> </ul>				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
<p><b>The ability to sustain or successfully complete the initiative.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal address the sustainability or completion of the project?</li> <li>• Does it identify resources or key issues needed for sustainability/completion?</li> </ul>				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

## Application Narrative

The narrative template outlines specific information we are seeking for each entry. While other information may be included, please answer the following questions. Unless otherwise noted, the length of answers may vary, but the total submission should **not** exceed five pages. Please refer to the Application Guidelines on the next page for additional suggestions.

### Project Overview:

- Provide a brief abstract of your initiative including its purpose, description of activities, and its impact. (Please limit to 250 words; for winning entries, this abstract may be used in press materials.)
- Provide background on the context in which the initiative operates and why it was created. This should include information about the region the initiative serves (rural, mid-size metro, etc.), your region's overall TBED activities, and other factors that provide a better understanding for the committee of the conditions under which your initiative operates. Describe how the initiative has been tailored to suit this context and how it has addressed market failures within the region.
- The specific activities of your initiative must be clearly defined.

### Best Practice Implications:

In this section of the narrative, applicants should address how lessons learned from this initiative can be applied to others.

- What lessons have been learned in the implementation of this initiative?
- How has this initiative helped to advance or been integrated with other TBED or more traditional economic development efforts?

### Impact:

In this section of the narrative, each applicant should provide details about the impact of the initiative.

- What metrics are used to measure the outcomes of or return on investment for the initiative?
- What has been the impact to date, and how is that that impact determined?
- How are the results of the initiative communicated to key stakeholders, supporters and the public?

### Innovation & Effectiveness:

In this section of the narrative, each applicant should address the following questions:

- What innovative approaches were used in developing and implementing the initiative?
- How does the initiative promote effective partnerships among relevant actors?
- How will the initiative be sustained or successfully complete its objectives?

### Other information:

Applicants can include additional information they view as relevant to this entry.

*SSTI invites you  
to share your  
TBED story.*

The following guidelines have been developed in accordance with suggestions submitted by committee members who judged the applications last year. The judges strongly advise applicants to address these critical issues within their narratives.

**1. Tell us what you did.**

- Provide your definition of the problem you set out to address and your theory of change.
- Provide a comprehensive description of what your initiative has accomplished.
- Provide any available evidence of potential clients' needs and priorities.

**2. Tell us how you do it.**

- Provide specific goals and objectives of your program: what are your qualitative measures, what qualitative data do you use to help support the goals and metrics?
- Provide specific and detailed information on the services and activities of your initiative.
- Provide information on the context: first describe the “whole” and then outline the “portion” that you have been able to affect.
- Are you adjusting your approach to respond to the context?
- On what basis are you targeting your efforts?

**3. Tell us how it is funded.**

- Provide information about initial funding and how you are planning for future sustainability.

**4. Tell us how it works.**

- Provide information on who does what within the organization and describe how your organization partners with others (this will help the judges determine leveraging of resources).

**5. Tell us why you should be recognized.**

- What distinguishes your program from others? Include information on the type of approach (comprehensive approach, a program within a comprehensive approach, an awareness-building program, etc.).
- How well has your initiative succeeded? Provide information on how you have chosen to measure success and the results to date.
- Make sure to carve out the results of the specific initiative from the overall results of the organization unless you are submitting the comprehensive work of the organization for an award.

## *2007 Excellence in TBED Award Winners*

■ **Georgia Research Alliance  
Eminent Scholars®**

*Expanding the Research  
Infrastructure Category*

■ **Georgia Research Alliance  
VentureLab**

*Commercializing Research Category*

■ **Technology 2020**

*Building Entrepreneurial Capacity  
Category*

■ **Connecticut Innovations Eli  
Whitney Fund**

*Increasing Access to Capital  
Category*

■ **Virginia Council on Advanced  
Technology Skills**

*Enhancing the Science & Technology  
Workforce Category*

■ **The Maryland Industrial  
Partnerships Program**

*Improving Competitiveness of  
Existing Industries Category*

# Award Application

Deadline: May 16, 2008 at 5 p.m. EST



Title/Name of Nominated Initiative:

\_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Award Category (check one):**

- Expanding the Research Infrastructure
- Commercializing Research
- Building Entrepreneurial Capacity
- Increasing Access to Capital
- Enhancing the Science & Technology Workforce
- Improving Competitiveness of Existing Industries

## Instructions for Completing Form

This application form must be completed and attached as the cover page to your entry. You can either 1.) save this PDF form and merge it with your narrative; or 2.) download this form as a Word document at [www.ssti.org/Awards/application.doc](http://www.ssti.org/Awards/application.doc), then copy and paste your narrative to the second blank page and convert the entire file to one PDF; or 3.) print and attach the cover sheet to your narrative and mail to: SSTI, 5015 Pine Creek Drive, Westerville, OH 43081.

Entries should be submitted via e-mail to [awards@ssti.org](mailto:awards@ssti.org) with a return receipt requested to [awards@ssti.org](mailto:awards@ssti.org).

**Please note:** Only the person listed as the contact name will receive information regarding this application.

Payment can be made by check and mailed to: Awards Entry Fee, SSTI, 5015 Pine Creek Drive, Westerville, OH 43081. To pay with a credit card, visit <https://www.ssti.org/Awards/registration.htm>.

## Questions?

### Contact

Rhiannon Skipper  
614.901.1690  
[skipper@ssti.org](mailto:skipper@ssti.org)

# Frequently Asked Questions



## FAQ

### **How are the award winners recognized?**

Winners will be recognized at SSTI's annual conference being held October 15-16, 2008, in Cleveland. Winners also will be showcased in the *SSTI Weekly Digest* and in a press release issued by SSTI. In addition, a written profile outlining the winning program or initiative within each category will be posted on SSTI's website. Finally, winners will receive exclusive use of the Excellence in TBED 2008 logo that can be added to their website, distinguishing their exceptional achievement in the TBED community.

### **Our TBED initiative crosses into several program areas — can we apply for more than one award?**

Yes, a project or an organization can apply to more than one award category. Remember that each application is reviewed separately, so program information as well as application fees must be completed for each category.

### **Our project is a partnership of multiple organizations — can each organization apply?**

Technically, the answer is yes. However, we would encourage the partnership, rather than multiple members, to apply. Remember that one of the criteria for evaluation is related to the ability to build effective partnerships, and competing against yourself may not help your application in demonstrating this ability.

### **Will you be providing examples about what we should include in the narrative?**

Probably not. We want people to be creative—and just because we didn't think of something, we don't want people to feel constrained by our examples. Instead, we have tried to provide a detailed narrative so each applicant will know exactly how the entries will be evaluated instead of focusing on the type of project we expect to see.

### **Is the awards program limited to U.S. initiatives?**

We are accepting applications from organizations that represent our membership, which at this time includes the U.S. and Canada.

### **How do I submit the application?**

Entries should be submitted as one PDF document via e-mail to [awards@ssti.org](mailto:awards@ssti.org) with a return receipt requested to [awards@ssti.org](mailto:awards@ssti.org). An application form is located on page 8 of this PDF. You may type within the required fields and save a copy of the form with your information. You may also mail your application to: SSTI, 5015 Pine Creek Drive, Westerville, OH 43081.

### **What happens after I submit my application?**

Within three business days, our staff will respond to you by e-mail to notify you that we have received your entry and that the application meets the guidelines set forth in the application. After the deadline closes, the staff will forward all applications in a specific award category to the corresponding selection committee.

### **Is there a time frame during which eligible initiatives must have been started or completed?**

There is no specific time frame for a start or completion date. One of the major components for evaluation is the impact of the initiative, and therefore, well-established initiatives are expected to have a better chance of being selected.

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## **Is there any way my application would be disqualified?**

Yes, there are two process-related items that may prevent your application from being submitted to the selection committee: 1) You forget the cover sheet or forget to check the appropriate award category and/or 2) you go over the five-page limit for the narrative. If one of these events occurs, we will notify you within three business days. If there is still time in the application process, you may correct the issue and resubmit the application. No extensions will be provided beyond the deadline date.

## **Can I include promotional materials along with the narrative?**

The awards program focuses heavily on the impact of your initiative, which should be documented through clearly defined metrics within your narrative. Any additional materials such as promotional items, annual reports, past recognitions, etc. will not be considered by the selection panel.

## **What if I have suggestions for other categories or ideas about the process?**

We would appreciate your feedback and encourage you to send us your ideas and comments via e-mail so we can have a written record and be able to assess suggestions at the end of the awards period. The 2008 awards program has changed as a result of suggestions we received in 2007.

## **Are credit card payments accepted for the application fee?**

Yes. We have provided a secure link on the website (<https://www.ssti.org/Awards/registration.htm>) to process your credit card payment. You also may fill in your credit card information on the award application and mail or fax it to SSTI at 614-901-1696.