

Round 2: 2020 NVC Submission Feasibility Analysis Guidelines (Social Venture Track)



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Overview

Will It Fly?

That's the primary question your feasibility analysis must answer. You will be evaluated based on your ability to make a convincing case that yours is an idea with the potential to soar. To do this, you must clearly articulate:

- A potentially transformative solution to a pressing social need or problem.
- Strategies for measuring your concept's social impact.
- A well thought-out business model that delivers value to key users and/or stakeholders.
- A reasonable path to financial viability, preferably with an earned income stream.
- A team with the skills, experience and/or connections to make it happen.

These guidelines will walk you through the many issues you must address, section by section, when developing your feasibility analysis. Before you begin, please keep in mind the following:

1. Don't make writing the feasibility analysis an academic exercise by mechanically answering the questions in this guide. These questions are designed to provoke deep thought about your concept. Use them to develop a document that tells a riveting story of your idea's potential.
2. The Additional Resources offered by the GW Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship will expose you to strategies that will help you come up with the answers you'll need. Be sure to take advantage of them.
3. The feasibility analysis is a high-level document; it's not meant to be all-encompassing. Later in this process, semi-finalists teams will be asked to describe their ventures in greater detail.

The GW New Venture Competition is an intense and thrilling journey. So, get ready to work hard, take risks, and above all, enjoy the ride!

Opportunity (10%)

Status Quo

- What's the high-level social need or problem you'd like to change or challenge?
- How will you address this need?
- How is the status quo currently less than optimal?

Insight

- What is the key insight that reveals a gap in the marketplace?
- What is the gap you've observed between the way things are now and the way things ought to be or could be?
- Why does this gap (i.e., need, want, problem or pain) persist?
- Why haven't others successfully addressed this before?

After reviewing this section, readers should:

- *Be tingling because they're so excited about the "big idea" behind your venture.*
- *Be intrigued by your idea's potential to affect long-term change or large-scale improvement in circumstances.*
- *Believe your idea is timely and potentially impactful.*

Solution (15%)

Value Proposition

- Describe your products/services.
- How will your products/services create gain or relieve pain?
- What *unique* value will customers derive from your products/services?
- How will your products/services enhance the way people live, work, do business or play?

Customer Segments

- Who will care about your solution and why?
- Who are your potential customers? Describe your *initial* target segments using relevant demographic, psychographic and/or behavioral characteristics.
- What needs, desires, or traits do they have in common? Is there an archetype?
- Describe the serviceable addressable market and serviceable obtainable market.
- Is yours a multi-sided market, with two or more interdependent customer segments?
- Are users and buyers one and the same?

After reviewing this section, readers should:

- *Understand who will care about your solution and why.*
- *Believe you've clearly identified and sharply-defined an important market segment.*
- *Understand why you've chosen to target this group.*

Opportunity/Solution Fit

- How passionate or enthusiastic will customers be about your product/solution? Why?
- Why will they prefer your offering to existing alternatives?
- What evidence do you have that customers will go wild with desire for your product? Explain your confidence.
- What pass/fail experiments did you run to verify your assumptions about market potential and social impact?
- Who have you talked to in order to better understand the situation and the appropriateness of your solution?
- Explain how your customer discovery efforts lead you to this conclusion.

After reviewing this section, readers should:

- *Understand the "gap" you intend to fill in the marketplace.*
- *Be impressed by the extent you've solicited third-party input to validate your hypotheses and refine your idea.*

Measuring Social Impact (15%)

Assessing Your Effectiveness

- How will you assess your effectiveness in achieving your stated social mission?
- What 3-4 indicators will link back to your theory of change and strategy?
- How will you measure these indicators to determine your social impact?

A Resource for Social Impact Measurement

Once the 3-4 indicators have been named, these indicators can then be tracked over time. An example might be:

Solar Panel Retailer that believes that deriving energy from solar power is cleaner and less harmful for the environment may define its social indicators as:

- # of solar panels installed per fiscal year;
- % of panels installed that replace other forms of energy; and
- Savings in air emissions related to non-solar power energy generation/sale.

For measuring your social impact from your social indicators, one great resource to use is the Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS): <https://iris.thegiin.org/>. An informative article explaining IRIS, from the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* can be found here: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/why_iris.

Operations Plan (20%)

Channels

- How do you plan to sell and market your product/service to customers?
- What distribution methods will you use? (Web? Physical? Direct? OEM? Distributors?)
- What are the financial and operational implications of the channel strategies selected?

Key Partners & Resources

- What partnerships must you forge to insure success? What strategic alliances, if formed, could help you reduce risks?
- What joint ventures or cooperation arrangements will enable you to acquire necessary resources/inputs?
- What physical, intellectual or human resources must you have to make your business model work?
- What are the most important assets required to deliver your proposed value proposition?
- Will you be able to acquire the resources needed?
- Does the necessary infrastructure exist to produce and deliver your product/service?

Status & Traction

- What's your current status? Describe milestones achieved so far, e.g., product development deadlines, beta testing, prototypes, users/customers acquired, letters of intent received, orders placed, etc.

Critical Risks

- How can you insure your product will work as planned? Will you be able to deliver the desired quality?
- Will you be able to manufacture your product? What key resources and partnerships must be in place? What activities must you master? Can you scale?
- What legal or regulatory issues could adversely impact the business? What regulatory approvals are required?
- Are there political, governmental, social or cultural obstacles you'll likely encounter? What are they? How will you overcome them?
- What are the key technical hurdles/milestones that must be overcome to bring your product/service to market, if any?

After reviewing this section, readers should:

- *Believe that the team is cautiously optimistic rather than dangerously naive about the potential challenges ahead.*

Financial Analysis (20%)

Pricing and Revenue Model

- Describe how you will make money, i.e., what you will charge for, how much and who is going to pay you. Will you have multiple revenue streams?
- What is the revenue model for each customer segment you plan to serve? (Asset sale, usage fee, rental, license, advertising, freemium, etc.)
- What price will you charge? Describe your pricing strategy.

Unit Level Cost Analysis

Estimate the per unit cost to produce and deliver your product or service. Your preliminary financial analysis should reflect:

- Fixed versus variable costs
- Cost of goods sold
- Channel costs and margins
- Customer acquisition costs (CAC)

Profit & Loss Statement

The profit & loss statement summarizes the revenue, cost of goods or services and expenses incurred by a venture. Among other things, it answers the following:

- What are your projected sales?
- What are your fixed and variable costs?
- Are margins sufficient to cover operations?

Although there are many unknowns pertaining to your venture, developing a P&L statement is still important at this stage. Doing so forces you to examine the logic underpinning your financial model. In the end, you'll have a better grasp on the interrelationships between your assumptions and strategic decisions and their impact on the venture's chances for financial feasibility.

Break Even Analysis

At the breakeven point, total costs equal total revenue. It's the point at which a venture becomes profitable as expressed in volume of sales, in units and dollars.

- How many units must you sell to cover your costs?

Sources & Uses of Startup Capital

- What are your anticipated startup expenses? How much cash will you need to get to “day one”, i.e., launch? (Technical talent? Equipment? Leases? Inventory? Key hires? Supplies? Professional fees? Licenses? etc.)
- How much cash will you need to reach important milestones, e.g., prototype, beta test, regulatory approval, first-customer ship, self-sustaining profitability, etc.?
- How much cash do you need to keep your venture going for the next 18 months to 2 years?

After reviewing this section, readers should:

- *Understand the estimated cost to launch.*
- *Be able to assess the financial potential & viability of the venture.*
- *Have confidence that the team has carefully thought through operating cash needs.*
- *Understand the key assumptions used to develop the financial plan.*

Prepare a Startup Budget

Prepare a Profit & Loss Statement

Team (20%)

Founders

- Briefly describe the relevant experience, skills and qualifications of each team member. Highlight prior startup experience or related industry expertise.
- Explain the primary role each person will play.
- Indicate whether or not this team has worked together before.

Note that teams that have more than one member and that are made up of team members from different academic disciplines will receive higher scores on this element than will solo teams or teams from all one discipline.

Advisors

- List key advisors who are lending their expertise (and not simply their names) to the management team. This may include an advisory board, board of directors or professional service providers, e.g., lawyer, accountant, consultants, etc.

Key Hires

- Describe who is missing from the team. What skill sets does the team lack and will need to acquire/hire?

Submission Instructions

Please follow these instructions EXACTLY as described. No exceptions. Failure to do so may result in your feasibility analysis not being evaluated.

Format

Your Feasibility Analysis **must not exceed 8 pages**, as described below.

- Your feasibility analysis text should be a maximum of five pages. (= 5 pages)
- Recommended: In addition to the feasibility analysis text, you may include a 2-page financial analysis containing: (a) 1- page Startup Budget, (b) 1- page profit & loss statement. (= 2 pages)
- Optional: You may also submit one page of supporting visual (not written) information about your product/service, e.g., diagrams, screen shots, product illustrations, etc. Do not use this optional page to add more text to your feasibility analysis. (= 1 page)
- Document should be on letter-sized paper with 12-point type, double spaced and 1" margins on all sides.

Submission Deadline

- Materials must be submitted by **1 ET on February 27, 2020**.

Website

NewVentureCompetition.gwu.edu

Additional Information

Please check the website for the latest updates, helpful information and useful resources. If you have questions, contact Jasmine Bautista, at jbautista@gwu.edu.