SDI ScienceDocs Inc.
Research • Funding • AI Strategy • Est. 2004
46-E Peninsula Center Dr. #509, Rolling Hills Estates CA 90274 323-834-8555 sd.admin@sciencedocs.com

Reviewer Concern Matrix

A structured worksheet for converting reviewer comments, anticipated objections, or internal critique into specific proposal, commercialization, technical, and risk-reduction actions. Use this matrix when preparing an SBIR/STTR resubmission, strengthening a commercialization plan, revising a pitch deck, or improving evidence before the next funding or partner review.

Organization / Team	Project or Technology	Funding Opportunity / Review Context	Prepared By / Date

1. How to Use This Matrix

Use one row for each reviewer concern, weakness, question, risk, or anticipated objection. Translate vague comments into concrete issues, assign a response owner, and identify the exact document section, data point, milestone, budget item, or commercialization argument that needs to change.

Checklist Item	Checklist Item
☐ Capture each concern in the reviewer's words before interpreting it.	☐ Identify the underlying issue, not just the surface criticism.
☐ Classify the concern by technical, market, team, budget, risk, regulatory, or commercialization category.	☐ Separate issues that require new data from issues that require clearer writing.
☐ Assign an owner and response due date for every material concern.	☐ Track whether the concern has been resolved, partially resolved, or deferred.

2. Reviewer Concern Intake Summary

Review Source	Date	Overall Outcome / Score	Top 3 Strengths	Top 3 Concerns
Example: NIH summary statement, NSF panel feedback, investor review, internal red team review				

3. Concern Classification Checklist

Check the category or categories that best describe the concern. Multiple categories may apply.

Concern Category	Typical Reviewer Signal	Applies?
Problem / Need	The problem is not compelling, urgent, quantified, or connected to a clear customer/user pain point.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Innovation / Differentiation	The technology appears incremental, insufficiently novel, or not clearly better than alternatives.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Technical Approach	The work plan lacks rigor, feasibility,	☐ Yes ☐ No

Concern Category	Typical Reviewer Signal	Applies?
	measurable endpoints, controls, or risk mitigation.	
Preliminary Data / Evidence	The proposal makes claims without adequate data, citations, validation, or customer evidence.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Commercialization Pathway	The market, customer, buyer, reimbursement, regulatory, or adoption path is unclear.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Team / Resources	The team lacks needed expertise, facilities, partners, commercialization experience, or operational capacity.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Budget / Milestones	The budget, timeline, personnel effort, or milestones do not appear realistic or well justified.	☐ Yes ☐ No
Risk / Regulatory / IP	Key risks, freedom-to-operate questions, IP position, data security, or regulatory requirements are underdeveloped.	☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Reviewer Concern Matrix

Use this working matrix to turn each concern into a specific revision plan. Add rows as needed.

#	Reviewer Concern / Objection	Category	Underlying Issue	Evidence or Revision Needed	Owner / Due Date	Status
1						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved
2						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved
3						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved
4						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved
5						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved
6						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved
7						☐ Open ☐ In progress ☐ Resolved

5. Response Strategy Builder

For high-priority concerns, develop a response strategy before rewriting. The goal is not to argue with reviewers; it is to make the revised submission, pitch, or plan stronger and easier to trust.

High-Priority Concern	Best Response Type	Concrete Fix	Where It Will Appear
	☐ Add data ☐ Clarify rationale ☐ Revise method ☐ Add partner		

High-Priority Concern	Best Response Type	Concrete Fix	Where It Will Appear
	☐ Reframe market ☐ Reduce scope ☐ Improve milestones		
	☐ Add data ☐ Clarify rationale ☐ Revise method ☐ Add partner ☐ Reframe market ☐ Reduce scope ☐ Improve milestones		
	☐ Add data ☐ Clarify rationale ☐ Revise method ☐ Add partner ☐ Reframe market ☐ Reduce scope ☐ Improve milestones		
	☐ Add data ☐ Clarify rationale ☐ Revise method ☐ Add partner ☐ Reframe market ☐ Reduce scope ☐ Improve milestones		

6. Evidence Gap Tracker

Use this table when reviewer concerns point to missing evidence. Evidence may include technical data, customer interviews, market size validation, usability testing, regulatory input, partner letters, pilot results, or cost/ROI data.

Evidence Gap	Why It Matters	Evidence Source / Method	Minimum Acceptable Evidence	Deadline

7. Commercialization and Market Concern Prompts

Use these prompts when reviewers question market need, customer demand, competition, adoption, pricing, reimbursement, or partner interest.

Checklist Item	Checklist Item
☐ Have we clearly separated users, buyers, payers, decision-makers, and implementation stakeholders?	☐ Have we shown that the problem is expensive, urgent, measurable, or strategically important?
☐ Have we compared the proposed solution against current alternatives and workarounds?	☐ Have we documented customer discovery, stakeholder interviews, or letters of support?
☐ Have we explained why adoption is feasible despite workflow, training, regulatory, or procurement barriers?	☐ Have we identified the first realistic market segment rather than describing an overly broad market?
☐ Have we tied commercialization milestones to technical	☐ Have we explained how SBIR/STTR funding moves the technology

Checklist Item	Checklist Item
development milestones?	closer to market traction?

8. Technical and Feasibility Concern Prompts

Use these prompts when reviewers question technical rigor, feasibility, methodology, milestones, data quality, or risk mitigation.

Checklist Item	Checklist Item
☐ Are the technical aims specific, measurable, realistic, and logically sequenced?	☐ Are success criteria defined in a way reviewers can evaluate?
☐ Are key risks named directly with mitigation steps, backup approaches, or decision gates?	☐ Are preliminary data, simulations, prototypes, publications, or prior results connected to the proposed work?
☐ Are assumptions about performance, scale, cost, data access, or implementation explicitly stated?	☐ Is the scope appropriate for the phase, budget, and project period?
☐ Have we identified required expertise, facilities, datasets, equipment, and external partners?	☐ Have we explained how results will inform Phase II, pilots, regulatory strategy, or commercialization?

9. Revision Priority Score

Score each major concern to determine where the team should focus first. Use 1 = low, 2 = moderate, 3 = high.

Concern	Reviewer Impact 1-3	Ease of Fix 1-3	Evidence Needed 1-3	Commercial Impact 1-3	Priority Score / Notes

Suggested interpretation: high reviewer impact + high commercial impact concerns should usually be addressed first, even if the fix is difficult. Low-impact wording issues can be batched later.

10. Action Plan and Ownership

Action Item	Owner	Support Needed	Due Date	Completion Notes

11. Final Resubmission / Revision Readiness Check

Checklist Item	Checklist Item
☐ Every major reviewer concern has a visible response in the revised material.	☐ The response is supported by data, logic, partner input, market evidence, or clearer framing.
☐ Technical milestones and commercialization milestones are aligned.	☐ The revised narrative acknowledges risk without sounding defensive.
☐ Weaknesses in the prior submission are not repeated in the same form.	☐ The team, budget, facilities, and work plan now support the revised claims.
☐ Market, customer, buyer, and adoption assumptions are more specific than before.	☐ A final internal reviewer has checked whether the concerns are truly resolved.

Key reviewer concerns that still require leadership discussion:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Final notes before submission, investor review, or partner meeting:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

ScienceDocs Support

Need help applying this tool? ScienceDocs supports commercialization, change management, AI adoption, grant strategy, SBIR/STTR resubmission planning, reviewer response strategy, and operational optimization.