

CSP: Connecting Science and People

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Idea in a Nutshell

Enhancing the broader impacts particularly the societal relevance of funded projects is one of the goals of NSF in advancing the scientific enterprise of our nation. Currently, this responsibility is largely vested in the hands of the individual researchers (PIs), especially at the front end, i.e., at the proposal preparation stage. However, the task of connecting the scientific community, and their research outcomes and products, with the stakeholder or end-user community, can be more effectively done by creating an office in each hub or across several hubs at NSF that is explicitly charged with enhancing the broader impacts of funded projects, not only during but also after the period of funding. The primary functions of this office of “**Connecting Science and People**” (**CSP**) are: (1) to disseminate and effectively communicate the scientific findings and output to the user community to fulfill their needs for useful and usable information; and (2) to channel the information needs of the user community (e.g., business, industry, government, and municipalities) to the research community (e.g., individual PIs) so that they can make their research outcome(s) more societally relevant and impactful.

Connecting Science and People, or **CSP**, is envisioned as an office within a hub or within a group of hubs, and proposes streamlining current approaches to development of Broader Impacts.

The principal objectives of CSP are two-fold and occur simultaneously. They include the communication of scientific information to non-scientists or potential end users of the data who are not well versed in methods, application of tools or interpretation of the data. Concurrently, the research needs of communities are communicated to stakeholders and scientists. We envision such an office, composed of a professional staff that is well-versed in the language and norms of the various scientific disciplines to serve as the matchmaking entity that connects Science and People.

Each CSP office within each hub is proactive in its dissemination and retrieving of scientific information to communities. For example, if a group of

scientists from the University of Oklahoma, LSU and Arizona State are crafting a proposal based on cutting edge scientific approaches but lack the knowledge base of end users or stakeholders that would be ideally suited for the Broader Impacts component that would most benefit from this data product, CSP would serve as the matchmaker connecting the PIs to the community or communities best served to make use of this research.

It is the responsibility of CSP to organize scientific and technical information/data and analysis that makes it useful and usable for communities, in part through translating research output that is easily understood.

CSP is envisioned as a central spoke (see Figure 1) that connects to the various stakeholders and matches them to the research community. In addition, CSP facilitates interaction between the end users themselves through creation/translation of information across various stakeholder entities.

CSP therefore serves as a collector of information as well as a disseminator of information. CSP focuses across different scales, from the local to regional, and across different temporal scales, dictated by the process being investigated. The information dissemination to stakeholders is enabled through webinars, but also geared to build trust in the process through face to face meetings, biannual workshops with all parties in attendance and social media outlets.

Conceptualizing CSP Office within each Hub

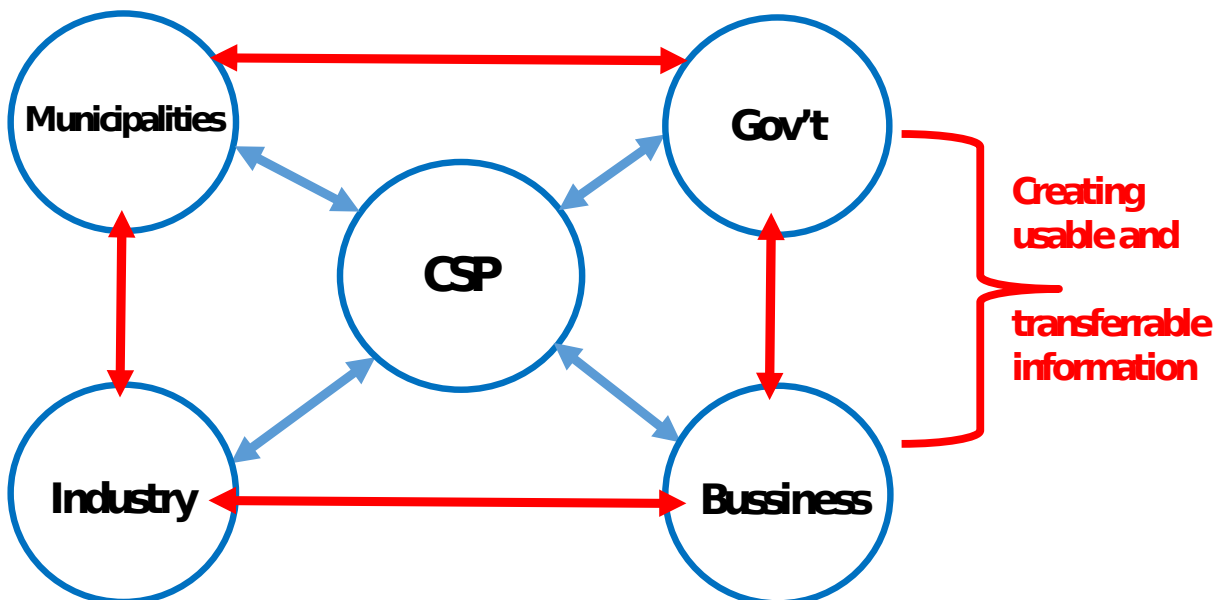


Figure 1. Conceptual approach to CSP role.