What is an Executive Summary?

An executive summary (required in .621 Version III) is just what it says it is: a summary of the entire document directed at the executive ---an intelligent, decision-maker who may or may not be a technical expert. This executive may not read the rest of the document; s/he has to be able to understand the project based on this one page.

• The executive summary is usually a page or less (although summaries of very long reports are longer).
• It is on a separate page.
• It appears after the Table of Contents and the List of Tables and Figures and before the main proposal or report begins.
• It is double spaced.
• It has no reference citations.
• It's rare to have graphics in an executive summary.
• It summarizes background and significance, key concepts, schedule, budgets, and concluding recommendations and/or proposals.
• The language in an executive summary is for the general, educated reader, not for the technical expert.

Suggestion

Write the executive summary last.
- It is not an introduction. It's a entirely separate section of the document that summarizes the entire report or proposal.