

Doing Business with DARPA

A Guide for Small Business



Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

Small Business Programs Office

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CREATING BREAKTHROUGH TECHNOLOGIES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

DARPA COMMUNITIES

DARPA's success depends on the vibrant ecosystem of innovation within which the Agency operates, and is fueled by partners in multiple sectors.



UNIVERSITIES



INDUSTRY



SMALL BUSINESS



GOVERNMENT



PUBLIC



MEDIA

For more information regarding DARPA's Mission, Perspective, and history, please visit <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/about-darpa>

DARPA's Technical Offices

DARPA's research portfolio is managed by six technical offices charged with developing breakthrough technologies

Biological Technologies Office (BTO)

Bio-complexity | Bio-systems | Disease | Health | Med-Devices | Syn-Bio

Defense Science Office (DSO)

Autonomy | Complexity | Fundamentals | Materials | Math | Sensors

Information Innovation Office (I2O)

Algorithms | Cyber | Data | ISR | Networking | Processing | Programming

Microsystems Technology Office (MTO)

Decentralization | Electronics | EW | Globalization | Microsystems | Mobile | Photonics | PNT | Spectrum

Strategic Technology Office (STO)

Air | Communications | Countermeasures | EW | ISR | Mobile | Spectrum | Tech-Foundations

Tactical Technology Office (TTO)

Air | Ground | ISR | Maritime | Munitions | Robotics | Space

For more information regarding technical offices and for a program manager directory, please visit <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices> and <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/people>

DARPA's Commitment to Small Businesses

DARPA knows that the ideas leading to breakthrough technologies for national security often start small. To maximize the pool of innovative proposal concepts it receives, DARPA strongly encourages participation by all capable sources: industry, academia, and individuals

The DARPA Culture

DARPA maintains and encourages a culture of innovation and the ability to execute rapidly and effectively. To do this, the agency recruits individuals, who are at the top of their fields - from industry, academia, and government agencies - to tackle difficult challenges and to take big risks that push the limits of their disciplines. Program Managers (PMs) are the key to working with DARPA. PMs are generally with the agency for 3-5 years, and a program typically ends when the PM leaves.

Preparing for Success

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Become familiar with DARPA's mission and philosophy to make pivotal investments in breakthrough technologies that will ensure ongoing U.S. military superiority and security. Review [Breakthrough Technologies for National Security](#), which provides an overview of the Agency.

LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES

DARPA funding opportunities are advertised through Broad Agency Announcements (BAA), Research Announcements (RA), or other government-initiated announcement or program posted on the official Federal Business Opportunities website (www.fedbizopps.gov) and the Federal Grants Opportunities website (www.grants.gov).

DARPA SBIR/STTR topics are included in the DoD SBIR and STTR Program Announcements at <https://sbir.defensebusiness.org/>.

DARPA purchases products and supplies through GSA Advantage: www.gsaadvantage.gov

ATTEND PROPOSERS DAY

Proposers Day conferences may allow for registration of one-on-one meetings with the relevant DARPA Program Manager. Proposers Day details will be included in the BAA or a Special Notice (SN) posted to fedbizopps.gov and grants.gov.

SUBMIT AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, WHITE PAPER OR PROPOSAL

Prior to submitting an executive summary, white paper or proposal, visit <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/people> to find a PM who may be interested in your idea. Email the PM to initiate a discussion. In your message, include the nature of your idea and how you believe it aligns with the PM's program(s) and the expected benefit to DoD (the warfighter), other government agencies, and the commercial market. Ideas should be compelling with potential for eliciting revolutionary change. Low-risk/low-impact ideas that will result in incremental improvement are typically not pursued.

Unsolicited Proposals

The preferred method for submitting ideas and concepts to DARPA is to respond to one of the following funding opportunities: program or open BAA, SBIR or STTR topic, RA, or RFP. For more information visit <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/unsolicited-proposals>.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES

Learn more about developing your business, science and technology policy, networking opportunities, and other opportunities for your business. For list of some of many available federal resources, visit <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/commitment-to-small-businesses>.

The Small Business Programs Office



The Small Business Program Office (SBPO) serves the small-business community by creating an environment within DARPA that considers small-business concerns as a primary source of innovative solutions. SBPO helps expand small-business relationships and training opportunities within the Department of Defense (DoD) and other federal agencies, and enables the small-business community to create and transition radical, game-changing technologies that benefit national security, the federal government and the commercial marketplace.

SBPO supports small businesses by:

- Helping firms understand the DARPA culture and mission
- Educating firms on agency policies and procedures
- Directing firms to the appropriate technology office for potential funding opportunities
- Directing firms to other Federal agencies as appropriate for potential funding opportunities
- Directing firms to websites and other useful resources
- Developing training materials and tools to ease the burden of doing business with the government
- Responding to inquiries in a timely manner

SBPO oversees DARPA's participation in federal SBIR and STTR programs. These programs help the Agency:

- Explore high-risk concepts and ideas without the expense of larger programs
- Provide up to \$1.6 million per project for promising technologies
- Leverage unique skillsets and novel ideas to address high-priority military needs
- Test & evaluate alternatives or solution subsets to reduce risk

SBPO also offers commercialization and transition assistance to Phase II SBIR and STTR awardees to increase the potential for performers to move their technology into the military services, other federal agencies and/or the commercial market.

DARPA's SBIR and STTR Programs

Program History

Congress established the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program in 1982 to provide opportunities for small businesses to participate in Federal government-sponsored research and development (R&D). The goals of the SBIR Program are to: stimulate technological innovation; use small business to meet Federal R&D needs; foster and encourage participation by socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns (SBCs) and by SBCs that are 51 percent owned and controlled by women; and increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal R&D, thereby increasing competition, productivity and economic growth. Congress established the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) pilot program in 1992 to stimulate a partnership of ideas and technologies between innovative small business concerns and research institutions through Federally funded research or research and development (R/R&D). STTR is a vehicle for moving ideas from our nation's research institutions to the market, where they can benefit both private sector and military customers.

Eligibility

Firms must meet the following SBIR eligibility requirements:

- Be a U.S. for-profit small business with 500 or fewer employees
- Perform work in the United States
- Perform a minimum of 2/3 of the effort in Phase I (see below)
- Perform a minimum of 1/2 of the effort in Phase II (see below)
- Have the principal investigator spend more than 1/2 of the time employed by the proposing firm

Firms and research institutions must meet the following STTR eligibility requirements:

- A firm must be a U.S. for-profit small business of 500 or fewer employees; there is no size limit on the research institution
- Research institutions must be a U.S. college or university, FFRDC or nonprofit research institution
- Work must be performed in the U.S.
- The small business must perform a minimum of 40% of the work and the research institution a minimum of 30% of the work in both Phase I and Phase II (see below)
- The small business must manage and control the STTR funding agreement
- The principal investigator may be employed at the small business or research institution

Three-Phases of SBIR and STTR

Both the SBIR and STTR programs are comprised of three phases.

Phase I is a feasibility study that determines the scientific, technical and commercial merit and feasibility of a selected concept. Phase I projects are competitively selected from proposals submitted in response to announcements. Each announcement contains topics associated with stated Federal government needs. The Phase I selection process is highly competitive, with about one of 10 submitted Phase I proposals receiving awards.

Phase II represents a major research and development effort, culminating in a well-defined deliverable prototype (i.e., a technology, product, or service). The Phase II selection process is also highly competitive. Successful Phase I contractors are invited to submit Phase II proposals as there are no separate Phase II announcements.

In Phase III, the small business or research institution is expected to obtain funding from the private sector and/or non-SBIR government sources to develop the prototype into a viable product or service for sale in the government or private sector markets.

DARPA's SBIR and STTR Programs

How to Participate

DARPA issues topics through the Department of Defense (DoD) SBIR and STTR program. DARPA participates in three SBIR announcements and one STTR announcement per year.

Step 1: Determine Eligibility

Review size and ownership eligibility requirements a company must meet to participate in the programs. Requirements differ for each program; be sure you understand the limitations before moving on to the next steps.

Step 2: Find a Topic

Review the current announcements at <https://sbir.defensebusiness.org> to identify topics of interest. On the Announcement page you will find the Announcement Instructions and Topics for each DoD Component. Use the topic search to filter by component and search by keyword. Be sure to review both the DoD Announcement Instructions and the DARPA-specific Instructions.

Step 3: Ask Questions

During the announcement period, communication between small businesses and topic authors is highly encouraged. During the Pre-Release period, you may talk directly with topic authors to ask technical questions about the topics. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are listed within each announcement topic. For reasons of competitive fairness, direct communication between proposers and topic authors is not allowed during the Open period when DoD is accepting proposals for each announcement. However, proposers may still submit written questions about announcement topics through the SBIR/STTR Interactive Topic Information System (SITIS). In SITIS the questioner and respondent are anonymous and all questions and answers are posted electronically for general viewing until the announcement closes. All proposers are advised to monitor SITIS during the Open announcement period for questions and answers and other significant information relevant to their SBIR/STTR topics of interest.

Step 4: Prepare Your Proposal

All SBIR/STTR proposals must be prepared in accordance with the DoD Announcement Instructions AND the DARPA-specific Instructions. Be sure to read and follow both sets of instructions or your proposal may be non-conforming and could be rejected.

Step 5: Submit Proposal

All SBIR/STTR proposals must be prepared and submitted electronically through the DoD SBIR/STTR Electronic Submission website at <https://sbir.defensebusiness.org> and in accordance with the program announcement. Once you have completed your proposal and reviewed it, you're finished! There is no "Submit" button. All complete proposal packages not marked for deletion will automatically be submitted at the announcement close date. When the announcement closes, the site will no longer accept changes although you will be able to view and print the proposals you have submitted.

For more information and additional resources, please visit <http://www.acq.osd.mil/osbp/sbir/index.shtml> .

Transition & Commercialization

The Technology Transition and Commercialization (T2C) Team administers the DARPA SBIR/STTR Transition & Commercialization Support Program (TCSP).

The TCSP is a voluntary participation program offered to DARPA-funded SBIR/STTR Phase II projects during the contract period of performance (typically 24 months). The goal is to increase the potential for these companies to move their developed technologies, solutions or products beyond Phase II and into the Department of Defense military services, other federal agencies and/or the commercial market.

Key consulting services provided by the T2C Team in collaboration with program participants include:

- Review and provide feedback to the company on their transition and commercialization plan
- Identify sources of potential funding and collaborators, experiment and demonstration opportunities, thought leadership opportunities and media and publication sources
- Facilitate introductions to potential funders, collaborators and partners as requested
- Provide business planning and assessment tools (see below)
- Provide information on resources and training
- Document project milestones and transition successes in Success Reports, Feature Reports and Technology Profile Reports
- Distribute weekly opportunity and event alerts that include Requests for Information (RFIs), Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs), Proposers Days, training events, etc.

Activities available to TCSP participants include:

- Kick-off and periodic (approximately quarterly) teleconferences with the T2C Team to discuss transition & commercialization plans/goals and identify areas where support is needed
- Develop materials to determine technology/business readiness and showcase project to potential funding sources, partners, collaborators and end-users with support from the T2C Team
- Request points of contacts, resources and introductions to increase visibility of project and follow up with the T2C Team recommendations as relevant
- Review and submit for opportunities, attend experiments and demonstrations, conferences and/or training events to further mature technology and company bench strength
- Collaborate with the T2C Team on developing Success Reports and Technology Profiles for posting on the DARPA website

A wide variety of resources are available to SBIR/STTR performers seeking to transition and/or commercialize their research, including:

- **DARPA Transition and Commercialization Fact Sheet**
- **DARPA Small Business Planning Tool (SBPT):** This is a self-assessment tool to help your company define or refine your commercialization strategy, assess the status of your current transition plan, and prioritize the important next steps to transition the technology/component/product you are developing into DoD and other federal and commercial markets.
- **DARPA SBIR/STTR Transition Planning Guide:** This guide covers the unique aspects of transitioning technology funded by the DARPA SBIR/STTR programs. It is designed to help Phase I performers develop a commercialization strategy for inclusion in a Phase II proposal. It also provides a framework that integrates three components—technology, business and market—for Phase II companies to augment their commercialization strategy for implementation.

Please visit the Transition and Commercialization page at <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/for-small-businesses/commercialization-continued> for additional resources and training material.



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