

Turbo Facility Clearance (TurboFCL)

SBIR Topic Number: HR0011SB20254-04

Small Business Programs Office
Strategic Technology Office

Industry Day

January 7, 2024





Agenda

- Topic Review
- Contracting
- Q&A



TurboFCL Topic Review

DARPA Strategic Technology Office

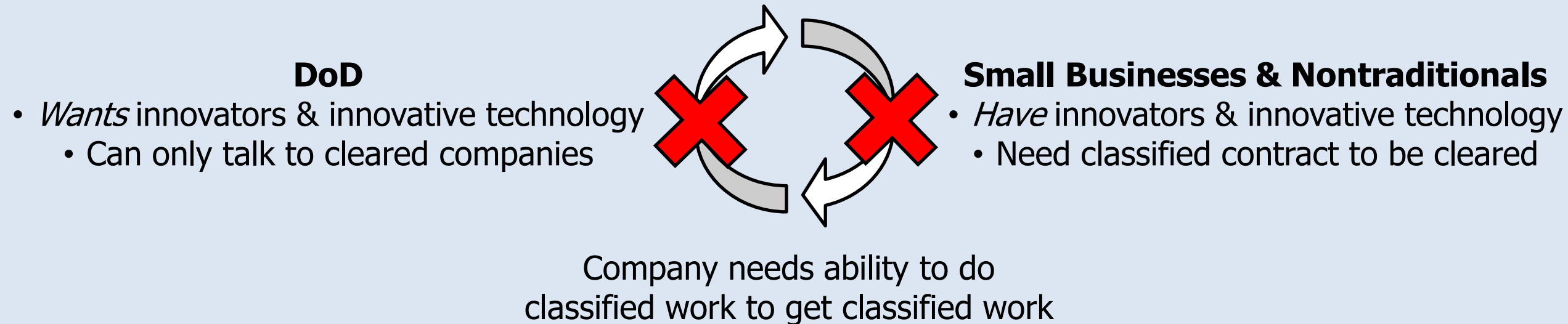
Gregory Kuperman

TurboFCL Program Manager



Challenge

The facility clearance (FCL) is a key barrier to entry for small business and nontraditional contractors seeking to enter the classified DoD workspace



DARPA BRIDGES helps address this issue by providing a means for these companies to be sponsored for a FCL...but the FCL process itself remains a challenge



Facility Clearance Process

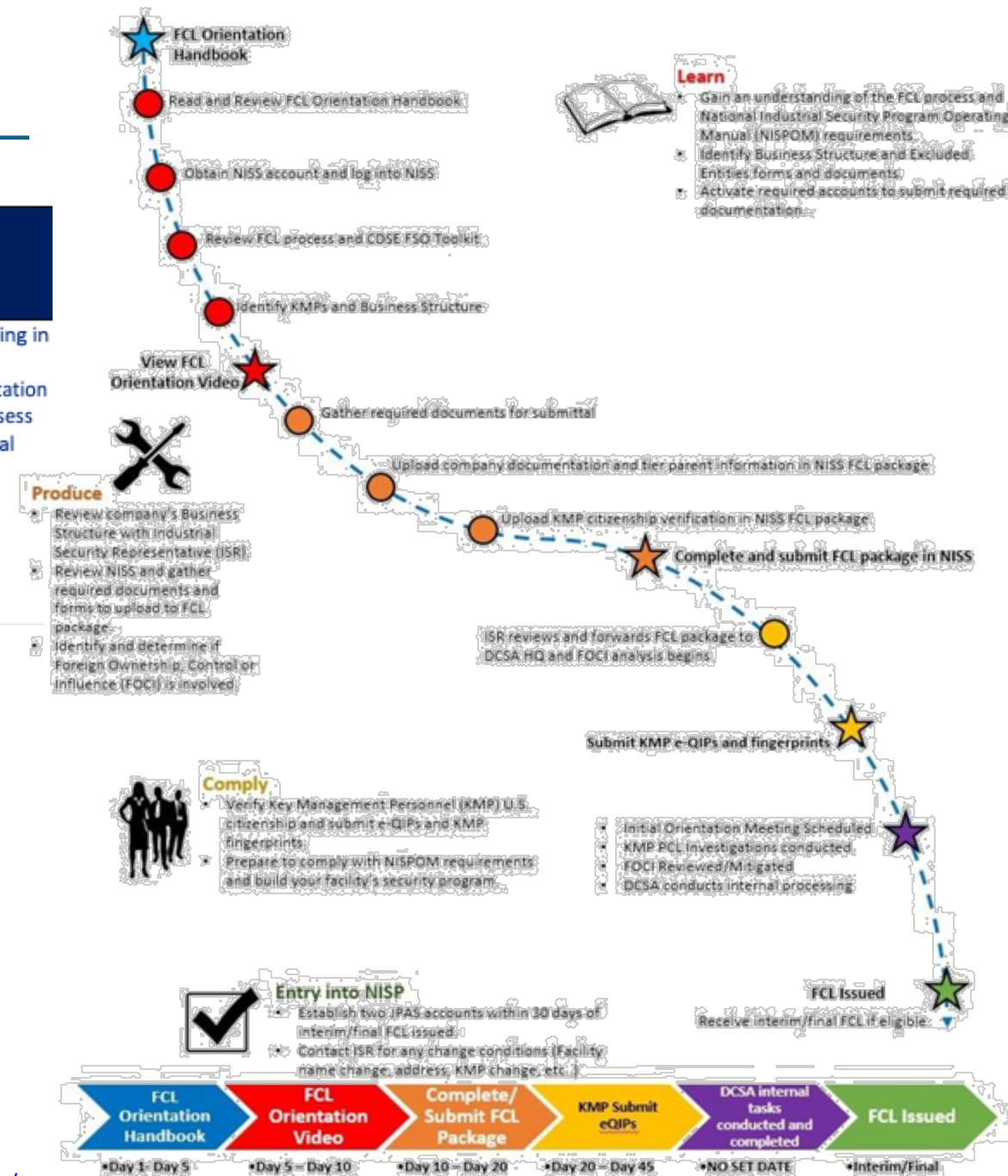
FCL Roadmap

FCL Orientation Handbook Day 1- Day 5	View FCL Orientation Video Day 5 – Day 10	Complete and submit FCL Package Day 10 – Day 20	FCL Initial Review and e-QIP submission Day 20 - 45	Post FCL Outreach First Year Under NISP
DCSA provides FSOs an educational, user friendly, and informative guide to navigate the FCL process.	FSOs will view the FCL Orientation video on the FCL process (www.dcsa.mil), NISS system, deadlines, and identify documents and forms required per company's business structure	FSOs upload all documents and forms per its company's Business structure into NISS. FCL package is submitted by day 20.	ISRs review company's FCL package and prepare for Initial FCL Orientation meeting. FSOs submit KMP e-QIPs and fingerprints, and prepare for orientation meeting	DCSA reaches out to facilities residing in the NISP under a year, to determine compliance with NISPOM implementation of a facility security program, and assess the facility's potential risk to National Security.

The high-level process seems straight forward, but the specifics are confusing to new applicants

- Majority of initial FCL packages are rejected due to errors, incomplete forms, or missing information
- FCL process information is written in "government speak"
- Small and nontraditional companies don't fully understand what's needed or the submission timelines

Impact: Clearances are delayed, and sometimes rejected, requiring the company to start the process over





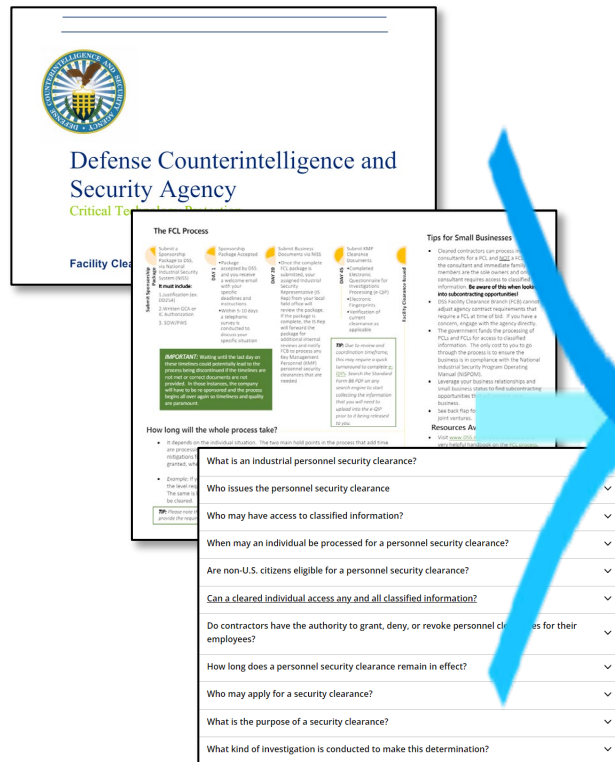
TurboFCL

Objective: Leverage advancements in language models to learn the facility (and personnel) clearance process and simplify it for small businesses and nontraditional contractors

- Accelerate facility and personnel clearance timelines by reducing errors and delays
- Provide insight into requirements and timelines
- Remove frustration from user experience

Approach

- Easy to use application built on a language model of the clearance process
 - Provide appropriate prompts to applicants
 - Autofill all necessary forms
 - Provide insight into submission deadlines and timelines
 - "Chat bot" to answer questions
- (Option) Test and evaluate with performers on DARPA BRIDGES
 - BRIDGES performers serve as "beta testers" and use to complete initial applications
 - Developer verifies inputs and outputs to ensure appropriate functionality



TurboFCL





TurboFCL execution plan

	Phase II Base Period 8 months \$800,000	Phase II Option 12 months \$1,000,000
Key Objectives/ Deliverables	<p>Prototype development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop initial prototype• Conduct internal testing• Deliver prototype that is ready for end-user testing	<p>Test and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with new performers on DARPA's BRIDGES program as beta testers<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performers will use for FCL applications• Continuous test and evaluation• Customer support



TurboFCL Contracting

DARPA Contracts Management Office

James "Mac" Ritch

Lead Contracting Officer, SBIR/STTR Cell



Topic Solicitation Number: HR0011SB20254-04

- **Simplified Proposal Instructions - Please pay close attention to and follow new approach; emphasis is on the technical volume**
- Important Dates:
 - Topic Opens – Proposals Accepted: **January 8, 2025**
 - Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP)
 - Proposal Due Date: **February 5, 2025**

NOTE: If there is any discrepancy between what is presented today and the BAA & Topic, the BAA & Topic take precedence.



Proposal Evaluation and Selection (Page 3 - Topic Solicitation)

- “All proposals will be **evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria listed in the DoD SBIR Program BAA.**”
- “DARPA will conduct an evaluation of each **conforming proposal.**”
- “Using the evaluation criteria, the Government will **evaluate each proposal in its entirety**, documenting the strengths and weaknesses **relative to each evaluation criterion.**”
- “**Proposals will not be evaluated against each other** during the evaluation process **but rather evaluated on their own individual merit...**”



Evaluation Criteria (Page 19 - DoD SBIR Program BAA)

- “Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined below, unless otherwise specified in the Service/Component-specific instructions.”
 - **DARPA does NOT deviate from the DoD SBIR Program BAA criteria.**
- Evaluation Criteria in descending order of importance:
 - The soundness, technical merit, and innovation of the proposed approach and its incremental progress toward topic or subtopic solution.
 - The qualifications of the proposed principal/key investigators, supporting staff, and consultants. Qualifications include not only the ability to perform the R&D but also the ability to commercialize the results.
 - The potential for commercial (government or private sector) application and the benefits expected to accrue from this commercialization.

Cost or budget data submitted with the proposal will be considered during evaluation.



Award and Contract Information (Page 2 & 4 – Topic Solicitation)

- Multiple awards are anticipated
- Only Phase II awards
- Only awarding Other Transactions (OT) for Prototype agreements
- \$1.8M maximum award amount
 - \$800k Base Period ("Award Amount")
 - \$1M Option Period ("Option Amount")
- 20 month maximum period of performance
 - 8 Month Base Period
 - 12 Month Option Period



Award and Contract Information (Page 4 – Topic Solicitation)

- DARPA reserves the right(s) to:
 - Select for negotiation all, some, one, or none of the proposals received and to make awards with/without communications with proposers
 - Accept proposals in their entirety or only portions of proposals for award
 - Segregate portions of proposal into pre-priced options
 - Negotiations may be opened with proposer
 - Request any additional, necessary documentation to aid in contract award
 - To remove a proposal from award consideration should the parties fail to reach an agreement on award terms, conditions, and price within a reasonable time and/or the proposer fails to provide requested additional information within three (3) business days.



What Is New With This Solicitation?

- Only awarding OTs... But why?
 - **Promote commercial best practices!**
 - Many of you may be commercial businesses. We want your companies to approach this as a commercial effort and contract. You are not restricted by FAR and DFAR regulations.
 - Learn more about OTs at
 - DARPAConnect - <https://www.darpaconnect.us/home>
 - DARPA's Acquisition Innovation - <https://acquisitioninnovation.darpa.mil/>
- **Dynamic performance**
 - Need greater flexibility to allow for unknowns that will most likely occur during testing and evaluation.
 - Reduces administrative burden and promotes teamwork between DARPA and performer.
 - **"DARPA and the Performer are bound to each other by a duty of good faith in achieving the Program objectives."**



So What Does This Mean For My Proposal?

- Emphasis is on the technical portion of proposal
 - Abstract and slide deck
 - **Watch page counts and format**
- Cost proposal is significantly less
 - Streamlined spreadsheet
 - Provide **fully burdened rates**
 - Add rows as needed, do **NOT** add columns
- New requirements for OT proposal submissions (Supporting Documents)
 - Firms will be required to **provide a completed OT agreement** at the time of proposal submission, with **explanation included of any proposed changes/redlines.**
 - Firms will be required to **submit OT Certifications**
- **Milestones should only be on the critical path of project completion.** We understand we may now know the best structure... We need your help!



www.darpa.mil