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General:

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- **What is the SBIR Program?**

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program is a highly competitive program that encourages domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research/Research and Development that has the potential for commercialization. Through a competitive award process, SBIR enables small businesses to explore their technological potential and provides the incentive to profit from commercialization. By including qualified small businesses in the nation's research and development arena, high-tech innovation is stimulated, and the United States gains entrepreneurial spirit as it meets its specific R&D needs.

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- **What is the STTR Program?**

The Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program expands funding opportunities in the federal innovation arena. Central to the program is the expansion of the public/private sector partnership to include joint venture opportunities between small businesses and nonprofit research institutions. The unique feature of the STTR program is the requirement for the small business to formally collaborate with a research institution in Phase I and Phase II. STTR's most important role is to bridge the gap between performance of basic science and commercialization of resulting innovations.

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- **How does the STTR Program differ from the SBIR Program?**

STTR differs from SBIR in several ways, including:

For an STTR award, the small business must perform at least 40% of the work and the single partnering research institution must perform at least 30% of the work. STTR requires the Small Business Concern (SBC) and its partnering institution to establish an intellectual property agreement detailing the allocation of

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intellectual property rights and rights to carry out follow-on research, development or commercialization activities.

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- **What are the objectives of the SBIR/STTR Program?**

The mission of the SBIR program is to stimulate technology innovation by strengthening the role of innovative SBCs in Federal Research/ R&D.

The program's goals are four-fold:

- - Stimulate technological innovation.
- - Use small businesses to meet Federal R&D needs.
- - Foster and encourage participation in innovation and entrepreneurship by socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses.
- - Increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal R&D funding.

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- **What are the three phases of the SBIR and STTR Programs?**

Phase I is the opportunity to establish the scientific, technical, and commercial feasibility of the proposed innovation in fulfillment of NASA Needs.

Phase II is focused on the development, demonstration and delivery of the proposed innovation. The SBIR Phase I contracts last for 6 months with a maximum funding of \$150,000, and Phase II contracts last for 24 months with a maximum funding of \$850,000. The STTR Phase I contracts last for 12 months with a maximum funding of \$150,000, and Phase II contracts last for 24 months with the maximum contract value of \$850,000.

Phase III is the commercialization of innovative technologies, products, and services resulting from either a Phase I or Phase II contract. Phase III contracts are funded from sources other than the SBIR and STTR programs and may be awarded without further competition.

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- **How can I get notified about upcoming solicitations and other important information regarding NASA's SBIR and STTR programs?**

The NASA SBIR/STTR Program Schedule and solicitations are posted on the NASA SBIR/STTR website at <http://sbir.nasa.gov> [1].

If you are interested in NASA SBIR/STTR Program news, you can subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, The Concept, which contains news, events, informative articles, and pointers to websites for the latest technical information on NASA mission programs.

To automatically receive the newsletters via email, visit <https://sbir.nasa.gov/info> [2] to sign up. Or to review current and past issues, [click here](#) [3].

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Eligibility:

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- **Who is eligible to receive SBIR and STTR awards?**

To receive an SBIR or STTR award, the awardee must qualify as a Small Business Concern (SBC) as defined by SBA regulations at 13 C.F.R. §§ 701-705. The eligibility requirements for the SBIR/STTR programs are unique and do not correspond to those of other small business programs.

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- **How is "Small Business Concern" defined for purposes of the SBIR Program?**

A Small Business Concern (SBC) must satisfy the following conditions on the date of award for both Phase I and Phase II funding agreements:

- (1) is organized for profit, with a place of business located in the United States, which operates primarily within the United States or which makes a significant contribution to the United States economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor;
- (2) is in the legal form of an individual proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, joint venture, association, trust or cooperative, except that if the concern is a joint venture, each entity to the venture must meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (3) below;
- (3) is more than 50 percent directly owned and controlled by one or more individuals (who are citizens or permanent resident aliens of the United States), other small business concerns (each of which is more than 50% directly owned and controlled by individuals who are citizens or permanent resident aliens of the United States), or any combination of these; and
- (4) has, including its affiliates, not more than 500 employees. (For explanation of affiliate see www.sba.gov/size [4]).

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- **Who determines if my company is eligible for an SBIR/STTR award?**

Applicants must self-certify at the time of award that their company meets the definition of an SBC for the program and is otherwise eligible. Applicants should be certain of their compliance with the eligibility requirements before formally certifying as an SBC. Information on SBA size determination and protest procedures can be found at www.sba.gov/size [4].

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- **Is a small U.S. firm still eligible to compete for an SBIR/STTR award if it forms a 50-50 joint venture with a non-profit or foreign firm?**

No. In order to receive an SBIR/STTR award, the joint venture must be a small business and all parties to the joint venture must meet the program's eligibility requirements. If one party to the joint venture is a non-profit, the non-profit would not meet the SBA's definition of "business concern," which requires the business

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to be for-profit. With respect to the foreign firm, it would not likely meet SBA's ownership and control requirements.

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- **Are non-profit organizations eligible for SBIR/STTR awards?**

No. A non-profit organization cannot directly receive an SBIR or STTR award. Non-profits may be a minority investor or subcontractor or sub-grantee on a project. In addition, an STTR awardee must subcontract a portion of the award to a research institution - a scientific or educational nonprofit institution, or a Federally Funded R&D Centers (FFRDC).

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- **What non-profit research institutions qualify to participate in the STTR program?**

The research institution must be owned and operated exclusively for scientific or educational purposes, non-profit, and located in the US. Research institutions eligible to participate in the STTR Program include:

- • Nonprofit college or university
- • Domestic nonprofit scientific/research organization
- • Federally Funded R&D Centers (FFRDC)

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- **Do you have to be a Phase I awardee in order to be considered for Phase II of a project?**

Yes. NASA requires a Phase I award in order to be considered for a Phase II.

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- **Can an SBIR/STTR Phase III follow-on funding contract be made, without competition, to the firm that successfully completes Phase I and II?**

Yes, the firm may be given a sole source contract for further work or production that derives from, extends, or completes earlier SBIR/STTR work. Such follow-on work must be given Phase III status by the agency.

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- **What is the minimum percent breakout for small firms and institutions in conducting STTR research?**

SBCs must perform at least 40% and research institutions must perform at least 30% of the work.

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- **When you are determining eligibility does it matter in which State the company performs the work?**

No. The State the company is in does not affect eligibility, rather we focus on which country the company is located in (i.e., the awardee must have a place of business located in the United States (U.S.), and operate primarily within the U.S. or make a significant contribution to the U.S. economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor). In addition, the SBIR and STTR work must be performed in the U.S.

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- **What is ITAR? And/or can our firm have a foreign national work on the contract?**

ITAR is the International Traffic in Arms Regulations. All SBIR/STTR contracts shall comply with all U.S. export control laws and regulations, including the ITAR and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). Offerors are responsible for ensuring that all employees who will work on this contract are eligible under export control and International Traffic in Arms (ITAR) regulations. Any employee who is not a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident may be restricted from working on this contract if the technology is restricted under export control and ITAR regulations unless the prior approval of the Department of State or the Department of Commerce is obtained via a technical assistance agreement or an export license. Violations of these regulations can result in criminal or civil penalties. For further information on ITAR visit https://www.pmdtc.state.gov/regulations_laws?id=ddtc_public_portal_itar... [5].

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- **How do I propose to NASA's SBIR/STTR programs?**

To participate in NASA's SBIR/STTR programs, firms must submit a proposal in response to a subtopic identified in the annual Solicitations. The Solicitations are available via the Solicitations section of the NASA SBIR/STTR Homepage (<http://sbir.nasa.gov> [1]). Proposals must be submitted electronically via the on-line NASA SBIR/STTR Proposal Submission Electronic Handbook, which is accessible from the NASA SBIR/STTR Homepage during open submission periods.

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- **Are unsolicited proposals accepted for the NASA SBIR/STTR programs?**

No. A proposal must be responsive to a research subtopic in the SBIR/STTR Solicitations issued by NASA.

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- **I am preparing a proposal and need to talk to the technical point of contact, how do I get in touch with them?**

Once the NASA SBIR/STTR General Solicitation opens, only questions requesting clarification of proposal instructions and administrative matters will be answered. NASA will not answer questions pertaining to the intent of the technical topics and/or subtopics. Prior to the Solicitation opening, Firms are encouraged to communicate with NASA mission program personnel and researchers to learn about the needs and objectives of mission programs.

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- **Can a Firm submit similar proposals to more than one topic/subtopic?**

No. Each proposal submitted must be a unique innovation, must be limited in scope to just one subtopic and shall be submitted only under that one subtopic within each program. Submitting substantially equivalent proposals to several topics/subtopics is not permitted and may result in all such proposals being rejected without evaluation.

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- **Can a Firm submit more than one proposal to the same topic?**

Yes, BUT each proposal submitted must be based on a unique innovation (i.e. different), must be limited in scope to just one subtopic and shall be submitted only under that one subtopic within each program. An offeror should not submit the same (or substantially equivalent) proposal to more than one subtopic. Submitting substantially equivalent proposals to several subtopics may result in the rejection of all such proposals.

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- **Is there a limit on the number of unique proposals that can be submitted to the NASA SBIR/STTR Program?**

Yes. NASA will accept a maximum of 10 SBIR and a maximum of 10 STTR proposals from any one company, for a combined maximum total of 20 proposals. However, of the combined maximum total, NASA does not plan to award more than 5 SBIR and 2 STTR contracts to any offeror. This is to ensure the broadest participation of the small business community. Note that each proposal must be based on a unique innovation and must be limited in scope to just one subtopic.

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- **Do I need to register this year if I used the Proposal Submission Handbook in previous years?**

If you have submitted Phase I or Phase II Proposals to a recent NASA SBIR/STTR Solicitation, then you only need to re-activate your account. To do this, click on the "Register/Activate" link on the login screen and follow the instructions. If you do not see your name on the list of users already registered under your firm, then proceed with a new registration. Note: The Business Official should be the first person to register for the SBC. This individual will be responsible for entering the Firm level certifications, audit information, and commercial metrics survey that is applicable across all proposals submitted to this Solicitation.

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- **What is the Company Registry?**

The SBA SBIR policy directive requires each small business concern (SBC) applying for a Phase I or Phase II award to register in the SBA Company Registry prior to submitting an application. Proof of registration is

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required to be submitted with each firm's proposal. From the NASA SBIR/STTR Proposal Submission Electronic Handbook (EHB), the SBC must provide their unique SBC Control ID that gets assigned by SBA upon completion of the Company Registry registration, as well as upload the PDF document validating their registration.

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- **What is the Estimated Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and must a firm provide it for a proposal?**

The Estimated Technology Readiness Level is a measure of the estimated maturity of the technology to be developed by a proposal. NASA measures this on a scale of 1 to 9; the definitions for these levels are available in Appendix A of the NASA SBIR/STTR Solicitation. The Estimated Technology Level for a proposal can be entered on the Proposal Summary Form and on the briefing chart. Firms are required to provide the Expected Technology Readiness Level for their proposal and may choose to provide either a single level or a range of levels.

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- **How/when do I submit my Phase II proposal?**

Phase II proposals are due on the last day of your Phase I contract and should be submitted using the Proposal Submission Electronic Handbook, which will be available via the SBIR homepage (sbir.nasa.gov) 5-6 weeks prior to your due date. Instructions for preparing your Phase II proposal are available in the NASA SBIR/STTR Solicitation.

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- **What is the Commercialization Technical Assistance that can be requested?**

In accordance with the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632), NASA will authorize the recipient of a Phase II SBIR award to purchase technical assistance services, such as access to a network of scientists and engineers engaged in a wide range of technologies, or access to technical and business literature available through on-line data bases, for the purpose of assisting such concerns in:

- 1. Making better technical decisions concerning such projects.
- 2. Solving technical problems which arise during the conduct of such projects.
- 3. Minimizing technical risks associated with such projects.
- 4. Developing and commercializing new commercial products and processes resulting from such projects.

Up to \$5k can be used for the commercialization technical assistance and it will not be counted towards the maximum budget allowed.

If you are interested in proposing use of a vendor for technical assistance, you must complete the "Technical Assistance" section located under Other Direct Costs (ODCs) in the Budget Summary Form. Approval of technical assistance is not guaranteed and is subject to review by the contracting officer.

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- **Do companies that don't have prior SBIR/STTR experience get penalized for lack of SBIR/STTR commercialization experience during the evaluation of factor 4 for Phase II proposals?**

No. Companies with no or fairly recent SBIR/STTR awards will not be penalized for under past performance for the lack of SBIR/STTR commercialization under SBIR/STTR awards.

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- **What if I haven't identified an identifiable/addressable commercial market/application outside of NASA yet when preparing my Phase II proposal? Will that hurt the score for factor 4, commercial potential?**

Not all of the technologies or concepts being investigated will have an identifiable/addressable commercial market/application outside of NASA. If the proposal provides a reasoned and rational market evaluation and concludes that there is not yet an addressable market outside of NASA then NASA will take this into consideration, particularly if the company has elected to pursue Commercialization Technical Assistance during the performance of the Phase II contract.

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- **How can I get my Phase I proposal feedback?**

For Phase I proposals, feedbacks will be automatically emailed to the designated business official within 60 days of the selection announcement. If you have not received your feedback by this timeframe, contact the SBIR/STTR Program Support Office at agency-sbir@mail.nasa.gov [6].

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- **How can I get my Phase II proposal feedback?**

To receive Phase II proposal feedbacks, offerors must send a request via email to the SBIR/STTR Program Office at ARC-SBIR-PMO@mail.nasa.gov [7] within 60 days after selection announcement. Late requests will not be honored.

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- **Where do I submit my contract deliverables?**

Firms must utilize the on-line NASA SBIR/STTR Awardee Firm Electronic Handbook (EHB) located at <https://ehb8.gsfc.nasa.gov/contracts/public/firmHome.do> [8] for submission of their Phase I and Phase II contract deliverables. Before gaining access to the EHB, all new registrants must first go through NASA's Account Management System (NAMS) process to request EHB application access. For additional information on NAMS, go to <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/itcd/nams.html> [9]. Timely response to all communications from NAMS is critical to avoid delay in accessing the EHB.

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- **Can a Firm have more than one POC in the EHB assigned to a contract for submitting contract deliverables?**

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No. While multiple persons can be registered under a Firm, there can only be one Firm POC assigned to a contract that is responsible for submitting the deliverables. The designated Firm Admin at the Firm has the capability to update Firm POC assignments in the EHB.

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- **Where do I find forms, deliverable templates, and samples of what is due?**

Templates and samples of all potential proposal and contract deliverables for Phase I and Phase II are available in the Firms Library located at http://sbir.gsfc.nasa.gov/sbir/firm_library/index.html [10].

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- **Who do I contact for questions related to contract requirements or status of invoice payments?**

Questions relative to Phase I contract requirements and status of invoice payments should be directed to the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) at 1-877-NSS-C123 or via email at NSSC-SBIR-STTR@nasa.gov [11].

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- **Who owns the data developed under an SBIR/STTR award?**

The SBC awardee owns, and has full right and title to, the data it develops under an SBIR award. For an STTR award, the SBC and research institution must, prior to award, sign an intellectual property agreement identifying the sharing of rights to data.

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- **Will the data I submit be securely protected? If so, for what length of time?**

SBIR/STTR Data are protected from disclosure by the participating agencies for a period of not less than 4 years from delivery of the last deliverable under the Phase I, II, or III award. The protection period is extended with each subsequent related award in order to avoid harmful disclosure of SBIR/STTR Data related to on-going federally-funded SBIR/STTR efforts.

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- **What rights, if any, does the Government have in the SBIR/STTR data?**

The Government has rights to certain limited use of the data, primarily for evaluation of the results of the award. While some agencies use the data only for evaluation and review purposes, others have interest in accessing the data to explore applications of the research or technology. These rights are stipulated in the SBIR and STTR Policy Directives.

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Post Phase II

- [What opportunities are there at NASA for Continued Technology Development Post-Phase II?](#)

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- [How do I submit a Phase II-E or Phase II-X application?](#)

- **What opportunities are there at NASA for Continued Technology Development Post-Phase II?**

The NASA SBIR/STTR Program has in place three initiatives for supporting its SBCs past the basic Phase I and Phase II elements of the program toward opportunities for commercialization. First, the NASA SBIR/STTR Program is continuing the Phase II Enhancement and Phase II eXpanded contract options that have been in place for several years. Second, the NASA SBIR/STTR program is introducing a commercialization transition, or "Pre-Phase III" program, based on the authority created by Public Law 112-81 for civilian agencies to execute a Commercialization Readiness Pilot program for SBIR/STTR.

[Click Here](#) [12] for additional information on these three initiatives.

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- **How do I submit a Phase II-E or Phase II-X application?**

During the Phase II effort, the small business must submit a Phase II Enhancement or Phase II eXpanded application through the NASA SBIR/STTR Contract Administration and Closeout Electronic Handbook (EHB) at <https://ehb8.gsfc.nasa.gov/contracts/public/firmHome.do> [8]

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I-Corps

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- [Can firms apply for and/or receive both I-Corps and Commercialization Technical Assistance \(CTA\) funding?](#)

- **What should a Phase I SBIR/STTR firm do if, based on the results of their I-Corps participation, they decide to not submit a Phase II proposal by the contractually mandated date?**

Advise their Contracting Officer (NSSC) that they will not be submitting a Phase II proposal.

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- **If a company has multiple applicable SBIR/STTRs, can they apply to I-Corps more than once and receive more than one training grant?**

Yes, as long as the teams and their team members are different.

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- **Can firms apply for and/or receive both I-Corps and Commercialization Technical Assistance (CTA) funding?**

No.

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Terms and Abbreviations:

Term/Abbreviation	Definition
ACN	Authorized Contract Negotiator
AFRC	Armstrong Flight Research Center
ARC	Ames Research Center
ARMD	Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate
CMS	Commercialization Metrics Survey
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
EHB	Electronic Handbook
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
GRC	Glenn Research Center
GSFC	Goddard Space Flight Center
HEOMD	Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate
I-Corps	Innovation Corps
IdMAX	Identity and Access Management System
IP	Intellectual Property
ITAR	International Traffic in Arms Regulations
JPL	Jet Propulsion Laboratory
JSC	Johnson Space Center
KSC	Kennedy Space Center
LaRC	Langley Research Center
MD	Mission Directorate
MSFC	Marshall Space Flight Center
NAMS	NASA Account Management System
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NSSC	NASA Shared Services Center
OIG	Office of Inspector General
Phase II-E	Phase II Enhancement
Phase II-X	Phase II eXpanded
PI	Principal Investigator
PMO	Program Management Office
R/R&D	Research/Research and Development
RI	Research Institution
SBA	Small Business Administration
SBC	Small Business Concern
SBIR	Small Business Innovation Research
SMD	Science Mission Directorate
SSC	Stennis Space Center
SSO	Source Selection Official
STMD	Space Technology Mission Directorate
STR	Space Technology Roadmap
STTR	Small Business Technology Transfer
TECH-Net	Technology Resources Network
TRL	Technology Readiness Level