

NASA SBIR/STTR Program | Infusion & Commercialization – Part I

Webinar Q&A

Webinar Date: August 19, 2021

Who is eligible to submit a Phase II proposal?

Only projects with current NASA Phase I contracts are eligible for a NASA Phase II award. Your Phase I contract serves as the Request for a Phase II Proposal.

When is the Phase II proposal due?

The Phase II proposal is due on the last day of your Phase I period of performance. Please ask the Contracting Officer if you have questions.

Where do I find format requirements and other instructions for my Phase II proposal?

All format, page limit, and other requirements are detailed in the applicable solicitation.

Currently, the applicable solicitation for your Phase II is the same one you applied to and were selected for a Phase I award under. If your Phase I was awarded under the 2021 solicitation, your Phase II instructions are in the 2021 solicitation.

Note that beginning in 2022, the Phase II solicitation will be separated from the Phase I solicitation and NASA will provide guidance on how to access the Phase II solicitation 60 days before your end of the contract period of performance.

Are there specific accounting system requirements for Phase II? Are there guidelines, examples, and general information, limits, or ranges on preparation and presentation of indirect rates?

The 2021 Phase II solicitation provides information in Section 3.4.3 on the proposal budget and indirect cost rates. NASA does not prescribe a specific accounting system requirement.

Can a Phase I STTR be submitted as an SBIR Phase II? Can I make other changes to my STTR proposal for Phase II (e.g., different university; same university, different team)?

A Phase I STTR must be submitted as an STTR for Phase II. Please work directly with the Contracting Officer if you are considering other changes.

Can you have two research institutions (RI) on an STTR that meet the minimum distribution of NASA resource funds?

Currently only one RI can be on a STTR project/contract.

What is the most important thing NASA looks for in a successful Phase II proposal?

Clearly demonstrate that you met the Phase I goals and objectives of the project and have a clear vision on where the innovation is going. Refer to the solicitation for specific evaluation criteria.

What's the success rate for Phase II proposals?

Approximately 40% of Phase II proposals are selected for negotiation and award.

When is the blackout period for Phase II proposals?

In order to ensure all offerors receive fair and equitable treatment, NASA employees are not, at any time following Phase I award, permitted to provide specific direction to Phase II proposal development, including advice or guidance on solution/approach or feedback on proposal drafts.

This prohibition is not intended to interfere with communications between the Phase I Technical Monitor (TM) and the awardee regarding the technical performance and progress of Phase I contracts. Likewise, other communications between NASA employees and awardees regarding Phase I progress and/or needs, capabilities, utilization, infusion and commercialization are permitted and encouraged. Examples of permitted activities include:

- Discussions about use of NASA facilities
- Participating in I-Corps Customer Development Interviews
- Supporting technology infusion planning for resulting Phase II
- Facilitating the commercialization of SBIR/STTR technologies

General questions about the solicitation for Phase II and all communications related to the Phase II proposal after submission are referred to the Helpdesk.

Are there examples of successful proposals available?

NASA does not publish proposal documents, which may contain sensitive information. You can view and search the abstracts of awarded proposals at https://sbir.nasa.gov/abstract_archives.

Is I-Corps available at Phase II?

I-Corps is not available at Phase II. However, I-Corps is being offered in conjunction with certain Post-Phase II vehicles. See <https://sbir.nasa.gov/content/I-Corps> for more information.

Can you provide more guidance on New Technology Reports (NTR)?

See <https://invention.nasa.gov/faqs.php> for answers to frequently asked questions about NTRs. You can also ask the Contracting Officer if you have additional questions.

We are looking for connections with other groups in NASA who may benefit from our technology. How should we get these connections and start this process?

If you are a current awardee, start with your Technical Monitor. The relevant Center Technology Transition Lead(s) (CTTLs) are also a vital resource. You can find contact information for CTTLs at <https://sbir.nasa.gov/contacts>.

If you are not a current awardee, you can review past solicitations (<https://sbir.nasa.gov/solicitations>) to determine what subtopics may be relevant to your technology. Each write-up includes lead and participating centers. Once you've determined the centers of interest, you can reach out to those CTTLs.

Something about the way TABA funding works makes it difficult for my company to use it effectively. Will NASA be changing the way TABA works in the future?

NASA started this initiative in 2021 and seeks to refine it in the future. We took note of all feedback provided during the webinar and networking session.

Does TABA count against the Phase II level of effort?

No, remember that TABA cannot be used by your company and must go towards services provided by a 3rd party vendor. Because of this, you do not need to include it as part of the level of effort.

Should patent costs (e.g., filing fees, patent attorney) planned for Phase II be submitted as a TABA application, or directly as part of the Phase II budget?

Under SBIR rules, Phase II awards cannot use SBIR funding for patent costs; however, TABA funding that is requested at Phase II can be used to cover patent costs such as filing fees, patent attorney costs, etc.

How can I find TABA vendors?

Some ways to identify TABA vendors include:

1. Other Federal SBIR/STTR agencies have a TABA vendor that they use, and these vendors are allowed to work with you on a NASA SBIR/STTR project.
2. SBIR.gov has a resources page where you can see a list of local and state organizations that may be able to provide TABA support.
3. A simple search on the internet for “SBIR TABA Services” will yield information on possible vendors.

Can a company make a request for TABA when submitting a Phase II-E proposal?

Unfortunately, TABA is only allowed under Phase I and Phase II per law. Post-Phase II programs such as Phase II-E do not qualify for TABA funding.

Is a subcontractor to develop one part of the work the same as a "vendor" for purposes of TABA?

TABA funds are provided to assist in commercializing the innovation. If there is a need for a subcontractor to help develop the technical innovation, these funds would be requested as part of the SBIR/STTR award, not TABA.

Does the 2021 Solicitation have the new Commercialization & Business Plan requirements?

Yes, the 2021 Solicitation has specific directions that a Phase II Commercialization & Business Plan must have a minimum of 2 pages and no more than 8 pages. See Part 7: Commercialization and Business Planning.

Why do you ask for commercialization outlets when the topics published are direct requirements for NASA application?

Many of the research areas that NASA solicits for SBIR and STTR are applicable to NASA as well as other government or commercial markets. The goal is to have you think about other possible avenues besides NASA as there could be growth opportunities for your innovation in those other markets.

Can you provide more information about Capital Commitment Letters?

Section 3.4.6 of the solicitation, Capital Commitments Addendum Supporting Phase II and Phase III, provides information on these letters. Letters of capital commitment act as an indication of market validation for the proposed innovation and add significant credibility to the proposed effort. Some examples include letters that show non-SBIR/STTR investments or follow-on funding, licensing, and future product sales.

Are there any limitations on SBIR sales after completing a NASA SBIR?

No, unless there are export control restrictions that apply to your innovation. The SBIR/STTR program does not provide assessments of whether your innovation is subject to export control.

Is there a mechanism for receiving feedback on ideas prior to submitting a Phase I proposal?

Look at the prior years' solicitations to understand what might be asked for in the future. In addition, you can always contact the CTTLs to discuss possible fit in the program.

What if you already have a product already developed and available, but need someone in certain sectors (education, NASA, & investment/funding positions) to just take a look at the product?

SBIR/STTR is not appropriate for products that are already developed and available. We recommend you contact the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) for more information about doing business with NASA. <https://www.nasa.gov/osbp>

How can a new business become a subcontractor?

One way to find out more information about current and past awardees and the projects they're working on is to search at https://sbir.nasa.gov/advanced_search.