

## SBTDC Interview with the DoD SBIR/STTR Program

All agencies participating in the SBIR/STTR programs are NOT created equal. Certainly, one would expect the missions of each agency to differ, but you will be surprised to learn of the programmatic differences in relation to SBIR/STTR between agencies. Recently I conducted interviews with a number of the agencies that participate in the SBIR and STTR programs in an effort to provide North Carolina firms with a clear vision of each agency. The more you know about the agency (your customer) when submitting a proposal, the better your chances of success.

**Ujvari:** Provide an overview or intro of your agency.

**DoD:** The DoD SBIR program consists of 10 component programs at the Army, Navy, Air Force, DARPA, MDA, DTRA, OSD/DDR&E, CBD, SOCOM, and NGA. The mission of the DoD SBIR program is to stimulate technological innovation in DoD's Critical Technology Areas (see listing at <http://www.dodsbir.net/solicitation/pdf/techareas.pdf>). In addition, at least 50 percent of the military services topics are supported by DoD acquisition programs which are potentially end customers for innovative new products resulting from SBIR projects.

**Ujvari:** Does your agency mainly offer grants or contracts?

**DoD:** Contracts only.

**Ujvari:** What is the 2004 budget for SBIR (and STTR if applicable)?

**DoD:** Approximately \$1B for SBIR and \$111M for STTR for DoD. The Component breakout is:

	<b>SBIR</b>	<b>STTR</b>
Army:	\$228M	\$27.3M
Navy:	\$220M	\$26.4M
AF:	\$288M	\$34.5M
DARPA:	\$64M	\$7.6M
MDA:	\$130M	\$15.6M
DTRA:	\$4.9M	
SOCOM:	\$13.5M	
OSD:	\$39M	
CBD:	\$11.2M	
NGA:	\$700K	

**Ujvari:** How many awards were made in 2003?

**DoD:** 2,113 Phase I and 1,080 Phase II awards for SBIR and 225 Phase I and 67 Phase II awards for STTR. Breakout by component and for past years is available at <http://www.dodsbir.net>(click on SBIR or STTR Annual Report)

**Ujvari:** What are the general win rates?

**DoD:** 1 in 6 proposals

**Ujvari:** How many awards are generally made per solicitation for a Phase 1 and Phase 2?

**DoD:** That depends on the number of components participating in a solicitation and the number of topics in the solicitation. The DoD has 2 to 4 SBIR solicitations a year. A

typical solicitation will have 400-500 topics, receive 5000 to 8000 proposals, and result in 1000 Phase I and 500 Phase II awards.

**Ujvari:** Who reviews your contract proposal/grant application (agency staff – outside peer reviewers – combination)?

**DoD:** Agency staff

**Ujvari:** How are reviewers selected?

**DoD:** Evaluators are selected at the component level.

**Ujvari:** Are the review criteria “weighted?”

**DoD:** Yes. Weights vary by component. In general, technical merit is weighted more than PI qualifications, which is weighted more than potential for commercialization.

**Ujvari:** Does your agency require a “succinct Commercialization Plan” in your current Phase II solicitation?

**DoD:** Yes. (Note: Phase II proposals are individually invited by Components. There is no DoD Phase II solicitation.)

**Ujvari:** Are there separate reviewers for the technical and commercialization sections of the applications for Phase I? For Phase II? If so, what are the backgrounds, generally, of the commercialization reviewers?

**DoD:** No.

**Ujvari:** At what point are the reviewers of a proposal known to the applicant organization?

**DoD:** The names of evaluators are not released.

**Ujvari:** How are debriefings requested?

**DoD:** In writing within 30 days of being notified that your proposal was not selected for award.

**Ujvari:** If provided – are debriefings oral or written?

**DoD:** Written debriefings.

**Ujvari:** What is the general period of time between proposal submission and announcement of selection or non-selection?

**DoD:** 4 months

**Ujvari:** What is the general time gap between the time an award is chosen for funding and actual distribution of funding

**DoD:** In general, SBIR/STTR funding at the Component level is available at the time of award selection.

**Ujvari:** Does your agency have a Fast Track or Quick Response offering? If so, please explain.

**DoD:** Yes. See section 4.5 of the DoD SBIR or STTR solicitation for details ([www.dodsbir.net/solicitation](http://www.dodsbir.net/solicitation)).

**Ujvari:** What is your agency’s dollar cap on phase 1 and phase 2 funding?

**DoD:** No dollar cap, but in general Phase I are funded at \$100K and Phase II at \$750K.

**Ujvari:** Does the agency provide any follow-on funding beyond the phase 2 or to carry on additional phase 2 work?

**DoD:** Yes. The Phase II Enhancement/Plus program will extend an existing Phase II contract for up to one year and will match up to \$250K of non-SBIR funds. Eligibility and requirements vary by component – see their topic section of the solicitation for details.

**Ujvari:** How is the applicant organization informed of selection or non-selection?

**DoD:** In writing.

**Ujvari:** If not selected, may applicant organization resubmit – Phase 1? - Phase 2?

**DoD:** Firms may resubmit a proposal to DoD SBIR solicitations for which there is a topic addressing the technology need proposed.

**Ujvari:** Is a Phase 2 proposal to be submitted only by invitation?

**DoD:** Yes.

**Ujvari:** Does a separate final report need to be submitted for Phase 1 and Phase 2?

**DoD:** Yes.

**Ujvari:** Is your agency typically a consumer of the final commercial product? (While we tend to think of contract agencies as looking for deliverables, it might be helpful to know if an agency is a potential customer or can provide sole-source assistance to begin a product launch).

**DoD:** DoD acquisition programs (see <http://www.dodsbir.net/liaisons.htm> for a list of acquisition program liaisons) and defense prime contractors are typically the initial consumer of the final commercial product.