

## Questions & Answers from U.S. DOT SBIR FY20 Phase I Pre-Offer Webinar

### Solicitation No. 6913G620QSBIR1

February 11, 2020

#### General Questions

**Question:** I saw 2 deadlines March 2 and 9 for offer. Can you please clarify?

**Answer:** March 2 is the deadline to submit administrative questions and questions on the Appendix C. March 9 (5:00 PM ET) is the deadline to submit an offer.

**Question:** In general, what percentage of Phase I awards receive Phase II awards?

**Answer:** The average number of Phase Is that receive Phase II awards varies from 40-60% on a given year.

**Question:** Who are the members of the technical evaluation panel? Does the panel constitute technical experts in the given topic or does the panel include USDOT staff?

**Answer:** All evaluators are Government employed technical staff from the U.S. DOT with technical knowledge in the topic being evaluated.

#### Cost Questions

**Question:** This cost sheet applies only to subcontractors contracted during Phase 1, not those planned to be contracted during a Phase II award, correct?

**Answer:** Correct. This solicitation is requesting offers for SBIR Phase I actions only.

**Question:** What does costs that are not supported mean? It means proof needed for each cost item?

**Answer:** Correct. All proposed costs must be supported/explained. For example, if it is proposed to purchase a magnetometer and a price is offered of \$500 it should have an internet quote, past invoice, or something similar to show where the \$500 was arrived from. Similarly, if an indirect rate (fringe, overhead, etc.) is proposed there must be something to show how the rate was arrived at. This could be something such as a Defense Contract Audit Agency indirect rate letter or company prepared sheet showing indirect cost expenses/pools to arrive at the rate proposed.

**Question:** Can we submit questions, if any, as we develop the cost proposal?

**Answer:** Questions pertaining to the Appendix C Contract Pricing Worksheet can be submitted through March 2.

## **Eligibility Questions**

**Question:** What if the company is not currently owned by hedge fund or private equity investors but becomes acquired by such investors midway through a Phase II project?

**Answer:** If this occurs the SBIR Awardee would have to notify the Government and it may affect the ongoing Phase II award. The U.S. DOT elects at this time not to use the authority that would allow venture capital operating companies (VCOCs), hedge funds or private equity firms to participate in the SBIR Program.

**Question:** On the requirement for the PI to be 50% employed by the offerer ... does that also mean that they must be dedicated to the SBIR project for at least 50% of their time?

**Answer:** The PI does not need to be committed to the project for 50% of the time.

**Question** How does DBE status affect your process?

**Answer:** DBE Status is not considered within the SBIR process.

**Question:** Does affiliation, include a mentor's personnel (even if the mentor is not part of the SIBR)?

**Answer:** No, it does not. The [All Small Mentor-Protégé program](#) is separate from employees or affiliates of a SBC.

**Question:** What counts as "affiliates" in the definition of small business?

**Answer:** The Small Business Administration's definition of "affiliates" can be found here: <https://www.sba.gov/document/support--affiliation-guide-size-standards>.

**Question:** If the Small Business does not have full time employee, can a proposal be submitted by a part time employee who is a university professor and at the time of funding, hire a full time employee?

**Answer:** An offer can be submitted by anyone but SBIR contracts will only be made to entities that have a valid registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). There is no requirement for a small business to have a certain number of "full time" employees. The principal investigator must have "primary employment" with the SBC at the time of contract award and at all times during the conduct of the proposed research. "Primary employment" means that more than one-half of the principal investigator's employment time is spent working for the small business. An offer may be submitted where not all proposed personnel are current employees of the business so long as it is clearly explained in the offer and, that upon award, the proposed PI will meet the primary employment requirement.

## **Pitch Day Questions**

**Question:** Are all topics included in the pitch day? or only specific ones determined by Volpe?

**Answer:** It is the U.S. DOT's intent to have all topics participate in Pitch Day so long as there are offers within the topic recommended to advance.

**Question:** Are pitch deck slides above the 15 page count?

**Answer:** Pitch deck slides are NOT to be submitted with the initial offer and have nothing to do with the 15 page count of the offer technical section as discussed in Section II.B.2 (a) of the solicitation on page 15. Upon invitation only and separate from the initial submission, offerors invited to Pitch Day must submit a pitch deck of no more than 15 slides in MS PowerPoint or PDF via email to the SBIR Program Office (dotsbir@dot.gov) no later than 3 business days prior to the event. There is no set format for the slide content.

**Question:** What is the potential benefit of the Pitch Day? What are the awards like? Thank you!

**Answer:** If invited to Pitch Day, the event serves as an opportunity to make an in-person (or virtual) oral presentation to the U. S. DOT and provides an opportunity for questions and answers with U.S. DOT evaluators. Pitch Day also aims to shorten award time, resulting in contracts being awarded in weeks instead of months.

**Question:** What will be the amount of time between when we are notified of being selected for the pitch day and when we have to be there? Advanced notice will be helpful if selected.

**Answer:** The U.S. DOT anticipates there being anywhere from four to six weeks' notice to Offerors that have been recommended to proceed on to the Pitch Day event. When such notice is provided there will be detailed information given on Pitch Day and the coordination/preparation for it.