

**UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**  
**23.4 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)**  
**Phase I Proposal Submission Instructions**  
**Release 3**

**July 6, 2023:** Topic issued for pre-release

**July 20, 2023:** USSOCOM begins accepting proposals via DSIP

**August 8, 2023:** DSIP Topic Q&A closes to new questions at 12:00 p.m. ET

**August 22, 2023:** Deadline for receipt of proposals no later than 12:00 p.m. ET

**Join us for a virtual Q&A with our Technical Point of Contact**  
**July 20, 2023, from 13:00 (1PM) – 14:00 (2PM) ET**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) seeks small businesses with strong research and development capabilities to pursue and commercialize technologies needed by Special Operations Forces through the Department of Defense (DoD) SBIR 23.4 Program Broad Agency Announcement (BAA).

Offerors responding to a topic in this BAA must follow all general instructions provided in the DoD SBIR Program BAA. USSOCOM requirements in addition to or deviating from the DoD Program BAA are provided in the instructions below. A thorough reading of the “SBIR 23.4 Annual Program BAA – Amendment 2”, located at <https://www.defensesbirsttr.mil/SBIR-STTR/Opportunities/> prior to reading these USSOCOM instructions is highly recommended. The Offeror is responsible for ensuring that their proposal complies with the requirements in the most current version of these instructions. Prior to submitting your proposal, please review the latest version of these instructions as they are subject to change before the submission deadline.

The Government may withdraw from negotiations at any time for any reason to include matters of national security (foreign persons, foreign influence or ownership, inability to clear the firm or personnel for security clearances, or other related issues).

**The USSOCOM SBIR/STTR Program Office will be hosting a virtual USSOCOM Industry Day on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to further specify requirements and stimulate small business/research institute partnership-building. Please visit <https://events.sofwerx.org/sbir23-4r3/> for additional information and to sign up.**

## **PHASE I PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

The Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP) is the official portal for DoD SBIR/STTR proposal submission. Offerors are required to submit proposals via DSIP; proposals submitted by any other means will be disregarded. Detailed instructions regarding registration and proposal submission via DSIP are provided in the DoD SBIR Program BAA.

Proposal Volumes are key in the qualification of the proposal. Offerors shall complete each of the following volumes: (1) Cover Sheet, (2) Technical Volume, (3) Cost Volume, (4) Company Commercialization Report, (5) Pitch Day Presentation, and (6) Fraud, Waste and Abuse Training.

### **Please Note:**

1. It is the Offeror’s responsibility to make sure all DoD and USSOCOM instructions are followed, and all required documents are submitted. The DSIP (DoD’s SBIR/STTR proposal submission website) will NOT be able to ensure your submission is in accordance with both DoD and USSOCOM

instructions. The DSIP notice “100% submitted” means that the upload process is complete; it does NOT mean the proposal submission complies with the stated instructions and that all required documentation is successfully uploaded.

2. USSOCOM does not assist Offerors with proposal preparation nor does USSOCOM review proposals for completeness. We recommend you use your local and state resources for assistance. (See DoD Instructions for resources information.)
3. Due to lengthy file names USSOCOM has encountered issues while downloading proposals, Offerors shall not use more than 20 characters (to include spaces) in any of the proposal documents titles.
4. **USSOCOM prohibits a Government Letter of Support (LoS). Any Government LoS provided will deem the proposal to be non-responsive (Disqualified).**
5. The identification of foreign national involvement in a USSOCOM SBIR topic is needed to determine if a firm is ineligible for award on a USSOCOM topic that falls within the parameters of the United States Munitions List, Part 121 in the International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR). A firm employing a foreign national(s) (as defined section titled “Foreign Nationals” of the DoD SBIR Program BAA) to work on a USSOCOM ITAR topic must possess an export license to receive a SBIR Phase I contract.

#### **Cover Page (Volume 1)**

Volume 1 is created as part of the DoD Proposal Submissions process. Follow all instructions provided in the DoD SBIR Program BAA and DSIP.

#### **Technical Volume (Volume 2)**

The technical volume is not to exceed five (5) pages and must follow the formatting requirements provided in the “SBIR 23.4 Annual Program BAA – Amendment 2”, “Format of Technical Volume” and “Content of Technical Volume”. USSOCOM will only evaluate the first (5) pages of the Technical Volume, additional pages will not be considered or evaluated.

#### **Content of the Technical Volume**

Required items are specified in the DoD SBIR Program BAA Phase I Format of Technical Volume instructions, reference <https://www.defensesbirsttr.mil/SBIR-STTR/Opportunities/> then scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the tab titled “Supporting Documents and Attachments”. At the bottom of the list, select the document titled “Phase I Technical (Vol 2) Sample Template”.

**Contract Data Requirement Lists (CDRLs):** CDRLs identifies which data products must be delivered by the contractor to the Government. Please make sure you read all required CDRLs requirements (each using a DD Form 1423-1) prior to developing your proposal. All five of the required Phase I CDRLs are available on <https://www.socom.mil/SOF-ATL/Pages/SBIR.aspx>.

#### **Cost Volume (Volume 3)**

The Phase I Base amount must not exceed \$175,000.00 Costs must be identified on the Proposal Cover Sheet (Volume 1) and in Volume 3. Once the proposal is initiated in DSIP the Offeror will have access to the required USSOCOM specific Cost Volume instructions and template.

A minimum of 67% of the research and/or analytical work in Phase I must be conducted by the proposing firm. The percentage of work is measured by both direct and indirect costs as a percentage of the total contract cost.

Please review the updated Percentage of Work (POW) calculation details included in section 5.3 of the DoD Program BAA. USSOCOM will not accept any deviation to the POW requirements on these Phase I topics.

The cost volume template (volume 3 template) is located on DSIP during proposal submission and <https://www.socom.mil/SOF-ATL/Pages/SBIR.aspx>.

#### **Company Commercialization Report (CCR) (Volume 4)**

Completion of the CCR Volume 4 of the proposal submission in DSIP is required. Please refer to the DoD SBIR Program BAA for full details on this requirement. Information contained in the CCR will be considered by USSOCOM during proposal evaluations.

#### **Supporting Documents (Volume 5)**

All proposing small business concerns are REQUIRED to submit the following documents to Volume 5:

1. Contractor Certification Regarding Provision of Prohibition on Contracting for Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (BAA Attachment 1)
2. Disclosures of Foreign Affiliations or Relationships to Foreign Countries (BAA Attachment 2)
3. Disclosure of Funding Sources (BAA Attachment 4)

The Verification of Eligibility of Small Business Joint Ventures (BAA Attachment 3), is required if applicable to the proposing small business.

#### **In addition to the documents listed above, the following USSOCOM documents are REQUIRED:**

1. PowerPoint Presentation: Potential Offerors must submit a slide deck **not to exceed 15 PowerPoint slides** (inclusive of the cover sheet). The presentation shall not have any videos or links to videos. There is no set format for this document. It is recommended (but not required) that more detailed information is included in the technical volume and higher-level information be included in the slide deck, suitable for a possible presentation. Refer to the "Phase I Evaluations" Section of this instruction for more details. The optimal place to add this is under the "Other" section of DSIP.
2. Section K - Titled "Representations, Certifications, and other statements of Offerors": If Section K is not submitted with the proposal, the proposal will still be considered responsive, but the completed Section K shall be required at the time of award. Section K is available at <https://www.socom.mil/SOF-ATL/Pages/SBIR.aspx>.
3. Resumes: Include resumes.

**A completed proposal submission in DSIP does NOT indicate that the mandatory supporting documents have been uploaded. It is the responsibility of the proposing small business concern to ensure that the mandatory documents listed above have been uploaded and included with the proposal submission.**

#### **Fraud, Waste and Abuse Training (Volume 6)**

Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA) training is required for Phase I proposals. Please refer to the DoD SBIR Program BAA instructions for full details.

**DISCRETIONARY TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE (TABAs):** USSOCOM does not provide Discretionary Technical and Business Assistance for Phase I awards.

**INQUIRIES: USSOCOM does not allow direct communication with the topic authors (differs from the DoD SBIR Program BAA instructions).**

During the Pre-Release and Open Periods of the DoD SBIR Program BAA, only and all technical questions that enhance the Offerors understanding of the topic's requirements must be submitted to the online Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP) Topic Q&A. All questions and answers submitted to DSIP Topic Q&A will be released to the general public.

USSOCOM does NOT allow inquirers to communicate directly in any manner to the topic authors (differs from the DoD STTR Program BAA instructions). Only questions pertaining to the proposal preparation instructions should be directed to: [sbir@socom.mil](mailto:sbir@socom.mil). All inquiries must include the topic number in the subject line of the e-mail.

**Consistent with DoD SBIR instructions, USSOCOM will not answer programmatic questions, such as who the technical point of contact is, the number of contracts to be awarded, the source of funding, transition strategy.**

**Physical site visits will not be permitted during the Pre-release and Open Periods of the DoD SBIR Program BAA.**

#### **EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria listed in the DoD SBIR Program BAA, with the following exceptions:

1. Proposals missing any of the six stated volumes, or those that do not comply with the requirement of the percentage of work (67%) to be executed by the proposing firm, or those proposals that exceed the maximum price allowed as per Table 1 of these instructions, will be considered non-responsive. Non-responsive proposals will not be evaluated.
2. The technical evaluation will utilize the Evaluation Criteria provided in DoD SBIR Program BAA instructions. The Technical Volume and PowerPoint Presentation slide deck will be reviewed holistically.

The technical evaluation is performed in two parts:

**Part I:** The evaluation of the Technical Volume will utilize the Evaluation Criteria provided in the DoD SBIR Program BAA. Once the evaluations are complete, all Offerors will be notified in a timely manner.

**Part II:** Selected offerors **may** receive an invitation to present their slide deck (30-minute presentation time/30-minute Government question and answer period) to the USSOCOM technical evaluation team, using virtual teleconference. This will be a technical presentation of the proposed solution **ONLY**. The key personnel listed in the proposal should represent the presentation and responding to the questions of the evaluation team. This presentation is NOT intended for business development personnel, it is purely technical. Selected offerors shall restrict their Pitch Day presentations to the 15-page PowerPoint presentation submitted with the respective proposals. There will be no changes or updates to the presentations from what was proposed. This presentation will complete the evaluation of the proposal against the criteria listed in the DoD SBIR Program BAA.

3. The Cost Volume (Volume 3) evaluation:  
For this Phase I, the award amount is set at a not to exceed (NTE) amount and a technical evaluation of the proposal cost will be completed to assess price fair and reasonableness. The team will assess the technical approach presented for the effort based on the number of labor hours by labor categories, the key personnel level of involvement, materials, subcontractors, and consultants (scope of work, expertise, participation, and proposed effort), and other direct cost as proposed.
4. In accordance with S.4900 SBIR/STTR Reauthorization, USSOCOM will conduct a security due diligence on cybersecurity practices, patent analysis, employee analysis, foreign ownership of offerors, and financial ties and obligations for every offeror.

Additionally, input on technical aspects of the proposals may be solicited by USSOCOM from non-Government consultants and advisors who are bound by appropriate non-disclosure requirements. When appropriate, non-government advisors may have access to Offeror's proposals and may be utilized to objectively review a proposal in a particular functional area and provide comments and recommendations to the Government's decision makers. They may not establish final assessments of risk, or rate or rank Offerors' proposals. All advisors shall comply with procurement Integrity Laws and shall sign Non-Disclosure and Rules of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest statements. The Government shall take into consideration requirements for avoiding conflicts of interest. Submission of a proposal in response to this request constitutes approval to release the proposal to Government support contractors.

Offerors will be notified of selection or non-selection status for a Phase I award within 90 calendar days of the closing date of the BAA by the USSOCOM Contracting Office. This notification will come by e-mail to the Corporate Official identified by the Offeror during proposal submission. The Government will also notify the Offerors if their proposal is considered non-responsive (disqualified).

A non-selected Offeror can make a written request to the Contracting Officer, within 30 calendar days of receipt of notification of non-selection, for informal feedback. The Contracting Officer will provide informal feedback after receipt of an Offeror's written request rather than a debriefing as specified in the DoD SBIR Program BAA instructions.

Refer to the DoD SBIR Program BAA for procedures to protest the Announcement.

As further prescribed in FAR 33.106(b), FAR 52.233-3, Protests after Award should be submitted to: [sbir@socom.mil](mailto:sbir@socom.mil).

## **PATH TO PHASE II**

If awarded a Phase I, the Small Business will automatically be invited to propose a Phase II proposal, unless otherwise informed by USSOCOM. To obtain the Phase II requirements, refer to the Contract Data Requirements List (CDRL) A004. The Final Report will be due on or before 6 months of the start of the Period of Performance (PoP) In Accordance With (IAW) CDRL A003. Your Phase II proposal will be due on or before the 195<sup>th</sup> day of the start of the PoP IAW CDRL A005.

All CDRLs are available on <https://www.socom.mil/SOF-ATL/Pages/SBIR.aspx>. There are two different attachments for CDRL 5. Please refer to the section titled "Award and Contract Information" for the contracting path pertaining to the topic.

The Government reserves the right to issue any of the following type of awards for Phase II:

1. FAR type contract

2. Non-FAR based fixed price (level of effort type):
  - a. Other Transactions Agreements (OTA). Successful completion of the prototype under an OTA may result in a follow-on production OTA or contract. Successful completion of the prototype is defined as meeting one or more threshold requirements.
  - b. USSOCOM may use a partnership intermediary to award SBIR/STTR contracts and agreements to small business concerns. This may be done through USSOCOM's intermediary partner, SOFWERX ([www.SOFWERX.org](http://www.SOFWERX.org)) resulting in a commercial contract between the firm and DEFENSEWERX. The is authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022, Section 852, MODIFICATION OF PILOT PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY- ENHANCED CAPABILITIES WITH PARTNERSHIP INTERMEDIARIES. The Government will conduct the evaluation and select the proposals to be funded for award.

**AWARD AND CONTRACT INFORMATION**

**Table 1: Consolidated SBIR Topic Information**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Technical Volume (Vol 2)</b>	<b>Additional Info. (Vol 5)</b>	<b>Period of Performance</b>	<b>Award Amount</b>	<b>Contract Type</b>
<i>Phase I</i> SOCOM234-003	Not to exceed 5 pages	15 page PowerPoint	Not to exceed 7 months	NTE \$175,000	Firm-Fixed- Price

The Government will conduct evaluations and selections for SBIR Phase I topic award(s) listed in this BAA.

Awards for SOCOM234-003 may be made under the authority of National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022, Section 852, MODIFICATION OF PILOT PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY- ENHANCED CAPABILITIES WITH PARTNERSHIP INTERMEDIARIES. USSOCOM may use a partnership intermediary to award SBIR/STTR contracts and agreements to small business concerns. The stated topics SBIR contract awards may be done through SOFWERX and result in a commercial contract between the firm and DEFENSEWERX. The Government will conduct the evaluation and select the proposals to be funded for award.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Phase I proposals shall NOT include:**

- 1) Any travel for Government meetings. All meetings with the Government will be conducted via electronic media.
- 2) Government furnished property or equipment.
- 3) Priced or Unpriced Options.
- 4) "Basic Research" (or "Fundamental Research") defined as a "Systematic study directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and/or observable facts without specific applications toward processes or products in mind."
- 5) Human or animal studies.
- 6) Discretionary Technical and Business Assistance (TABAs)

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Release 3**

SOCOM234-003

**Visual Augmentation Systems (VAS) Range Finder**

**SOCOM234-003**

**TITLE: Visual Augmentation Systems (VAS) Range Finder**

OUSD (R&E) CRITICAL TECHNOLOGY AREA(S): Trusted AI and Autonomy; Advanced Computing and Software; Integrated Sensing and Cyber; Microelectronics; Human-Machine Interfaces

The technologies within these topics that are restricted under the International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR), which controls the export and import of defense-related material and services, require Offerors to disclose any proposed use of foreign nationals, their country of origin, and what tasks each would accomplish in the statement of work in accordance with the solicitation. Additionally, Offerors will describe compliance mechanisms that they have in place or will put in place, to address any ITAR issues that arise during the course of agreement administration.

**OBJECTIVE:**

SOF ground forces require an improved capability for situational awareness allowing reliable and effective day/night observation and range measurement in a small, low-cost, easy to use device in primarily urban or near-urban environments with ambient light sources.

Current observation and range measurement solutions possess the following requirements:

- requires digital integration
- requires low-light or night capability
- Too large
- Cost prohibitive
- Require active emission of laser energy
- Lack user-assistance, limiting the effective range
- Lack feedback mechanisms that allow the user to be sure of their measurement

IMPORTANT: For SOCOM instructions: please visit: <https://www.defensesbirsttr.mil/SBIR-STTR/Opportunities/>. Go to the bottom of the page and click "DoD SBIR 23.4 Annual". Once there, go to the SOCOM SBIR 23.4 Release 3.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Potential solutions should hyper enable the SOF operator by interrogating a potential target with its integrated sensors, organizing that gathered information in a useful manor, and reliably disseminating it via Tactical Assault Kit (TAK) interface to the End User Device (EUD).

Potential solutions include integrated sensing solutions capable of aiding the user in detecting human sized targets at the maximum possible distance for both day and night urban environments. Solutions must enable the user to gather range measurements to target types that include, but are not limited to humans, vehicles and buildings. Solutions utilizing a laser transmitter for range measurement must maintain user safety by using a laser with wavelength greater than 1400 nanometers and also by not exceeding the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Class 1 laser hazard classification.

Potential solutions shall be capable of surviving all environments that SOF encounters, including immersion, transportation vibration, high and low temperatures, high humidity, high altitude, drops and



shocks, rain, ice, sand and dust, salt fog, and electromagnetic radiation. Participants are encouraged to outline the design trades associated with surviving immersion at 1 meter for 30 minutes.

The innovative research should focus on solutions that can be adapted to meet the size, weight, and power (SWaP) constraints listed below.

- Less than 18 oz. (1.125lbs) with power source(s) installed.
- Less than 64 cubic inches in volume, and not exceed 6 inches in either length, width, or height.
- Potential solutions must provide the operator with the following runtime profile before requiring a change of power source.
  - Daytime: 30 minutes of observation including 75 range measurements; and
  - Nighttime: 30 minutes of observation including 75 range measurements; and
  - 20 Rapid Ranging Events: A Rapid Ranging Event can be described as follows. User detects an object of interest while not using the device. User then picks up the device and utilizes its range measurement capability until user is confident, they have an accurate range measurement to the object of interest.

*Clarifying Information:* The purpose of this effort is not to generate precise target coordinates. For any target coordinates that the integrated sensing solution can generate, it should be able to communicate those digitally into TAK with all associated errors.

**PHASE I:** Conduct a feasibility study to assess what is in the art of the possible that satisfies the requirements specified in the above paragraphs entitled “Objective” and “Description.”

The objective of this USSOCOM Phase I SBIR effort is to conduct and document the results of a thorough feasibility study (“Technology Readiness Level 3”) to investigate what is in the art of the possible within the given trade space that will satisfy a needed technology. The feasibility study should investigate all options that meet or exceed the minimum performance parameters specified in this write up. It should address the risks and potential payoffs (including consequences to size, weight, power, and cost) of the innovative technology options that are investigated and recommend the option that best achieves the objective of this technology pursuit. The funds obligated on the resulting Phase I SBIR contracts are to be used for the sole purpose of conducting a thorough feasibility study using scientific experiments and laboratory studies as necessary. Operational prototypes will not be developed with USSOCOM SBIR funds during Phase I feasibility studies. Operational prototypes developed with other than SBIR funds that are provided at the end of Phase I feasibility studies will not be considered in deciding what firm(s) will be selected for Phase II.

A phase II proposal is expected at the conclusion of the Phase I effort.

**PHASE II:** Develop, install, and demonstrate a prototype system determined to be the most feasible solution during the Phase I feasibility study.

**PHASE III DUAL USE APPLICATIONS:** This system could be used in a broad range of military and commercial applications.

**REFERENCES:**

1. Tactical Assault Kit Website: <https://tak.gov/>
2. Butler, Michael. "The Developer's Guide to Cursor on Target." 2005, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA637348.pdf>.
3. Kristan, Michael J, et al. "Cursor on Target Message Router's Guide." Nov. 2009, [https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/pdf/09\\_4937.pdf](https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/pdf/09_4937.pdf).

KEYWORDS: Range Finder, Range Measurement, Optics, Optical, Imaging, Imager, Camera, Night Vision, Visual Augmentation, Hyper Enabled Operator, Infrared, Low Light Level (LLL), Color Day, Urban Night, TAK, CMOS, Thermal, AI.