

DOD Open Topics “Dual Use” Technologies

The SBIR and STTR Extension Act of 2022 SBIR requires each component of the Department of Defense (DOD) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program to issue at least one “open topic” per year. The goals of the “open topic” are to:

- A. Increase the transition of commercial technology to the Department of Defense;
- B. Expand the small business nontraditional industrial base;
- C. Increase commercialization derived from investments of the Department of Defense;
- D. Expand the ability for qualifying small business concerns to propose technology solutions to meet the needs of the Department of Defense.

To facilitate this requirement, the DOD has emphasized "dual use" technologies in their “open topic” solicitation. “Dual use” refers to technologies or products that have applications in both military and civilian sectors. The term highlights the importance of developing innovations that can serve defense purposes while also offering commercial value in the civilian market. Dual use projects aim to address specific defense needs while having the potential to be adapted for commercial use, thus enhancing the return on investment for both the government and the private sector.

Keys to Highlighting Dual Use in a DoD SBIR proposal

1. **Clearly define the dual use applications.** Describe the military application development as the primary goal. Identify how developing the military application allows for an adapted civilian use.
2. **Outline the dual use development platform.** Detail the steps you will take to develop and test the technology for both military and civilian applications. Highlight any specific modifications or additional features required for each application.
3. **Identify the commercialization pathway.** Describe your strategy for bringing the technology to market in both sectors. Identify the civilian beachhead market for the dual use technology. Include potential partnerships, distribution channels, and marketing approaches.

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