



AFWERX  
AFVENTURES

# How to Read an Open Topic Phase I Solicitation

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# How Does the DAF SBIR Program Solicit Proposals?

## Two Types of SBIR Solicitations

1. **Open Topics:** innovative solutions that have not yet been identified as a need by the warfighter
2. **Conventional (“Specific”) Topics:** traditional SBIR topics, more narrowly-focused topic areas, applicant proposals typically address a problem statement

## Solicitation Methodologies

1. **DAF Commercial Solutions Openings (CSOs):**
  - a. Unitary document
  - b. Fewer topics per solicitation, usually one and sometimes two
  - c. All topics in each solicitation will reside in same program and same Phase, i.e. all topics in each will either be Phase I SBIR, Phase I STTR, or D2P2 SBIR
  - d. Most terms and provisions are applicable to all topics contained in the document
2. **OSD Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs):** used for triannual SBIR/STTR conventional topic solicitation cycles promulgated by OSD
  - a. General solicitation terms and provisions are contained in the OSD “shell” BAA
  - b. Component-specific terms and provisions are contained within component-specific instructions
  - c. Mix of Phase I and D2P2 topics within same solicitation

# Open Topic Solicitation Requirements Structure

## Same Solicitation = Same Program = Same Phase

Applicants can presume that each Open Topic CSO will contain same program (SBIR v. STTR) topics and same Phase (Phase I or D2P2) topics

- i. Solicitation AFX23.6 = one SBIR D2P2 Open Topic
- ii. Solicitation AFX23.7 = one SBIR Phase I Open Topic
- iii. Solicitation AFX23.E = one STTR Phase I Open Topic
- iv. Solicitation AFX24.4 = one SBIR D2P2 Open Topic

# Topic Naming - Open Topic Phase I SBIR

**A topic's name tells a story.**

**Example below = upcoming 23.7**

**AFX237-OCSO1**

**AF = Component (DAF)**

**X = AFWERX Open Topic**

**23 = Fiscal Year (FY)**

**7 = Solicitation Sequence**

- **Out-of-Cycle (OOC) Topics start at 4 (4, 5, 6, 7)**
- **7 = Fourth OOC topic of that FY**

**O = Out-of-Cycle (all CSOs are OOC)**

**CSO = Commercial Solutions Opening**

**1 = topic sequence within that individual solicitation**

# Topic Naming - Open Topic Phase I STTR

**A topic's name tells a story.**

**Example below = upcoming 23.E**

**AFX23E-OTCSO1**

**AF = Component (DAF)**

**X = AFWERX Open Topic**

**23 = Fiscal Year (FY)**

**E = Solicitation Sequence**

- **Out-of-Cycle (OOC) Topics start at D (either D or E)**

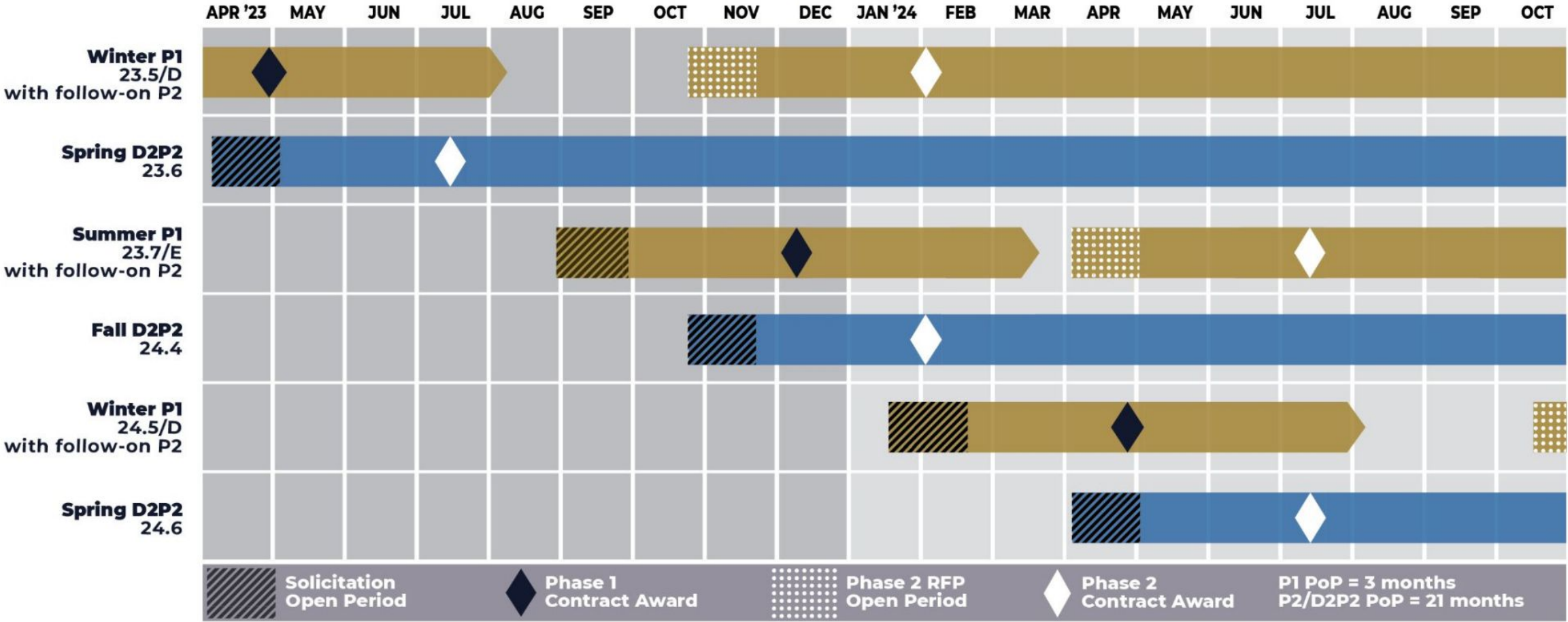
**O = Out-of-Cycle (all CSOs are OOC)**

**T = STTR**

**CSO = Commercial Solutions Opening**

**1 = topic sequence within that individual solicitation**

# Open Topic Annual Cycle



# SBIR Solicitation Structure

**Open Topic solicitations are structured to address the following information:**

- a. Submission of Proposals (information contained in cover sheet)
- b. Program Description
- c. Certifications
- d. Proposal Preparation Instructions and Requirements
- e. Method of Selection and Evaluation Criteria
- f. Considerations
- g. Research Topic(s) - to include scientific and technical information sources
- h. Attachments and Appendices - forms and data submission requirements

# Forms and Data Submission Requirements

**As of the most recent DAF SBIR CSO, solicitations will be divided roughly into halves:**

## **First Half**

1. Non-deliverable applicant, program, solicitation, evaluations, topic information.
2. “Things to know”

## **Second Half**

1. Attachments and Appendices
2. “Things to submit”



# Cover Sheet and Solicitation-At-A-Glance

## Cover Sheet

1. Outlines submission timeline (due dates)
2. Outlines how to submit (DSIP)
3. Customer support information (DSIP Help Desk, USAF Vission-X)

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE (DAF)  
SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM  
COMMERCIAL SOLUTIONS OPENING (CSO)  
DIRECT-TO-PHASE-II (D2P2) X23.6

<p><b>Proposal Submission Timelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 April 2023 DAF begins accepting proposals</li> <li>4 May 2023 Full proposals due no later than 12:00 p.m. ET</li> <li><b>Deadline for Receipt:</b> No exceptions will be made to the above submission deadline. DAF recommends early submission, as computer traffic intensifies near announcement closing. <b>Do not wait until the end of the submission period to submit proposal materials.</b> DAF is not responsible for missed proposal submission due to system lag or inaccessibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposal Submission Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small business concern may only submit one (1) proposal in response to each open topic. Refer to Table 1 below for more details.</li> <li>All proposals must be prepared and submitted through the Department of Defense (DoD) SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal (DSIP), <a href="https://www.dodsbirstrtr.mil/">https://www.dodsbirstrtr.mil/</a>.</li> <li>Ensure applicant email address is accurate. DAF is not responsible for missed notifications due to applicants changing mailing addresses/email addresses/company points of contact after submission without notifying the DAF.</li> <li>DSIP is the official portal for DoD SBIR/STTR proposal submission. Applicants are required to submit proposals via DSIP; proposals submitted by any other means will be disregarded. Applicants submitting through this site for the first time will be asked to register. Applicants are required to register for a Login.gov account and link it to their DSIP account.</li> <li><b>Classified proposals are NOT accepted.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>SBIR/STTR Help Desk:</b> For AF SBIR/STTR Program questions, contact the USAF SBIR/STTR One Help Desk at 1-855-855-5360 or <a href="mailto:usaf.team@afsbirstrtr.mil">usaf.team@afsbirstrtr.mil</a></p> <p><b>DSIP Support Desk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to the DSIP <a href="#">Customer Support Document</a> for general information regarding the DoD SBIR/STTR process in DSIP. For additional assistance with the DSIP application, please visit the Learning &amp; Support section of the DSIP at <a href="https://www.dodsbirstrtr.mil/submissions/learning-support/">https://www.dodsbirstrtr.mil/submissions/learning-support/</a>.</li> <li>Email DSIP Support at <a href="mailto:DoDSBIRSupport@rcisystems.com">DoDSBIRSupport@rcisystems.com</a> only for further assistance with issues pertaining directly to the DSIP application. Questions submitted to DSIP Support will be addressed in the order received during normal operating hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET).</li> <li>Applicants are responsible for following ALL troubleshooting guidance provided by DSIP Support. Applicants are responsible for reengaging with DSIP Support if provided troubleshooting tips do not resolve applicant proposal submission issues. Applicant proposal submission failure is virtually never attributable to DSIP performance issues.</li> </ul>

## Solicitation-At-A-Glance

1. Covers “big ticket” solicitation information
2. Topic Number, Topic Name, Deadline, Max PoP, Maximum Budget, Tech Volume Page Limit, Tech Volume Format, Performance of Work Requirements

Solicitation Topic Number	AFX236-DPCSO1
Solicitation Topic Name	Direct-to-Phase-II Call for Innovative Defense-Related Dual-Purpose Technologies/Solutions with a Clear DAF Stakeholder Need
CSO Submission Deadline	4 May 2023 at 12:00pm (noon) ET; proposals submitted after this date will not be considered for award.
Maximum Period of Performance	Twenty-one (21) Months; proposals that exceed this duration will not be considered for award.
Maximum SBIR Funding Amount	\$1,250,000.00; proposals that exceed this amount will not be considered for award.
Technical Volume Page Limit	15 pages; include page numbers. Pages in excess of 15 will not be reviewed.
Technical Volume Format	White Paper
Minimum Performance of Work Requirement	A minimum of one-half (50%) of the research and/or analytical work must be performed by the proposing firm. The percentage of work is measured by both direct and indirect costs, not including profit.
Anticipated Number of Awards	The Government currently anticipates making approximately 110 awards under this CSO. The Government reserves the right to make no awards under this solicitation. The Government is not responsible for costs incurred before award receipt.
Limitations on Proposal Submission and Program on Innovation Open Topics	Section 7 of the SBIR and STTR Extension Act of 2022 requires the DoD to establish innovation open topic activities in order to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the transition of commercial technology to the DoD;</li> <li>Expand the small business, nontraditional industrial base;</li> <li>Increase commercialization derived from investments of the DoD; and</li> <li>Expand the ability for qualifying small business concerns to propose technology solutions to meet the needs of the DoD.</li> </ol>

# Certifications

## 1. Objectives

General objectives for DAF SBIR program

## 2. Three Phases

Describes the three phases of the SBIR program

## 3. Eligibility

Describes eligibility requirements for the applicant

## 4. Performance Benchmarks

Revised as of 2022 - outlines minimum performance requirements of SBIR-participating companies

## 5. Definitions

List of definitions relevant to SBIR program and solicitation

# Proposal Preparations and Instructions

## 1. Additional Reporting

Outlines data submissions required of SBIR *awardees/participants* (not necessarily *applicants/offerors*)

## 2. Administrative Proposal Matters

Includes “housekeeping proposal matters”: including requirements for proprietary information, conflicts of interest, requirements dependent upon types of research proposed

## 3. Proposal Contents

Moved to Appendix A

# Method of Selection and Evaluation Criteria

**Arguably the most important information in the entire solicitation! This section describes the exact way in which proposals will be analyzed.**

## **Criteria A: Commercialization Potential**

Outlines the ways in which commercialization potential will be evaluated in the proposal to include: record of commercialization, existence of follow-on commitments, funding commitments, as well as transition strategy.

## **Criteria B: Defense Need**

The appropriateness, relevance, and specificity of an identified Defense Need as well as the ways in which applicants can demonstrate that Defense Need.

## **Criteria C: Technical Merit**

The technical approach, soundness, technical merit, and innovation of proposed approach. Includes qualifications of Principal Investigator and proposed team.

# Considerations

Contains various “housekeeping” matters:

1. Number of awards
2. Types of awards
3. Payment schedules
4. Copyrights
5. Research and Analytics Work
6. Contractual Requirements

This section contains a long list of potential contractual requirements if your proposal is selected for awards and negotiations. This gives you a “sample” of what the eventual award terms would look like.

# Solicitation Topic

## Contains the following information:

**Topic Title:** “Phase I Call for Innovative Defense-Related Dual-Purpose Technologies/Solutions with a Clear Air Force Stakeholder Need”

## Critical Technology Areas

**Topic Objective:** Describes what the topic seeks on behalf of the DAF

**Topic Description:** Describes the DAF’s conception of what constitutes an Open Topic

**Phase I:** Describes the types of activities the DAF expects during P1 performance

**Phase II:** Describes the types of activities the DAF expects during P2 performance

**Phase III:** Describes P3 transition

## Notes / References / Keywords

# Attachments and Appendices (Second Half)

**Outline the required data deliverables associated with the proposal itself**

## **Attachments**

Forms that are not necessarily directly related to the precise technical solution the applicant is proposing

## **Appendices**

Templates that outline the volume contents in DSIP. Not forms in and of themselves, but walk applicants through the type of information the DAF will expect to see from applicants.

# Appendix

Proposal Contents Table (All Volumes)

Proposal Cover Sheet Contents Table

Technical Volume Content Description (Volume 2) Table

Non-Proprietary Work Plan Outline Table

Commercialization Plan Outline Table

Cost Volume Description (Volume 3) Table

Supporting Documents (Volume 5) Table





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## Still have questions?

**Specific Topic:** [usaf.team@afsbirsttr.us](mailto:usaf.team@afsbirsttr.us)

**Open Topic Phase I:** [p1@afwerx.af.mil](mailto:p1@afwerx.af.mil)

**Open Topic Phase II:** [p2@afwerx.af.mil](mailto:p2@afwerx.af.mil)

**STRATFI/TACFI:** [stratfi.tacfi@afwerx.af.mil](mailto:stratfi.tacfi@afwerx.af.mil)



Let us know how we are doing. Please complete the survey as you leave today's meeting.