NASA Selects 300 Small Business Research and Technology Projects

On November 29, 2011, NASA selected 300 small business proposals for possible contract awards through the Agency’s Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. The SBIR and STTR programs address specific technology gaps in NASA missions, while striving to complement other Agency research investments.

The SBIR program selected 260 proposals, with a combined value of approximately $33 million, for negotiation of Phase I feasibility study contracts. The STTR program selected 40 proposals, with a combined value of approximately $5 million, for negotiation of Phase I contracts. The NSSC processed these selections during December and anticipates having all awards made before the end of January.

These programs are based on a three-phase award system. Phase I is a feasibility study to evaluate scientific and technical merit. Awards are typically for six months for the SBIR contracts and 12 months for the STTR contracts, in amounts up to $125,000. Firms successful in Phase I are eligible to submit Phase II proposals, expanding on Phase I results. Phase III includes commercialization of the results of Phase II, and requires the use of private sector or non-SBIR Federal funding as innovations move from the laboratory to the marketplace.

Some of the key facts of these projects:

- Encourage involvement in federal research, development, and commercialization
- Enable exploration of technological potential while providing incentive to profit from new commercial products and services
- Program has benefited many NASA efforts, including modern air traffic control systems, Earth-observing spacecraft, the International Space Station, and the Mars rovers

Selected SBIR proposals were submitted by 196 small, high-technology firms in 37 states. Selected STTR proposals were submitted by 36 small, high-technology firms in 13 states. As part of the STTR program, the firms proposed to partner with 34 universities or research institutions in 16 states.

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