SBIR/STTR, CPP Programs Extended

H.R. 2608, the Small Business Program Extension and Reform Act of 2011, was passed by Congress and signed into law on October 4, 2011. This bill extends agency appropriations through November 18, 2011 and also keeps the SBIR/STTR and CPP (DoD’s Commercialization Pilot Program) programs alive “as is” through that date.

Now that the government will be funded through the middle of November, many anticipate that the House will again take up the issue of SBIR/STTR reauthorization. H.R. 1425 has been considered by committee and has been recommended for consideration by the House as a whole.

However, many SBIR “insiders” feel that H.R. 1425 is likely to be a contentious bill and that one or more continuing resolutions may be necessary before legislation that is acceptable to both chambers can be passed. Key issues that need to be resolved before reauthorization legislation can be passed include the length of the reauthorization period, increasing the amount of the set-aside for the programs, and changes in eligibility of small businesses for the program related to ownership by other entities. The SBIR/STTR programs have been maintained by a long series of continuing resolutions over the past three years, but it may a little longer yet before the programs are fully reauthorized.

USPTO Pilot Program for Small Business

Part of a White House press release September 16, 2011 announcing that President Obama had signed the America Invents Act included a notice that the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) will be collaborating with the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Small Business Administration (SBA) to assist SBIR grant recipients in taking advantage of the USPTO’s small business programs and resources. The initial pilot will provide support comprehensive intellectual property support to 100 NSF SBIR recipients.

For more information, the entire press release can be viewed here.
NSF Phase I SBIR Solicitation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently issued the second release of its FY2012 Phase I SBIR solicitation. There are four overarching research topics for this solicitation, each with numerous subtopic areas: Biotech and Chemical Technologies (BC); Education Applications (EA); Electronics, Information and Communication Technologies (EI); and Nanotechnology, Advanced Materials, and Manufacturing (NM). Proposals should be for projects that are high-risk and have high potential commercial payback.

NSF anticipates making about 100 awards of up to $150,000 for six month projects under this announcement. Note that contact with the cognizant program manager is strongly encouraged prior to submission, and that letters of support for the technology (no more than three) are also strongly encouraged. Organizations may submit only two proposals for this solicitation; in addition the project principal investigator (PI) or co-PIs may participate in only one submitted proposal. PIs must also spend a minimum of one calendar month on an SBIR Phase I project. NSF requires a data management plan as part of the proposal.

Proposals will be accepted beginning November 2, and the application deadline is 5 pm (submitter’s time) December 2, 2011. Applications must be submitted electronically through the FastLane system; in addition, applicants must have a DUNS number and be registered in the Central Contractor Registry. Click here for more details.

DOT FY12.1 SBIR Solicitation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced that it plans to release its FY12.1 Phase I SBIR solicitation on October 11, 2011. Research topics will come from the DOT’s operating administrations, and may include the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration are being offered. Note that the DOT has several specific forms that must be completed as part of the proposal preparation process.

The application deadline is December 12, 2011, and applications must be submitted electronically using the DOT’s submission form. For more information, or to download the solicitation, visit: http://www.volpe.dot.gov/sbir/.

NIH FOA

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently released a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) inviting STTR applications for research and development proposals for the development of appropriate pediatric drug formulations in different age groups. Under PAR-11-305, proposals for development and testing of novel drug delivery systems in the pediatric population is also encouraged. Example areas of interest include, but are not limited to, development of nanosized formulations to optimize efficacy and minimize toxicity of off patent pediatric drugs of narrow therapeutic index or innovative technologies and platforms for oral pediatric formulations for poorly soluble or unpalatable drugs.

While not required, prospective applicants are asked to submit a letter of intent 30 days prior to the application deadline to estimate potential reviewer workload and help plan the review. Standard application deadlines apply, and applicants must be registered in Grants.gov and the eRA Commons. For more information, click here.
NOAA Presolicitation Announcement

The Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has issued a presolicitation notice for its FY2012 Phase I SBIR program. NOAA intends to release this solicitation on or about October 14, and the following research and development topics will be available: Climate Adaption and Mitigation, Weather-Ready Nation, Healthy Oceans, and Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies. NOAA anticipates awarding multiple Phase I contracts of up to $95,000 for projects up to six months in duration under this offering.

Once the solicitation has been released, general SBIR-related inquiries may be directed to the NOAA SBIR Program Manager, Kelly Wright at (301) 713-3565 x 292 or kelly.wright@noaa.gov. Additional questions should be directed to Joan Clarkston, Contract Specialist at (816) 426-7469 or email joan.e.clarkston@noaa.gov. When contacting individuals regarding this announcement, please reference in the title Solicitation Number NOAA2012-1. The application deadline will be on or about January 27, 2012.

For more information about NOAA’s SBIR program, visit: http://www.oar.noaa.gov/orta/.

IES Solicitation Information

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the Department of Education has indicated that it plans to release two solicitations in late fall 2011 for its FY2012 funding opportunities. IES anticipates issuing a Phase I solicitation in education for up to $150,000 for 6 months of funding; this solicitation is not expected to have a Fast-Track (Phase II) option for education in FY2012. IES also plans to issue a Phase I solicitation in special education for up to $150,000 for 6 months of funding, with the option to also submit a Fast-Track (Phase II) proposal for up $900,000 for an additional 2 years of funding in Phase II.

IES has stated that the application deadline for these solicitations is likely to be in early 2012, with awards being announced in late spring 2012 and projects beginning soon afterwards.

For more information on the Department of Education’s SBIR program, visit: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sbir/applicant.html.

Key Solicitation Dates

- The deadline for NIH’s contract solicitation is November 7, 2011 at 5:00 pm ET.
- The deadline for NSF’s FY2012 solicitation is November 17, 2011.
- The deadline for NSF’s FY2012 Phase I SBIR solicitation is December 2, 2011.
- The deadline for non AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is December 5, 2011.
- The deadline for the DOT’s FY12.1 Phase I SBIR solicitation is December 12, 2011.
- The deadline for AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is January 7, 2011.

For more information on these solicitations, visit: www.sbir.gov.
Hybrid Tandem Junction Solar Cells (ISURF #3879)

Organic photovoltaic (OPV) cells used to convert solar energy into electric energy have been the subject of intense research because of their potential to enable much more inexpensive manufacturing, in terms of materials and processes used, compared to conventional inorganic photovoltaic cells. However, OPV suffer from two major drawbacks. First, they are much less efficient than inorganic devices due primarily to the limited range of photon wavelengths that can be absorbed by the materials used for light absorption. Second, OPV are susceptible to performance degradation by the atmosphere (i.e., oxygen and moisture) as well as short wavelength UV light.

To overcome these drawbacks, ISU researchers have developed hybrid tandem junction solar cells. These devices consist of an inorganic solar cell coated with a transparent conducting layer on which an organic solar cell is deposited. The inorganic solar cell can be an amorphous or nanocrystalline semiconductor, and either p-n or n-p heterojunctions can be used between the two cells. This structure offers better solar conversion efficiency through optimizing the bandgap or absorption of each of the solar cells while also improving stability of the organic cell since high energy photons are absorbed primarily in the higher energy gap inorganic cell, preventing them from degrading the organic cell. The organic solar cell is also protected from moisture and oxygen as an impermeable barrier is created by the inorganic cell. In addition, the devices can be manufactured using roll-to-roll methods on plastic transparent substrates. As a consequence, more robust, efficient and economical photovoltaic devices may be enabled.

For more information on this and other technologies available for licensing, go to: www.techtransfer.iastate.edu.