IDT Wins Phase I

Coralville-based Integrated DNA Technologies, Inc. (IDT) has been awarded a $170K Phase I SBIR grant from the National Institutes of Health.

IDT will use the funding to support development and commercialization of a novel gene silencing technology called “U1 Adaptors”. The ability to alter the expression of certain genes is of tremendous research interest and may eventually have clinical importance. However, currently used methods to modulate gene expression sometimes result in only modest suppression of the target gene or can lead to off-target effects with unanticipated consequences. IDT’s research may thus lead to an important addition to the scientific community’s gene silencing toolkit. In addition, because IDT’s method exploits a distinctly different mechanism compared to more common gene silencing approaches like RNA interference or antisense methods, it has the potential of enhancing these traditional technologies when used in combination with them via synergistic effects. This may aid in the development of emerging oligonucleotide-based gene silencing therapies by improving potency.

IDT is the largest US custom manufacturer of short pieces of DNA or RNA known as oligonucleotides, or “oligos”. Oligos are widely used in diagnostics for infectious or genetic diseases, and in basic biomedical and agricultural research.

For more information about IDT, visit http://www.idtdna.com/Home/Home.aspx.

Grants.gov Updates

Many participating SBIR and STTR agencies require that proposals be submitted through Grants.gov, a central storehouse for information on more than a thousand grant programs. Grants.gov has recently added a blog that provides daily updates on the system status, tutorials on using the Grants.gov system and other information on navigating the grant submission process.

Grants.gov has also announced in its Succeed Newsletter that it will be transitioning to Adobe-based forms for applications; this transition is expected to be complete by January 31, 2009. Anyone planning to submit an SBIR or STTR application soon should double check the application instructions and ensure the correct forms are used—for example, NIH plans to begin using Adobe forms on January 8, 2009.
Department of Defense 2009.1 SBIR Solicitation

The Department of Defense (DoD) 2009.1 SBIR solicitation will be released November 12, 2008. Proposals will be accepted beginning December 8, and the solicitation will close on or about January 14, 2009. All proposals must be prepared and submitted electronically through the DoD SBIR/STTR Electronic Web Site (http://www.dodsbir.net/submission/SignIn.asp). Proposers must also be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (http://www.ccr.gov/).

Between November 12 and December 7, 2008 proposers may talk directly with Topic Authors. Direct communication between proposers and Topic Authors is not permitted beginning December 8, 2008. However, proposers may submit written questions regarding solicitation topics through the SBIR/STTR Interactive Topic Information System (SITIS). Note that monitoring this bulletin board is a good way to obtain updated information about your research topic and your potential competition. All questions and answers are posted anonymously on the SITIS website for general viewing.

For more information, go to: http://www.acq.osd.mil/osbp/sbir/.

NIST Presolicitation Notice

The Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has issued a presolicitation notice for its FY2009 Phase I SBIR offering; the solicitation will be released on or about November 12, 2008 and proposals will be due January 22, 2009. Phase I contracts of up to $90,000 for projects up to six months in duration will be awarded.

A wide variety of research topics is being offered for this solicitation, and a public website will be available where technical questions can be submitted for answers from NIST experts that will be posted for general viewing.

Applicants must be registered in the Central Contractor Registry and have a DUNS number. For more information, see the NIST SBIR website: http://tsapps.nist.gov/ts_sbir/.

DOC NOAA FY2009 SBIR Solicitation

The U. S. Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has released its FY2009 SBIR solicitation. Research topics available for this Phase I solicitation include Ecosystems, Climate, Weather and Water, and Commerce and Transportation. Note that written and verbal contact with NOAA regarding additional information on technical topics is prohibited in the interest of fairness, although the agency may be contact for general questions about its SBIR program. NOAA anticipates awarding up to 10 firm-fixed price contracts of no more than $95,000 for projects of up to six months in duration under this offering. Awardees will be required to be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

Applications (including six copies of the proposal) must be submitted by surface mail and received by January 14, 2009. For more information, visit: http://www.oar.noaa.gov/orla/.

The NIST FY2009 Phase I SBIR solicitation will be released November 12, 2008
Key Solicitation Dates

- The application deadline for the NIH SBIR contract solicitation is November 3, 2008.
- The application deadline for the Department of Education FY2009 Phase I SBIR solicitation is November 10, 2008.
- The deadline to submit proposals for the DOE’s FY2009 Phase I SBIR/STTR solicitation is November 20, 2008.
- The deadline for the NSF FY2009 SBIR Phase I solicitation is December 4, 2008.
- The deadline for non-AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is December 5, 2008.
- The deadline for the Department of Homeland Security’s FY2009.1 SBIR solicitation is January 5, 2009.
- The deadline for AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is January 7, 2009.
- The deadline for the DoD’s SBIR 2009.1 solicitation will be on or about January 14, 2009.
- The deadline for NOAA’s FY2009 Phase I SBIR solicitation is January 22, 2009.

For more information on these solicitations, visit: www.sbir.gov

New Policy on NIH Resubmissions

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced a change in an existing policy regarding resubmitted (amended) applications. Beginning with applications submitted for January 25, 2009 due dates and beyond, NIH will accept only a single amendment to the original application (i.e., never before submitted) and competing renewal applications—applicants were previously allowed to submit two amendments. Applicants that fail to receive funding after two submissions (the original and one amendment) will be required to substantially re-design the proposed project. This change is being implemented in order to fund high quality applications sooner, with fewer resubmissions. Note that any applications submitted prior to January 25, 2009 will be “grandfathered” and permitted two amendments.


DHS FY2009.1 SBIR Solicitation

The Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate has pre-released its FY2009.1 Phase I SBIR solicitation. Between now and November 12, 2008, proposers may directly contact Technical Point of Contact (TPOC) to ask technical questions regarding the research topics available under this offering. Once the solicitation opens for proposal submission on November 12, direct contact with TPOCs will be prohibited.

The research topics included in this solicitation are: Low Cost and Rapid DNA based Biometric Device, Hard Drive Unlocking, Submillimeter-wave Vector Measurements for Explosive Materials, Non-antibody Based, Selective and Rapid Protein Analysis for Detection of Viruses and Bacteria in Environmental Samples, Decision Analytic Approaches for CBRN Terrorism Risk Assessment, Highly Scalable Identity Management Tools, and Autonomous (or alternative) In-liquid Survey Vehicle.

The application deadline is January 5, 2009 and proposals must be submitted electronically through the DHS submission website.
Technology Spotlight

Biobased Production of Gold Nanoparticles (ISURF #3343)

Methanobactin is a small peptide secreted by methane-oxidizing or methanotrophic bacteria and binds to extracellular copper when these bacteria are grown under low copper conditions. Methanobactin is also able to bind to a number of other metals, including gold, iron, nickel, zinc, cobalt, cadmium, mercury, and uranium. ISU researchers and their collaborators investigating the properties of methanobactin have determined that gold in the 3+ oxidation state, Au(III), can be reduced to its zero oxidation state, Au(0), at or below ratios of one Au(III) per methanobactin molecule. Under these conditions, the Au(0) remains associated with the methanobactin, and could serve as a soluble delivery/extraction system for the generation of gold thin films or wires by application to surfaces. Additionally, this methanobactin-Au(III) binding and reduction system may serve as an aurothiolate-type system for the administration of Au(0) for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. At ratios of Au(III) to methanobactin above one to one, methanobactin binds and catalytically reduces Au(III) to Au(0) with the concomitant production of gold nanoparticles, and this approach can also be used for the formation of gold nanoparticles. Continuous reduction of gold by methanobactin can also be achieved if a reductant is provided. Thus, methanobactin has the potential to replace the use of toxic cyanide for the recovery of gold from ores.

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