



## How to Connect with Prime Contractors: An Interview with Lockheed Martin

If you are planning to or have already submitted an SBIR/STTR proposal to the Dept. of Defense you probably have a keen interest in learning how to connect with prime contractors. Primes provide small businesses with various assistance during different phases of their SBIR/STTR projects; including supporting technology requirements, evaluation, co-development, and insertion into larger systems.

Recently BBCetc's top DOD SBIR consultant, Becky Aistrup, interviewed Lockheed Martin's (LM) Orysia Buchan, Supplier Diversity Government Programs Manager, to learn more about how SBIR/STTR companies can engage with LM. Here's what she found out:

### **BBCetc: Why is the SBIR/STTR program important/interesting to LM and how does LM engage small companies via the SBIR/STTR program?**

**LM:** Lockheed Martin engages with small businesses through the Federal Government's SBIR/STTR Program to assist small businesses in the development of novel and innovative technologies to bring these emerging technologies to the company's products and services. We leverage federal agency R&D funding to assist with the advancement of innovative technologies that align to current and future program needs. The transition of technologies into programs of record ultimately can drive affordability into legacy and emerging programs and helps bridge the technology gap between current technologies and future innovation.

### **BBCetc: How do you identify topics of interest and how do companies learn more about those topics?**

**LM:** Lockheed Martin established a [process](#) for small businesses to follow to explore potential partnership opportunities with the company. We encourage qualifying small businesses with a SBIR/STTR technology project or concept that is compatible with Lockheed Martin technology interests and needs to email [sbir.fc-lmc@lmco.com](mailto:sbir.fc-lmc@lmco.com) to request to be added to the Lockheed Martin SBIR Email Distribution List. The purpose of this distribution list is to connect small businesses with the appropriate Lockheed Martin technical points of contacts to explore opportunities for partnership and innovation. For each Department of Defense (DOD) solicitation, and many of the non-DOD agency solicitations, Lockheed Martin reviews its internal topics of interest and then shares those topics of interest, complete with a point of contact and email address with its distribution list. The goal is for SBIR firms to contact a Lockheed Martin point of contact for topics of mutual interest. [Click here](#) for a sample of the LM topic list from the DOD solicitations closing October 25, 2017.

When contacting Lockheed Martin on a specific solicitation topic, Lockheed Martin will decide if a letter of support will be written for the SBIR firm. If one is written, it generally takes at least 10 business days, but may take up to one month to receive. The SBIR firm is advised if Lockheed Martin is or is not interested in partnering.

A SBIR firm may include the [this chart](#) and email it to [sbir.fc-lmc@lmco.com](mailto:sbir.fc-lmc@lmco.com) if they have a technology not aligned with a solicitation but is compatible with Lockheed Martin technologies and is interested in partnering with Lockheed Martin on a project. SBIR firms should not share any proprietary, export controlled, confidential or classified information in this email. The information will then be sent to appropriate SBIR leads across the corporation to determine interest.



**BBCetc: What is the optimum way for a company to engage with LM for a Phase I proposal? Phase II? OR What roles can LM play in a Phase I or Phase II project?**

**LM:** Lockheed Martin is made up of four separate business units. These business units are built around the unique products, platforms and/or services that they provide to their customers. Likewise, our corporate SBIR team has technical and small business representation from each of our four business units. Our entire SBIR team follows a rigorous and coordinated process of how we make initial engagements with small businesses pursuing a Phase I award.

SBIR team members lead a specific effort based on the technology development being pursued and how the maturation and eventual transition of that technology fits into the product, platform or service of that Lockheed Martin business unit. Once these initial engagements are defined, usually during the Phase I solicitation response period, the SBIR team can build on the relationship in the manner that best fits their business unit. The relationship during the Phase I period of performance are generally determined by factors such as the size of the acquisition program where the technology would be transitioned, if there is existing parallel work and subject matter experts to champion the effort, and the priority of the technology being developed and where it resides in a technology roadmap.

As the project moves from a Phase I to a Phase II, and possibly a Phase III, is really determined by three dependent factors:

1. The technical success of the project in the Phase I period of performance;
2. The early identification and buy-in of a technology transition plan; and
3. The strength of the personal relationships built during each phase of a project as it progresses towards transition.

Without technical success, or at the very least the belief the innovation will eventually be realized, any SBIR project will not move forward. Similarly, interest and sponsorship internally will lessen even with a project that meets or exceeds technical milestones unless a transition plan to a Lockheed Martin product, platform or service is identified. The earlier in the SBIR project's lifecycle that a transition plan is determined, the greater opportunity for success. It is very important for small businesses and Lockheed Martin representatives to build strong personal relationships over the SBIR project's lifespan. The Lockheed Martin SBIR team prides itself in not only being technically sound and project oriented. The team members also serve as mentors and care about the individuals that we work with from small businesses to support the SBIR project through completion.

**BBCetc: Is LM interested in being a subcontractor to the small business on Phase II for testing or other aspects of the project?**

**LM:** Lockheed Martin is an active supporter of the SBIR/STTR programs. Whether working as a subcontractor or a technology mentor, Lockheed Martin assists small businesses during distinct phases of their SBIR/STTR projects, including: supporting technology requirements, evaluation, co-development and insertion into larger systems. Lockheed Martin assists SBIR firms in the development of novel and innovative technologies to integrate these emerging technologies in to the company's products and services.



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**BBCetc: What advice do you give to small companies who are not deeply familiar with how to work with DoD or a Prime Contractor?**

**LM:** Do your homework. Review DOD and prime contractor websites as it pertains to SBIR. Importantly, if looking to partner with a government prime, get involved as early as possible to ensure there is a potential opportunity in a certain technology area.

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