

## SUPPLEMENTAL OPPORTUNITY (Phase IIR) FOR SBIR/STTR PHASE II GRANTEES AND THE ENGINEERING RESEARCH CENTERS TO COLLABORATE

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Dear Colleague Letter

### **SYNOPSIS**

This supplement opportunity aims to open the doors for NSF SBIR/STTR Phase II Grantees to benefit from the innovative and leading-edge research performed at Engineering Research Centers (ERCs) and for the ERCs to benefit from the role of small firms in carrying out research to speed research results into commercial products.

Supplemental funding requests are invited from Engineering Research Centers and Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Phase II grantees to perform collaborative research. ERCs have pushed the boundaries of knowledge across a broad spectrum of technology fields while transferring a continuous stream of cutting-edge enabling and systems technologies to the market place through their industrial partners and spin-off start-up firms. SBIR/STTR awardees work at the leading edge of technology.

NSF's investments are leveraged and complemented by the collaborative fundamental research done by the ERC researchers and small business technical personnel most of whom also have advanced engineering degrees. These collaborative research activities could by themselves lead to other synergistic innovative research activities with commercial potential never imagined if the two entities continued to work separately. This opportunity will complement existing NSF supported activities in the SBIR/STTR and ERC programs. It is designed to directly help U.S. small business to compete by helping them to address their research needs. ERCs act as a catalyst to provide the research that small business immediately needs to further help make it successful and competitive.

### **PROPOSAL DEADLINE**

Supplement Request Deadline Date and Time: On or before June 1, 2007, 5 p.m. submitter's local time.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT**

Eligible proposers are Engineering Research Centers supported by the ERC Program in FY 2007 and are limited to current NSF SBIR/STTR Phase II and/or Phase IIB awardees. The collaborating ERC should be selected from among those currently under support from NSF. For a list of currently NSF-supported ERCs and access to each ERC web site see <http://www.erc-assoc.org/centers.htm> and for two page descriptions of these ERCs see <http://www.erc-assoc.org/factsheets/>

To be eligible, the expiration dates of current awards to ERCs and SBIR/STTR Phase II awardees must fall on or after September 30, 2007. The maximum duration for the supplement is one year.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The SBIR/STTR program stimulates entrepreneurship in this country through government support for research in small business. These small firms often need additional research to commercialize their products and/or services. One method of providing this needed research is by enabling small businesses to collaborate with an ERC.

The National Science Foundation-sponsored ERCs are interdisciplinary, multi-university centers located at universities all across the United States, each in close partnership with industry. Each ERC provides an environment in which academe and industry collaborate in pursuing strategic advances in complex engineered systems and enabling systems-level technologies that have the potential to spawn whole new industries or to radically transform the product lines, processing technologies, or service delivery methodologies of current industries. Activity within ERCs lies at the interface between the discovery-driven culture of science and the innovation-driven culture of engineering and industry. The centers provide the intellectual foundation for industry to collaborate with faculty and students on resolving generic, long-range challenges, producing the knowledge needed for steady advances in technology and their speedy transition to the marketplace.

The supplemental funding request must be centered on research that is mutually beneficial to the ERC and the SBIR/STTR awardee and thus it will serve the following dual purposes: (1) to speed the transition of ERC-generated research and technology advances to the market place and engage ERC students more directly in the innovation process, and (2) to strengthen the research capacity of the SBIR/STTR awardee and broaden its portfolio of marketable products.

Prospective PIs should contact an ERC of interest to learn more about that center's scope of research, its membership agreement, the members of its Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) and the research areas of interest of the center's faculty, researchers and graduate students. A letter of endorsement by the center director must be included with the supplement request.

## **SUPPLEMENT AWARD INFORMATION AND ALLOWABLE COSTS**

This request must be submitted as a supplement by an Engineering Research Center that is supported by the ERC Program during FY 2007. The lead organization is the lead institution of the ERC and the SBIR/STTR Phase II firm will be a sub-awardee to the lead institution. The total amount of the budget for the supplement must not be more than \$200,000 including the subaward. The sub-awardee budget must at least be a minimum of 30% or a maximum of 70% of the total supplemental amount that is not to exceed \$200,000.

All supplement awards are subject to (a) the availability of funds, and (b) review of the quality of the request.

The supplement request and the budget must be submitted through FastLane. See instructions below.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING SUPPLEMENT REQUESTS**

The first line for the summary of proposed work must include the words "ERC – SBIR/STTR Collaborative Request:" followed by the name of the center with which the small business

proposes to collaborate. Requests for supplemental funding must be submitted through FastLane as a supplement by the ERC researcher, which is the lead organizer.

Call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov) for user support. The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. When contacting FastLane, inform the technician that you are required to apply for this opportunity as a supplement.

The supplemental funding request must include the following information:

### **JUSTIFICATION FOR SUPPLEMENT REQUEST**

- 1). **Limit: ten pages:** The supplemental request must describe the innovation, contain a rationale for the mutual benefit of the project to the ERC and the SBIR/STTR awardee, the collaborative research and technology commercialization plan, and a plan for involvement of undergraduate and graduate students to enhance their knowledge of innovation.
  
- 2). In addition, the supplemental request must include a detailed budget and a letter of endorsement from the Director of the ERC indicating the value of the collaborative effort to the ERC, and a letter of endorsement from the SBIR/STTR Phase II PI indicating the value of the collaborative effort to the small business.

Supplemental funding requests not following these instructions will be returned without review. NSF program officers in the Division of Industrial Innovation and Partnerships and the Division of Engineering Education Centers will manage the review of requests.

Each SBIR/STTR Phase II grantee may be a partner in only one supplemental request; however, an ERC may submit more than one supplemental funding request because of the breadth of the research program.

### **PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

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All supplemental funding requests received by the due date will be reviewed by NSF program officers using NSF merit review criteria.

Approximately 8 to 10 awards will be made by September 30, 2007.

### **EXPECTED DELIVERABLES**

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At the end of every six months, the Phase II/IIB grantee will submit a report (maximum fifteen pages) to the cognizant SBIR/STTR program director. In similar fashion the ERC research investigator/collaborator will submit a report (maximum fifteen pages) to the cognizant ERC program director.

## CONTACTS

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If you have questions concerning this Dear Colleague letter, please contact one of the NSF staff listed below:

- **Murali Nair**, SBIR/STTR Program Director, 570.02 N, Telephone: (703) 292-7059, e-mail: [mnair@nsf.gov](mailto:mnair@nsf.gov)
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