



Small Business Innovation Research

www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/sbir

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) is a highly competitive federal grant program for American-owned and independently operated for-profit businesses of 500 employees or less. USDA is one of eleven federal agencies required to reserve 2.5% of their extramural research and development dollars for small businesses. Since its inception in 1982, SBIR has funded thousands of research and development projects across these eleven agencies that have enhanced American agriculture, the environment, health care, our nation's defense and have improved rural communities.

Why SBIR?

Entrepreneurs of small businesses are often by nature, innovative, and small businesses can adapt quickly to commercialize new ideas for the benefit of consumers, government, and other institutions, which will then stimulate the US economy. However, the expense and risk of research and development may limit the ability of the small businesses to bring innovative solutions to the marketplace. Small operators often simply cannot compete with the research and development budgets of larger corporations. The SBIR program is designed to provide the opportunity for the most innovative ideas from the small business sector to see the light of day. More information on the federal SBIR program can be found at the Small Business Administration, (coordinator of the SBIR federal program) at www.sba.gov/sbir/indexsbir-sttr.html or at www.sbirworld.com.

The United States Department of Agriculture SBIR (FY 2007 approximately \$19 million):

The USDA SBIR provides flexibility in the research areas that ensures the greatest degree of creativity and innovation possible, consistent with the overall SBIR and USDA vision of a healthy and productive nation in harmony with the land. The USDA SBIR program has awarded over 1900 research and development projects since its first year of funding in 1988, allowing hundreds of small businesses to explore their technological potential, and providing an incentive to profit from the commercialization of innovative ideas.

The program supports high-quality research and development that could stimulate technological innovation in the private sector, strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting federal research and development needs, increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research and development, and foster participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small business firms. The participation of university researchers as collaborators, contractors, or consultants is strongly encouraged.

Please Note: All proposals must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov. This process requires registration with Grants.gov prior to submitting their application. This process can take up to one month and we encourage all potential applicants to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

Research Topic Areas:

8.1 Forests and Related Resources

This program develops environmentally sound techniques to increase productivity of forest land and the utilization of materials and resources from forest lands, including increasing growth and yield, improved protection of trees against forest pests, increasing the utilization of forest-grown materials, reducing ecological damage by forest operations, reducing the risk of wildfires and controlling wildfires on forest land, and developing new products or technologies to increase the use of wood.

8.2 Plant Production and Protection - Biology

Enhance crop production by reducing the applying biological approaches to reducing the impact of harmful agents, developing new methods for plant improvement, and developing new food and specialty-use crop plants.

8.3 Animal Production and Protection

Research projects that develop knowledge enabling producers of animals of agricultural importance to increase production efficiency, prevent diseases or disease outbreaks and to assure a reliable, safe supply of animal protein and other animal products, while conserving resources and reducing costs of production.

8.4 Soil and Water Resources

Research in this area is focused on developing technologies for conserving and protecting water and soil resources while sustaining optimal farm and forest productivity by reducing soil erosion, enhancing water quality and conservation, developing improved irrigation technologies, and promoting technologies that enhance soil properties while restricting environmental perturbations.

8.5 Food Science and Nutrition

The food science and nutrition research programs develop new knowledge and a better understanding of the characteristics of the foods we eat and their nutritional impact, applies new knowledge to improve human foods and diets, and to the production of useful new food products, processes, materials and systems, including the use of nutritional information for consumer foods and food service systems.

8.6 Rural and Community Development

The primary focus of this program is on the development of new technologies and on the innovative application of new or existing technologies to address important problems and opportunities affecting people and institutions in rural America. Since FY 2005, the "new" Rural and Community Development topic area is less centered on agriculture, per se, but is more focused on areas of increasing importance to rural communities (energy, homeland security and small industries). The program requests applicants to explicitly discuss the specific rural problem or opportunity that they will examine and how this project will successfully address this problem or opportunity.

8.7 Aquaculture

This research will enhance the knowledge and technology base for the continued growth of the domestic aquaculture industry. Emphasis is placed on research leading to improved production efficiency and increased competitiveness of private sector aquaculture in the United States. Studies on commercially important (or potentially important) species of fish, shellfish and plants, from both freshwater and marine environments, can be addressed.

8.8 Biofuels and Biobased Products

This program promotes the use of biofuels and non-food biobased products by developing new or improved technologies leading to increased production of industrial products from agricultural materials, and new opportunities to diversify agriculture and enhance agriculture's role as a reliable supplier of raw materials to industry.

8.9 Marketing and Trade

Research in this area will identify an array of innovative marketing strategies to increase sales of agricultural, forestry, and aquacultural products (raw commodities, plus processed, value-added food, feed, and industrial products derived from these commodities), both domestically and abroad.

8.11 Animal Manure Management

The objective of this research area is to develop new or improved technologies and environmentally sound approaches for improved management of animal waste that will reduce the adverse impact of animal waste on the environment and people, and improve the economics of animal production by optimizing waste management technologies and creating value-added products derived from animal waste. This program will focus exclusively on terrestrial animal production (including poultry).

8.12 Small and Mid-Sized Farms

Research in this area is focused on promoting and improving the sustainability and profitability of small and mid-size farms and ranches by encouraging the development of new specialty farm products, both plant and animal, including organic and natural products, improving farm management including enhanced farm safety, conservation of natural resources, and educational outreach to small farmers.

8.13 Plant Production and Protection - Engineering

Improve crop production by reducing the impact of harmful agents and developing effective crop production, post-harvest and storage systems that are economically and environmentally sound.

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