

Research Advancing to Market Production (RAMP) for Innovators Act of 2023

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BACKGROUND

- **The SBIR/STTR program has supported science at small U.S. firms for over 30 years**, converting technological breakthroughs into innovations that address federal R&D needs.
- **Too few projects funded by SBIR/STTR grants become commercialized technologies.** Across 11 participating federal agencies—including DOD, HHS, NASA, DOE, and NSF—only about half of SBIR/STTR awards result in commercialized products.
- **Delays in application decisions, disbursement of funds, and patent awards** make it difficult to keep a small business operational while waiting on SBIR/STTR funds.
- **Agencies need the flexibility to award Phase II contracts to promising SBIR/STTR technologies** that may not have participated in SBIR/STTR Phase I.
- **There is a lack of geographic and demographic diversity among awardees** due to barriers in project applications, selection, and access to entrepreneurship training and commercialization support.
- **Congress needs greater visibility into SBIR/STTR program performance.** Voluntary firm reporting, different benchmarks of success per agency, and agency delays make assessing commercialization success difficult.

RAMP for Innovators Act

The RAMP for Innovators Act would:

1. **Ensure assessment of commercial potential when evaluating SBIR/STTR grant applications.**
2. **Expand the allowable uses of grant funds to include commercialization activities** and create a Technology Commercialization Officer role at each agency.
3. **Reduce time from research project to marketable product** by streamlining and standardizing the application process and accelerating agency final decisions from one year to 180 days. Firms will obtain IP protection before going to market using a SBIR/STTR-only prioritized examination pathway and waivers of prioritized examination fees.
4. **Provide agencies a Phase II fast-track option for qualified projects** to support firms that have demonstrated the commercial potential of their technologies. This ensures that high-potential technologies access the fastest path to commercialization.
5. **Provide uniform technical assistance and commercialization support across agencies to grantees.** The bill will also provide access to I-Corps training, which encourages innovators to explore commercialization.
6. **Increase clarity on SBIR/STTR program performance** by requiring each agency to publish a metrics-based Commercialization Impact Assessment, a condition for the Phase II award flexibility.

The RAMP for Innovators Act is endorsed by Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF), Small Business Technology Counsel of the National Small Business Association, the University City Science Center, the National and Delaware Chapters of the Small Business Development Center, and MForesight.