

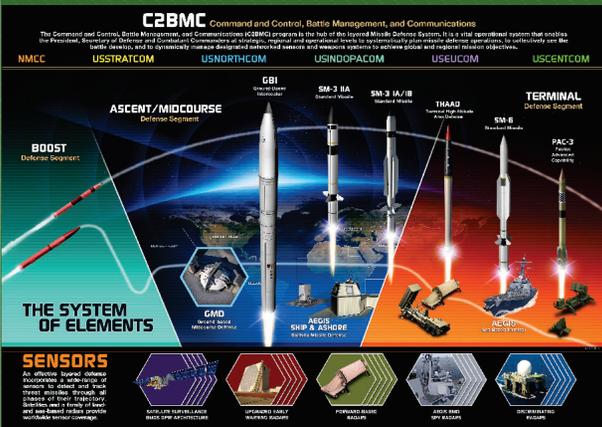
# ABOUT MDA

## MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is a research, development, and acquisition agency within the Department of Defense.

Missile defense technology being developed, tested and deployed by the United States in order to counter ballistic missiles of all ranges—short, medium, intermediate and long. Since ballistic missiles have different ranges, speeds, size and performance characteristics, the Ballistic Missile Defense System is an integrated, “layered” architecture that provides multiple opportunities to destroy missiles and their warheads before they can reach their targets. The system’s architecture includes:

- networked sensors space-based, ground-based and sea-based radars;
- ground- and sea-based interceptor missiles;
- and a command, control, battle management, and communications network.



# MDA MISSION

## WHY WE ARE HERE

Develop, test and field an integrated, layered, ballistic missile defense system (BMDS) to defend the United States, its deployed forces, allies, and friends against all ranges of enemy ballistic missiles in all phases of flight.



## WEBSITES

- [www.sbir.gov](http://www.sbir.gov)
- [www.acq.osd.mil](http://www.acq.osd.mil)
- [www.mda.mil](http://www.mda.mil)

## CONTACT

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# MDA

## MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

### WHAT MAKES A WINNING PROPOSAL FOR

- SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH
- SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

[www.mda.mil](http://www.mda.mil)

# GENERAL GUIDANCE

## writing SBIR/STTR proposals

*These tips are intended to help proposers write better, more competitive proposals, based on feedback from government evaluators. If in any case, guidance appears to conflict with the solicitation, the solicitation governs.*

- A concisely written introduction should clearly demonstrate that the proposer understands what the solicitation is requesting and, in a convincing manner, why their solution addresses it. When a proposer attempts to “shoe-horn” an idea into a topic that is clearly different, the proposal may be determined to be non-responsive and not evaluated.
- A winning proposal should be easy to follow. The author needs to explain complicated procedures/ principles in clear, straightforward language.
- Know your customer. Review public web sites, etc, to ensure the approach is relevant.
- Attention to detail matters; proof read for content and check spelling and grammar prior to submitting the proposal. Some proposals are difficult to read due to grammatical errors. Make good use of graphics and charts to illustrate the message.
- The proposal needs to be clear and concise. Understand that the evaluator may be reading many proposals in multiple topic areas and generally has many other responsibilities as well.
- Clearly and concisely answer what, how, who, where, when, and importantly, why?
- Do not reference websites or other material. The evaluator must assess only the contents of the proposal. Stay within the page limits.
- Think the project through as though you know you will be performing the work: planning, staffing, export control, classification, data rights, accounting systems, etc.

# PERSONNEL

- Make sure that the personnel listed match the staffing in the cost proposal. Do not list a number of people in the personnel section that will not be working on the project.
- Do not forget to address the qualifications and experience in commercialization or transition.
- Do not assume the evaluator has knowledge about your company or previous work for other customers.
- The evaluator reviewing personnel is generally looking for team qualifications. If the Principal Investigator or firm is weak in an area, make sure to supplement qualifications with appropriate team members or subcontractors. Evaluators want an honest representation of the firm’s capabilities.

# COMMERCIALIZATION

- Do not underestimate the importance of commercialization. Many proposals give this too little thought or provide a generic business approach. MDA requests a well thought out process on how the technology will transition into the BMDs, other DoD program or commercialization avenue.
- A winning proposal needs to focus on technology for existing programs and a path to transition the technology through prime contractors or companies that integrate mature technologies into appropriate government systems.
- DoD is looking for a solution for the warfighter. Know the relevance of the product to the warfighter’s situation.
- Know how the proposed product fits into the higher-level system or platform.
- Endorsements by prime contractors are not required but can be evidence that the proposer has given thought to transition. Typically, these are the customers for the small business. Know how to become a qualified supplier with a prime contractor for technology insertion into a military system.
- Endorsements from a prime contractor or division that does not produce the same product related to the topic can do more harm than good, e.g. a shipbuilder endorsing a proposal for an aircraft. This implies the proposer does not understand the supply chain.

# TECHNICAL

- Discuss the innovation of the concept, and how that compares to the state of the art or practice.
- Perform a literature review before proposing - using literature reviews points out how this approach is better, and it presents a compelling story. Demonstrate why the proposed solution is the best answer, not just a possible answer.
- Identify risks and indicate the mitigation plan to address each risk.
- It is very important that the technology be in line with the government program office needs, in addition, the technology is one that a prime contractor would be interested in using.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the application, the government program, and the prime contractor (or supplier).
- Do not just focus on Technology Readiness Level. Consider Manufacturing Readiness Level as well.
- Write so evaluators who have limited expertise in the specific technology understand the proposed technology and the benefits of it.
- Provide a sufficiently detailed work plan and schedule with tasks that flow smoothly from start to finish. Do not skimp on the work plan.
- Make sure the work plan clearly shows a well thought out execution plan to accomplish the work. Do not wait until contract award to develop the plan. This should also include materials, equipment, and facilities.
- Clearly state assumptions. Do not leave that to the evaluator.
- When the topic is fairly broad, still make sure to focus on a single or small number of exploratory paths. Evaluators are not looking for a literature review or survey.
- Ensure the project is reasonable, realistic, and achievable within the period of performance and funds available.

