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SBIR/STTR Commercialization Plan Checklist

A practical checklist for strengthening the commercialization plan section of an SBIR or STTR proposal and aligning technical work with market, customer, funding, and Phase III strategy.

Company / organization:	_____	**Prepared by:**	_____
Technology / product:	_____	**Date / version:**	_____
Target agency / topic:	_____	**Target phase:**	☐ Phase I ☐ Phase II ☐ Fast-Track ☐ Direct-to-Phase II
Primary market:	_____	**Intended customer / buyer:**	_____
Commercialization lead:	_____	**Plan status:**	☐ Draft ☐ In review ☐ Submission-ready

1. Commercialization Plan Snapshot

Use this snapshot to define the core story before drafting: what is being commercialized, who needs it, why now, and how the company will move from SBIR/STTR-funded R&D to adoption, revenue, licensing, procurement, partnership, or investment.

Planning area	Prompt	Draft notes
Commercial product or service	What will exist after successful development?	
Primary customer / buyer	Who can pay, adopt, license, procure, prescribe, integrate, or recommend it?	
Primary problem solved	What painful, costly, risky, or strategically important problem does it address?	
Commercialization pathway	☐ Direct sales ☐ Licensing ☐ Strategic partnership ☐ Government procurement ☐ Clinical adoption ☐ SaaS/subscription ☐ Other	
Phase III vision	What happens after SBIR/STTR support ends?	

2. Problem, Customer, and Market Need

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan clearly identifies the problem, unmet need, operational pain point, clinical gap, scientific bottleneck, or market inefficiency being addressed.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The target users, customers, buyers, payers, procurement officers, licensors, channel partners, or adopting organizations are separated clearly instead of treated as one	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
group.			
The plan explains why the problem matters economically, strategically, clinically, operationally, scientifically, or socially.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The market need is supported by credible evidence such as customer discovery, literature, industry reports, public data, procurement signals, clinician/user input, partner feedback, or letters of support.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan avoids generic market claims and connects the opportunity to the company's specific beachhead segment.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan describes current alternatives, workarounds, substitute products, services, manual processes, or competing technologies.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

3. Product, Technology, and Differentiation

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan describes the commercial product or service in plain language, not only the underlying research project.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The technical innovation is translated into a customer-facing value proposition.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan explains how the solution is meaningfully different from current alternatives, including performance, cost, speed, access, usability, accuracy, scalability, safety, integration, or defensibility.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The company can explain what will be difficult for competitors to copy, such as IP, data, regulatory know-how, workflow integration, domain expertise, partnerships, technical complexity, or first-mover access.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan connects SBIR/STTR milestones to product maturity, prototype readiness, validation, pilot use, deployment, or market	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
entry.			
The plan is realistic about what the funded project will and will not accomplish commercially.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

4. Market, Segment, and Competitive Landscape

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan defines the initial market segment narrowly enough to support a believable early commercialization strategy.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
TAM, SAM, and SOM assumptions are documented or estimated with a clear method rather than presented as unsupported numbers.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan identifies competitors, substitutes, incumbents, internal build options, and status quo alternatives.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan describes the competitive advantage for the initial segment and the conditions under which customers would switch.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The market entry strategy is staged rather than assuming broad market penetration immediately after R&D completion.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan includes realistic adoption barriers such as procurement cycles, validation requirements, switching costs, workflow resistance, trust, data access, reimbursement, regulation, or channel limitations.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

5. Customer Discovery, Stakeholder Evidence, and Letters

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
Customer discovery has been completed or planned with the actual user, buyer, payer, partner, procurement, clinical, technical, or operational stakeholders.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Interview findings are	☐ Strong		

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
summarized in terms of customer pain, current behavior, willingness to test, buying process, constraints, and decision criteria.	☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Letters of support, partner letters, pilot interest letters, customer feedback, or advisor statements are specific and credible rather than generic endorsements.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan distinguishes between interest, validation, pilot commitment, paid commitment, and commercial traction.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The company has identified what additional market evidence is needed before Phase II, Phase III, or investment discussions.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Stakeholder feedback is tied directly to product requirements, validation plans, commercialization milestones, or go-to-market strategy.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

6. Business Model, Pricing, and Revenue Pathway

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan describes how the company expects to generate revenue or value through sales, licensing, subscriptions, reimbursement, procurement, services, data partnerships, manufacturing, distribution, or strategic acquisition.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The pricing or economic model is at least directionally supported by customer value, cost savings, performance gains, reimbursement logic, procurement norms, competitive pricing, or willingness-to-pay evidence.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan explains the likely sales cycle, decision process, procurement pathway, channel strategy, and early adopter profile.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Revenue projections are realistic, staged, and tied to specific assumptions that can be tested.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan identifies what resources will be needed to commercialize, such as sales, regulatory support, manufacturing, software development, customer success, implementation, quality systems, or partnerships.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The business model fits the company's capabilities, timeline, capital needs, and target market behavior.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

7. IP, Regulatory, Reimbursement, and Data Considerations

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan identifies relevant intellectual property, licensing status, invention disclosures, patent filings, trade secrets, data rights, software rights, or university licensing requirements.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Freedom-to-operate, competitive patent landscape, or licensing risks have been considered at an appropriate early level.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
If regulatory approval or compliance is relevant, the plan identifies the expected pathway, decision points, evidence needs, and expert input required.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
If reimbursement, coverage, coding, payment, or procurement is relevant, the plan identifies assumptions and next validation steps.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
If the product uses sensitive data, AI/ML, clinical data, controlled information, or customer systems, the plan addresses data governance, security, privacy, validation, and trust issues at a suitable level.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan does not overstate regulatory, IP, or reimbursement certainty where additional review is still needed.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

8. Development Milestones and Commercialization Timeline

SBIR/STTR technical milestone	Commercial meaning	Evidence produced	Decision enabled	Target date
Example: prototype accuracy or performance threshold	Supports pilot-readiness or customer validation	Test data / validation report	Proceed to pilot or redesign	

9. Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III Strategy

Stage	Commercialization objective	Key milestones	Evidence needed	Funding / partner path
Phase I	Feasibility evidence, prototype proof, risk reduction, preliminary validation			
Phase II	Product development, deeper validation, customer/pilot engagement, regulatory or market preparation			
Phase III / non-SBIR	Commercial deployment, revenue, procurement, licensing, investment, strategic partner support, or follow-on non-SBIR funding			

10. Team, Partners, Advisors, and Commercial Capability

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan explains why the company is capable of commercializing the technology, not only completing the research.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Commercial leadership, domain expertise, customer access, technical expertise, and operational capabilities are described clearly.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Important gaps are acknowledged and addressed through planned hires, consultants, advisors, subcontractors, university partners, strategic partners, manufacturers, clinical partners,	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
distributors, or investors.			
The plan identifies partner roles and the value each partner adds to market access, validation, production, implementation, adoption, regulatory strategy, or scale-up.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The commercialization team and advisory structure match the technology's market pathway.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan avoids overstating partner commitments that have not yet been secured.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

11. Financial, TABA, and Follow-on Funding Plan

Commercialization plan item	Status	Evidence / details to include	Gap / next action
The plan identifies how SBIR/STTR funding fits into a broader financing strategy.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The company has identified likely follow-on funding sources such as Phase II, TABA, state programs, foundations, strategic partners, investors, customers, procurement, licensing, or revenue.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
TABA or commercialization assistance needs are identified, such as IP review, market research, regulatory strategy, reimbursement analysis, investor readiness, customer discovery, manufacturing planning, or partnership development.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Commercialization costs beyond the proposed R&D budget are considered at a high level.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
The plan includes realistic capital milestones and does not imply that SBIR/STTR alone will fully commercialize the product unless that is actually plausible.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		
Financial projections, if included, are tied to market entry assumptions, adoption rates, pricing, customer segments, and development milestones.	☐ Strong ☐ Partial ☐ Missing		

12. Agency-Specific Fit Check

Agency / solicitation expectations	What the reviewers likely need to see	Included?	Notes / changes needed
Commercialization potential	Clear market, customer, value proposition, and path beyond R&D	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No	
Company capability	Team can execute both technical and commercial development	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No	
Societal / mission impact	Solution aligns with agency mission, public benefit, economic impact, or national need	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No	
Market evidence	Customer, partner, end-user, procurement, clinical, or stakeholder signals are credible	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No	
Phase III path	Plausible non-SBIR future funding, adoption, revenue, partnership, or procurement path	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No	

13. Commercialization Plan Completeness Scorecard

Area	Score	Evidence, concern, or revision needed
Problem/customer/market need	____ / 5	
Product value proposition and differentiation	____ / 5	
Market sizing and competitive landscape	____ / 5	
Customer discovery and stakeholder evidence	____ / 5	
Business model and revenue pathway	____ / 5	
IP/regulatory/reimbursement/data considerations	____ / 5	
Milestones, Phase III, and follow-on funding plan	____ / 5	
Team, partners, and commercialization capability	____ / 5	
Overall score	____ / 40	

Suggested interpretation: 34-40 = strong plan; 27-33 = credible but needs targeted strengthening; 18-26 = major gaps; below 18 = complete additional customer, market, partner, IP, or funding validation before submission.

14. Key Gaps and Revision Plan

#	Gap / concern	Category	Action needed	Owner	Due date
1		☐ Market evidence ☐ Differentiation ☐ Customer ☐ IP/regulatory ☐ Funding ☐ Team ☐			

#	Gap / concern	Category	Action needed	Owner	Due date
		Other			
2		☐ Market evidence ☐ Differentiation ☐ Customer ☐ IP/regulatory ☐ Funding ☐ Team ☐ Other			
3		☐ Market evidence ☐ Differentiation ☐ Customer ☐ IP/regulatory ☐ Funding ☐ Team ☐ Other			
4		☐ Market evidence ☐ Differentiation ☐ Customer ☐ IP/regulatory ☐ Funding ☐ Team ☐ Other			
5		☐ Market evidence ☐ Differentiation ☐ Customer ☐ IP/regulatory ☐ Funding ☐ Team ☐ Other			

Commercialization plan revision notes

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