SDI ScienceDocs Inc.
Research • Funding • AI Strategy • Est. 2004
46-E Peninsula Center Dr. #509, Rolling Hills Estates CA 90274 323-834-8555 sd.admin@sciencedocs.com

SBIR/STTR Readiness Checklist

A practical readiness worksheet for research teams, startups, university spinouts, and small businesses preparing to pursue SBIR or STTR funding.

Company / organization:	_____	**Prepared by:**	_____
Project / technology:	_____	**Date / version:**	_____
Target program:	☐ SBIR ☐ STTR ☐ Unsure	**Target agency:**	_____
Target phase:	☐ Phase I ☐ Phase II ☐ Direct-to-Phase II ☐ Fast-Track	**Submission window:**	_____
Primary technical area:	_____	**Current TRL / maturity:**	_____

1. Quick Readiness Snapshot

Use this first page to identify whether the project is ready for an SBIR/STTR pursuit now, needs targeted preparation, or should be redirected to another funding pathway.

Readiness area	Selection	Notes
Overall readiness	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low	Main reason: _____
Best fit	☐ SBIR ☐ STTR ☐ Other non-dilutive funding ☐ Equity/partner funding	Why: _____
Proposal timing	☐ Ready this cycle ☐ Needs 30-60 days ☐ Needs 3-6 months ☐ Not yet	Critical gap: _____
Commercialization strength	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Weak	Evidence: _____
Technical/research strength	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Weak	Evidence: _____

2. Eligibility and Program Fit

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The applicant organization qualifies as an eligible U.S. small business under the target program requirements.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team understands ownership, control, PI employment, and work location requirements for the target agency.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
For STTR, a qualifying research institution partner has been identified or can be secured in time.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The proposed work is R&D-oriented rather than routine product development, consulting, sales, or implementation only.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The topic, solicitation, or agency mission area clearly fits the proposed technology and intended outcomes.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team has checked whether the agency uses specific topic requirements, budget caps, registrations, forms, or submission portals.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The applicant can complete required registrations before the deadline, including SAM.gov and other agency-specific systems.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

3. Innovation and Technical Merit

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The idea addresses a meaningful scientific, technical, clinical, operational, or national need.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The proposed approach is novel or meaningfully better than current alternatives.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team can describe the technical hypothesis, core uncertainty, or key feasibility question to be tested.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The proposed Phase I work can produce measurable evidence of feasibility within the allowed budget and timeline.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The project has a clear technical foundation, such as preliminary data, prototypes, algorithms, designs, publications, patents, or prior work.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The anticipated risks are understood and can be addressed through a credible experimental or development plan.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The expected outcome is specific enough to support a go/no-go decision for further development or Phase II planning.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

4. Research Plan and Workplan Readiness

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
Specific aims or technical objectives are drafted in plain language.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Each aim has defined methods, tasks, milestones, and measurable success criteria.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The workplan separates feasibility testing from full-scale product buildout.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Milestones are realistic for the Phase I or Phase II period of performance.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team has identified data, materials, equipment, software, facilities, approvals, and collaborators needed to complete the work.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Potential failure points have been identified with backup approaches or decision gates.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The project has a credible path from Phase I results to Phase II development or follow-on funding.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

5. Commercialization and Market Readiness

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The target customer, user, payer, buyer, agency, or adopting organization has been defined.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The problem is important enough that customers or stakeholders would pay, adopt, partner, license, or fund further development.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Current alternatives, workarounds, competitors, and substitute approaches have been identified.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team can explain why the proposed solution is differentiated, defensible, or strategically valuable.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Early market evidence exists, such as interviews, letters of support, pilot interest, customer discovery, advisor input, or partner discussions.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The business model or adoption pathway is plausible for the target market.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The commercialization plan can connect technical milestones to product, regulatory, reimbursement, partnership, licensing, procurement, or investment milestones.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

6. Team, Partnerships, and Facilities

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The PI or technical lead has relevant expertise and enough availability for the project.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team includes or can access commercialization, customer discovery, regulatory, reimbursement, manufacturing, data, or go-to-market expertise as needed.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Key subcontractors, consultants, university collaborators, or clinical/industry partners are identified and willing to participate.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Roles and responsibilities are clear across company staff, consultants, subcontractors, and research institution partners.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Facilities, equipment, software, data access, testing environments, or lab resources are adequate for the proposed work.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Letters of support, biosketches, CVs, facilities descriptions, or partner documentation can be prepared before submission.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

7. Budget, Compliance, and Submission Readiness

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
The team has estimated personnel, consultant, subcontractor, equipment, materials, travel, and indirect cost needs.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The proposed budget aligns with agency caps, solicitation rules,	☐ Ready ☐ Partial		

Readiness item	Status	Evidence / notes	Action needed
and the actual scope of work.	☐ Not yet		
Human subjects, animal subjects, data security, export control, biosafety, privacy, or other compliance issues have been identified if applicable.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team understands required registrations, forms, certifications, attachments, and portal steps for the target agency.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
Internal review time is built into the schedule for technical, commercial, budget, and administrative review.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		
The team has a plan for final document assembly, formatting, page limits, attachments, and deadline management.	☐ Ready ☐ Partial ☐ Not yet		

8. SBIR vs. STTR Decision Check

Decision factor	Status	Implication / notes
Company can perform most of the work internally	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	May favor SBIR if agency rules and team structure support it.
University or nonprofit research institution is essential to the technical work	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	May favor STTR or a subcontract-heavy SBIR, depending on agency rules.
PI employment/appointment requirements are clear	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	Check agency-specific requirements early.
IP ownership and licensing expectations are clear	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	Important for university spinouts and STTR partnerships.
Company has commercialization leadership and decision-making authority	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	Important for either SBIR or STTR competitiveness.

9. Readiness Scorecard

Area	Score	Evidence or concern
Eligibility and agency fit	____ / 5	
Technical merit and feasibility	____ / 5	
Research plan clarity	____ / 5	
Commercialization strength	____ / 5	
Team and partner readiness	____ / 5	
Budget/admin/submission readiness	____ / 5	
Overall readiness total	____ / 30	

Suggested interpretation: 24-30 = strong near-term candidate; 18-23 = promising but needs targeted preparation; 12-17 = clarify technical and commercial gaps before submission; below 12 = consider discovery, customer validation, pilot planning, or another funding pathway first.

10. Key Assumptions and Gaps

Assumption / gap	Current belief	Validation method	Owner / deadline
Technical feasibility assumption		☐ Test ☐ Validate ☐ Defer	
Market/customer assumption		☐ Interview ☐ Research ☐ Validate	
Regulatory/reimbursement/ procurement assumption		☐ Investigate ☐ Expert review ☐ Not applicable	
Partner/team assumption		☐ Confirm ☐ Recruit ☐ Replace	
Budget/timeline assumption		☐ Revise ☐ Confirm ☐ Escalate	

11. Next-Step Action Plan

#	Action	Owner	Due date	Status / notes
1	Confirm target agency/topic and deadline			
2	Resolve eligibility or SBIR/STTR structure questions			
3	Draft specific aims or technical objectives			
4	Collect preliminary data, market evidence, and partner support			
5	Build budget, workplan, and compliance checklist			
6	Decide whether to submit, delay, or pursue another pathway			

Readiness decision summary

_____

_____

_____

_____

Need help applying this tool? ScienceDocs supports commercialization, change management, AI adoption, grant strategy, and operational optimization.