

The Army xTech Program – xTechSearch 8 Competition Announcement

I. Background and Purpose

The U.S. Army invites interested entities to participate in the eighth iteration of the Expeditionary Technology Search competition, a forum for eligible sole proprietors and small businesses across the U.S. to engage with the Department of Defense (DOD), earn prize money, participate in the accelerator program and potentially submit for a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) award. xTechSearch offers an opportunity for eligible participants to pitch novel technology solutions – new applications for an existing technology or entirely new technology concepts – to the Army.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology recognizes that the Army must enhance engagements with small businesses by (1) understanding the spectrum of “world-class” technologies being developed commercially that may benefit the DOD in the manufacturing space and (2) integrating the sector of commercial innovators into the DOD Science and Technology (S&T) ecosystem.

The xTechSearch 8 competition will provide up to \$800,000 in cash prizes to select eligible entities. Up to 50 finalists will receive a cash prize of \$2,000 each and an invitation to pitch their innovative technology solutions to a panel of Army and DOD SMEs. Up to 20 participants will be selected as the final winners of the competition. Winners will receive an additional cash prize of \$35,000 each and the opportunity to submit a proposal for a Phase I SBIR award of up to \$250,000 each. Details on the prize and SBIR structures are listed in the announcement below.

The xTechSearch competition strives to integrate small businesses into the Army’s S&T ecosystem by providing research opportunities with Army labs, including authorized access to the Army’s organic intellectual and technical capital. Participants will receive detailed feedback from Army and DOD stakeholders, and finalists will have access to training, mentorship and other support infrastructure to determine how best to align their technology solutions with real users and buyers within the Army. Finalists will be invited to participate in the xTech Accelerator to receive education, mentorship and access to networking events to help grow their companies for Army and commercial users.

The efforts described in this notice are being pursued under the authorities of 10 U.S.C. § 4025 and 15 U.S.C. § 638 and 10 U.S.C. § 4022 (Prototype Projects) to award cash prizes and SBIRs as described in this announcement. While the authority of this program is 10 U.S.C. § 4025, the xTechSearch 8 competition may generate interest by another U.S. Army, DOD or United States Government (USG) organization for a funding opportunity outside of this program (e.g., submission of a proposal under a Broad Agency Announcement). The interested DOD organization may contact the participant to provide additional information or ask for a request for proposal in a separate solicitation. Finalists of the prize competition may be invited to submit a separate proposal for further development of their proposed technology solution based on the needs of the Army. The Army may use a contract mechanism of their choice and will notify the participants accordingly.

All xTechSearch 8 competition submissions are treated as privileged information and contents are disclosed to Government employees or designated support contractors only for the purpose of evaluation and program support.

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Detailed feedback from the judges panel will be provided to participants during each part of the competition. The purpose of providing this feedback is to accelerate transition of the technology to an Army end-user by providing insight on best applications for the technology, suggestions for product improvement for Army use and recommended next steps for development. However, the Government will not respond to questions or inquiries regarding this feedback.

II. Eligibility Requirements

Small, independent U.S. businesses. Restrictions exist about (1) the type of firm, (2) its ownership structure, and (3) the firm's size in terms of the number of employees, as follows:

- (1) Type of Firm: an eligible firm must be organized as a for-profit concern and meet all the other small business requirements in 13 C.F.R. § 121.702. Non-profit entities are not eligible.
- (2) Ownership and Control: A majority (more than 50%) of an eligible firms' equity (e.g., stock) must be directly owned and controlled by one of the following:
 - a. One or more individuals who are citizens or permanent resident aliens of the U.S.
 - b. Other for-profit small business concerns (each of which is directly owned and controlled by individuals who are citizens or permanent resident aliens of the U.S.)
 - c. A combination of (a) and (b) above.

Note: If an Employee Stock Ownership Plan owns all or part of the concern, each stock trustee and plan member is considered an owner. If a trust owns all or part of the concern, each trustee and trust beneficiary is considered an owner.

- (3) Size: An eligible firm, together with the affiliates, must not have more than 500 employees.

Foreign companies may participate in xTechSearch by partnering with a U.S. based company that meets the type of firm, ownership structure, and size requirements defined above, so long as the U.S. small business is the primary lead.

Companies that have previously participated in xTechSearch competitions are eligible to participate for new technology concepts or improvements to prior submitted proposals.

Finalists from the xTechSearch 7 competition are not eligible to participate in this competition unless they partner with another firm that did not reach the finals of xTechSearch 7, so long as the alternate firm is the primary lead. xTechSearch 7 finalists will be eligible to once again participate in the xTechSearch series and submit a proposal of their own when xTechSearch 9 launches.

Technologies that fall exclusively within the portfolio of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, which include military infectious diseases, combat casualty care, military operational medicine, chemical biological defense, and clinical and rehabilitative medicine, are excluded from xTechSearch.

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III. Army Focus Areas

xTechSearch is seeking novel, disruptive concepts and technology solutions with dual-use capabilities that can assist in tackling the Army's current needs and apply to current Army concepts. The intent is to provide the Army with transformative technology solutions while enabling cost savings throughout the Army systems' life cycle. Critical technology areas include Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning; Autonomy; Climate and Clean Tech; Contested Logistics and Sustainment; Immersive/Wearables; and Sensors.

See the attached document on the Valid Eval registration page for the full list of suggested focus areas which include the critical technology areas listed above in addition to other key areas of interest to the Army.

IV. Program Submission

The xTechSearch 8 competition is voluntary and open to all entities that meet eligibility requirements. **Only one submission per eligible entity is permitted.** The registration information and submission upload must be received by **5 p.m. ET on November 30, 2023.** Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered.

Register by selecting the xTechSearch 8 competition tile at:

<https://www.xtechsearch.army.mil/>

V. xTechSearch Competition Structure

Part 1: Concept White Paper

All eligible entities shall submit a three-page concept white paper outlining their technology, the potential impact on the Army, technology and concept viability, and descriptions of the dual-use technology applications for both the commercial and defense space. Each concept white paper will be reviewed by DOD experts across the S&T ecosystem including Warfighter, acquisition, and research and development subject matter experts.

All concept white papers must adhere to the following requirements:

- All concept white papers must be submitted using the template found on the Valid Eval registration page, "*xTechSearch8_WhitePaper_Template.doc*". **Any proposals submitted in a format other than that provided by the template will not be reviewed.**
- Please list your company name, and proposal title **EXACTLY** how you would like them to appear on any contest marketing materials. Use a clear and concise proposal title to give readers and potential stakeholders an understanding of how your technology would benefit the Army.

Concept white papers will be evaluated and ranked in a two-stage process using the following scoring criteria (further details on each scoring dimension can be found on the xTechSearch 8 competition registration page):

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- Abstract – 5%
- Army Capability Gap(s) – 10%
- Potential for Impact – 35%
- Technology and Concept Viability – 30%
- Dual Use – 15%
- Proposal Quality – 5%

Upon conclusion of the concept white paper evaluation period, up to 50 applicants will be selected to receive a prize of \$2,000 each and an invitation to Part 2: Finals.

Part 2: Finals

Selected participants from Part 1 will be invited to conduct a virtual pitch to a panel of Army and DOD SMEs, tentatively scheduled from April 22-May 3, 2024 (dates will be finalized with participants) and are subject to change.

Detailed instructions and evaluation criteria will be provided to the participants selected for Part 2 of the competition. Up to 20 participants will be selected as the final winners of the competition and will receive an additional prize of \$35,000 each and an invitation to submit for a Phase I SBIR award of up to \$250,000 each.

Part 3: Request for Phase I SBIR Proposal

A separate SBIR announcement will be issued with detailed instructions on how to submit the SBIR proposal materials. Winners selected from Part 2: Finals will be the **only firms eligible** to participate and submit a Phase I proposal under this announcement and will receive detailed instructions upon selection. All other submissions will be ineligible.

Participants that are selected and awarded a Phase I SBIR, will have an opportunity to submit a Phase II SBIR proposal at the conclusion of their Phase I contract. Only firms that were awarded a Phase I SBIR under this announcement will be eligible for a Phase II SBIR. Additional instructions and details will be provided to the eligible firms.

xTechSearch 8 Accelerator

In addition to the prize money, selected finalists will have the opportunity to participate in the xTechSearch 8 Accelerator, a cohort-based program designed to help develop participants through educational programming, diverse mentorship, venture building consulting, community building and strategic exposure. Additional details on the accelerator will be provided to the selected participants.

VI. Prizes and Incentives

Prizes will be offered under 10 U.S.C. §4025 (Prize competitions). The total prize pool is \$800,000. The SBIR contract awards will be offered under 15 U.S.C. 638; each Phase I SBIR award shall be up to \$250,000 and each SBIR Phase II proposal shall be up to \$1.9M. Other non-monetary incentives are provided through the xTechSearch 8 competition to help small businesses engage with the Army.

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Phase	Winners	Prize	Phase I SBIR Award
Part 1: Concept White Paper	Up to 50	\$2,000 each	N/A
Part 2: Finals	Up to 20	\$35,000 each	N/A
Part 3: Request for Phase I SBIR Proposal	Up to 20	N/A	Up to \$250,000 each
	Total	\$800,000	Up to \$5M

VII. Proposed Schedule

The proposed schedule is outlined below and subject to change without notice.

Date	Activity
October 17-November 30, 2023	Application Part 1: Concept white paper submission period
March 20, 2024	Finalists Announced
Spring 2024	xTechSearch 8 Accelerator
April 22-May 3, 2024	Part 2: Finals
May 13, 2024	Winners Announced
May 2024	SBIR Phase I proposal submission period
June 2024	SBIR Phase I award notification

VIII. Disclaimers

Registered participants are required to assume any and all risks and waive claims against the Federal Government and its related entities, except in the case of willful misconduct, for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue, or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from their participation in this prize competition, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise.

IX. Intellectual Property

The Army is a strong proponent of deliberate intellectual property (IP) rights and management by the private sector and the DOD.

For the xTechSearch 8 competition:

- The Federal Government may not gain an interest in IP developed by a participant without the written consent of the participant;
- Nothing in this xTechSearch 8 prize competition shall diminish the Government's rights in patents, technical data, technical information, computer software, computer databases, and computer software documentation that the Government had prior to this xTechSearch 8 prize competition, or is entitled to, under any other Government agreement or contract, or is otherwise entitled to under law; and
- The Federal Government may negotiate a license for the use of IP developed by a registered participant in the prize competition.

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X. Point of Contact

The xTech Program Office

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, Research and Technology

Email: usarmy.pentagon.hqda-asa-alt.mbx.xtechsearch@army.mil

Website: <https://www.xtechsearch.army.mil>