

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
We opted out during proposal submission and would like to opt in now. How to change the status to participate?	You can still apply via ProSAMS.
Our team previously participated in I-Corps through a different agency (U.S. Department of Energy, Phase Shift program), but we are currently investigating a new and distinct technology. In addition, our proposed Executive Lead has not previously participated in any I-Corps programs. Would we be eligible to participate in the NASA SBIR I-Corps program under these circumstances?	Absolutely can as long as they have a current award with NASA. Especially if this is a different technology or if the customers are different. Going through it again is definitely worth it. Teams that have gone through full programs come back to want to go through it again when they get their SBIR award or STTR awards because it gives them now even more insight and information about their business model and customer need.
What is the time commitment that we will be asking of an external Industry Mentor?	All team members have to agree to attend all I-Corps sessions and meetings, that includes the industry mentor. You can add up all the meeting times for either program and determine the number of hours with the instructors. Your industry mentor is not required to attend all customer interviews. It is recommended that they attend some in the beginning to understand what the program is about and what you are doing, but they are not required to.
Are these virtual sessions?	All virtual sessions.
Getting 50 people to agree to an interview seems quite challenging to say the least. How do you get so many people to participate?	The lectures are going to talk about how you identify people to interview, how to schedule interviews and who are the best people to interview. The program covers the questions to ask as well. It is very infrequent that a team does not hit the 50 or 100 interviews (based on their program). It is not as hard as you may think.
Are the times in Eastern Time zones?	Yes
How do we ID/select an industry mentor for an I-Corps cohort, especially if our location is different than our key non-profit, FFRDC team member? Would the industry mentor be associated with a NSF Hub? For us we might have three locations to consider?	Do not worry about location of your industry mentor unless you were trying to physically meet with them. You are welcome to reach out to the NSF core hubs to find an industry mentor. NSF supports regional I-Corps training through something we call NSF Hubs. There are now thirteen (13) NSF Hubs located across the country. They may be able to assist you in finding a mentor, so you could reach out to them or give you some ideas about how to locate an industry mentor.

<p>Can a candidate who is currently an MBA graduate student and holds a Bachelor of Science degree fulfill the role of Executive Lead for a NASA SBIR I-Corps team? If so, are there additional requirements or recommendations regarding their eligibility?</p>	<p>It is best if entrepreneurial lead is a part of the company. A MBA student is not a good choice. Typically, they don't have the experience required to be that entrepreneurial lead and they are not typically trying to help make decisions for the company. On occasion NSF has allowed an MBA student to be the Entrepreneurial Lead; however, it most always doesn't work out. However, the student could be a co-entrepreneurial lead. They would get a fabulous experience.</p>
<p>In the NASA I-Corps website it says 30 interviews are required for SBIR I-Corps teams. Do we need to conduct 50 interviews for NASA SBIR Phase I I-Corps Teams?</p>	<p>50 interviews are required for SBIR Phase I I-Corps Teams.</p>
<p>Can travel and attendance to in-person conferences be included in the introduction to I-Corps budget proposal for customer interaction?</p>	<p>We do allow you to spend money on travel both if you need to visit customers and/or need to go to conferences. It is encouraged to use the funds to attend conferences. It is a more enriched experience to attend a conference in person.</p>
<p>Is there a template or requirements documents we should follow for the proposal submission?</p>	<p>There is a Template for I-Corps Proposal. It is on the NASA SBIR/STTR I-Corps website, but we will send a reference with the email of resources from this webinar.</p>
<p>Can 50 interviews be divided in beachhead market/industry. Or these be split in different industries of target. Any guidance on how many interviews for each industry to target?</p>	<p>The I-Corps instructors of the program will go into great detail about these interviews. You are welcome to ask them that sort of advice during your office hours as well. As you start the program, you might be searching for the right application or target market that you might want to test a couple markets. The instructors will tell you what to focus on. It is common to start with one market idea and pivot based on how the interviews go.</p>
<p>Should interviews be used in part to cultivate additional technical talent, as a part of commercial scaling?</p>	<p>You could use it for that purpose, but the instructors will want to make sure you have everything you need. We will want to make sure that you have a validated beachhead market that you understand the value proposition and the problem you are solving warrant your efforts in commercialization.</p>
<p>If targeting different industries, how many is too many?</p>	<p>Talk to the I-Corps instructors on this but it is often true that teams come in thinking that their product or technology could be used for multiple industries and in multiple applications. That maybe true but the I-Corps</p>

	Team's focus will need to be narrowed down because it is not likely that you can address all markets at the same time. If you believe that you have multiple markets and applications, start with a few and you can focus down from there.
The interview number surges from 30 in 2024 to 50 now (for SBIR). Does this trend encourage us to talk to customers from various commercial and even academic sectors?	NASA and NSF changed the SBIR Phase I I-Corps program. It was designed a bit differently in 2024. This program now has a bit more material and a little bit bigger requirement for the number of interviews. It is perfectly ok to target academic sectors as a part of your customer interviews.
if mentor is very busy and we meet offline with her/him, could just the technical lead and entrepreneur lead attend the I-Corps sessions and update the industry mentor later on?	No. All members of the team are required to attend all sessions of the I-Corps program.
Is the I-Corp proposal for both the local hub and national programs? If I remember, the national I-Corps program has just a few awards, correct?	NASA SBIR Phase I Awardees are eligible for the less intensive National I-Corps program, and NASA have a smaller number of STTR Phase I I-Corps Teams versus the number of SBIR Phase I I-Corps Teams. NASA typically supports 20 SBIR I-Corps teams and 2 to 6 STTR I-Corps teams per year.
Do all 50 interviews need to be completed by the end of the 7-week I-Corps period or by the end of the Phase I effort?	The interviews need to be completed by the end of the 7-week I-Corps program.
Can you please clarify mentor time commitment again; i.e., number of hours during the 7-weeks I-Corps program?	The mentor needs to attend to all of the I-Corps meetings but does not have to attend all the interviews.
Can our TABA vendor act as our industry mentor?	It could be possible. This has not been seen before in past I-Corps programs.
Can we interview potential customers outside of the US?	Yes. However, we do not let you travel or spend money outside of the US. You would just have to make sure that the company/companies are not in countries that is in NASA list of "Designated Countries". This is a compilation of countries with which the United States has no diplomatic relations.
How do i find an industry mentor?	As a company you should have advisors. It's probably best if you go to people that have the interest in your company and interest in helping you build your business. Those people make the best industry mentors. You could contact one of the NSF I-Corps hubs for

	assistance in identifying a mentor. NSF does not keep a list or database of mentors.
Are the lectures and training material available for those who do not get selected for the I-Corps program, but would like to conduct customer discovery following the I-Corps process?	Unfortunately, the answer is no. The I-Crops materials are there for participants in the program and course instructors. We do not share those I-Corps materials.
What other services do the Hubs offer?	They provide I-Corps training in a short course. They also both select and train mentors in regional programs.
If there are approximately 20 STTR Phase I Teams selected for National I-Corps Cohort, are the remaining STTR Phase I awardees allowed to participate in the I-Corps program offered by the NSF Hubs?	It is a bit of a mixture. There is a special I-Corps Cohort for SBIR Phase I companies due to it being a shorter program and all teams will be NASA SBIR companies. STTR companies will join the full program, and that program will have NSF Phase I companies as well. It could have NIH Phase I companies and DHL as well. But it is not a regional program.
Can companies with DoD Phase IIs also apply to NASA I-Corps program, or is it just for NASA or NSF?	Just NASA, NSF does not have a relationship with DoD.
If we are a STTR Phase I awardee is not selected for the National I-Corps program, then we will not be allowed to participate in the I-Corps program at all?	They will have another opportunity. Let's say they are a STTR Phase I awardee, and they did not get selected for I-Corps, but they went on to get a Phase II award. In the Phase II contract, there is an option called Phase II-E. The small company will immediately become eligible to apply for the National I-Corps Cohort program. The same opportunity applies for the SBIR Phase II firm that exercises its Phase II-E option.