Note: These discussions are designed to elicit feedback that can be used to improve FAST program service delivery both from the SBA to FAST applicants/awardees and from FAST awarded organizations to small businesses. The requires a more comprehensive understanding of the various services provided by FAST organizations beyond what they conduct under the FAST grant award, a general understanding of the broader ecosystem that influences grantees and small businesses, and the perspectives of small businesses that have received SBIR/STTR related assistance from these organizations.

FAST Stakeholder Draft Discussion Guide

- Thank you for participating in this discussion today. My name is [DISCUSSION LEADER], and I am a [TITLE] with Summit/IEc. Summit and IEc have been hired by the U.S. Small Business Administration to conduct this research effort on the agency's behalf.

- As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, this discussion cannot take place without approval from the Office of Management and Budget. SBA obtained that approval under OMB Control # 3245-0398. The total estimated time for participating in this discussion is one hour per respondent.

- Your participation in this research is completely voluntary.

- Your insights will be used to develop recommendations on how to improve the Federal and State Technology (FAST) grant program.

- Your name, organization, or small business will not be associated with any of your responses.

Unless you have any questions for me, we can start our discussion.

[Note: We will excerpt the relevant questions for each respondent prior to sending out the guide.]

Stakeholder Group	Topics/Questions

Group 1. FAST Award Recipients	• How did you hear about the FAST Program?
	
	When thinking about applying for the FAST grant, did you expect or need any help from the SBA?
	• What assistance did you receive once your FAST application was successful?
	  What assistance have you found helpful from SBA on FAST program implementation?
	  What other assistance would you like to see SBA offer?
	  What changes would you recommend to SBA to improve the FAST application process?
	  Do you have any plans to apply to future FAST grant opportunities? (If no, why not?)
	  Do you have concerns about meeting the FAST funding match requirement?
	  What other federal, state or private grant programs do you regularly apply to?

Stakeholder Group	Topics/Questions
	How do these other programs supplement or augment the assistance you receive from FAST?
	• How many businesses do you serve overall per year?
	• What types of services do you provide to SBIR/STTR applicants and awardees? (How) did the FAST grant enhance or augment the services that you provide to SBIR/STTR applicants and awardees?
	• (How) did the FAST grant enhance or augment your ability to develop a network of mentors to work with your clients?
	• What common characteristics do you see in most successful SBIR/STTR applicants? What outreach strategies have you found effective for engaging first-time and/or underserved clients? What outcomes (e.g., commercialization progress) do you see in successful Phase 1 awardees? What outcomes (e.g., commercialization progress) do you see in successful Phase 2 awardees? What business assistance tools have you found helpful in meeting SBIR/STTR client needs?
	What lessons learned and/or best practices can you share on each of the following? 1. increasing the number of underserved clients, 2. improving SBIR/STTR client outcomes, 3. meeting first-time client needs, 4. facilitating more competitive proposals, particularly from underserved clients
	• What information do you track on your clients?
	• How has that information helped you determine client outcomes? What challenges exist in tracking client data?
Group 2. FAST Non-recipients	What do you know about the FAST Program? [If it is known that non-recipient applied to FAST, skip] Have you applied for a FAST grant in the past? (If answer to above is no) What are the reasons you have not applied for a FAST award? (If they have applied to FAST previously) When thinking about applying for the FAST grant, did you expect or need any help from the SBA? What changes would you recommend to SBA to improve the application process? Do you have any plans to apply to future FAST grant opportunities? (If no, why not?) What other federal, state or private grant programs do you regularly apply to aimed at helping SBIR/STTR or other small business technology commercialization? How many businesses do you serve per year?

Stakeholder Group	Topics/Questions
	What types of services do you provide to SBIR/STTR applicants and awardees? What common characteristics do you see in most successful SBIR/STTR applicants? What outreach strategies have you found effective for engaging first-time and/or underserved clients? What outcomes (e.g., commercialization progress) do you see in successful Phase 1 awardees? What outcomes (e.g., commercialization progress) do you see in successful Phase 2 awardees? What lessons learned and/or best practices can you share on each of the following? 1. increasing the number of underserved clients, 2. improving SBIR/STTR client outcomes, 3. meeting first-time client needs, 4. facilitating more competitive proposals, particularly from underserved clients What business assistance tools might be helpful to meet SBIR/STTR client needs? What information do you track on your clients? How has that information helped determine client outcomes? What challenges exist in tracking client data?
Group 3. SBIR/STTR Awardees	What help did you seek when you sought assistance from [organization]? What assistance did you receive? Before seeking assistance from [organization], what was your general understanding and impression of the SBIR/STTR funding opportunity? Have you received Phase 0 funding from [organization]? If so, what has your experience been? How many times did you interact with [organization]? What service(s) was (were) the most valuable for developing a successful SBIR/STTR application or continuous award? Did you receive continuous support from SBIR/STTR application through SBIR/STTR award? Were there any gaps in services offered? How can services be improved? What changes would you recommend to improve the services provided for the SBIR/STTR application or post-award phases? Have you made commercialization progress following your SBIR/STTR Award? If yes, has the assistance you received from [organization] been valuable for commercialization? Did you receive other, non-SBIR/STTR services of value from [organization]? If yes, what type of services? Of all the services you received from [organization], what service(s) was (were)

Stakeholder Group	Topics/Questions
	most important to your company's growth/development?
	What are your greatest needs? What types of support would help you meet those needs?
	Have you received grants or contracts from other federal or state programs? How do these grants or contracts supplement or augment the development of your technology?
Group 4. Un-successful SBIR/STTR Applicants	What help did you seek when you sought assistance from [organization]?
	Before seeking assistance from [organization], what was your general understanding and impression of the SBIR/STTR funding opportunity?
	Have you received Phase 0 funding? If so, what has your experience been?
	How many times did you interact with [organization]?
	What type of services and/or support did you receive from [organization] for the SBIR/STTR application?
	Were there any gaps in services offered? How can services be improved?
	Did you participate in a debrief session with the SBIR/STTR agency? If so, what changes were recommended to your proposal? If so, will you take the input and resubmit your proposal?
	Are you considering responding to another SBIR/STTR opportunity in the future?
	Did you receive other, non-SBIR/STTR services of value from [organization]? If yes, what type of services?
	What service(s) was (were) most important to your company's growth/development? What are your greatest needs? What would help you meet those needs?
	Have you received grants or contracts from other federal or state programs?
Group 5. SBIR/STTR Non-Appli-cants	Before seeking assistance from [organization], what was your general understanding and impression of the SBIR/STTR funding opportunity?
	What is your general level of awareness of the SBIR/STTR programs now?
	What help did you seek when you sought assistance from [organization]?
	What type of services and/or support did you receive from [organization]?
	How many times did you interact with [organization]?
	Were there any gaps in services offered? How can services be improved?
	What service(s) was (were) most important to your company's growth/development?
	Have you received Phase 0 funding? If so, what has your experience been?
	Did you put together a proposal? If so, why did you not submit?
	What are some of the reasons that you have not applied for an SBIR/STTR opportunity?
	Do you plan to respond to an SBIR/STTR opportunity in the future? (Why or why not?)
	What are your greatest needs? What would help you meet those needs?

Stakeholder Group	Topics/Questions
	Have you received grants from other federal or state programs?