

SUPPORTING STATEMENT - PART A for

OMB Control Number 0524-0052:

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Funding Agreement Certifications

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Table of Contents

A1. CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY.....	3
A2. PURPOSE AND USE OF THE INFORMATION.....	4
A3. USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND BURDEN REDUCTION.....	4
A4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION.....	5
A5. IMPACTS ON SMALL BUSINESSES OR OTHER SMALL ENTITIES.....	5
A6. CONSEQUENCES OF COLLECTING THE INFORMATION LESS FREQUENTLY.....	5
A7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE GUIDELINES OF 5 CFR 1320.5.....	5
A8. COMMENTS TO THE FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE AND EFFORTS FOR CONSULTATION.....	6
A9. EXPLAIN ANY DECISIONS TO PROVIDE ANY PAYMENT OR GIFT TO RESPONDENTS.....	7
A10. ASSURANCES OF CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS.....	7
A11. JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE.....	7
A12. ESTIMATES OF THE HOUR BURDEN OF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.....	8
A13. ESTIMATES OF OTHER TOTAL ANNUAL COST BURDEN.....	9
A14. PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.....	9
A15. EXPLANATION OF PROGRAM CHANGES OR ADJUSTMENTS.....	9
A16. PLANS FOR TABULATION, AND PUBLICATION AND PROJECT TIME SCHEDULE.....	10
A17. DISPLAYING THE OMB APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE.....	10
A18. EXCEPTIONS TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT IDENTIFIED IN ITEM 19.....	10

A1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting a revision of a currently approved information collection. The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) make competitively awarded grants to qualified small businesses to support high quality, advanced concept research related to important scientific problems and opportunities in agriculture that could lead to significant public benefit if successful.

The USDA SBIR/STTR Programs Office proposes to collect two forms: a “Funding Agreement Certification” form and a “Certification for SBIR/STTR Applicants that are Majority-Owned by Multiple Venture Capital Operating Companies, Hedge Fund or Private Equity Firms” form. NIFA intends to ask all recipients of SBIR/STTR grants to submit a Funding Agreement Certification form after NIFA has provided the grantee notification of the award, as well as any other time set forth in the funding agreement. For example, the small business concern (SBC) may be required to update the form to assure continued eligibility and compliance when changes in the SBC apply. NIFA also intends to ask SBIR/STTR applicants that are majority-owned by multiple venture capital operating companies, hedge funds, or private equity firms to submit an additional certification form prior to submitting an application. These certification statements are for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the small business concern for a SBIR/STTR award. NIFA is proposing implementation of these forms in order to comply with the guidance provided in the Small Business Administration’s [SBIR/STTR Policy Directive](#) effective May 3, 2023.

The objective of the SBIR/STTR Programs are to: stimulate technological innovations in the private sector; strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting Federal research and development needs; increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from USDA-supported research and development efforts; and foster and encourage participation by small business firms in technological innovations that are new entrants or from emerging states. The USDA SBIR/STTR programs are carried out in three separate phases:

1. Phase I awards to determine, insofar as possible, the scientific and technical merit and feasibility of ideas that appear to have commercial potential.
2. Phase II awards to further develop work from Phase I that meets particular program needs and exhibits potential for commercial application.
3. Phase III awards where commercial applications of SBIR/STTR-funded R/R&D are funded by non-Federal sources of capital; or where products, services or further research intended for use by the Federal Government are funded by follow-on non-SBIR/STTR Federal Funding Agreements.

The USDA SBIR/STTR Programs are administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). NIFA oversees the policies and procedures governing SBIR/STTR grants

awarded to the U.S. small business community, representing approximately 3.2% of the USDA extramural R/R&D budget. This represents approximately \$187M in Phase II grants awarded to the U.S. small business community from 2016 to 2025. In 1982, the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Grants Program was authorized, Pub. Law 97-219. In 1992, the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Grants program was authorized, Pub. Law 102-561. In 2026, the Small Business Innovation and Economic Security Act reauthorized the SBIR and STTR programs through September 30, 2031.

A2. Purpose and Use of the Information.

Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate how the agency has actually used the information received from the current collection.

Grant data is collected from respondents using the Funding Certification form which is used by USDA staff to ensure small business concerns meet specific eligibility requirements for an SBIR/STTR award. The form asks applicants to certify a series of ten statements in order to ensure the grantee is complying with specific program requirements during the life of the funding agreement. If the SBC is majority-owned by venture capital companies, hedge funds, or private equity firms, those respondents will be required to fill out an eight-question form titled Certification for SBIR Applicants that are Majority-Owned by Multiple Venture Capital Operating Companies, Hedge Fund or Private Equity Firms in addition to the Funding Agreement Certification form. The small business concern may be required to update the Funding Agreement Certification form to ensure continued eligibility and compliance when changes in the SBC occur. Information collected includes program participant certifications regarding: the awardee meets ownership, control, size, and organization requirements; U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien status is met; all statements made within forms and documents are true and correct; all certifications are continuing in nature; agreement of no misrepresentation of small business status; the signatory on the form is an authorized representative of the awardee.

A3. Use of information technology and burden reduction.

Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

NIFA makes every effort to comply with the E-Government Act, 2002 (E-Gov) (Pub. L. 107-347) and to provide for alternative submission of information collections. Respondents receive the form(s) via e-mail from NIFA. The forms are fillable PDFs that are completed and sent back to NIFA also via e-mail. Forms are also available for viewing on the NIFA website. Currently there are no plans to create or launch web-based systems to submit the data collection.

A4. Efforts to identify duplication.

Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.

No duplication is involved. There is no similar information available which can be used or modified to meet the information needs of this program. NIFA solely administers and monitors the SBIR/STTR programs.

A5. Impacts on small businesses or other small entities.

If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

SBIR and STTR awards are only available to small businesses. Consequently, all 185 respondents for this collection are necessarily small businesses. However, the Funding Certification form and Certification for SBIR Applicants that are Majority-Owned by Multiple Venture Operating Companies, Hedge Fund or Private Equity Firms form will be fillable PDFs to help minimize the amount of time needed to complete a response to the collection.

A6. Consequences of collecting the information less frequently.

Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted, or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

This is an ongoing, mandatory, information collection.

If NIFA were unable to collect this data, then the USDA SBIR/STTR program would be unable to comply with the Small Business Administration program and reporting requirements that apply to all SBIR and STTR awardees to ensure program integrity and requirements are met during the life of the Funding Agreement.

A7. Special circumstances relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5.

Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**

- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

A8. Comments to the Federal Register Notice and efforts for consultation.

If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior years. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

Notice of intent to renew and revise this information collection was published in the *Federal Register* Tuesday, June 23, 2026, Vol. 91, No. 119 (91 FR 37379). There were no comments.

CONSULTATIONS WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY

NIFA sought consultation outside the agency with the following individuals:

John Kastl, Strategic Development Advisor
Sentinel Ag

Email: john.kastl@sentinelag.tech

Ian Gibson, COO
Pitch Aeronautics Inc.
Email: ian.gibson@pitchaero.com

Richard (Rick) Stonex, CEO and CFO
Poplar Innovations Inc.
rick.stonex@poplarinnovations.com

Stakeholders provided information related to time needed to complete the collection. The forms are mandatory per SBA and are not subject to alteration. The information provided by stakeholders was input as time per response in question A12.

A9. Explain any decisions to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

The agency does not provide payment or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

A10. Assurances of confidentiality provided to respondents.

Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

There is no data that will be released. The certification forms are internal use documents that will certify the awardee meets the requirements of the program before funding an award.

A11. Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

The certifications do not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

A12. Estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

A. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.

Type of Respondent	Forms/ Instruments	No. of Respondents	Annual Frequency per Response	Total Annual Response s	Hours per Response	Total Hours
Businesses/ for-profit concerns	SBIR STTR Funding Form Time of Award	180	1	180	0.50	90
Businesses/ for-profit concerns	SBIR STTR Funding Form Majority Owned	5	1	5	0.5	2.5
Total		185	1	185	1.00	92.5

B. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

Type of Respondent	Avg. Hourly Wage	Avg. Hours/Form	Total	Total Forms/year	Total Yearly Cost
Chief Executive	\$129.63	0.5	\$64.82	180	\$11,666.60
Chief Executive	\$129.63	0.5	\$64.82	5	\$324.10

BLS statistics

*Average Hourly Wage was calculated using BLS hourly mean wage for chief executives (<https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/area/0000000/2025>). This estimate accounts for the cost of fringe benefits for the respondents.

ANNUALIZED COSTS TO RESPONDENTS

The estimated total man-hours for this information collection are 92.5, based on 185 respondents. It is estimated that the cost to respondents is \$11,990.70. Other annual costs to respondents or record keepers are associated with customary and usual business or practices of organizations receiving USDA funding. This estimate accounts for the cost of fringe benefits for the respondents.

A13. Estimates of other total annual cost burden.

Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in questions 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no capital or startup costs or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

A14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Estimated time and review application costs using GS 13, step 5 and GS 15, step 5:

NIFA staff time

NIFA Staff	Avg. Hourly Wage*	Avg. Hours/Form	Total	Total Forms/year	Total Yearly Cost
GS13/5	\$58.74	0.5	\$29.37	185	\$5,433.45
GS15/5	\$81.65	0.5	\$40.83	185	\$7,553.55

*Dollar amounts derived from the 2026 Federal Pay Tables for Kansas City-Overland Park-Kansas City, MO-KS assuming each a step 5 annual salary for each GS level listed.

A15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments.

Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

This is a revision of a currently approved information collection request. The estimate provided in the Federal Register Notice (91 FR 37379) has been revised based on additional input and reports from stakeholders regarding the actual time needed to complete the forms from one hour to 30 minutes for the Funding Agreement Certification form and 30 minutes for the Majority Owned form. This revised time aligns with the currently approved information collection request.

The estimated number of respondents from the currently approved information collection request has changed from 115 to 185. The estimated average collection time has decreased to 30 minutes per each form stated above. The estimated total annual burden on respondents has increased from the approved burden estimate of 58 hours to 92.5 hours. The increased burden reflects an increase in program recipients.

The Federal government annualized cost decreased due to updated estimates of time to review the forms. The estimated time needed to review the form was revised from two hours per form to thirty minutes per form based on direct input from NIFA grants management specialists responsible for reviewing the forms.

A16. Plans for tabulation, and publication and project time schedule.

For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

The agency has no plans to publish.

A17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date.

If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

All forms will display the expiration date of OMB approval.

A18. Exceptions to the certification statement identified in Item 19.

Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I" Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act."

There are no exceptions to item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.