



AFWERX
AFVENTURES

Pulling Back the Curtain of Open Topic

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Open Topic

Dual-use problem solving

Webinar Focus

- Deciphering the new Open Topic annual cycle
- Breaking down the budget
- Behind the scenes after proposal submission
- Demystifying the evaluations & selection process
- 22.4/D solicitation results

Pulling Back the Curtain

Webinar Intent

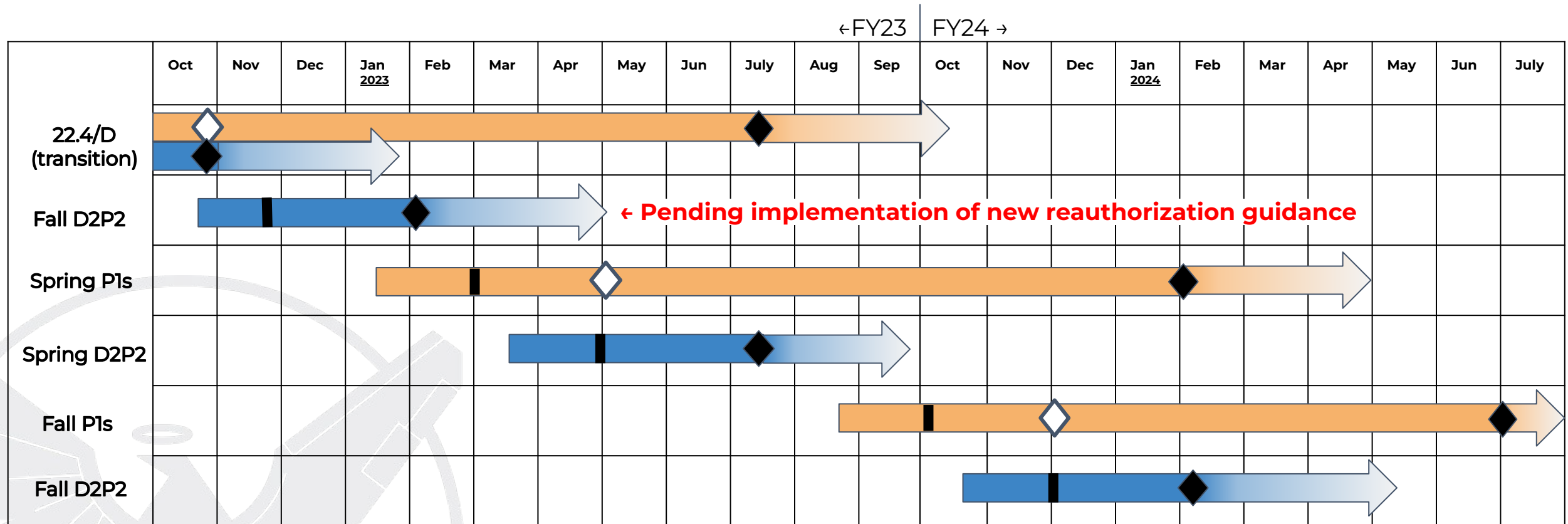
- Open Topic is the DAF's "front door" for small business innovation. To be successful, our processes need to be easy to use and well understood
- Continuing to build a predictable, repeatable and accountable program
- Increase awareness of Open Topic to reduce knowledge barriers for startups & companies not already familiar with Government contracts

Disclaimers

- All processes are subject to change
- The data and numbers are aggregated or approximated when needed to avoid sharing sensitive information
- All future actions are pending new guidance included with the SBIR/STTR reauthorization

Transition to Annual Cycle

Disclaimer: subject to change



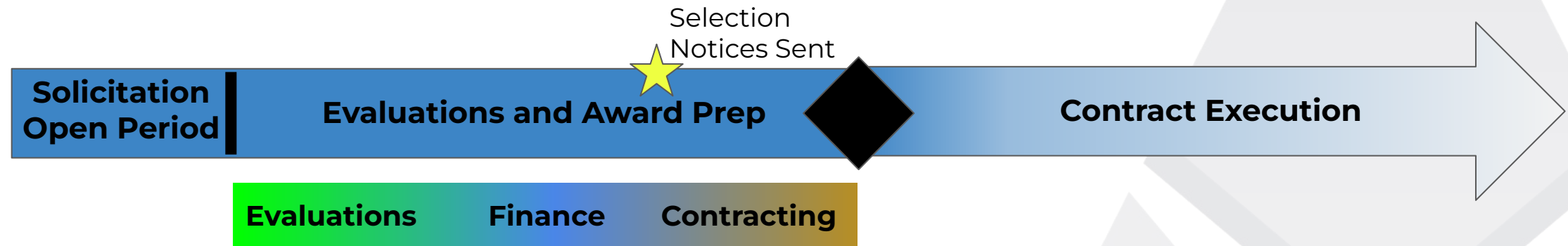
◇ Denotes Phase I contracting sprint (post award execution period = 3 months)

◆ Denotes Phase II contracting sprint (post award execution period = 21 months)

■ Denotes Solicitation Close

Timeline between Submission & Award

Solicitation Close to Contract Award : AFWERX Goal = 75 days (OSD Requirement = 180 days)

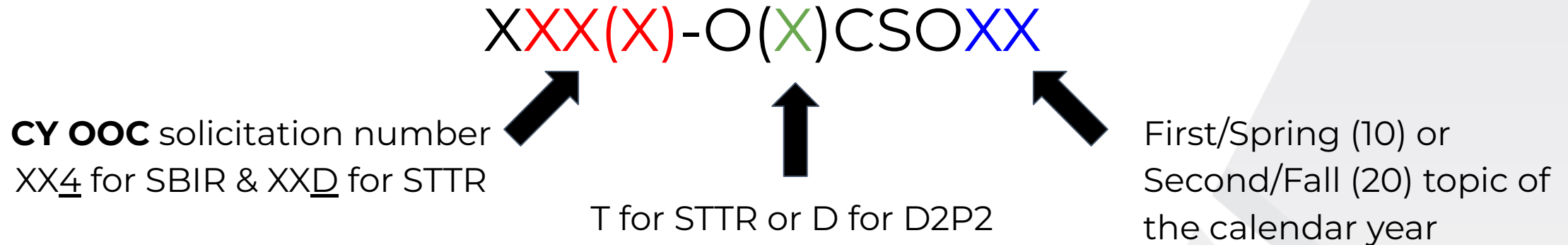


Tasks include:

- Proposals review
- Technical evaluations
- Financial review & funding allocation
- Selection Notifications
- TPOC Designations (Phase II)
- Contract Award Prep

Disclaimer: subject to change.
Fiscal vs Calendar alignment
currently being redetermined

Open Topic Solicitation Nomenclature



Calendar Year Out Of Cycle 2023

SBIR: X234-OCSO10, X234-OCSO20

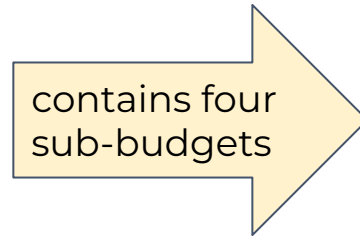
STTR: X23D-OTCSO10, X23D-OTCSO20

D2P2: X234-ODCSO10, X234-ODCSO20

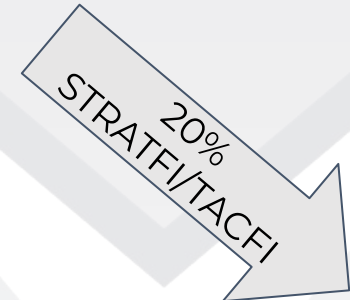
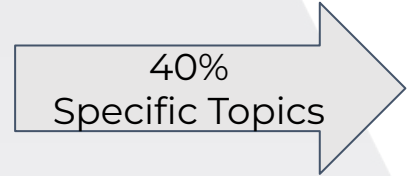
Disclaimer: These numbers are rounded and approximated. Budget amounts and allocations change each fiscal year as well as throughout the fiscal year

Breaking Down the Budget

Fiscal Year 2022
SBIR/STTR Budget
\$1B



	Air Force (~73%)	Space Force (~27%)
SBIR (~87%)	\$625M	\$250M
STTR (~13%)	\$100M	\$40M



OT Air Force SBIR = **\$250M** **\$100M** = OT Space Force SBIR

OT Air Force STTR = **\$40M** **\$15M** = OT Space Force STTR

Number of Awards...Based on the Budget!

3 simple program goals

- Target 20% conversion from Phase I to Phase II (30% for STTR)
 - NOTE: actual selection rate is much higher; many P1 companies don't submit a P2 proposal
- Target equal ratio of traditional Phase II and D2P2 awards
- Allocate evenly across the annual cycle (two Phase I solicitations & two D2P2 solicitations)

Given the current budget and proposal funding limits (\$75K P1, \$1.25M P2/D2P2)...

Expected Awards:

350 Phase I (fall)

72 Phase II (fall follow-on)

71 D2P2 (winter)

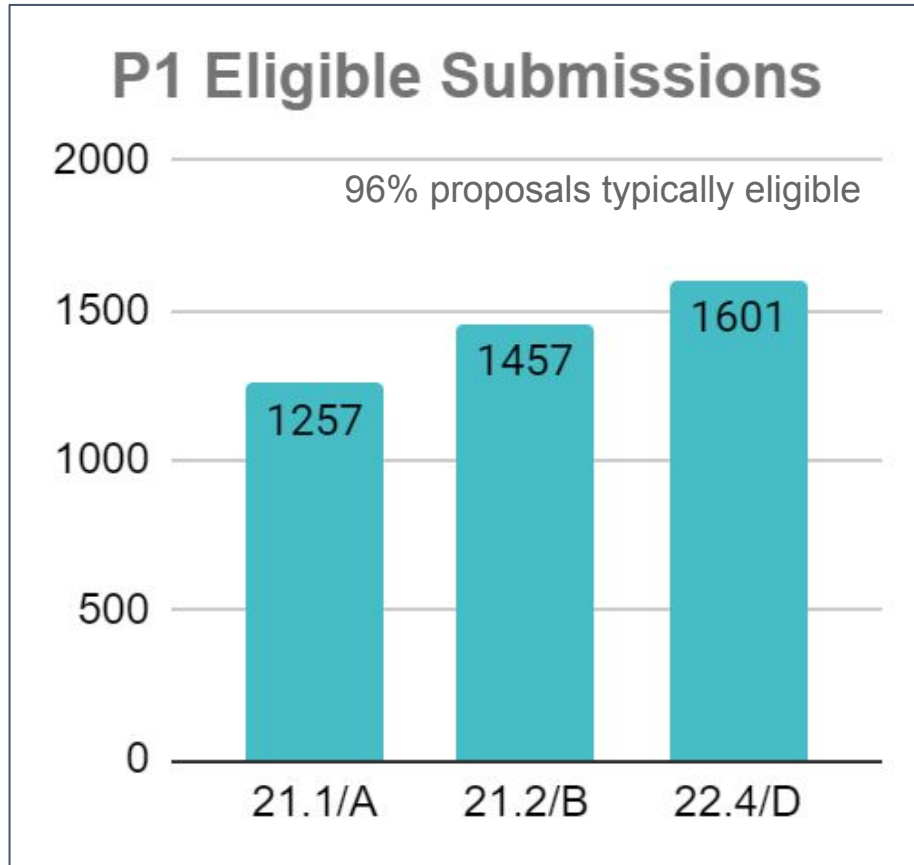
350 Phase I (spring)

72 Phase II (spring follow-on)

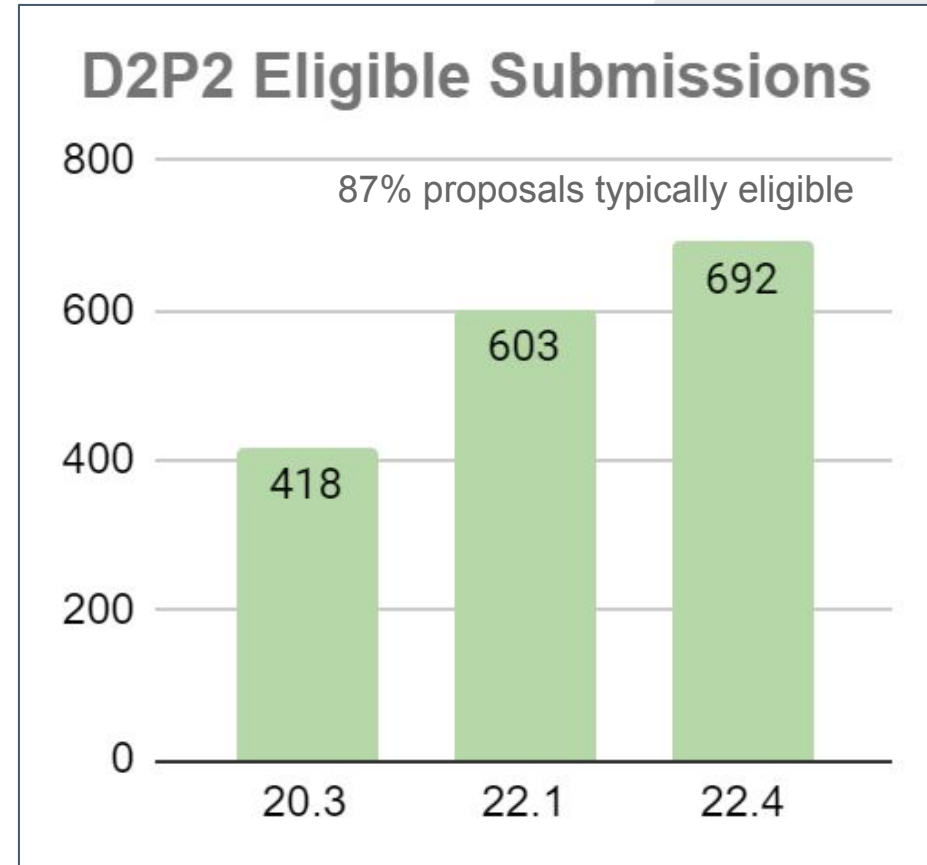
71 D2P2 (summer)

Disclaimer: Subject to change. This is a close approximation; actual award numbers are also dependent on amount of prior year funds, cross-program needs, and balancing the four sub-budgets.

Recent Solicitation Results



22.4/D: 357 Selects (22%)



22.4: 67 Selects (10%)

Evaluation Criteria

The Criteria is listed in the Solicitation instructions, which we are required to follow exactly.

Here's what 22.4 Phase I looked like:

1. The potential for Government or private sector **Commercialization** and benefits expected to accrue from commercialization.
 - a. The SBC's record of commercializing SBIR or other research, as indicated by pre-sales, pilots, sales, revenue, active users, subscriptions, downloads, and/or other forms of traction/adoption.
 - b. Phase II follow-on commitments for the subject research are also evidence of commercialization potential.
2. The appropriateness, relevance, and specificity of an identified **Defense Need**. While not required, signed letters of support from AF customers and/or end-users may be indicators of the appropriateness, relevance, and specificity of an identified Defense Need (Content discussed in 5.3(b)(7)). The adequacy of the proposed effort and its relationship to fulfilling the identified Defense Need. The presence of previous investment (basic research grants, etc) directly supporting the proposed effort may also be indicative of the relevance and depth of an AF need.
3. The soundness, **Technical Merit**, and innovation of the proposed approach as well as its differentiation from current customer alternatives, and incremental progress toward fulfilling the identified Defense need. Includes the proposed Principal Investigators/Project Managers, supporting staff, and consultants' qualifications to execute the proposed approach.

Submission Pitfalls

Most Common Reasons for Proposal Disqualifications:

- 1** Invalid or missing Customer Memo (Phase IIs and D2P2s only) - be sure to use the required template and get TWO valid signatures!
- 2** Exceeding Cost or Duration Limits
 - a. Phase I - \$75K and 3 months max
 - b. Phase II and D2P2 - \$1.25M and 21 months max
- 3** SAM.gov Registration - Firms must have an active registration at time of submission
- 4** STTR without a Research Institute - All STTRs require a RI performing at least 30% of work
- 5** Missing Volume 2 (Technical) - Don't forget to attach all required documents! (mostly Phase Is)

Evaluators... where they come from

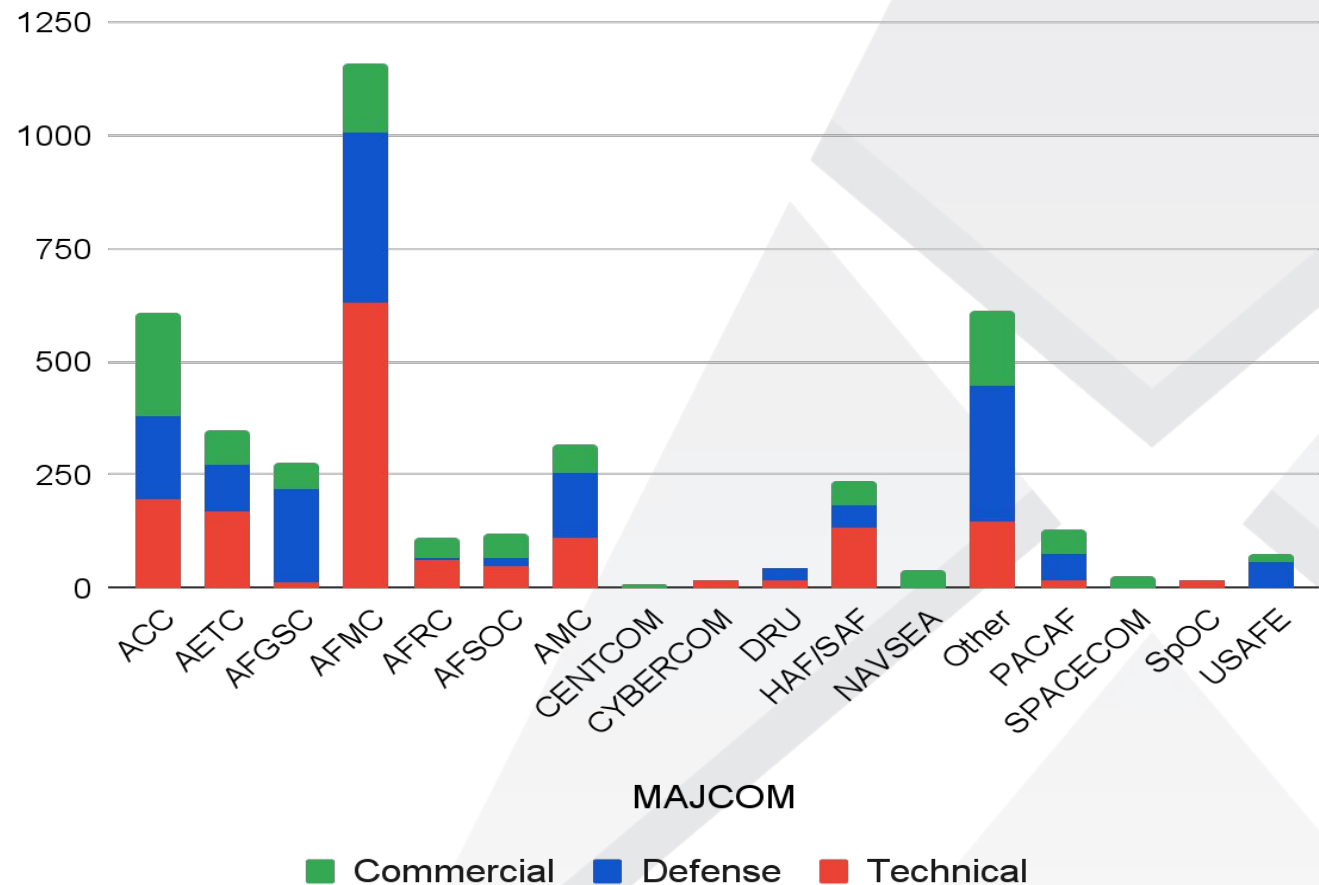
22.4/D 10-series

Evaluator Categories

- A. Scientists & Engineers
- B. Acquisition Professionals
- C. Ops & End Users

We leverage hundreds of experts from each category!

Evaluations Completed by MAJCOM



Open Topic Program - Looking Ahead

- Continuing to build a predictable, repeatable and accountable program
- Improve program transparency and ease-of-use to reduce knowledge barriers for startups and companies not already familiar with Government contracts
- Greater attention on SECAF's Operational Imperatives
- Solicitation Revamp
 - Attachments hosted on website
 - New Customer Memorandum fillable PDF - make it easier to understand and complete
 - New Regulatory Compliance fillable PDF - remove it from the Phase II 15-page maximum
- Roadshows across DAF to increase understanding and participation in Open Topic
- Improved customer discovery
 - Focus Areas overhaul
 - Matchmaking program implementation

Resources

Open Topic “About Us”

<https://afwerx.com/open-topic/>

AFVentures Official Resources and FAQs:

<https://afwerx.com/afventures-resources/>

Weekly Webinar Series:

<https://afwerx.com/afventures-weekly-webinar-series/>

MAJCOM Focus Areas - submit Focus Area ideas to:

focus.areas@afwerx.af.mil



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Questions?

Please type your questions in the Q&A section.