# FY22 SPARK Proposal Submission Instructions

* **The JPEO-CBRND is responsible for the advanced development and acquisition of critical chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense capabilities for the warfighter and partners**
* **Through SPARK FY22, JPEO-CBRND will provide funds to enable JPEO-CBRND innovation**
	+ SPARK awards are seedling funds for projects devised by or supported by JPEO-CBRND staff
	+ Projects can be $1–$100,000, with multiple SPARK projects to be awarded
	+ Period of performance is typically 6–9 months (or shorter)
	+ All JPEO staff are invited to participate. Contractors and external organizations (military components, industry, laboratories, and other innovators) are welcome to propose ideas with JPEO government sponsor.
* **JPEO leadership conducts SPARK because we are committed to identifying and cultivating innovative ideas from JPEO staff and partners**

# FY22 SPARK Interests

***Aligned to JPEO Leadership Commitments***

* + - * **Acquisition Excellence**
* JPEO is committed to bringing the best business practices and tools into the JPEO (for just a few ideas: harnessing data for better decision making, technology tracking and transition, streamlining JPEO processes)
	+ - * **Transformational Capabilities**
* Modernizing Biological Defense (including medical and non-medical approaches)
* Integrated Early Warning
* Unencumbering the Warfighter
* Approaches to countering emerging threats
* Integration with non-CBRN defense capabilities
	+ - * **Workplace of Choice**
* Efficiencies and workplace improvements that would support and empower our vital workforce to the fullest extent
	+ SPARK supports realization of ideas involving:
		- Fresh technological thinking for the best warfighter capabilities
		- Improved processes to support acquisition and our workforce
* **Timeline**
	+ Proposals will be accepted until 31 July 2021 using the attached proposal template.
	+ A review board will assess proposals. Highest ranking proposals will be considered finalists and will be invited to provide short oral presentations with Q&A. Following final review and down select, winning proposals will be announced early Q1 of FY22.
	+ JPEO-CBRND will issue funding, which is processed through JPEO-CBRND HQ or JPM / JPL financial POCs for performer funding or contracting. A financial spend plan will be required prior to fund issuance.
* **How to submit a SPARK proposal**
	1. Complete the proposal form (attached or download from https://www.jpeocbrnd.osd.mil/Work-With-Us/SPARK). Save as a Word or PDF document with file name “*Title under 30 characters\_FY22 proposal”*.
	2. Proposals should be no longer than three pages (minus signatures), minimum 10-point font.
	3. **Proposals MUST BE SIGNED by the submitter and a JPEO Civilian/Military sponsor prior to submission or they will not move on in the review process.**
	4. Submit proposals by email to usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@mail.mil by 31 JULY 2021.

*JPEO-CBRND staff should stay tuned to JPEO internal “Topics for Tuesday” portal for any updates or info sessions.*

**Attend an AMA Session to ask questions on 24 June at 2:00 EDT or 13 July at 11:00 EDT**

*links to join the Ask Me Anything (AMA) sessions will be posted on the SPARK website: https://www.jpeocbrnd.osd.mil/Work-With-Us/SPARK*

***\* Please share the SPARK opportunity with your colleagues! \****

# SPARK FAQs

1. **Q: Why is SPARK conducted?**

**A:** ***Innovation and empowerment***. The JPEO-CBRND is committed to identifying novel approaches for delivering the best countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD) and CBRN defense capabilities to the warfighter in the shortest amount of time.

* Department of Defense leadership is focused on developing transformational technologies and approaches that counter challenges from adversaries, ensuring readiness and modernization.
* The JPEO-CBRND is dedicated to realizing technological improvements that defeat WMD and maximize CBRN defense capabilities most effectively for the warfighter, enabling them to conduct their missions irrespective of CBRN hazards. This involves fresh thinking, smart partnering, and capitalizing on emerging technological options. It also means being flexible and making fundamental improvements at all process levels within our organization.
* Industry innovates all the time, scouting for new technology and better, more efficient ways of leveraging their people’s talents. SPARK is one way that the JPEO-CBRND does this.
1. **Q: What is SPARK looking for? What types of proposals are you looking for?**

**A:** Keep in mind that SPARK is very open to a range of proposals – it is your chance to offer ideas. SPARK is a means to “test drive” novel technological approaches or overcome shortfalls or delays in our capability development activities. We want to think boldly and differently about material solutions to warfighter problems and the processes needed to deliver these – and to act on these ideas in concrete ways. JPEO‑CBRND leadership and reviewers are looking for a diversity of proposals and are willing to take risks. The best proposals will articulate the problem and approach in succinct but understandable, clearly described ways. Page 1 describes the Focus Areas for SPARK 2022. SPARK is aligned to the three primary JPEO Commitments set forth by the Joint Program Executive Officer for CBRND, Dr. Jason Roos:

* Acquisition Excellence – all processes that enable advanced development and acquisition functions
* Transformational Capabilities – focus on technology development actions across all JPEO portfolio areas
* Workplace of Choice – ensuring that we are supporting our team members to the fullest extent

Proposals addressing technology innovations and explorations continue to be of great interest. We are also interested in concepts actionable changes and projects that may bring about improvements in processes underpinning acquisition and advanced development, including supporting and empowering our workforce. We seek innovative ideas from within the JPEO, as well as from partners, both existing and new!

1. **Q: Who can submit proposals?**

**A:** All government JPEO-CBRND staff, regardless of time or role in the organization. If you have an idea on how to identify and explore technology more creatively, or how to help us function more effectively and efficiently internally, we want to hear from you. Personnel from external organizations or contractors are also welcome to submit ideas; a JPEO-CBRND government sponsor (an individual) will need to sponsor such proposals. Junior staff are very much welcomed to participate, as well as those with years of experience. Projects that leverage insight gained from industry experience and/or other DoD/government organizations are valued. If you are from an outside organization (e.g., partner government organization, military component, industry, laboratory, university) and you have an idea that may address a JPEO-CBRND or JPEO-CBRND customer need, we would love to see your SPARK proposal. If you need assistance, contact usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@mail.mil and we will try to find you a contact within the JPEO-CBRND organization who may be able to help.

1. **Q: Must supervisors (within HQ or JPM) sign off on proposals?**

**A:** If the proposer is a JPEO-CBRND government employee, the short answer is no, because SPARK allows for a direct route of ideas from JPEO-CBRND staff to JPEO HQ. However, discussing a proposal with organizational leadership, supervisors, and co-workers can help refine and strengthen a proposal. JPEO-CBRND sub-offices and personnel are encouraged by HQ leadership to support development of ideas by staff. Staff members are vital to the successful execution of selected proposals—it’s a team effort!

1. **Q: Who will do the work? What is the sponsor’s role?**

**A:** SPARK proposers whose projects are selected for funding will be the project managers or performers, depending on the project. JPEO-CBRND government sponsors (if the proposer is not already a civilian employee/military member of JPEO) are part of the SPARK team. Their insight often shapes the direction of a SPARK proposal, helping ensure project relevance and impact. The sponsor will interface with JPEO CTO SPARK team and JPEO financial office to help the project get started and will assist on funding and contracting steps together with JPEO/JPM/JPL colleagues as necessary. The sponsor continues to check in with the performer team throughout the project to ensure things stay on track and participates in status updates. The sponsor role is critical and valued.

1. **Q: How will funding work?**

**A:** JPEO-CBRND HQ will provide funding to conduct selected SPARK project proposals. Usually, the program office under which the SPARK falls handles contracting actions or downstream funding actions. If a new contract is required for the project, it is best to start discussing options for this as soon as possible. Contract arrangements are not required at proposal stage and JPEO HQ does not want to discourage ideas coming forward if a funding mechanism is unknown. However, starting to discuss this early is very beneficial to assure that project could be initiated in as timely a manner as possible. This topic will be raised at an oral presentation if your proposal ranks highly among the field of entries.

1. **Q: I don’t know if my proposal is suitable to the JPEO-CBRND, or another organization. What do I do?**

**A:** Feel free to contact us or submit it anyhow! If we receive proposals that may not be appropriate for the JPEO-CBRND (e.g., projects that better suited for S&T funding, for example) we will share with S&T partners for their feedback, as well as for their consideration.

1. **Q: I am new to working with the JPEO. What if I have an idea, but I don’t have a government sponsor?**

**A:** Please reach out to the SPARK mailbox. We will attempt to identify offices or personnel who may be interested in joining your effort as a sponsor. A sponsor does have responsibilities to assist with project implementation. There is no guarantee we will be able to identify a sponsor for your proposal—personnel main job responsibilities are top priority. **If you want to inquire, please make it easy for us to introduce and socialize your idea. Please describe your initial concept(s) clearly and concisely in body of an email**; attachments are optional, short description is required. JPEO is a busy place but we try our best to share ideas!

1. **Q: What happens after I submit my proposal?**

**A:** A review panel will convene (including JPEO-CBRND and other invited individuals) and assess proposals in the August–September time frame. Next, teams from the highest-ranking proposals will be asked to give a short, informal oral presentation of their idea, allowing for Q&A. Following that, winning proposals will be determined, with plans to notify in the October–November timeframe. The JPEO HQ SPARK team is working to streamline the process for all, but we also need to ensure proper review and consideration and adequate time to coordinate with funding steps.

1. **Q: How is the review process conducted?**

**A:** Proposals are evaluated according to standardized feedback for multiple attributes including relevance to JPEO mission; technical, operational, programmatic merit and innovation; and cost realism; fit for the SPARK mechanism. Review is two-part – first is written phase, then second, oral presentation phase for finalists. Invited reviewers are well aligned with spirit and intent of SPARK and participate with an open mind, in an interdisciplinary manner. All proposals are reviewed by multiple reviewers to ensure robust and balanced assessment. Invited reviewers are well aligned with spirit and intent of SPARK and participate with an open mind. All proposals are reviewed in accordance with legal considerations (e.g., regulations, conflict of interest/proprietary considerations).

1. **Q: Other nuts & bolts proposal questions:**

**A:** You do not need to submit the SPARK instructions or FAQs from this instructions document, just the proposal itself. Proposals should be no longer than three pages (minus signatures), minimum 10-point font. You may delete the explanatory bullet/italics in proposal template sections. Electronic signatures are best. Your file name convention should be *Title under 30 characters\_FY22 proposal*. Contact us if you encounter a problem!

1. **Q: Where do I submit my proposal, and what if I have questions?**

**A:** Submit proposals as a Word or PDF document with file name convention *Title under 30 characters\_FY22 proposal* by email to usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@mail.mil prior to the deadline of 31 July 2021. We are hosting two Ask Me Anything (AMA) sessions during the proposal submission window for anyone to attend and voice their questions. JPEO-CBRND staff may reach out directly to SPARK POCs and should stay tuned to JPEO’s internal website for other SPARK updates or info sessions. External organizations may contact us through usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@mail.mil, or reach out to the SPARK POCs (please CC: group mailbox), and can visit <https://www.jpeocbrnd.osd.mil/Work-With-Us/SPARK> for updates.

1. **Q: What can you tell us about past winning proposals? What are *types* of SPARK proposals?**

**A:** In most past SPARK rounds, we have received 50+ proposals each round, with ~~and~~ 6–10 proposals chosen each round. Examples of types of past winning SPARK projects are listed below; However, keep in mind that we are emphasizing interest in all areas that support JPEO’s ability to deliver, which includes acquisition processes and support to our workforce, as well as continued strong interest in technology-focused proposals.

* Technical Study / Assessment
* Prototype Advancement
* Repurposing of Technologies to Address Other CBRN Threats
* Industry / Academia Workshop
* Engaging Tech from a non-CBRN Area
* Analytics on CBRN Data
* Framework to Aid Acquisition Strategy
* Enhancing Training for End Users
* Improving Test Methodologies
* Software and Analytics Optimization
* Optimizing Workflow and Efficiencies

 **Please reach out if you have any questions!**

**Government Lead:** JPEO Chief Technology Officer (CTO) david.m.restione.civ@mail.mil

**SPARK Lead:** Chief Science Coordinator, CTO Office julia.e.dooher.ctr@mail.mil

**SPARK Support:**

jessica.m.parker46.ctr@mail.mil

**JPEO CBRND SPARK Mailbox:**

usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@mail.mil

**SPARK Website:** https://www.jpeocbrnd.osd.mil/Work-With-Us/SPARK

**Have your voice heard, we look forward to your FY22 *SPARK* proposal!**

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# FY22 SPARK PROPOSAL FORM

Your SPARK proposal (completed sections below) must not exceed three pages (with exception of block 15, signatures.) Minimum size 10 font and you may delete explanatory bullets/italics.

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| 1. **Title of Proposed SPARK Project:**
* *Please avoid long titles, your proposal/project* ***title must be 30 characters or less*** *(proposal file name convention must be “*Title under 30 characters\_FY22 proposal”*).*
 |
| 1. **Proposer Name, Organization, Proposer Contact Info:**
	* *Provide project lead. For external organizations / contractors, also supply name of JPEO-CBRND government personnel sponsoring.*
 |
| 1. **Proposed Amount:**
	* *Amount of funding you request for your project, $K. Also provide a brief cost estimate breakdown including labor, materials/equipment, other costs. You may list or provide small chart.*
 |
| 1. **Expected Project Duration:**
	* *Provide brief schedule and milestones.*
 |
| 1. **Challenge Statement:**
	* *What is the primary problem your SPARK proposal proposes to address / solve? Keep this to maximum of 3 sentences Remember, this can be from a technical, programmatic, operational, acquisition/program, or process point of view.*
 |
| 1. **SPARK Project Description:**
	* *What will you do? Provide specifics on technologies or processes involved. (Avoid a project description that is too general. Make sure we understand what you set out to do.) Describe outcomes. (Question 8 elaborates on benefits.)*
 |
| 1. **What is the *SPARK* here?**
	* *How is your proposed project innovative?*
	* *How does your proposal differ from other activities conducted or funded by the JPEO/JPM/JPL?*
 |
| 1. **What’s the benefit?**
	* *How would your proposed project benefit how the JPEO-CBRND does business and/or the warfighter?*
	* *Does it involve a technological advancement or a process improvement for efficiency?*
	* *What deliverables or outcomes do you plan to produce? Who will benefit? Who are the stakeholders / users?*
 |
| 1. **What are the risks?**
	* *Describe relevant risks to this project (e.g., technical or programmatic risks, institutional / historical obstacles?). What are your plans for addressing these?*
 |
| 1. **Relationship to existing programs:**
* *How do you think your project relates to or supports existing programs? This is not a requirement for all SPARKs, but a chance to note where applicable.*
 |
| 1. **Additional stakeholders / partners:**
* *Opportunity to list partners / stakeholders whose involvement could be beneficial, by either direct participation, advising, or for awareness.*
 |
| 1. **Sponsor support statement.**
* *Briefly, from a JPEO government program office perspective, how is this project a SPARK? Do you have general funding considerations you wish to express?*
 |
| 1. **Other, if necessary:**
* *Is there anything else we should know to help reviewers understand your SPARK proposal?*
* *Are there related efforts that would give context or background?*
 |
| 1. **Planned Contract approach (if necessary).**
* *Please provide a brief description on the contract approach, if necessary, to execute this effort. This section only pertains to efforts requiring a contract to execute a portion or all of the proposed funds. Funding planned to be sent to a Government Lab or other non-contract entity do not need to be listed, though awareness of existing agreements is helpful. Specific contract details are not required to be finalized at the proposal stage; however, discussing the general approach early is very beneficial to assure that a project could be initiated in as timely a manner as possible. We do not want to discourage new performers if a contract does not exist, so general thoughts are acceptable. Please note a contract approach will need to be presented at the oral presentation phase if your proposal ranks highly among the field of entries.*
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*(signatures, section 15, may be on a separate, 4th proposal page, if needed)*

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| **15. Name and signature of proposer.** **Name:** **Email:** **Phone:**  | **Name and signature of sponsoring JPEO government personnel if proposer is a contractor or from an external organization.** **Name:** **Email:** **Phone:**  |