# FY23 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 FY23, 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–$50,000, with multiple SPARK projects to be awarded
	+ Period of performance is typically 3 months (or shorter)
	+ All JPEO-CBRND staff are invited to participate. Contractors and external organizations (military components, industry, laboratories, and other innovators) are welcome to propose ideas with a JPEO‑CBRND government sponsor.
* **JPEO-CBRND leadership conducts SPARK because we are committed to identifying and cultivating innovative ideas from JPEO-CBRND staff and partners**

# FY23 SPARK Interests

***Integrated testing and training tools supporting data integration and digital transformation***

* + - * **Data Integration**
* Operational data science (Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning) for CBRN decision support
* CBRN and non-CBRN operational/tactical data fusion to inform Joint All-Domain Command & Control (JADC2)
* Integrated/system of systems testing & training approaches
	+ - * **Digital Transformation**
* Development, Security, and Operations (DevSecOps) with focus on security and operations areas for Joint Capability Delivery
* Digital Engineering to support portfolio integration
* Workforce upskilling in Digital Transformation
	+ 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 26 May 2023 using the attached proposal template.
	+ A review board will assess proposals. Winning proposals should be announced by 30 June 2023.
	+ JPEO-CBRND will issue funding, which is processed through JPEO-CBRND HQ or Joint Project Manager (JPM) / Joint Project Lead (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\_FY23 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-CBRND 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@army.mil by 26 May 2023.

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

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

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

# SPARK FAQs

1. **Q: Why SPARK?**

**A:** ***Innovation and empowerment***. The JPEO-CBRND Headquarters conducts SPARK because we are committed to identifying and cultivating innovative[[1]](#footnote-2)[1] commercial products and services from industry by supporting the realization of fresh solutions for the best warfighter capabilities. The JPEO-CBRND is committed to identifying innovative commercial products and services for delivering the best countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD) and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense capabilities to the warfighter in the shortest amount of time. More information on the mission and programs of the JPEO-CBRND can be found at [https://www.jpeocbrnd.osd.mil/](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/www.jpeocbrnd.osd.mil/__;!!May37g!OCVylIsNR817qfTtl5_aUO7HR-r_sgbThrBwDet8ndPFkK-Ibc-_VqT0cs_sB1B1V-SRL5kmK9mWGrx2UdzIuougbXaLdXxgY3ncm8k$)

* 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.
* SPARK seeks to leverage Industry innovation and scouts for new technology and better, more efficient ways of meeting the JPEO-CBRND mission; SPARK is one way that the JPEO-CBRND does this. While open to a broad range of innovative proposals, in FY23, SPARK is focused on data integration and digital transformation.
1. **Q: What is SPARK looking for? What types of proposals are you looking for?**

**A:** The JPEO-CBRND is very open to a range of innovative SPARK proposals. SPARK is a means to overcome shortfalls or delays/gaps 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 is looking for a diversity of SPARK proposals and are willing to take risks. The best proposals will articulate the problem and approach in succinct but understandable, clearly described ways. Proposals addressing technology innovations and explorations continue to be of great interest.

Page 1 outlines the Focus Areas for SPARK 2023—integrated testing and training tools within data integration and digital transformation:

**Data Integration**

* **Operational data science (Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning) for CBRN Decision Support:** JPEO‑CBRND is interested in exploring applications of data science for command & control (C2) and decision support of CBRND operations. CBRND operations is a general term and may include any military activity that involves a CBRN threat, such as reconnaissance, threat identification, protective posture, decontamination, medical treatment, and site exploitation. Proposals may apply broadly to any area of data science, including but not limited to operational data acquisition, model development, and data visualizations. Technologies that apply common data science use cases (e.g., route planning, image analysis) towards CBRN defense are highly encouraged.
* **CBRN and non-CBRN operational/tactical data fusion to inform JADC2:** The Department of Defense is moving towards more jointly integrated operations supported by data sources from multiple domains under the concept of Joint All-Domain Command & Control (JADC2). As the main provider of CBRN data for each of the services, JPEO-CBRND is seeking solutions that integrate CBRN data with other all-domain data to provide the commander with additional decision-making aids. Proposals may identify any technology that provides data fusion, such as applications that provide an all-domain common operating picture (COP), message translation software that integrates data from multiple sources (e.g., electronic warfare + CBRN), or cross-domain solutions that enable data to be shared on multiple enclaves.
* **Integrated/system of systems testing & training approaches:** JPEO-CBRND is evolving its approach to capability development by focusing on a system of systems (SoS) approach to CBRN defense. These SoS solutions will require new ways of performing integrated testing and training using new tools and methodologies. The organization is seeking proposals that provide the capability to do integrated testing (live, virtual or constructive) or training in any setting (e.g., field, laboratory). Some examples include integrated soldier kit models for size/weight/power/cooling performance or enterprise training platforms that offer CBRN and non-CBRN integrated C2 modules.

**Digital Transformation**

* **Development, Security, and Operations (DevSecOps) with focus on Security and Operations areas for Joint Capability Delivery:** JPEO-CBRND is seeking proposals that will explore applying DevSecOps to the development of CBRN defense applications. The organization is looking to identify technologies and processes that facilitate and provide operator feedback directly to software developers in a more agile manner (DevOps). The organization is also pursuing software pilots that will utilize DoD-approved DevSecOps environments to perform real-time monitoring of cyber risk to pursue a continuous authority to operate (cATO).
* **Digital Engineering to support portfolio integration:** JPEO-CBRND is implementing the DoD Digital Engineering (DE) Strategy with a specific emphasis on DE to support portfolio integration. The organization is looking for DE tools, technologies and techniques that provide system of systems integration services, such as mission engineering, portfolio optimization, and reference architecture validation. Scope of digital engineering is broad and may include anything from model-based systems engineering, modeling & simulation, portfolio lifecycle management, or digital twin.
* **Workforce upskilling in Digital Transformation:** The Army has placed a priority on digital transformation (DT) in acquisitions and JPEO-CBRND is seeking to develop its workforce in the areas of DevSecOps, enterprise data management, data science, cyber, and general topics in digital innovation. Proposals in this topic may include technologies and platforms that directly provide workforce development, continuous learning, certification, or other solutions for talent management.

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-CBRND, as well as from partners, both existing and new! Note: TRL of proposed technologies must be at TRL 4 or greater; technologies at the TRL1, TRL2, and TRL3 levels will not be considered for award.

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, submit your capability (not your proposal nor any proprietary information) via** [**JETT**](https://jacks.jpeocbrnd.army.mil/JETT) **to connect with the right folks at the JPEO-CBRND that may be a good fit to sponsor your ideas. Under "What brings you to the JPEO-CBRND?" select Other and in the text box type that you are looking for a SPARK sponsor.**

After clicking on the JETT link on the JPEO-CBRND’s Work With Us page, you will be prompted to answer a series of questions that will create a roadmap to connect you with a JPM, JPL, a program manager, or a technologist to share ideas and inventions. Industry members will have the opportunity to read descriptions of JPM or JPL market research areas of interest and be able to select up to three offices that are most appropriate to contact regarding a given capability or technology. For each office selected, industry members will be asked to answer a short questionnaire and upload any additional relevant information. These responses will go directly to the designated office for review and follow-up. JETT is not a source selection portal, nor will information provided be used to award a contract. JETT is intended only for publicly available material and is not to be used to submit anything proprietary or classified, including personally identifiable information (PII). To access the JETT tool, either go to the JPEO Work With Us page and click on the JETT logo, or go directly to <https://jacks.jpeocbrnd.army.mil/JETT>

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-CBRND 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-CBRND) 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 the JPEO-CBRND SPARK team and JPEO-CBRND financial office to help the project get started and will assist on funding and contracting steps together with HQ/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-CBRND 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.

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 may share with S&T partners for their feedback, as well as for their consideration.

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

**A:** 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, submit your capability (not your proposal nor any proprietary information) via** [**JETT**](https://jacks.jpeocbrnd.army.mil/JETT) **to connect with the right folks at the JPEO that may be a good fit to sponsor your ideas. Under "What brings you to the JPEO-CBRND?" select Other and in the text box type that you are looking for a SPARK sponsor.**

After clicking on the JETT link on the JPEO-CBRND’s Work With Us page, you will be prompted to answer a series of questions that will create a roadmap to connect you with a JPM, JPL, a program manager, or a technologist to share ideas and inventions. Industry members will have the opportunity to read descriptions of JPM or JPL market research areas of interest and be able to select up to three offices that are most appropriate to contact regarding a given capability or technology. For each office selected, industry members will be asked to answer a short questionnaire and upload any additional relevant information. These responses will go directly to the designated office for review and follow-up. JETT is not a source selection portal, nor will information provided be used to award a contract. JETT is intended only for publicly available material and is not to be used to submit anything proprietary or classified, including personally identifiable information (PII). To access the JETT tool, either go to the JPEO Work With Us page and click on the JETT logo, or go directly to <https://jacks.jpeocbrnd.army.mil/JETT>

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 June time frame. Winning proposals will be determined, with plans to notify by the end of June. Your sponsor will then work to coordinate funding and award on contract to hopefully begin work by the end of July. The JPEO-CBRND 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 the JPEO-CBRND mission; technical, operational, programmatic merit and innovation; and cost realism; fit for the SPARK mechanism. 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\_FY23 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\_FY23 proposal* by email to usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@army.mil prior to the deadline of 26 May 2023. JPEO-CBRND staff may reach out directly to SPARK POCs and should stay tuned to JPEO-CBRND’s internal website for other SPARK updates or info sessions. External organizations may contact us through usarmy.apg.dod-jpeo-cbrnd.mbx.spark@army.mil 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:** Please note that FY23 is being conducted differently than past SPARK cycles with a truncated and later timeline, shortened process, and reduced budget. In most past SPARK rounds, we have received 50+ proposals each round, with 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-CBRND’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!**

**JPEO-CBRND SPARK Mailbox:**

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

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

**Have your voice heard- we look forward to your FY23 *SPARK* proposal!**

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# FY23 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 should delete explanatory bullets/italics.

|  |
| --- |
| 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\_FY23 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-CBRND 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.*
 |

*(signatures, section 15, may be on a separate, 4th proposal page, if needed)*

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

1. [1] “Innovative" means any technology, process, or method, including research and development that is new as of the date of submission of a proposal, or any application that is new as of the date of submission of a proposal of a technology, process, or method existing as of such date. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)