The Spark Initiative & Instructions

- **JPEO-CBD will provide Spark funds in FY18 to enable JPEO-CBD innovation.**
  - Spark awards are seedling funds for projects devised by and supported by JPEO-CBD staff
  - Projects can be $1,000 - $100,000, with multiple Spark projects planned to be awarded
  - Project execution ranges from ~ 6-9 months
  - All JPEO staff are invited to participate, from Joint Project Managers (JPMs) or JPEO-CBD HQ (contractors with JPEO government sponsor)

- **This second round of Spark is being launched because JPEO-CBD leadership is serious about cultivating innovative ideas from JPM and HQ staff.**
  - Spark aspires to support execution of ideas from JPEO-CBD staff that involve:
    - Fresh thinking for developing the best Warfighter capabilities
    - Improved processes to support acquisition and our workforce

- **This year Spark is seeking submissions in three areas:**
  - Test & Evaluation – Improvements in T&E processes and methodologies that will make selecting the best equipment safer, faster, and more cost effective.
  - Rapid Prototyping to support JPEO-CBD efforts – Rapid prototyping can save time and reduce risk and life cycle cost. Projects should be scoped and include metrics.
  - Process and product improvements for ongoing efforts – “Is there a better way to do this?” This area has a wide leeway and can fall ANYWHERE within the acquisition workflow.

If your idea does not fall into one of these three areas but you feel it has value then please do submit it. You might be pleasantly surprised! Please spread the word!

- **Timeline:**
  - Proposals will be accepted 27 Nov – 1 Feb. Template is at end of this guidance document.
  - A review board will be assembled to assess proposals. A subset of proposals will be selected for short oral presentations.
  - Winning proposals will be announced no later than April.
  - Funds will come from JPEO HQ and will pass through JPM financial POCs, and will require a financial plan at time of award.
• **How to submit:**
  - Fill out proposal template that follows, also found at [https://www.jpeocbd.osd.mil/spark](https://www.jpeocbd.osd.mil/spark).
  - Submit email proposals using [https://www.jpeocbd.osd.mil/spark](https://www.jpeocbd.osd.mil/spark). (You may also note your interest in Spark by registering there, which will help us communicate any updates to you.)
  - Proposals should be no longer than 2 pages, minimum 10 point font.
  - Electronic signatures are best. Contact us if a problem. You do not need to submit the Spark instructions or FAQs from this document, just the proposal form.
  - For questions, please email usarmy.apg.jpeo-cbd.mbx.spark@mail.mil.
  - Info sessions will be held for JPEO-CBD staff.

### Spark FAQs

1. **Q: Why is Spark being launched?**
   
   **A:** The short answer is *innovation*. The JPEO-CBD is motivated to remove barriers that currently hold us back from being the most effective organization it can be to deliver to the Warfighter the best capabilities possible in the shortest amount of time.
   
   - Department of Defense (DoD) leadership is focused on developing transformational technologies and thinking that offset ways in which we are challenged by adversaries. Army leadership is focused on modernization and readiness.
   - The JPEO-CBD is dedicated to realizing technological improvements that address these issues by maximally protecting the Warfighter and enabling national security objectives. This involves partnering with the best organizations and minds that push technological bounds. It also means making fundamental improvements at all process levels within our organization.
   - JPEO-CBD hosted its first Spark innovation initiative a year ago, and technological and process-based Spark projects were selected representing a wide range of JPEO-CBD activities.
   - The JPEO-CBD is committed to empowering innovative ideas from our own staff who know the challenges our warfighters face and also the hurdles we must leap to bring them the best capabilities they deserve. The JPEO-CBD also welcomes ideas from partners in organizations experienced in CBRN and CWMD challenges as well as from those new to working with us.

2. **Q: What is Spark looking for?**
   
   **A:** Proposals are sought that address new ways to overcome shortfalls in our advanced development activities. We want to think boldly and differently about technological solutions to warfighter problems and key supporting processes – and to act on these in concrete ways. In reviewing Spark proposals, JPEO-CBD leadership and reviewers are looking for a diversity of proposals, and are also willing to take risks. We are looking for proposals that articulate the problem and the approach in succinct but well described ways.

3. **Q: Who can submit proposals?**
   
   **A:** All government JPEO-CBD 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. Contractors are welcome to collaborate with a government employee; a JPEO-CBD government sponsor (individual) will need to sponsor such proposals. Junior staff are very much welcomed to participate, as well as those with significant internal insight and experience. Projects that leverage insight gained from industry experience and / or other organizations in DoD or government are also valued. If you are from an outside organization and you have an idea that may address a JPEO-CBD need, contact usarmy.apg.jpeo-cbd.mbx.spark@mail.mil and we will work to find you a contact within the JPEO-CBD organization who could take a look.
4. **Q:** Must supervisors (HQ or JPM) sign off on proposals?

   **A:** If the proposer is a JPEO-CBD government employee, the short answer is no, though of course staff may discuss with co-workers or supervisors / organizational leadership. Spark allows for a direct route of ideas from JPEO-CBD staff to JPEO HQ. JPEO-CBD sub-offices and organizations are encouraged by HQ leadership to support development of ideas by staff, and execution of selected proposals.

5. **Q:** Who will do the work?

   **A:** Spark proposers whose projects are selected for funding will be the project managers. Have a question? Ask us.

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

   **A:** JPEO-CBD HQ will provide funding for conduct of selected Spark project proposals. Proposals are expected to involve individual funding requests ranging from $1,000 – $100,000. JPEO-CBD HQ offices will facilitate funding steps post selection to relieve burden on other offices.

7. **Q:** What is the period of performance for awarded Spark funds?

   **A:** We are looking for projects that can be conducted during an approximately 6-9 month time frame.

8. **Q:** What types of proposals are you looking for?

   **A:** Page 1 describes the focus areas for this round of Spark. A few examples of possible proposals include:

   I. New technological approaches involving prototypes that addresses operational concerns.
   II. Discrete, focused study with operational considerations.
   III. Innovation in acquisition or other internal processes (e.g., software, other) to achieve quality outcomes faster.
   IV. Other ideas to improve how we develop and deliver capabilities to the Warfighter, or how our workplace functions can be improved.

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

   **A:** A review panel will convene (including JPEO HQ leadership and others), assessing proposals in the Feb - March time frame. A short list of proposers will be asked to give a short, informal presentation of their idea. All proposers will be notified of decisions no later than April.

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

    **A:** To submit proposals or ask questions, email usarmy.apg.jpeo-cbd.mbx.spark@mail.mil. There will also be informational sessions.

11. **Q:** How will the review process be conducted?

    **A:** Further information will be supplied on the review process. Also, all proposals will be reviewed in accordance with legal considerations (e.g., regulations, conflict of interest, etc).

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Thank you for your efforts to **INNOVATE**, and please submit your **SPARK** proposal!

www.jpeocbd.osd.mil

and

www.jpeocbd.osd.mil/spark