Question	Answer
One of the eligibility criteria is that entrants must be 'U.S. owned and operated companies & startups' and given we are based in Sydney, Australia, that would rule Quasar out, however, if we were to set up a U.S. owned company prior to the week of March 24, 2025, would we then be eligible?	Yes, if you were to start a company that meets the criteria of being US-owned and operated, you would be eligible. However, the company could still qualify if it meets the NDC definition, in which case establishing a US-based business wouldn't be necessary.
What TRL levels are preferred for the challenge?	There is no specific TRL requirement. The program is designed to accommodate companies at various stages, from early development to more advanced technologies. The curriculum will be tailored based on the selected participants' TRL levels and funding stages. Applicants should not worry about their TRL level, as the program will meet them where they are and adjust accordingly.
Do you want the QUAD doc as a slide or as its own document?	The QUAD doc should be included as part of the pitch deck submission, not as a separate document. It must be within the 10-slide limit for the submission. See template here.
Is the applicant the company or an individual at the company?	The applicant is the company, not an individual.
Can only one person per organization participate?	Each company can decide how many team members to send, typically two to three participants. The funding is meant to assist with travel costs, so companies should choose the individuals who will benefit the most from the accelerator.

As for whether to send a technical or business team member, it depends on the company's focus. The program includes sessions on both technical development and business strategy (including investor relations), so companies may choose to alternate representatives based on the session agenda, which will be shared upon selection. |
The application has a menu of tech dev stages to pick from. What is MVP?	MVP (Minimum Viable Product) refers to a product that has some level of development and can be demonstrated. The exact definition can vary, but in this challenge, it should at least include a proof of concept or a tangible demonstration of the technology. The emphasis is on having something to show, rather than just a theoretical concept.
What can the 15K be used for?	The $15,000 award can be used at the company's discretion. It was primarily intended to help cover travel and accommodation costs for in-person sessions during the accelerator. However, companies have the flexibility to allocate the funds as needed to support their participation in the program.
Is there a preference for companies located in the Northwest?	There is no preference for companies located in the Northwest. While the accelerator is based in Washington, companies from anywhere in the U.S. can apply. However, since the program includes in-person sessions, participants must be able to commit to attending those sessions in the Pacific Northwest.
Can you elaborate on "limited or no prior DoD contracts"? Do prior SBIR (or similar) contracts preclude eligibility?	Eligibility is determined based on the 2023 DoD Other Transactions Guide, which defines non-traditional defense contractors (NDCs). Having prior SBIR or other DoD contracts does not automatically disqualify a company, but applicants should review the guide to determine if they meet the NDC criteria. The challenge aims to engage companies that have limited or no prior DoD contracting experience, but there is some flexibility in the interpretation.
Can you explain what "potential for follow-on opportunities" entails? Is anyone participating eligible?	"Potential for follow-on opportunities" means that, because this challenge follows a competitive selection process, DoD stakeholders may choose to continue working with selected companies if their technology aligns with a specific defense need.

However, there are no guaranteed follow-on contracts. Any future collaboration would depend on stakeholder interest and the company's ability to meet DoD requirements. All participants are eligible, but securing a follow-on opportunity will be based on the value and relevance of their solution. |
What is the expected time commitment outside of or in addition to the in-person events?	The main focus is on refining pitches, engaging with mentors, and building relationships between sessions. Companies will have about three and a half weeks between each session to apply what they've learned, but there won't be significant outside work or assignments. The goal is to support business development without overwhelming participants with additional tasks.
When will the agenda be posted for the accelerator?	The agenda will be shared with finalists after they are selected to participate in the accelerator. While the first in-person session is scheduled for March 26-27 in Seattle, the full agenda, including session details and topics, will be provided once the final companies are chosen.
Have the dates for the on-site sessions been decided? If yes, can you share the dates?	Yes, the first on-site session is scheduled for March 26-27 in Seattle. Additional session dates have been planned but will be shared with selected participants once they are finalized. The sessions will take place at different locations in the Pacific Northwest to provide access to various stakeholders and resources.
Can this accelerator program, if awarded, count toward past performance in bidding future programs?	While participation in the accelerator may not automatically count as past performance, it can help companies build relationships with DoD stakeholders and gain valuable experience in working with defense programs.

Additionally, because this challenge follows a competitive selection process, DoD stakeholders could potentially use it as a basis for future collaboration, reducing the need for companies to go through another competition for follow-on opportunities. |
| Will there be a Prize Challenge on the east coast in the near future? | Currently, there are no plans for a Prize Challenge on the East Coast that feeds into an accelerator like this one. However, the success of this program could influence future opportunities. |
| If we already submitted, but the quad chart wasn't a requirement then, will there be any issues resubmitting the application with the quad chart | No, resubmitting your application with the quad chart will not disqualify you. Since the quad chart was added later, applicants who submitted before it was required will not be penalized. However, it is recommended to resubmit with the quad chart included to ensure your application is as complete and competitive as possible. |
| What outcome are you looking to achieve at the end of the 4 months? | The goal of the four-month accelerator is to help companies advance and move forward in their development. The program is designed to assess where each company is currently, understand their goals, and tailor the curriculum to support their growth.

The ultimate outcome is to see participants either become prime or subprime contractors and have their technology reach the warfighter or its intended application. Even after the accelerator ends, the support does not stop—the goal is to ensure companies continue progressing and do not stagnate or move backward. |
| Are there ways or resources we can use to learn more about specific DoD use cases and needs to address? Sometimes we have a technology that we believe is useful to the DoD. It will be very helpful to have a way to verify the use cases. | There is no openly available, centralized resource for identifying DoD use cases and requirements. For now, participants selected for the accelerator will receive guidance, tools, and resources to help them research and identify DoD needs. While there is no simple way to search for requirements today, work is being done to improve access to this information in the future. |

Question	Answer
Can you describe the anticipated agenda for the monthly on-site programming meetings?	The monthly on-site programming meetings will take place at different locations in the Pacific Northwest, leveraging the region's infrastructure and existing defense innovation ecosystem. The sessions will provide mentorship, guidance, and connections by matching participants with relevant partners, private equity firms, government stakeholders, and end users who have experience navigating similar challenges. While specific details are still being finalized, the curriculum is designed to accommodate companies at various stages, from those with advanced TRLs and funding to early-stage startups. The goal is to ensure that every company receives value without wasting time on irrelevant content.
The QUAD doc is loaded with information. A separate doc would make it way easier to read. Can we set it up as a separate doc and have a max of 9 slides?	No, the QUAD doc must be included within the 10-slide pitch deck. It cannot be submitted as a separate document. The total slide limit remains 10, including the QUAD chart.
Quad Chart- does this count as part of your allowed 10 slides? Or just include this at the end of the deck as slide 11?	Yes, the Quad Chart counts as part of the 10-slide limit and cannot be included as an 11th slide. It must be incorporated within the existing 10-slide pitch deck.
Any specific reason for Renton, WA?	Yes, Renton, WA was chosen because it is the home base of the Defense Innovation OnRamp Hub Washington. The location provides a large collaborative space and easy access to key infrastructure, partners, and resources in the Pacific Northwest defense innovation ecosystem. Additionally, it is conveniently located near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) for ease of travel.
Do all employees have to be US citizens or H1B Visa is fine as well?	No, there is no requirement for all employees to be U.S. citizens. The key eligibility criterion is that the company must be U.S.-owned and operated. Employees on H1B visas are allowed as long as the company meets the ownership and operational requirements.
In addition to war fighting applications, will you also consider tech that supports other DoD applications, such as logistics, maintenance, inspection, repair, etc.?	Yes, the accelerator will consider technology that supports other DoD applications, including logistics, maintenance, inspection, and repair. These functions are critical to supporting the warfighter, and solutions in these areas are welcomed as part of the challenge.
1. Who are the DoD Stakeholders partnering with this DIU Accelerator? 2. How many downselected finalists will there be? (I think Kelly mentioned 8, but looking for clarity) 3. Will the quad chart template be shared with the participants of this call?	1. The specific list of DoD stakeholders is not being shared publicly to prevent them from being inundated with outreach. However, the stakeholders come from various DoD services and agencies, ensuring broad representation. Participants will have opportunities to engage with some of these military partners during the accelerator. 2. Up to eight (8) finalists will be selected to progress through the accelerator. 3. Yes, the quad chart template will be linked in the Q&A document on the event page, along with the AMA video for reference. (Insert link to QUAD)
Could you flash the quad chart template on the screen once more please?	The Quad Chart template will be linked in the Q&A document on the event page. (Insert link to QUAD) While your chart does not need to follow the template exactly, it should clearly communicate these key points.
Are DOD letters of support valuable for application/ need- we are emerging technology. If we are already in SBIR programs, does that exclude us?	Yes, having a DoD letter of support can help demonstrate that your emerging technology is relevant and of interest to DoD stakeholders. If you have such a letter, it is recommended to include it in your pitch deck or mention it to strengthen your application. If we are already in SBIR programs, does that exclude us? Not necessarily. Eligibility depends on whether your company qualifies as a non-traditional defense contractor (NDC) as outlined in the 2023 DoD Other Transactions Guide. It is recommended to review the eligibility criteria to determine if your company qualifies.
Can we have one person applying for the Accelerator, and have two people from our company alternate in attending the on-site sessions?	Yes, but it is recommended to have at least one consistent representative attend all sessions for continuity. While companies can alternate who attends, having a consistent presence will help ensure stronger engagement, networking, and a better understanding of the curriculum.
How do you plan to work with local venture capital funds? Will there be cross-collaboration/sessions with investors? Etc.	Yes, the accelerator will include curriculum focused on venture capital (VC) funding. Participants will have opportunities to meet and engage with investors at every location, providing them with multiple contacts and funding options. While the program does not dictate how companies should secure funding, it aims to offer guidance and connections to help navigate the investment process.
How to submit the idea/pitch? Our SAM registration is currently underway. It might take a few weeks before we get it. Does that hinder our ability to submit the form?	Follow the instructions on the event page to submit your pitch. Ensure that your submission includes all required documents, including the 10-slide pitch deck with the Quad Chart. No, you can still submit your application even if your SAM registration is in progress. However, SAM registration is required for eligibility, so while a pending registration won't block submission, it may delay payment if you are selected. It is recommended to note the status of your SAM registration in your submission.
Is there any particular branch focus (i.e. Army, Marines, etc)? And should the proposal be focused on working with a particular branch/office? Or is it better if there is cross-branch applicability?	There is no specific branch focus for this accelerator. Your proposal should tell your company's story and highlight the broad applicability of your solution. While your technology may align with a specific branch, it is recommended to emphasize dual-use and joint-service potential to increase its traction. Rather than limiting your solution to a single branch (e.g., Navy or Coast Guard), consider how it might address broader DoD needs across multiple services.
Can you describe, in general, what types of things will be covered and/or activities will take place at the onsite meetings?	The onsite meetings will cover a wide range of topics, including: Funding Development,Stakeholder Engagement, and Collaborative Learning The curriculum will be tailored to each company's Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and funding stage, ensuring that no time is wasted on irrelevant material. The program will also emphasize cross-collaboration, allowing participants to learn from each other's challenges and solutions.
In case of a drone solution company, will I be able to find DoD drone stakeholders through the accelerator program?	The accelerator includes DoD stakeholders from various branches and agencies, but specific stakeholders are not publicly disclosed. Participants may have opportunities to connect with relevant DoD representatives, including those with an interest in drone technologies, during the program.
Is there a TRL level or level of product development that would be considered too far advanced for this program?	No, there is no TRL level that is considered too advanced for this program. The accelerator is designed to meet companies where they are, whether they are in the early stages of development or have a more mature product. The curriculum will be tailored to fit the TRL and funding stage of the selected companies.
Where can we find the Quad Chart template? What is supposed to go in each quadrant?	The Quad Chart template will be linked in the Q&A document on the event page. (Insert link to QUAD) While your chart does not need to follow the template exactly, it should clearly communicate these key points.
Is there an issue if our technology does not have an obvious dual-purpose/commercial use?	No, dual-use or commercial applicability is not required. If your technology is focused on a single DoD-specific application, that is completely acceptable. The key is to clearly articulate why your solution is needed and how it addresses a critical defense challenge.

Question	Answer
How much weight will be assigned to commercial vs. DoD customer traction in the down select process?	There is no specific weight assigned to commercial vs. DoD customer traction beyond what is outlined in the published grading criteria. The evaluation will be based strictly on the problem statement, technical areas, and selection criteria; no additional factors will be considered behind the scenes. Applicants should focus on addressing the criteria provided to strengthen their submission.
If a company has an ongoing SBIR with one org within the DoD, is the company eligible to apply for the accelerator, because the technology can be used in other applications with other orgs within the DoD?	Yes, a company with an ongoing SBIR may still be eligible to apply. It is recommended to review the non-traditional defense contractor (NDC) criteria provided in the link on the event website. If there is any uncertainty about eligibility, companies are encouraged to apply anyway, as the screening process aims to be as inclusive as possible.
What intellectual property protections can be established? Will Non-Disclosures be executed by DIU?	Applicants retain full ownership of their intellectual property (IP) included in their submission. The DIU does not retain or claim rights to any IP. Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) are only required for government contractors evaluating submissions, but not for government personnel. Participants can choose how much or how little information to share, as evaluators will primarily focus on technical areas and capabilities rather than deep proprietary details. If testing or evaluation of the technology becomes necessary later, a limited license would be negotiated, but any further use would require separate agreements with the participant.
If a company is new, company did not sell anything commercially or in defense. But technology itself is dual use and there are products in the market. Would not having sold anything place our submission at a disadvantage?	No, not having previous sales will not place your submission at a disadvantage. This is not specifically addressed in the evaluation criteria or problem statement, so there is no emphasis on prior sales. The key is to effectively tell your story and demonstrate why your technology is applicable to the DoD.
Can you provide a link to where to apply for this challenge?	Application Link:
Any relationships/material on DIU Blue Manufacturing?	This accelerator is separate from DIU Blue Manufacturing and has a completely different objective. However, there are Washington OnRamp Hub partners and PNDC member groups that specialize in manufacturing for the DoD. These groups will be involved as mentors, sharing insights and helping participants connect with DoD stakeholders in the manufacturing sector. Additionally, companies that participate in this program will become part of DIU's growing network, increasing visibility to potential DoD partners looking for companies in this space.
Can you expand on focus area "Emerging Tech"? Are these only Technology based Products?	Emerging Technology (ET) encompasses a broad range of advanced, multi-disciplinary, deep-tech initiatives. While primarily technology-driven, this category serves as a catch-all for innovations that don't fit neatly into other defined tech areas. It includes cutting-edge advancements across various industries and applications. For more details and examples, you can explore the DIU Emerging Tech portfolio here: DIU Emerging Tech Portfolio.