EXCERPT FROM NASA SBIR COMMERCIAL METRICS REPORT

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, NASA is required to demonstrate that its programs contribute to the Nation's economic well-being. One of the elements of that effort is a commercial metrics survey protocol that NASA designed and implemented to try to quantify the commercial activity associated with its Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) program.

While the primary purpose of NASA's SBIR program is to meet NASA mission-related technology needs, commercial application of NASA-funded SBIR technology is a strong secondary objective and is an imperative under GPRA as well as NASA's Strategic Plan. Accordingly, the NASA SBIR Solicitation emphasizes the importance of commercial potential of NASA-funded SBIR technology.

NASA's SBIR commercial metrics survey provides a mechanism to identify not only the commercial applications of NASA SBIR technology, but also other measures of commercial activity. The survey is designed to capture data on sales of products and/or services, as well as to reveal commercial intent. For example, cases where the firm has taken significant steps toward a commercial venture at least partially based on NASA SBIR technology, but a resulting product or service has not yet been (or perhaps never will be) sold are measured by the survey.

Submission of a completed survey form reflecting efforts to commercially apply technology gives the respondent an excellent opportunity to show commercial

intent and commercial capability with respect to NASA SBIR developed technology. Specifically, submitting the survey form lets NASA give credit for commercial information that might not otherwise be included in the information on commercialization potential typically provided in proposals. Firms completing the survey are eligible to submit their technologies for publications in the NASA Tech Briefs magazine at no cost. NASA Tech Briefs has a readership of over a half million individuals per month.

The universe of firms having received NASA phase II awards over the 1983 to 1994 period is 723 companies. Currently, about 75 percent of the firms have responded, 8 percent have not responded, and NASA has been unable to locate the remaining 17 percent. Of the firms we could find, about 91 percent have responded; they represent over 80 percent of the 1,443 phase II contracts awarded by NASA over the 1983 to 1994 period.

Survey results show that over 30 percent of NASA phase II awards have produced technology that has been incorporated into revenue generating commercial products and services in nongovernment markets. More than 450 associated commercial products and services in numerous industrial sectors are represented. This demonstrates the pervasive effect of NASA's SBIR program on the national economy.

The survey results also show significant commercial intent to apply NASA-sponsored SBIR technology in nongovernment markets. Specifically, for more than 35 percent of phase II's awarded by

NASA over the 1983 to 1994 period, the technology was either incorporated in products and services generating revenues in nongovernment markets or the firm took significant action to develop a commercial venture at least partially based on the technology. The survey also shows that the degree of strategic alliance partnering among SBIR and non-SBIR firms regarding ventures producing these products and services is significant.

Among other findings, the survey shows that about 90 percent of all firms winning NASA phase II awards have previously received three or fewer NASA phase II awards. Over the past five years, about 46 percent of all firms receiving NASA phase II awards for that period are new to NASA's SBIR program. This particular finding shows that there is significant opportunity for newcomer firms to enter the program.

NASA has extended its survey universe to include all of the more than 800 firms having received NASA SBIR phase II awards over the 1983 to 1995 SBIR award year period. Results are being compiled. The Office of Management and Budget has reauthorized both the survey instrument and methodology for another three years.

Copies of NASA's SBIR commercial metrics survey form may be downloaded from the NASA SBIR web site at http://sbir.nasa.gov. Firms should return completed survey forms to Jack Yadvish. Code RW, NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC 20546. Firms generally will not be requested to update the survey information more frequently than about once every two to three years, voluntary updates are invited at any time. Any questions regarding completion of the two-page form should be referred to Mr. Yadvish at 202-358-1981.