# Tips for Rapid Industry Teaming

For high-tempo agencies like ARPA-H and DARPA, proposal teams form within days of a program announcement, during Proposers' Day, and through teaming profiles. While speed is essential, rushed partnerships can lead to unfavorable IP terms, unreliable collaborators, or partners incapable of executing a federal award.

🚨 Loop in ORSP and/or Innovation Partnerships to help with NDAs, teaming agreements, and contract implications.

## DETERMINING THE RIGHT FIT

- ☐ **Program Fit.** Read the program call. Tailor your pitch strictly to the PM's stated vision, metrics, and Technology Readiness Level (TRL) targets before making the call.
- ☐ **Genuine Capability Gap.** The partner must bring specific, complementary expertise or resources that your academic lab lacks (e.g., scaled manufacturing, clinical trial access, hardware, or field deployment).
- ☐ **Transparency & Fit.** Strong partners will be transparent and forthcoming with information, communicate well, and respond promptly.
- ☐ **Contractual Authority.** Your point of contact will need the organizational authority to commit the company's resources and sign agreements.
- ☐ **Comfort with Milestone Funding.** The partner must explicitly understand and accept "go/no-go" phase-based funding. If they miss a milestone, the funding stops immediately.
- ☐ **TRL Alignment.** Their starting TRL must seamlessly complement your research stage, with a plausible trajectory to a demonstrable prototype.
- ☐ **Believable Transition Story.** The partner must be able to articulate a highly credible path to commercial scale, market entry, or clinical deployment once the federal funding concludes.

## BEFORE YOU FORMALLY TEAM UP

- ☐ **Establish the Lead Organization.** Explicitly state who will lead the proposal. The prime contractor drives contracting speed, administrative reporting, and how IP/data-rights terms are structured.
- ☐ **Sync on Timelines.** Reach clear agreement with the partner on meeting rapid-fire milestones.
- ☐ **Verify Federal Contracting Readiness.** If relevant, confirm the partner is active on SAM.gov and has an approved federal accounting system.
- ☐ **Consult on Export Control & Security.** U-M offices can help identify ITAR/EAR-controlled technologies, facility/personnel security clearance needs, or foreign-national restrictions that may impact proposal submission.
- ☐ **Safeguard U-M Intellectual Property.** Be cautious about sharing unpublished data or proprietary approaches. Focus more on what the work is (vs how it's implemented). If sharing confidential information is necessary, execute an NDA in eRPM before sharing your technical approach or IP. Do not wait for full subaward terms to be negotiated.
- ☐ **Draft Preliminary IP Boundaries.** Put a summary of Background IP (what you each bring to the table) vs. Foreground IP (what you will create together) in writing, alongside expected government data rights.
- ☐ **Discuss Budget and Cost-Share Expectations.** Ensure the industry partner understands any cost-share requirements; they can often fulfill this via in-kind contributions (personnel time, equipment, or facility resources).

## 🟢Green flags🟢

- Prior DARPA / ARPA-H / IARPA / SBIR experience, or asks smart questions about OTAs
- Willing to put IP/data-rights understanding in writing early
- Willing to enter into a mutual NDA to protect background intellectual property

## 🛑Red flags🛑

- No SAM.gov registration or federal accounting system
- Wants to fully negotiate IP/royalty terms before the proposal is even submitted
- Insists on exclusive rights to all resulting IP or unlimited data at the outset