

Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI)

The newly revised SBRI programme is a cross-government programme being led by the Technology Strategy Board. The programme is designed to help early stage, high-technology Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) gain greater access to Research and Development (R&D) opportunities supporting the future procurement needs of government departments. These are competitive R&D contracts which specifically aim to:

- Provide opportunities to those existing small firms whose businesses are based upon providing R&D - by increasing the size of the market;
- Encourage other smaller businesses to increase their R&D capabilities and capacity - to exploit new market opportunities;
- Create opportunities for starting new technology-based or knowledge-based businesses.

The Department of Health has been one of two government departments leading the piloting of this new SBRI scheme. As part of the i4i programme a pilot health SBRI call was launched in October 2008 in the area of Healthcare Associated Infections. A number of contracts have now been successfully placed and we are currently considering other areas for further SBRI calls.

Under i4i, the health-related SBRI programme will complement the Future Product Development funding streams by signalling very specific areas of NHS need for technological innovation. Innovative technological solutions to address these needs will be invited and funding will be provided through a two stage process:

1. A first short intensive high risk phase of approximately six months, with funding of up to £100,000 to provide evidence of the feasibility of the approach proposed; and if successful;
2. Substantial second phase funding to demonstrate commercial potential.