



## Pitch Days (United States)



Public Procurement Principle: **Balance**



Procurement Stage: **Tendering**



Audience: **Policy makers, Procuring entity, Private sector**

### Description

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The United States Air Force launched an Air Force Pitch Day programme in 2019. Modelled after commercial investment pitch competitions (e.g. television's Shark Tank), the aim is to deliver a faster, smarter approach to competing for ideas in the accelerating technology ecosystem. The process represents a major departure from the lengthy procurement and contracting processes typically expected of the government. It focuses on rapidly awarding small business innovation research (SBIR) contracts to companies based on a simpler streamlined evaluation of proposals papers and in-person presentations. Such grants have special procurement rules to promote innovation under the 1982 Small Business Innovation Development Act.

The first Pitch Day was held in March 2019. In the weeks leading up to the event, Air Force contracting officials reviewed 417 submissions received during the 30-day application period and then invited 59 businesses to pitch their proposals in person. The Air Force subsequently awarded 51 contracts to different companies for a total value of almost USD 9 million. Each of the initial contracts was paid immediately using a government purchase card, with winning contractors being paid in an average of 15 minutes. More than 500 attendees from government, industry, academia, venture capital and investment communities participated in the Pitch Day, which was an open event. About 12 pitch days were held around the United States throughout 2019. Each focuses on a different topic, such as communications systems, space, aviation technology and Artificial Intelligence.

This concept is not limited to defence. The US General Services Administration (GSA) has created the Assisted Acquisition Services Express Programme to provide services to non-military agencies, in order to help them obtain ideas and proposals from the private sector for innovative solutions that may be a good fit for their missions. Special contracting authorities used by this programme can help provide a faster and more efficient route to

obtaining innovative products and services in government. GSA helps to pay for the service by charging a fee to participating agencies.

Source: OECD (2020), [System Change in Slovenia: Making Public Procurement More Effective](#), OECD Publishing, Paris

