



DARPA's Defense Sciences Office (DSO) identifies and pursues high-risk, high-payoff research initiatives across a broad spectrum of science and engineering disciplines, and transforms them into important, radically new game-changing technologies for U.S. national security. Current DSO themes include accelerating scientific discovery, exploring fundamental limits, and expecting the unexpected – *but we look to you to tell us what the next big technology idea might be!*

Three basic ways for you to pursue your ideas with DSO

1. Talk to a Program Manager

Program Managers *are* DSO, so please communicate directly with one or more of them (see DSO's website, <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso>). E-mails, phone calls, or face-to-face meetings help you explore concepts and ideas and translate them into a substantive approach that you may wish to propose in one of the formats discussed below.

2. Submit your ideas to DSO's Office-wide Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), DARPA-BAA-16-46

The Office-wide BAA is primarily used to fund small, short-duration exploratory projects we call "seedlings". Seedlings help us determine whether "disbelief" in an idea's plausibility can turn into "mere doubt" – and remember that "mere doubt" is often sufficient to start a new DARPA program. Seedlings are typically 3-9 month projects that answer a specific question and involve a very limited number of personnel. The seedling ideas that you bring us today could lead to the next generation of program ideas.

3. Submit your ideas to a Program BAA

Initial seedling investments that bear fruit and become programs will appear as individual program BAAs throughout the year. You can search for them on FedBizOpps.gov, grants.gov, the DSO website, or the DARPA website under "Solicitations."

DSO's Office-Wide Broad Agency Announcement

The current DSO Office-wide BAA covers the entire scope of DSO's technical interests for this year and is open for new ideas through June 22, 2017.

Please note that the Office-wide BAA does not supersede program-specific BAAs. Rather it is intended to fund completely new ideas not connected with programs that are already underway or currently soliciting proposals.

The Office-wide BAA offers three different ways to submit ideas: (i) executive summaries (typically two pages in length); (ii) abstracts (not to exceed five pages); and (iii) full proposals.

We recommend you start by submitting a two-page executive summary (ES), preferably after discussing your ideas with a Program Manager. Your ES will be circulated among all the Program Managers in DSO, and we will provide feedback to let you know if there is any interest.



DARPA's mission is to make the pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent strategic surprise for U.S. national security

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DSO has a designated BAA Administrator, whom you can email at DARPA-BAA-16-46@darpa.mil. If you are not getting a timely response from a Program Manager or have other questions, please contact the BAA Administrator directly.

General Advice for Submitting New Ideas to DSO

- *Bring us your dreams for changing the world.*
- *Convince us that your idea does not violate any laws of physics or thermodynamics.* Remember that, at this stage of idea formulation, we are not asking for proof – only for a plausible argument and a robust technical approach for discovering the truth.
- *Identify clear demonstrations and metrics that tell us (and you!) that you are on the right track.* We are likely to ask you, “If you had the resources right now, what would you do?” If you cannot answer this question right away, then you are not ready.

As you are organizing your thoughts, you may find the “Heilmeier Catechism” to be very helpful. Developed by Dr. George Heilmeier, Director of DARPA in the mid-1970s, DARPA has lived by this catechism for decades, and it poses the questions we ask ourselves about every new DSO program:

- What are you trying to do?
- How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
- What’s new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
- Who cares?
- If you succeed, what difference do you think it will make?
- What are the risks and the payoffs?
- How long do you think it will take?
- Can we transition?
- How much will it cost?

Please seriously consider these questions. Initially, we recommend you focus on the first four to help you sort through the challenge you are actually trying to tackle. In addition, we will ask you, “Why DARPA? Why DSO? Why now?” These questions of relevance come up every day in conversations at DARPA.

Above all, please read the BAA. If you have questions about the BAA, contact the Office-wide BAA Administrator at DARPA-BAA-16-46@darpa.mil.

We look forward to your ideas!

