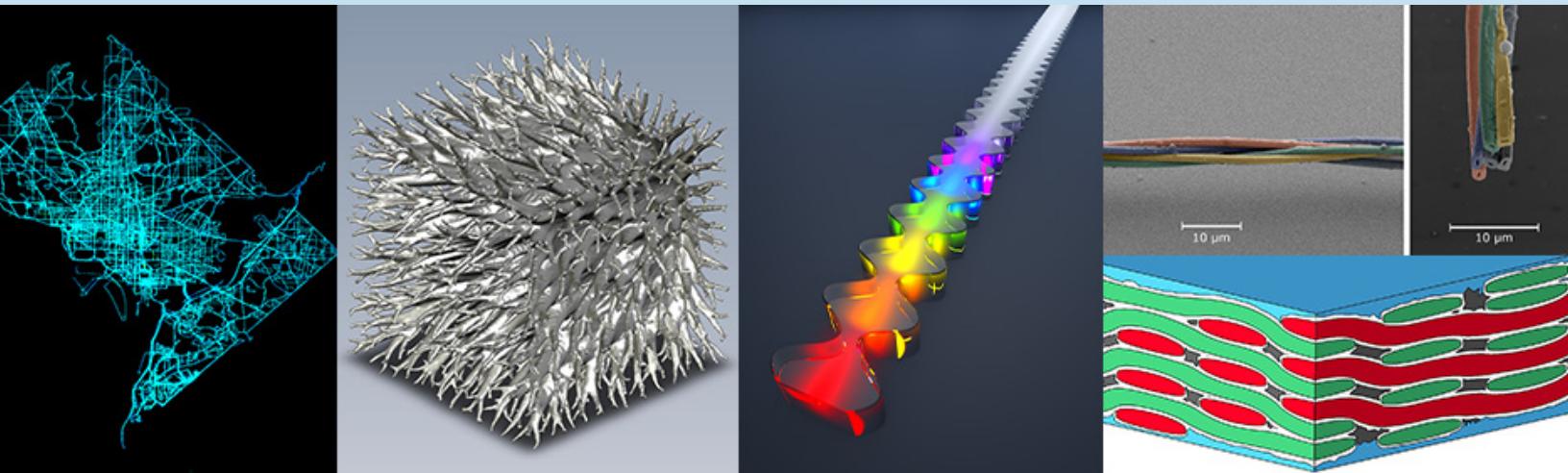




# Doing Business With DSO



**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, new game-changing technologies for U.S. national security. Current DSO themes include Frontiers in Math, Computation & Design, Limits of Sensing & Sensors, Complex Social Systems and Anticipating Surprise.

DSO relies on the greater scientific research community to help identify and explore ideas that could potentially revolutionize the state of the art.

## Four ways to make DSO aware of your research ideas:

### 1. Talk to a Program Manager

Program Managers recommend which proposals should receive DSO funding. You may communicate directly with one or more of them (see DSO's website, <https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso>). E-mails, phone calls, or face-to-face meetings allow you to explore concepts and ideas and translate them into a substantive proposal.

### 2. Submit a proposal to DSO's Office-wide Broad Agency Announcement (BAA), HR001120S0048

The Office-wide BAA is primarily used to fund small, short-duration exploratory projects.

These small projects help DSO determine whether "disbelief" in an idea's plausibility can turn into "mere doubt" – and "mere doubt" is often enough to encourage DSO to make a larger investment to determine if a scientific or technology innovation may be possible. These efforts are typically 3-9 month projects that answer a specific question and involve a very limited number of personnel. Knowledge gleaned from these small projects often lead to the next generation of program ideas. See section entitled "DSO's Office-wide Broad Agency Announcement" on the next page."

### 3. Submit a proposal to a program-specific BAA

Exploratory investments that bear fruit and become programs will appear as individual program BAAs throughout the year. You can search for them on [beta.SAM.gov](#), [grants.gov](#), the [DSO website](#), or the DARPA website under "[Solicitations](#)".

### 4. Submit a proposal to DSO's Disruptioneering Program Announcement, DARPA-PA-20-01

See section entitled "DSO's Disruptioneering" on the next page.

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



# Doing Business With DSO

## DSO's Disruptioneering

The pace of discovery in both science and technology is accelerating worldwide, resulting in new fields of study and the identification of scientific areas ripe for disruption. In order to capitalize on these new opportunities, DARPA's approach to investing must include faster responses with smaller, targeted investments. DSO has successfully addressed this concern through use of its Disruptioneering acquisition technique to make awards in fewer than 90 days after solicitation.

Targeted special notices called Disruption Opportunities (DOs) are issued under the Program Announcement, DARPA-20-01, for each Disruption effort. These DOs focus on small, high risk programs within technical domains important to DSO's mission. Research topics of interest to DSO may be found at <https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices/dso>.

## 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 11, 2021.

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 no more than two pages in length), (ii) abstracts (not to exceed five pages), and (iii) full proposals (Read the BAA instructions regarding the structure and content of full proposals).

We recommend you start by submitting an 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 you will receive feedback letting you know if there is any interest.

If you are not getting a timely response from a Program Manager or have other questions, please contact DSO's BAA Administrator directly at [HR001120S0048@darpa.mil](mailto:HR001120S0048@darpa.mil).

## General Advice for Submitting New Ideas to DSO

The "*Heilmeier Catechism*" is helpful for organizing your thoughts. Developed by Dr. George Heilmeier, Director of DARPA from 1975-1977, DARPA has lived by this catechism for decades. It poses the questions we ask ourselves about every new DSO program:

1. What are you trying to do?
2. How is it done today and who does it? What are the limitations of the present approaches?
3. What is new about our approach, and why do we think it will succeed?
4. If we succeed, what difference will it make?
5. How long do we think it will take?
6. What are our mid-term and final exams?
7. How much will it cost?

Initially, we recommend you focus on the first four to help define and scope your proposed research. 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 [HR001120S0048@darpa.mil](mailto:HR001120S0048@darpa.mil).



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