HR001120S0014

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 2/5/2020
Updates Highlighted Below

General

1. My research is not geared specifically to meet the AWE program goals. Is there an alternate solicitation that I can respond to?
   a. Yes. DARPA/BTO has an office-wide solicitation (HR001119S0048) for this purpose. Responses are being collected through April 23, 2020. Any innovative ideas can be submitted to the BTO office-wide solicitation at any time.

2. Will the Proposers Day slides and videos be posted online?
   a. Yes, information relayed during the Proposers Day will be made available on the BTO section of the DARPA Opportunities page: http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/opportunities.

3. Is Dr. Cohen available for a call or meeting to discuss our approach?
   a. In the interest of fairness to all parties, as Dr. Cohen will likely not have availability in his schedule to honor all requests, we will not be taking any program-related calls/meetings. Ultimately, the best way to determine the applicability of and level of interest in your approach is through the submission of a proposal abstract. The BAA describes the program, including metrics, in detail. If you have specific questions, please submit them by email to AWE@darpa.mil. Please be aware that your question and its answer may be published on this FAQ page, after the question has been revised to remove proprietary information.

4. Is proposal abstract submission required to submit a full proposal?
   a. No. Per the BAA – “Regardless of DARPA’s response to an abstract, proposers may submit a full proposal. DARPA will review all conforming full proposals using the published evaluation criteria and without regard to any comments resulting from the review of an abstract.” That being said, you are STRONGLY encouraged to carefully review the solicitation/FAQ and ask any necessary clarification questions to ensure your approach is responsive to the BAA before expending the effort to prepare a proposal.

Program Logistics

1. Do you anticipate a down-select between phases?
   a. Determination of which performers progress to the Phase II Option of the program will be based on performance in Phase I, including in the Capability Demonstration at Month 22.

2. Over the course of the program, can awardees combine efforts if it is found to be beneficial to the overall approach?
   a. That is not DARPA’s intent at this time.
3. During the execution phase, will results be presented in forum available to all participants?
   a. Performer meetings will occur approximately every 6 months, with both open- and closed-door sessions. Performers will not be expected to share proprietary results with other performer teams but will be encouraged to share fundamental results, as well as non-fundamental results, when appropriate.

4. If awarded a portion of this program, is a performer precluded from participation in SBIRs?
   a. No. But you cannot receive duplicate funding for the same tasks.

5. How much funding is available? What is the expected size of an award?
   a. The amount of resources made available under this BAA will depend on the quality of the proposals received and the availability of funds; however, typical DARPA BTO program budgets range from $40-60M over 3-5 years and fund 3-5 awards.

Proposals

1. Will non-adsorbent based approaches be considered if they meet the technical criteria?
   a. No. TA1 involves sorbent development and all proposals must address both TA1 and TA2 to be responsive to the BAA.

2. Is a credible commercialization path needed as part of the proposal?
   a. Proposers should refer to Section II of the BAA for commercialization plan requirements.

3. Is there a greater emphasis on Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the program?
   a. Both phases must be addressed in the proposal and will be considered together in evaluation of the proposal.

4. How does the IV&V process work?
   a. IV&V will be performed by government entity selected by the DARPA team. The IV&V team should be able to reproduce results reported by the performers through independent operation of the prototype device during the Capability Demonstrations.

6. Should teams propose the inclusion of DARPA embedded entrepreneurs as part of the proposal?
   a. The selection process for participation in the Embedded Entrepreneurship Initiative will be conducted separately from this proposal submission. However, proposers may include a description of their interest in participation in the Embedded Entrepreneurship Initiative and why the additional resource would be important to achieving successful technology transition.

7. Is a commercialization plan required?
   a. Yes.

Teaming

1. How can non-US organizations can participate?
   a. Please refer to Section 3.1.2 Non-US Organizations in the BAA. DARPA can and does directly fund foreign research laboratories. Funding restrictions can vary based on the country of origin, but no additional documentation is required at the time of submission. It is possible that additional contractual language and requirements could occur post-award.

2. Is there a limit on the number of teams that can be included on a proposal?
   a. No.
3. Can multiple organizations register under a single account to submit a proposal?
   a. No. The prime should submit a single, consolidated proposal on behalf of the entire team.

4. Can the team structure change between abstract and full proposal?
   a. Yes.

Device

1. Expeditionary. Can the unit fold into the volume envelope, but be larger during deployment?
   a. The size of the device is a derived metric; therefore, the proposal should define the device size. Compaction for storage could be part of the device design.

2. Expeditionary. Can there be human interaction with the unit (e.g., pumping, burying)?
   a. Yes.

3. Expeditionary. Is utilizing breathing either as a source of moisture, or as a source of power/airflow acceptable?
   a. Any device should not significantly encumber the movement or comfort of the user. A proposal that included moisture or power/airflow derived from breathing should clearly describe how the device could operate without impinging on warfighter effectiveness.

4. Expeditionary. What is the entry/exit TRL desired?
   a. TRL is not part of the proposal selection criteria.

5. Expeditionary. If one proposes to use a battery that is less than the total mass and volume requirements, can it be charged and if so, how often? Moreover, does the time required to charge the battery need to be considered as downtime for the AWE device?
   a. The size/weight requirements must include 24 hours of operational time. If that means the battery must be changed to run the device for 24 hours, that additional battery must be included in the size/weight. If it means the battery must be charged using a readily available power source (in far-forward operating conditions), that downtime counts against the 24 hour water production timeframe.

6. Does the expeditionary-scale unit need to produce water on the move (i.e. while the soldier is walking) or can it be used as a stationary system?
   a. Producing water while mobile may be proposed. If the device is designed to be used only while stationary, the rate of water extraction should be augmented so that the full water output objective is met while the warfighter is stationary. If the device is only operational as a stationary system, the logistics of use should be carefully considered by the proposer.

7. Is there any need to harvest water at night or could all of the water be harvested throughout the daytime?
   a. The water output targets should be achieved within a 24-hour period but may be accomplished more quickly. Day or night harvesting are acceptable.

8. Is there some guidance on average wind speed over the 30 day operational period we could evaluate or must the system be designed to move the required air volume through other methods excluding wind?
   a. Proposals may include the use of wind for contributing to air circulation through a device; however, because the device should be designed to work in a wide range of climate conditions, no specific wind flow should be assumed.
9. In the metrics temperature and relative humidity are specified. Should we assume that there are no differences between day and night for these temperature and RH points?
   a. The device should be able to meet the SWaP metrics assuming 24 hours under the described test conditions. Assume no difference between night and day temp and RH.

10. For the three different temperature and RH points can we develop three different materials, or a single material family with small changes to make three sub-tuned materials in order to tune the operation optimally for those conditions?
   a. A single device should be used under all three test conditions. The proposer may integrate multiple materials into the device but may not swap out one material for another between tests.

11. Are there constraints on the types of energy that can be used? How much reliance may be placed on solar energy? Will there be missions which preclude the availability of solar energy requiring the energy to be stored in the system?
   a. There are no limits on the power source, only on the power objective (for stabilization units) that the device may use. The use of solar thermal energy and solar photovoltaic energy are permissible; however, the BAA provides further clarification on the use of solar photovoltaics, particularly for the expeditionary track.

12. Does the device need to mitigate environmental contaminants?
   a. The device should produce potable water under controlled temperature and humidity conditions in a laboratory setting. Mitigation of environmental contaminants is not part of the BAA.

13. Will a testing capability to confirm potability be required on the device?
   a. Potability of water from the device will be verified by IV&V partners. There is no requirement that the device itself report on water potability.

14. Is there a noise limit for the device?
   a. No.

15. Are there cost limitations to the prototypes?
   a. No, but the cost of building the prototype(s) should be included in the proposed budget.

16. Stabilization: Does the unit have to remain on a vehicle?
   a. No. Weight and size limits as part of the derived metrics are designed so the device fits in a vehicle and can be lifted by four individuals, but there is no requirement that the device be integrated with or remain on a vehicle.

17. Is the 30 days of being operational metric based on maintenance/repair needs or does it include cleaning requirements?
   a. Maintenance/repairs.

18. Do the sorbent and extractant need to be separate or can they be combined in a single material?
   a. They may be combined in a single material.

19. For sorbent materials development: are you looking for new materials synthesized or just select the best available materials?
   a. Sorbent development is part of TA1. Development or derivatization of existing sorbents/materials may meet the objective.