

Machine Common Sense (MCS) Program

Mark Jones

DARPA Contracts Management Office

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DISCLAIMER

If DARPA publishes an MCS Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) and it contradicts any information in these slides,

the BAA takes precedence!



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BAA OVERVIEW

- BAA follows procedures in accordance with FAR 35.016.
- Any BAA (as well as any future amendments) will be posted on FEDBIZOPPS at www.fbo.gov and possibly Grants.gov at www.grants.gov
- Proposal due dates will be identified in the BAA
- BAA will cover all info needed to submit proposals. Follow instructions for proposal preparation and submittal.



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BAA ELIGIBILITY

- All interested/qualified sources may respond subject to the parameters outlined in the BAA.
- Foreign organization/individuals – check all applicable Security Regulations, Export Control Laws, Non-Disclosure Agreements, and any applicable governing statutes.
- FFRDCs/UARCs and Government entities
 - Subject to applicable direct competition limitations
 - Must clearly demonstrate eligibility per BAA
- Real and/or Perceived Conflicts of Interest
 - Identify any conflict
 - Include mitigation plan



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PROPOSAL PREPARATION INFORMATION

- Proposals consist of two volumes – Technical and Cost.
- Volume 1 - Technical and Management
 - BAA will identify a maximum page limit
 - Includes mandatory Appendix A – will not count towards page limit.
 - May include optional Appendix B – would not count towards page limit
- Volume 2 – Cost - No page limit.
- Level of Effort Summary by Task Spreadsheet – Example an Attachment to BAA
- Proposal PowerPoint Summary Quad Chart – Example a second Attachment to BAA
- The BAA will describe the necessary information to address in each volume –
 - Make sure to include every section identified.
 - If a section does not apply – put “None”
 - Include a working/unprotected spreadsheet as part of your Cost Volume submission.
 - Review individual TA descriptions, IP rights, and any deliverables for submission information



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STATEMENT OF WORK (SOW) PREPARATION TIPS

Write a SOW as if it were an attachment to an award

- Don't use proposal (e.g. we propose to do . . .) or marketing language
- Break out work between any phases/time periods identified in the BAA
- Succinctly and clearly define tasks & subtasks
- Identify the primary organization responsible for task execution
- Identify measurable milestones and define deliverables
- Do not include any proprietary information!

NOTE: For grants/cooperative agreements: SOW = RDD or Research Description Document. For Other Transactions: SOW = TDD or Task Description Document



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PROPOSAL PREPARATION TIPS

- **Substantial Time Commitment**
 - Propose substantial time commitment for key personnel
 - If PI is committed to multiple projects, consider co-PI(s) or document mitigation efforts to make up for PI's lack of commitment to effort
- **Risk** – Do not be afraid to address Risk in Technical Volume
 - Identify risk(s) to show an understanding of technical challenge(s)
 - Discuss metrics / potential mitigation plans / alternative directions
 - If conducted prior research, use data to support why approach will work
- **Page Limits** – Depth better than breadth
 - Focus on most critical/beneficial aspects
 - Don't restate problems at expense of explaining solution
 - Don't sacrifice SOW



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PROPOSAL PREP CONT'D – INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- Government typically desires, at a minimum, **Government Purpose Rights** for any proposed noncommercial software and technical data. (SEE DFARS 227 for Patent, Data, and Copyrights)
- Data Rights Assertions – IF asserting **less than Unlimited Rights**:
 - Provide and justify basis of assertions (e.g. privately funded under IRAD project XYZ)
 - Explain how the Government will be able to reach its program goals (including transition) within the proprietary model offered; and
 - Provide possible nonproprietary alternatives
- IF proposed solution utilizes commercial IP – submit copies of license with proposal



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ITEMS TO NOTE

- Fundamental vs. non-fundamental research
- Understand and comply with SAM, E-verify, FAPIIS, i-Edison and WAWF. Links can be found in the BAA.
- Subcontracting Issues
 - Non-Small Businesses: Subcontracting Plans required for FAR-based contracts expected to exceed the applicable threshold.
 - Subcontracting plans with <5% SDB goal – provide an explanation why
 - Subcontractor cost - Proposals must include, at a minimum, a non-proprietary, subcontractor proposal for EACH subcontractor. Include any internal price/cost analysis of subcontract value in proposal.
 - If utilizing FFRDC/UARC, Government entity, or a foreign-owned firm as a subcontractor, submit their required eligibility information, as applicable.



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ITEMS TO NOTE CONTINUED

- Proposals typically must be valid for a minimum of 120 days – recommend putting in a longer time period
- TFIMS-2 Usage
- Document files must be in .pdf, .odx, .doc, .docx, .xls, and/or .xlsx formats
- Submissions must be written in English



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ABSTRACT/PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- Abstracts are submitted via DARPA's web-based upload system.
- FAR based contract and OT proposals: Required to be submitted by via DARPA's web-based upload system for unclassified portion of proposal. Submission must be in a single zip file not exceeding 50 MB.
- Assistance Instrument proposals: Required to be submitted via Grants.gov.
- Follow submission procedures outlined in the BAA. DO NOT submit proposals except as outlined in the BAA (e.g., email/fax submissions will NOT be accepted).
- DO NOT wait until the last minute to make submissions – the submission deadline(s) as outlined in the BAA will be strictly enforced!
- DO NOT forget to FINALIZE your proposal submission in the DARPA submission tool!



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EVALUATION / AWARD

- No common Statement of Work - Proposal evaluated on individual merit and relevance as it relates to the stated research goals/objectives
- Evaluation Criteria (listed in descending order of importance) at a minimum will be: (a) Overall Scientific and Technical Merit; (b) Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission; and (c) Cost Realism.
- Evaluation done by scientific/technical review process. DARPA SETAs with NDAs may assist in process.
- Government reserves the right to select for award all, some, or none of the proposals received, to award portions of a proposal, and to award with or without discussions.



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COMMUNICATION

- Prior to Receipt of Proposals – No restrictions, however Gov't (PM/PCO) shall not dictate solutions or transfer technology. Unclassified FAQs will be periodically posted to this BAA's DARPA web page.
- After Receipt of Proposals – Prior to Selection: Limited to PCO – typical communication to address proposal clarifications.
- After Selection/Prior to Award: Communications range from technical clarifications/revisions to formal cost negotiations. May involve technical as well as contracting staff.
- Informal feedback for proposals not selected for funding may be provided once the selection(s), if any, are made.



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TAKE AWAY

- Submit abstracts/proposals before the due date/time - Do NOT wait until the last minute (i.e. hour) to submit.
- Read and understand the BAA - Follow the BAA when preparing proposals.
- Be familiar with Government IP terms from the DFARS Part 227.
- Submit working/unprotected spreadsheet(s).
- The Contracting Officer is the only Government official authorized to obligate the Government.



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