Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as of 7/27/17

38Q: Is my topic of interest to the TEE BAA?
38A: We cannot comment on specific approaches. Please carefully read the technical portion of the BAA (Section I. “Funding Opportunity Description”). If you feel your topic is responsive to the metrics described therein, you should submit a proposal.

37Q: I am interested in proposing a project exploring applications other than memory or logic. Would this be of interest to the Topological Excitations in Electronics program?
37A: As stated in the BAA, proposers in TA1 may address an application other than memory and/or logic as long as it is based on nano-sized topological excitations operating at room temperature and it can significantly improve upon the state of practice. Such proposals should have a proof-of-concept task to assess the potential application.

36Q: Should the TEE abstract documents be submitted again in the full proposal as Attachments 1 & 2?
36A: No.

35Q: Where should the excel version of the cost proposal be included?
35A: The Volume 2 (Cost proposal) spreadsheet file must be included as a separate file in the full proposal package.

34Q: In the statement of work, is it recommended to indicate the level of effort of each personal involved (PI, Co-Pi, Post-doctoral, etc…) in terms of number of labor of hours for each task/subtask?
34A: This level of detail is required in the cost proposal. Labor hours broken down by personnel involved and tasks should be included in your Volume 2, cost proposal. Section ii of the cost proposal requests cost summaries by phase and task, and section iii (1) request direct labor costs. A more general discussion of major cost items should be included in the Volume 1.

33Q: Is it recommended to indicate the level of effort of PI and Co-PI in terms of hours for each task/subtask in the cost volume, even if no dollars are asked for their effort?
33A: The level of effort for the PI and co-PI are required so that DARPA can assess the Performer's ability to perform/understanding of the work required to accomplish the proposed Statement of Work.

32Q: Attachment 5, Cost Volume Template, states to include a spreadsheet file (.xls or equivalent format). Is there a specific template that should be used for this submission?
32A: There is no specific excel template. You may use the format that works best for your team’s proposal as long as all of the requested information in BAA is provided.
31Q: The “Total Proposed Cost” section asks for $ amounts for Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Total. However, this is a 42 month proposal. I am not sure how to break out the $ amounts in the three years.

31A: The BAA states that Phase I will be of an 18-month duration (an initial phase in which performers will establish/validate materials and metrics for topological excitations of interest) and Phase II will be of a 24-month duration (an option phase in which successful approaches will be integrated to demonstrate a prototype device as a proof of principle and to characterize its stability, as well as the parameter space of its interactions for the topological excitations of interest). A target start date of February 1, 2018 may be assumed for planning purposes. Therefore, a suggested breakdown by Government Fiscal Year (GFY) would be as follows:

Year 1, Phase I: 2/1/2018 – 9/30/2018 = 8 months
Year 2, Phase I: 10/1/2018 – 7/31/2019 = 10 months
Year 2, Phase II: 8/1/2019-9/30/2019 = 2 months
Year 3, Phase II: 10/1/2019 – 9/30/2020 = 12 months
Year 4, Phase II: 10/1/2020 – 7/31/2021 = 10 months

30Q: What required elements count against the 20 page limit in Volume 1?

30A: As stated in the BAA, the Volume 1 page limit includes items iv - xiii of the technical volume with the exception of the slides (attachment 3).

29Q: What is the expectation for time commitment per faculty?

29A: DARPA expects all key personnel associated with a proposal to make substantial time commitment to the proposed activity and the proposal will be evaluated accordingly.

28Q: Is an FFRDC/Government Entity required to submit a detailed spend plan?

28A: Yes.

27Q: If a proposal from an FFRDC/Government Entity were to be selected for funding, how will the award money be disbursed?

27A: If an FFRDC is selected for an award (either as a prime or as a sub), Government funds will be disbursed directly to the FFRDC.

26Q: I work for a foreign/Non-U.S. government-sponsored lab. Can I participate in the TEE BAA?

26A: Yes, non-U.S. organizations and/or individuals may participate to the extent that such participants comply with any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances.

25Q: I’d like to schedule a feedback call/meeting on my discouraged abstract.

25A: At this time, we are not scheduling informal feedback calls for discouraged abstracts. In your abstract response, we did our best to provide detailed feedback.
regarding the rationale for this decision. While proposers are welcome to submit a full proposal, the purpose of the abstract process is to allow a proposer to quickly ascertain whether the proposed concept is of interest to the TEE BAA while minimizing effort and reducing the potential expense of preparing a proposal. While your abstract was not encouraged, 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. Should you choose to submit a full proposal, it is strongly recommended that you carefully read the BAA and FAQs.

24Q: In the statement of work, it is asked for “A measurable milestone (e.g., a deliverable, demonstration, or other event/activity that marks task completion).” It is a bit confusing as a deliverable or event are not necessarily a milestone. Can it be written in the proposal as “measurable task completion criteria”?

24A: Yes.

23Q: A copy of the subawardee statement of work of is asked for in the cost volume. Should it the same as the statement of work in the attachment 4, with only the contribution of the subawardee? If not, will the contribution of the subawardee from a scientific point of view be judged in this document? Can it be more detailed? Or the objective is only to judge the adequation of the cost with the scientific task?

23A: Because Volume 1 (attachment 4) has a page limit, the subawardee(s) detailed statement of work (SOW) need not be provided in Volume I. However, a description of the work to be performed and total costs should be included. The details of the subawardee(s) statement of work (SOW) and costs must be provided in the Cost Proposal (attachment 5). All subawardee information must be provided at the same level of detail as the prime. The contribution of the subawardee from both a financial and scientific point of view will be judged by assessing the complete proposal against the evaluation criteria.

22Q: In the volume 1, there is some overlap between the technical plan and the statement of work, in particular concerning the plan to achieve the milestones. In which of these sections should these be described in detail?

22A: The Technical plan should be broad; details of the tasks can be provided in the “statement of work” section and the “schedule and milestones” section.

21Q: In the BAA, it is written “The Technical Concept Slide: Using the slide template provided as Slide 2 of Attachment 3 to the BAA, provide graphics, plots, conceptual diagrams and/or process flows to highlight the Goals and Impact discussion above.”, while the template of the Technical Concept Slide ask for “How It Works/Innovative Claims Risks and mitigation strategies”, which is different. Which indication should we follow?

21A: Please follow the instructions in the BAA. Slide 2 of attachment 3 is a free-form opportunity for you to discuss the goals, impact, and risk of your technical concept.
20Q: In Section 4 of Attachment 6 it is written that the “In accordance with BAA Section VI.B.4, provide the following information, as applicable. Note: the Government will assume unlimited rights to all IP not explicitly identified as restricted in the proposal.” Does the term “unlimited rights” mean, as set forth in the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) 227, that « the Government can use, modify, reproduce, release or disclose technical data or computer software in whole or in part, in any manner, and for any purpose whatsoever, and to have or authorize others to do so”? 
20A: Yes, per (DFARS) 227 "Unlimited rights" means rights to use, modify, reproduce, perform, display, release, or disclose technical data in whole or in part, in any manner, and for any purpose whatsoever, and to have or authorize others to do so.

19Q: In the table in the Attachment 6 section 4, what is expected for in the “basis for assertion” column and in the “asserted Rights category”. Can you provide examples? 
19A: The "basis of assertion" is the proposer's reasoning for asserting an intellectual property restriction. Generally, the development of an item, component, or process at private expense, either exclusively or partially, is the only basis for asserting restrictions on the Government's rights to use, release, or disclose technical data pertaining to such items, components, or processes. Indicate whether development was exclusively or partially at private expense. If development was not at private expense, enter the specific reason for asserting that the Government's rights should be restricted.

In the "asserted rights category" enter the asserted rights category (e.g., government purpose license rights from a prior contract, rights in SBIR data generated under another contract, limited or government purpose rights under this or a prior contract, or specifically negotiated licenses).

18Q: On page 35 of the BAA, it is written that “Proposers should note that the Government does not own the intellectual property or technical data/computer software developed under Government contracts. The Government acquires the right to use the technical data/computer software. Regardless of the scope of the Government’s rights, awardees may freely use their same data/software for their own commercial purposes (unless restricted by U.S. export control laws or security classification). Therefore, technical data and computer software developed under this solicitation will remain the property of the awardees, though DARPA will have, at a minimum, Government Purpose Rights (GPR) to technical data and computer software developed through mixed sponsorship.”Does it mean that, in any case, the government will have Government Purpose Rights?
18A: The Government will have Government Purpose Rights to technical data/computer software developed with mixed funding (Government and private funding). If the technical data/computer software is developed solely at Government expense, the Government will have unlimited rights to it.

▲▲▲▲ New Questions and Answers ▲▲▲▲
17Q: What are the rules for equipment purchases by a non-U.S. organization?  
17A: They are the same for equipment purchases by a U.S. organization with the caveat that Non-U.S. organizations must also comply with any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances. All proposers must provide an itemized list of all proposed equipment including quantities, unit prices, proposed vendors (if known) and the basis of estimate (e.g., quotes, prior purchases, catalog price lists, etc.). Any item that exceeds $5,000 must be supported with back-up documentation such as a copy of catalog price lists or quotes prior to purchase. Please review Section IV.B.2.b.iii of the BAA for further information.

16Q: Does a grant allow full payment of costly equipment (> $100k) at the start of the project?  
16A: Potentially. All equipment purchases requested should be adequately justified and necessary for the completion of the proposed work, at the proposed time. The specifics of funding disbursement and equipment purchases will be negotiated if selected for an award.

15Q: What happens if an organization that was selected for award does not pass the initial evaluation of Phase I or fails to achieve several milestones within the project?  
15A: While the consequences may vary, the organization may not obtain funding for Phase II.

14Q: What are the consequences of milestone failure within the project?  
14A: The most serious consequence of milestone failure could be the withdrawal of future funding.

13Q: Is there recommendation regarding the number of milestones and their time schedule?  
13A: Yes, the recommended milestones are provided in Section I.F of the BAA.

12Q: Are there rules for indirect cost? How should they be justified? In particular, does DARPA pay for the salary of permanent staff working on the project?  
12A: All costs (both direct and indirect) including individual labor hours for personnel working on the project should be included and the basis for each cost should be provided. Direct and indirect costs must be in compliance with the Offeror's accounting system. Rate Agreements must be provided. If selected for an award, DARPA will make payments according to the terms negotiated.

11Q: Is it possible to have access to previous projects submitted to DARPA?  
11A: No. However, to obtain information on awards made under a specific solicitation you will need to submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request through the Department of Defense's FOIA office. You can find the necessary information on how to submit a FOIA request at http://www.dod.mil/pubs/foi/foiareq.html. Note that you will need to specify the BAA number when making your request.

10Q: What is the timeframe of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year?  
10A: The U.S. Government Fiscal Year is from 10/01 until 09/30.
9Q: I am interested in proposing research in materials that host Dirac-type or similar quasiparticles which under certain conditions can be topologically protected. Is this type of research within the scope of the program?

9A: As stated in the BAA, the program is interested in nano-sized topological excitations for classical and quantum applications irrespective of the materials platform used. While memory, logic, sensors and quantum computing are specifically mentioned, other applications are also of interest as long as they significantly improve upon the state of the art.

8Q: Can I propose multiple subcontractors on a proposal?

8A: Yes and teaming is highly encouraged. Per the BAA, “Collaborative proposals involving expertise in materials and device fabrication, metrology, ultrafast time-resolved imaging, and modeling are anticipated.”

7Q: Is $700,000 the maximum amount of money for proposals requesting a Procurement Contract?

7A: No. For proposals requesting procurement contracts, the Federal Acquisition Regulation imposes requirements depending on the total amount of the cost proposal. Please carefully review the information on page 24 of the BAA.

6Q: The DARPA-SN-17-26 RFI mentioned topological excitations in oxide materials. Are these of interest to the Topological Excitations in Electronics BAA?

6A: As stated in the BAA, the program is interested in materials and material combinations that host nano-sized topological excitations. The call for proposals is agnostic as to what type of materials form the basis for these excitations.

5Q: Approximately how much funding is available for a project and how large should a team be?

5A: The amount of funding and the size of the team proposed should be commensurate with each other and depend on the scope of the project. The proposed team and budget should be as large as they need to be to meet the overall goals of the program.

4Q: Can an individual or institution be a part of two or more teams submitting proposal abstracts or full proposals submitted in response to the BAA?

4A: Yes.

3Q: Is there a limit to the number of applications you will accept from a single institution?

3A: No.

2Q: Will feedback be provided on our response to the DARPA-SN-17-26 RFI?

2A: No, feedback is not provided on RFI responses. Please consider submitting an abstract to the TEE BAA per the instructions in Section IV of the BAA. DARPA will
respond to abstracts with a statement as to whether DARPA is interested in the idea. If DARPA does not recommend the proposer submit a full proposal, DARPA will provide feedback to the proposer regarding the rationale for this decision.

1Q: If we responded to the DARPA-SN-17-26 RFI, will our teaming profiles automatically be included in the teaming profile list?
1A: No. If an organization is interested in having their information included in the teaming profile list, they must follow the instructions in Section VIII.B of the BAA.