

DARPA-PA-26-05 MATHBAC
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
as of 04/13/2026

8Q: My team specializes in a critical Department of War (DoW) application area, such as cybersecurity or logistics. Can we propose a project that uses AI to solve a problem in our field?

8A: See Q1; Additionally, MATHBAC aims to fund the creation of new mathematics that advances the science of AI itself. Selected science domains should drive the development of new, foundational mathematical theories for AI. However, a proposal that simply applies existing AI tools and techniques to a specific domain like cybersecurity, without a core focus on generating and proving new mathematical insights, would not be aligned with this solicitation.

7Q: Is it permissible for an organization/PI to participate as a non-lead, contributing team member on multiple proposals submitted by different lead institutions, provided that the organization's role is limited in scope and clearly defined within each proposal?

7Q: Yes, potential awardees may be involved in multiple proposals. However, there is a potential conflict of interest if supporting multiple awards on the same program. You must provide a mitigation plan to demonstrate how you are going to deconflict the issue(s), protect stakeholders' proprietary information, and provide/ensure sufficient support for the effort(s). Additionally, you will need to document how the work being assigned in one effort differs from the other. The Government will not pay for the same work performed on multiple awards.

6Q: What specific expertise or background is required for a team proposing to the MATHBAC program?

6A: See page 22 Section II: Evaluation Criteria, Proposer's Capabilities or Related Experience: The proposer team must demonstrate capabilities and/or related experience with (1) agentic AI; (2) small science models; and (3) the proposed mathematics/information/systems/data science theory and algorithms to be deployed.

5Q: My proposal focuses on achieving significant performance improvements for an AI system. How important is it to also develop a new mathematical theory to explain why it works?

5A: Developing a rigorous mathematical framework is essential to the MATHBAC program. While improved performance is a welcome outcome, the core goal is to advance the fundamental "science of AI." Proposals that only demonstrate better performance without creating and validating a new mathematical theory to explain the underlying principles are not aligned with the program's objectives. The central aim is to understand why an approach works, not just that it does.

4Q: Given the abstract deadline of April 30, is there any guidance on the expected scope and format of the abstract submission?

4A: Additional instructions for abstract submission are contained within Attachments A and B found on the MATHBAC solicitation opportunity posted on SAM.gov.

3Q: Is registration for the April 21 Proposers Day webcast still possible, or is there an alternative way to access the briefing materials?

3A: Registration closed on April 13, 2026. There will not be an alternative way to access briefing materials.

2Q: Can a Canadian organization submit to MATHBAC under the non-U.S. entity provisions? Are there specific compliance requirements we should be aware of beyond those in the solicitation?

2A: See page 25 SECTION IV: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: “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.”

1Q: Does the program scope include applications where the data streams originate from physical infrastructure systems (SCADA, ICS, sensor networks) rather than purely digital/computational environments? Specifically, I'm interested in whether geometric approaches to multi-agent communication - where agents communicate differential manifold state changes across federated infrastructure domains - fall within the program's aperture.

1A: MATHBAC is interested in developing/deriving the mathematics for (1) understanding/designing agentic communication protocols and for (2) improving communication content. Proposed science domains, applications, and data streams should support the goals of the program.