

DARPA-PS-26-127: Perrseus

Questions and Answers

Version 5

August 31, 2026

Q23: Is cost sharing required for teams that opt for the Baseline IP Path and meet all License Rights Expectations? If so, does the type of organization, such as an educational institution or a nontraditional defense contractor, affect the cost-sharing requirements?

A23: Cost sharing is not required for proposers who meet the Baseline IP License Rights Expectation, with the exception of proposers who do not have at least one non-traditional defense contractor or nonprofit research institution participating to a significant extent (see 10 U.S.C. §4022).

Q22: When and how will the oral presentations date be determined for my team?

A22: DARPA will reach out to coordinate the time and date of oral presentations shortly after your Intent to Submit Notification is received.

Q21: In the Intent to Propose Notification letter, must all the subcontractors and team members be identified?

A21: No. Per Addendum 1 to the solicitation, the Intent to Propose notification, due on September 1st 2026 at 4:00 pm ET, only needs to contain the following information:

- i) Statement of intent to propose.
- ii) Abstract control number (if applicable).
- iii) Prime organization and its Principal Investigators (PI).

Q20: How should the Statement of Work (SoW) of an FFRDC, UARC, or Government Entity supporting the prime be justified in the proposal?

A20: Because FFRDCs operate under unique statutory constraints regarding private-sector competition, DARPA will closely evaluate fabrication services and technology transfer plans. DARPA is prohibited from funding FFRDC tasks that compete with commercially available private-sector services. The SoW of an FFRDC must explicitly identify tasks and subtasks that cannot be executed commercially. The SoW of the FFRDC should also be structured to include mechanisms, such as pure-play foundry utilization, to guarantee accessibility of developed technologies to other Perrseus performers.

If a task leverages previously developed FFRDC technology, the FFRDC should utilize commercial, IP agnostic, private-sector services for partial or complete technology transition. The FFRDC's SoW should include tasks to execute the transition plan during the Period of Performance (PoP) of Perseus. For example, the FFRDC's SoW could include modification and transition of existing design files to a commercial foundry for fabrication.

If a task requires the FFRDC to develop entirely new technology, the FFRDC must justify why the tasks can only be performed in-house. A transition plan for the development work may be delivered at the end of the program.

Q19. How should offerors address the availability and commitment of subcontractor resources that may be supporting more than one effort?

A19. Offerors are responsible for proposing a realistic and executable approach. If a proposal relies on subcontractor resources that may support multiple efforts, the proposal should clearly demonstrate that those resources have sufficient availability, capacity, and commitment to successfully perform the proposed work. Offerors should also explain how they will manage any potential competing commitments or resource constraints that could affect successful execution of the proposed effort. The Government will evaluate proposals in accordance with the solicitation.

Q18. Are there specific requirements for the performance of the pressure sensor for the month 12 milestone?

A18. No, there are no specific performance or range requirements for the pressure sensor at the month 12 milestone. As stated in the solicitation, the purpose of this milestone is to de-risk and demonstrate the underlying methodology and concept of operation for the proposed pressure sensor(s). This ensures the measurement approach is validated before being used for process development throughout the program. It is incumbent upon the performer to justify how their demonstration sufficiently de-risks this methodology.

Q17. Will any further information be provided regarding the specific definition of what high-volume manufacturing means?

A17. The information provided in the PS and the FAQ regarding the high-volume manufacturing requirement should be sufficient for comprehensive and holistic responses in the abstract and proposal. No further information will be provided.

Q16. Can capital equipment be proposed for this effort?

A16. Yes, but the purchase of capital equipment is treated as an exception and requires significant justification. The proposal must demonstrate that the equipment is essential for the proposed effort, necessary to overcome gaps in commercially available tooling, and is not simply an incremental upgrade. Given the exceptional nature of this cost,

proposers are to detail any planned capital equipment purchases in their abstract submission to receive early feedback from the Government.

Q15. Can manufacturing/fabrication partners be brought in during Phase 2, or do they need to be a part of the team for the entire program?

A15. Proposers are expected to identify their full proposed team, including Phase 2 manufacturing and fabrication partners, in their initial proposal submission so the Government can holistically evaluate the team's capabilities. Proposers may structure their team such that certain partners have a phased period of performance limited strictly to Phase 2. While post-award additions or substitutions of subcontractors are contractually permissible to address unforeseen technical gaps, they require formal justification and prior approval from the Contracting Officer. Proposers should not rely on adding critical, foreseeable team members post-award as a substitute for comprehensive upfront teaming.

Q14. Can a group/company be a subcontractor for multiple different performers if the work being done is distinct for each proposal?

A14. Yes. A research group or commercial company can be a proposed subcontractor across multiple prime contractor proposals and, if selected for award negotiation, may be funded on multiple efforts. In such cases, the subcontractor and primes must ensure:

1. The scope of work on each project is distinct (no double-billing for the same effort).
2. Appropriate firewalls/safeguards are in place to ensure proprietary or protected information is not shared across competing teams.

Because DARPA cannot fund these organizations through prime contracts, distinct solicitation requirements apply depending on when they are identified:

- In Full Proposals (PS Section IV.B.1, Page 26): Proposers including a UARC, FFRDC, Government Entity, or National Laboratory must define their role and POC in the Technical Proposal with a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost only, while completely excluding their costs from the prime's Cost Proposal. If selected for award negotiation, DARPA will fund these entities directly via their existing sponsoring agreements. If funded, these organizations will be required to share their work and findings with other performers supporting the Perrseus program.
- Designation as Shared Government Resources (PS Section IV.B.1, Pages 25–26): DARPA reserves the right to fund unique, critical capabilities directly and designate the entity as a Shared Government Resource supporting all selected performers.
 - o If identified during the Abstract phase, DARPA will notify the proposer to remove the entity from their team prior to full proposal submission so the capability can be furnished centrally.

- o If proposed in a Full Proposal, DARPA may similarly fund the entity directly during award negotiation and structure their statement of work as a shared, program-wide capability.

Q13. Would a high-level description of the proposed architecture, objectives, and anticipated capabilities be considered CUI? Would manufacturing recipes, process travelers, integration tolerances, or other implementation details identified be CUI?

A13. Per the Perrseus CUI Guide (Attachment L), a high-level description of the proposed architecture, objectives, and anticipated capabilities is not considered Controlled Technical Information (CTI), but it would be considered Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) if it contains proprietary business information that requires protection. The manufacturing recipes, process travelers, integration tolerances, and other implementation details for integrated devices developed under the program are considered CTI, which is a category of CUI, as explicitly defined in the guide.

Q12. There are multiple "SAMPLE_OT_P" model agreements posted on SAM.gov for this solicitation (e.g., Streamlined Fixed, Traditional Cost-Share, Expenditure Based, etc.). Which model should we use?

A12. The "SAMPLE_OT_P" documents were uploaded to the SAM.gov posting due to a system error and are not applicable to this solicitation. For this program, offerors must refer exclusively to DARPAPS-26 127_Perrseus_Attachment_J_Model_OT_Prototype.docx as the sole authorized model agreement. Please disregard all other generic "SAMPLE_OT_P" documents.

Q11. What is a single mode photonic interconnect?

A11. A single mode interconnect allows only a single spatial mode to propagate into the package. A window allows multiple spatial modes and would not be considered an interconnect.

Q10. Is partial pressure an acceptable measurement?

A10. This program is interested in absolute pressure measurement within a package.

Q9. Are there any power restrictions for driving the device?

A9. There are no defined power requirements other than compatibility with the μ UHV package. Proposers need to ensure that power delivered to the device must be consistent with the use of the interconnects, and the interconnects should be able to handle all the required optical and electrical power.

Q8. Are we required to use a cold atom or ion sensor as part of our pressure sensing method?

A8. If proposing a method of pressure sensing that does not require the use of cold atoms or ions, proposers must demonstrate that the selected pressure sensing methodologies are able to operate and output reliable measurements well below a pressure of 10^{-10} mbar to ensure that our measurement of progress is never limited by the pressure sensor itself.

Q7. Is there a threshold or specific definition of what is manufacturable?

A7. No. There is no specific threshold for manufacturable. Examples are given in the solicitation. DARPA is looking for comprehensive solutions that cover short-term and long-term manufacturing needs. In the short term, there are no methods for generation of any quantity of high-performance sensors based on a μ UHV package. In the long term, any manufacturable process must be able to scale to meet the demands of the Government and commercial markets.

Q6. What is included in the 5 mL volume?

A6. The 5 mL volume encompasses the physics package of the μ UHV system. Examples of components that are not included are lasers, power supplies, etc. If magnetic coils or similar components are needed, that is included in the 5 mL volume. However, if external components are being used for the measurement of pressure, then they must be connected to the μ UHV through the interconnects.

Q5. What wavelength is required for the single-mode photonic interconnects?

A5. The wavelength should be compatible with cooling and readout of the integrated atomic source.

Q4. Does only vacuum need to be maintained for 3 years or also the atomic source?

A4. Both the vacuum integrity and the atomic source's operational performance must be maintained for a continuous operational lifetime of 3 years

Q3. One of the milestones requires a process that is compatible with atomic source integration. Is this required if we do not require an atomic sensor for measurement of pressure? Requiring atomic source integration may limit the available processes.

A3. Atomic source integration is required. The intent of the program is the development of processes that are compatible with MEMs, photonics, and quantum sensors. It is imperative that any process developed be compatible with future quantum sensors, and the atomic source integration is intended to force that compatibility.

Q2. Which institutions are eligible to prime?

A2. Companies and universities are eligible to prime. FFRDCs, UARCs, and National Labs can only perform as subcontractors.

Q1. As a university sub-award to a company Prime, does this fee range affect university budgeting that usually takes a ~52% indirect cost (i.e., can the usual ~52% indirect cost still be used in university budgets)?

A1. The solicitation's fee limitations and a university's negotiated indirect cost rate are unrelated. Academic institutions may continue to apply their federally negotiated indirect cost rate to the appropriate direct cost bases in their sub-award budgets, subject to any standard limitations outlined in the solicitation. The fee range restriction outlined in the solicitation applies to fee/profit earned above actual costs.