DARPA-PS-26-127: Perrseus

Questions and Answers

Version 10

September 17, 2026

Q31: When are the oral presentation slides due? Should the slides be included in the ZIP file submitted through BAAT? Can the slides be submitted in PowerPoint (.pptx) format, or are they required to be in PDF format? Are backup slides (beyond 20 slide limit) permitted to support more detailed discussions and potential questions during the Q&A session? Can the slides be modified in between submission and the oral presentation?

> A31: As stated in the solicitation and in Attachment D, the slides for the oral presentation are part of Attachment D and are due with Attachment D as part of a compliant proposal submission. The slides should be included in the ZIP file submission to BAAT. As stated in Attachment D. The slides must be submitted as a PowerPoint or PDF file. The oral presentation submitted shall not exceed 20 slides. Any slides after number 20 will not be reviewed or presented during the oral presentation.
>
> No changes can be made to the slides following submission. The submitted slides will be the ones displayed during the presentation.

Q30: What is the procedure if a FFRDC and/or Government Entity has a different, government-approved cybersecurity procedure and framework rather than CMMC/SPRS? What is the responsibility of the prime proposer in this situation?

> A30: Because FFRDCs and Government entities are funded directly by the Government through separate funding mechanisms, all the contract/subcontract flowdowns do not necessarily apply. For example, with regard to CMMC compliance as stated in the solicitation: "Proposers must include in their proposals an attestation that all subcontractors who will process, store, or transmit FCI or CUI under a resultant award will meet the applicable CMMC level required by 32 CFR §170.23, and indicate how proposers will verify subcontractors' status prior to subcontract award. For subcontractors handling CUI under this program, the minimum requirement is CMMC Level 2 (Self-Assessment)" does not apply to FFRDCs or government entities that are acting in a performing role as a subcontractor. It is not the responsibility of the prime proposer to certify that the FFRDC or government entity will meet the applicable CMMC level. However, the prime proposer remains responsible for conducting reasonable due diligence to ensure the proposed team is credible and capable of performing the proposed work. This includes identifying material dependencies, assumptions, risks, and contingency plans associated with an FFRDC or Government entity's proposed role.

If the government chooses to fund a proposal with a FFRDC or government entity involved in the work, then the government will establish CUI compliance for the Perrseus program at that time through two potential paths:

1. The FFRDC or government entity follows the process defined in the solicitation for CMMC Level-2 (Self Assessment) compliance and validation in SPRS

   or

2. A cognizant security representative from the FFRDC or government entity provides a statement that the current government-approved cybersecurity framework is equivalent to CMMC Level 2 for the purposes of this effort.

Q29: On page 25, the solicitation states that if FFRDCs are proposed as subawardees, "their costs must be clearly segregable in cost proposals." However, on page 26, it states that a "rough order of magnitude cost is provided in the technical proposal only—cost proposals must exclude their funding."
Where should the FFRDC costs be included or excluded in the proposal submission?

A29: Because FFRDCs and Government entities are funded directly by the Government through separate funding mechanisms, their costs must be excluded from the prime proposer's own cost totals, budget summaries, and Attachment F pricing sheets. The prime proposer must include a ROM estimate for the FFRDC or Government entity's effort within the Technical and Management Volume (Volume I) to provide a complete picture of the total program scope. For Volume II (Cost/Price), a separate, standalone detailed cost proposal from the FFRDC is required for Government cost evaluation. The prime proposer may include the FFRDC's standalone cost package as a separate attachment within the proposal submission package, or, if the FFRDC considers its cost details proprietary, the FFRDC may submit its detailed cost volume directly to DARPA via email (Perrseus@darpa.mil) by the proposal due date.

Explicitly, the FFRDC costs should:

i. Be included in the Technical and Management Volume (Volume 1) of the proposal as a ROM.

ii. Have their own Attachment_F_Price_Detail_Spreadsheet and Attachment_E_Proposal_Instructions_and_Volume_II_Template_Price, similar to a normal subcontractor's cost proposal.

iii. Be excluded from the prime's Attachment_F_Price_Detail_Spreadsheet under subcontractors, and thus excluded from the total amount of the prime's cost proposal as well as the total budget reflected in the cover page of the proposal.

Q28: The solicitation and Attachment D require a comprehensive IP Management Plan addressing Background IP, anticipated Foreground IP, ownership, Government rights, licensing, and collaboration among team members.
Must the IP Management Plan be finalized and signed by the prime and all subcontractors at proposal submission, or whether the inclusion of the agreed IP terms and language in the proposal is sufficient at this stage?

> A28: A fully executed or signed multi-party agreement is not required at the time of proposal submission. Inclusion of the agreed-upon IP terms, governance structure, and strategy within the Intellectual Property Management Plan (Volume I, Section 17) is sufficient. Proposers must ensure that all formal IP assertions, including Background IP, commercial and non-commercial technical data/computer software rights, and any basis for assertions, are accurately completed within the required tables in Volume I.

Q27: There appear to be three distinct requirements referenced in the solicitation for FFRDCs.

Item 1. Section I.F / IV.B.1 of the main solicitation states: "A letter of intent from the division director of the FFRDC, UARC, or Government Entity identifying the potential technologies and committing to transitioning the technology to the prime contractor is required at proposal submission."

Item 2. The same section separately requires, for FFRDCs specifically: "a letter, on official letterhead from their sponsoring organization, that (a) cites the specific authority establishing their eligibility to propose to Government solicitations and compete with industry, and (b) certifies the FFRDC's compliance with the associated FFRDC sponsor agreement's terms and conditions."

Item 3. Attachment E (Volume II Price Template) cover sheet includes a certification checkbox stating: "I certify that a Joint Letter of Intent to Execute (LOI) signed by the commercialization/IP offices of both the Prime and the Federal Laboratory is included."

Three questions are:

a) Are items (1) and (3) above referring to the same document, or are these two separate letters of intent with different signatories (division director vs. commercialization/IP office) and different scopes (technology transition commitment vs. joint execution)?

b) Is item (2), the FFRDC sponsoring-organization eligibility letter, a separate document from items (1) and (3)?

c) Given that the "Joint LOI" certification appears on the Volume II (Price) cover sheet, should the letter(s) described above be physically included with the Price Volume submission, or should they instead be included with the Technical Volume (Volume I), where the solicitation separately requires that the FFRDC's role be "clearly defined in the technical proposal with a point of contact"?

A27: Regarding the three questions labeled a), b), and c):
a) Are items (1) and (3) referring to the same document?

No, items (1) and (3) refer to two separate documents with different signatories and scopes.

Item (1): Division Director Letter of Intent: As specified in Section IV.B.1, this letter must come from the division director of the FFRDC. Its purpose is to identify the specific technologies being proposed and explicitly commit to transitioning that technology to the prime contractor.

Item (3): Joint Letter of Intent to Execute: As referenced by the certification in Attachment E, this is a joint letter that must be signed by the commercialization and/or intellectual property (IP) offices of both the prime contractor and the FFRDC. Its focus is on the execution of technology transfer from an IP and commercialization standpoint.

While both letters concern technology transition, they originate from different offices and serve distinct functions, one technical and one administrative/legal. The program office's interpretation that both are for tech transfer is correct, but they are not the same item.

b) Is item (2) a separate document from items (1) and (3)?

Yes, the FFRDC eligibility letter described in item (2) is a distinct and separate document from the two LOIs.

Item (2): Sponsoring Organization Eligibility Letter: As stated in Section IV.B.1, this letter must be on official letterhead from the FFRDC's sponsoring organization (e.g., Department of Energy, Department of Defense). It serves to certify the FFRDC's authority to compete for government solicitations and its compliance with the sponsor agreement's terms. This is a standard eligibility requirement separate from the project-specific technology transition commitments.

c) In which volume should the letters be included?

The solicitation requires different submission locations for the documents.

Technical Volume (Volume I): The LOI from the FFRDC Division Director (Item 1) and the Eligibility Letter from the sponsoring organization (Item 2) are direct requirements of Section IV.B.1, which pertains to a subcontractor's eligibility and role. This section states the FFRDC's role must be "clearly defined in the technical proposal." Therefore, these letters should be included in the Technical Volume (Volume I) to provide a complete picture of the FFRDC's role and eligibility.

Price Volume (Volume II): The certification for the Joint LOI (Item 3) is explicitly located on the cover sheet of the Price Volume (Attachment E). The logical placement for the corresponding Joint LOI document would be with the Price Volume, as it is directly related to the certification being made in that volume.

Q26: Can you please clarify something about CMMC Level 2 requirements. My understanding is that CMMC Level 2 compliance is required for all contractors, including subrecipients or subawardees. However, we have a subawardee whose participation in the project would not involve any activities requiring them to handle, store, process, or transmit CUI.

Would CMMC Level 2 compliance still be required for this subawardee under these circumstances?

A26: No. Under Section IV.C.3 and 32 CFR § 170.23, CMMC requirements flow down based strictly on the type of information handled:

- CMMC Level 2 (Self-Assessment) is required only for subcontractors that process, store, or transmit CUI.
- Subcontractors that process, store, or transmit FCI only require CMMC Level 1.
- Subcontractors whose scope of work involves neither FCI nor CUI do not require CMMC certification.

Note: It is the prime contractor's responsibility to properly scope subcontractor roles, attest to compliance per Section IV.C.3, and ensure technical/administrative controls prevent unauthorized CUI access.

Q25: What if a team needs more than the specified three months to achieve CUI CMMC Level 2 compliance?

A25: The solicitation establishes a three (3) month baseline for Phase 0 (Security Set-up) to ensure that technical performance under Phase 1 commences on schedule. Proposers utilizing the Alternative Compliance Pathway should present a credible, executable plan to achieve and post CMMC Level 2 (Self-Assessment) compliance in SPRS within this 3-month window. While proposers may propose an alternative timeline with detailed risk mitigations, any proposed duration exceeding three months directly impacts Phase 1 kickoff, introduces substantial schedule risk, and will be evaluated accordingly under the Budget, Price, and Schedule evaluation criteria. Proposers are reminded that per Table 2 (Exit Criteria), failure to meet Phase 0 milestones may preclude transition to Phase 1.

Q24: Could you please clarify the items that the prime organization must include for each subawardee? The checklist only lists the Volume II Price Proposal and the Price Detail Spreadsheet. Do proposers need to include Attachment G – OT Certifications separately for each subawardee? For university subawardees, are there any other documents that need to be included in the prime submission?

> A24: The checklist is accurate and only the Volume II Price Proposal and the Price Detail Spreadsheet are required for most subawardees, the exception being FFRDCs, UARCs, and Government Entities, who require additional documentation as specified in the Perrseus PS. Subawardees are not required to submit separate OT certifications. Per Attachment G, “The prime contractor is responsible for attesting to the nontraditional defense contractor or nonprofit research institution status of the organization with which it is partnering.” No specific documents are required from university subawardees, beyond the required documents from all subawardees.

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 Perrseus. 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.

- 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.
- 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 µUHV 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 µUHV 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 µUHV 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 µUHV 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.