

Questions and Answers Regarding Funding Opportunity Number W911NF23S0001-SPECIALNOTICE-DATN “Distributed Analytics in Tactical Networks”

Q1. I didn't find a specific page limit for full proposals in either the BAA document or the Special Notice. Is there any guidance for that?

A1. Per BAA in II.D.2.d.vi, no page limit is specified for the Project Description (Technical Proposal), but it is recommended that Applicants should submit proposals with a Project Description (Technical Proposal) that is no more than ten (10) pages long (single spaced, 11-point font).

Q2. Is there a page limit associated with this proposal.

A2. Per BAA in II.D.2.d.vi, no page limit is specified for the Project Description (Technical Proposal), but it is recommended that Applicants should submit proposals with a Project Description (Technical Proposal) that is no more than ten (10) pages long (single spaced, 11-point font).

Q3. Do we first submit 5 page white papers by the March 20 deadline as indicated in the BAA W911NF-23-S-0001-0002 or directly submit full proposals by March 20?

A3. Applicants should submit full proposals by March 20. The Special Notice does not include a whitepaper phase.

Q4. Do we need to submit a white paper too?

A4. Applicants should submit full proposals by March 20. The Special Notice does not include a whitepaper phase.

Q5. Can you confirm awards are expected to be up to \$700k/year and not \$700k total for the two years?

A5. As stated in the Special Notice, “The expected award range is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years.” An award will be \$500,000 to \$700,000 in year one and then an option for \$500,000 to \$700,000 in year 2. Proposals should include a technical approach for the entire two year period and budget for both years.

Q6. Is there flexibility in terms of scale. In other words, would smaller-scale single-PI proposals be acceptable or is the \$500K for 2 years kind of the minimum target?

A6. As stated in the Special Notice, “The expected award range is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years.” Proposals within these parameters will be considered for award.

Q7. I see that the award is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years. Do you typically expect a single PI for one award, or two PIs for one award?

A7. As stated in the Special Notice, “The expected award range is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years.” Proposals within these parameters will be considered for award. The applicant may structure their primary PI and any co-PI's as they see fit to accomplish their research approach.

Q8. The award size of \$0.5-0.7M per year appears to fit 2-3 PIs, is that the expected team size?

A8. As stated in the Special Notice, “The expected award range is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years.” Proposals within these parameters will be considered for award. The applicant may structure their primary PI and any co-PI’s as they see fit to accomplish their research approach.

Q9. Is there a zero-fee policy for this collaborative agreement?

A9. Yes, profit/fee is not allowed on cooperative agreements.

Q10. To confirm, in Grants.gov, should we be submitting under W911NF-23-S-0001-SPECIALNOTICE-Distributed Analytics in Tactical Networks or would it just be under W911NF-23-S-0001?

A10. Proposals MUST be submitted under the W911NF-23-S-0001-SPECIALNOTICE-Distributed Analytics in Tactical Networks announcement.

Q11. is there any preference on whether the PIs are from the same institution or not? If multi-institution proposal is allowed, is collaborative submission allowed (each institution submits separately, but identifying the linkage), or should one institution be the primary and the other be sub-awardee?

A11. If the proposal involves multiple institutions, one will be the prime awardee who submits the proposal and others will be sub-awardees included within the prime’s proposal (including technical approach and budget). Reference the BAA for inclusion of proposed sub-awardees and their costs. Separate proposals will be considered separate and may not be linked.

A proposal can involve a team from a single or multiple institutions. However, should a single PI submit multiple proposals, there shall be no duplication of effort, and the proposals should consider and address how it will avoid duplication of effort. If the Government determines there is a duplication of effort between two proposals from the same PI, it will only evaluate the first proposal submitted according to the time stamp on the grants.gov submission.

Q12. Is this solicitation intended primarily for academic institutions, or can industry labs be prime? If the latter is true, are collaborative proposals with academic institutions encouraged?

A12. Per BAA W911NF-23-S-0001 II. C. 1. Eligibility Information (p. 15), “Unless noted in Section II.A.3 or as dictated by the award instrument type, eligible applicants under this BAA include institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, foreign organizations, foreign public entities, and for-profit organizations (i.e. large and small businesses).”

Q13. Can an organization submit multiple proposals, say one in each topic area?

A13: An institution can submit multiple proposals. However, should a single institution submit multiple proposals, there shall be no duplication of effort, and the proposals should consider and address how it will avoid duplication of effort. If the Government determines there is a duplication of effort between two proposals from the same institution it will only evaluate the first proposal submitted according to the time stamp on the grants.gov submission.

Q14. Can these be multi-institutional?

A14. A proposal can involve a team from a single or multiple institutions. If the proposal involves multiple institutions, one will be the prime awardee who submits the proposal and others will be sub-awardees included within the prime's proposal (including technical approach and budget). Reference the BAA for inclusion of proposed sub-awardees and their costs. Separate proposals will be considered separate and may not be linked.

However, should a single PI submit multiple proposals, there shall be no duplication of effort, and the proposals should consider and address how it will avoid duplication of effort. If the Government determines there is a duplication of effort between two proposals from the same PI, it will only evaluate the first proposal submitted according to the time stamp on the grants.gov submission.

Q15. Is this 6.1 Fundamental Research or 6.2 Applied Research? Are the deliverables basically research products like papers, reports, etc., or are performers supposed to deliver demos/software as well?

Q15. The funding opportunity is for a 6.1 Fundamental Research program. Research products such as papers, reports, software and demos are all appropriate for 6.1 research.

Q16. Since proposals are expected "to identify possible linkages to the other research goals", is it encouraged if a proposed solution can also address some problems from other research topics? Should such effort be elaborated in the proposal?

Q16. Proposals are expected to focus on one of the research goals and to identify possible linkages to the other research goals.

Q17. Topic #1 seems extremely relevant to a number of things we are doing in data analytics research. Would that be of interest?

A17. Proposals may take any approach that addresses the research thrusts and topics as specified in the Special Notice and will be evaluated based on the criteria from the Special Notice.

Q18. Is the study of foundation models / LLMs relevant for this project? Is it in scope?

A18. Proposals may take any approach that addresses the research thrusts and topics as specified in the Special Notice and will be evaluated based on the criteria from the Special Notice.

Q19. Is this special notice focusing on fundamental or applied research? In particular, regarding Topic #3 Cross-layer multimodal networking and communications, are the proposed solutions supposed to be prototyped and evaluated on a real-world testbed? Or is the focus here more on addressing theoretical challenges, characterizing fundamental tradeoffs, and developing new algorithms? Would simulations be sufficient for evaluations?

A19. Proposals may take any approach that addresses the research thrusts and topics as specified in the Special Notice and will be evaluated based on the criteria from the Special Notice. The funding type available is 6.1 basic research funding.

Q20. Regarding "multi-flow, multi-modal network optimization" mentioned in Topic #3, does "multi-modal" here refer to different network layers/mechanisms, or different types of observation data (e.g., congestion, traffic demand, spectrum usage, etc), or both?

Q20. Proposals may take any approach that addresses the research thrusts and topics as specified in the Special Notice and will be evaluated based on the criteria from the Special Notice.

Q21. Would a project involving maximizing information for ML inference in distributed sensor networks with communication-constrained channels that are subject to change?

A21. Proposals may take any approach that addresses the research thrusts and topics as specified in the Special Notice and will be evaluated based on the criteria from the Special Notice.

Q22. Do you think we can pivot our previous white paper to this?

A22. Proposals may take any approach that addresses the research thrusts and topics as specified in the Special Notice and will be evaluated based on the criteria from the Special Notice.

Q23. Is there an expectation of demonstration of the research outcomes in real-world testbeds, i.e., given the goals of foundational research, should we include tasks and prioritize demonstrations of these outcomes using access to actual hardware/radios, existing institutional and public platforms?

A23. The funding opportunity is for a 6.1 Fundamental Research program. Research products such as papers, reports, software and demos are all appropriate for 6.1 research.

Q24. This BAA (as well as W911NF-23-S-0001) does not specify a page limit for the technical proposal. How many pages may be desired in the submission?

A24. Per BAA in II.D.2.d.vi, no page limit is specified for the Project Description (Technical Proposal), but it is recommended that Applicants should submit proposals with a Project Description (Technical Proposal) that is no more than ten (10) pages long (single spaced, 11-point font).

Q25. Is it preferred that we request feedback from you through a whitepaper submission before the final proposal submission on March 20?

A25. Applicants should submit full proposals by March 20. The Special Notice does not include a whitepaper phase.

Q26. What is the page limit?

A26. Per BAA in II.D.2.d.vi, no page limit is specified for the Project Description (Technical Proposal), but it is recommended that Applicants should submit proposals with a Project Description (Technical Proposal) that is no more than ten (10) pages long (single spaced, 11-point font).

Q27. "Proposal must be submitted in accordance with the preparation and submissions instructions under BAA W911NF-23-S-0001." Q. In accordance with the BAA referenced a White Paper stage is referenced. Should a White Paper be submitted or does the Special Notice skip directly to Proposal submission only?

A27. Applicants should submit full proposals by March 20. The Special Notice does not include a whitepaper phase.

Q28. "The expected award range is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years. Awards will be yearly with options." Q. Does this mean that Options can(should) be proposed in each year of a 2 year project? Or that the Year 2 effort is to be proposed as an option? Or that Options can be proposed for out years (i.e., Year 3...)?

A28. As stated in the Special Notice, "The expected award range is from \$500,000 to \$700,000 per award per year for 2 years." An award will be \$500,000 to \$700,000 in year one and then an option for \$500,000 to \$700,000 in year 2. Proposals should include a technical approach for the entire two year period and budget for both years.

Q29. What should be the emphasis on experimental hardware demonstration of the proposed algorithms? Would a computer based simulation be enough or should we be planning a hardware demonstration?

A29. The funding opportunity is for a 6.1 Fundamental Research program. Research products such as papers, reports, software and demos are all appropriate for 6.1 research.

Q30. Is it expected that competitive proposals will have ARL contacts / collaborators already identified and part of the proposed work?

A30. No.

Q31. Is there any page length for the technical proposal? I could not find one in the DEVCOM BAA, but wanted to check.

A31. Per BAA in II.D.2.d.vi, no page limit is specified for the Project Description (Technical Proposal), but it is recommended that Applicants should submit proposals with a Project Description (Technical Proposal) that is no more than ten (10) pages long (single spaced, 11-point font).

Q32. Can we be PIs on two proposals corresponding to two different areas detailed in the call?

A32. A proposal can involve a team from a single or multiple institutions. However, should a single PI submit multiple proposals, there shall be no duplication of effort, and the proposals should consider and address how it will avoid duplication of effort. If the Government determines there is a duplication of effort between two proposals from the same PI, it will only evaluate the first proposal submitted according to the time stamp on the grants.gov submission.