

Announcement Type: Open Competition Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Title: Securing Emerging Technologies and Their Supply Chains
Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0009314

NOFO Qs & As

Q1. Our organization is very interested in responding to several of the NOFO's issued by your office. In some, the objectives are broad which would require teaming with other entities to address all the requirements. As an alternative, is it possible to focus on the subset of requirements that our organization can address by itself or do we have to address all the requirements in each NOFO?

A1. Yes, your organization can apply to multiple NOFOs by submitting individual applications to the specific LOEs to which you would like to apply. Further, your organization can join with other organizations to apply as a consortium; however, only one organization can act as a prime on EXBS grant applications with other organizations in a consortium functioning as sub-grantees. Each LOE can receive a separate award, thus, applicants may choose to (e.g.) team on one LOE in a given NOFO and not team on others in that same NOFO. Please make sure to reflect the subgrantee relationship in the proposal, budget, and budget justification. Please see responses to the following questions under Q3.

Q2. We have a few questions about the last item (#5) Page #8 in this deliverable.

"Engage national authorities, industry, and R&D institutions in these 20 countries through regional workshops to assess supply chain disruption risks, raise risk awareness, develop appropriate sectoral guidance, and implement due diligence and security measures to protect IP related to semiconductor technology, including, where applicable, measures to safeguard the manufacturing process against efforts to maliciously alter chips or render them defective."

Q2a. Would you please provide us with more details about this item including the 20 countries, type of necessary workshops, and sectoral guidance?

A2a. Please see responses to the following questions under Q2.

Q2b. Should we plan for 20 workshops in 20 countries within the 2-year plan?

A2b. Workshops should be regional in nature, allowing for several countries to participate in one workshop. Your organization should propose how many regional workshops will be required.

Q2c. What are those 20 countries?

A2c. Per the paragraph numbered one (1) under this LOE, the 20 countries this LOE addresses will be determined by mapping industries relevant to semiconductor manufacturing in EXBS partner countries, as outlined in the LOE. This exercise will result in a prioritized list of EXBS partners representing major existing or emerging semiconductor technology markets. In other words, your organization, if selected, will recommend the 20 countries based on its mapping research.

Q2d. Is there any special format for the workshops?

A2d. There is no special format for the workshops and applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that provide their specific ideas on the content and structure of the workshops.

Q2e. How about sectoral guidance?

A2e. Per the paragraph numbered one (1) under this LOE, sectoral guidance should address industry sectors involved in the design, fabrication, assembly, testing, and packaging of semiconductors as well as supply of products relevant to semiconductor production, including industrial machinery, specialty chemicals, crystal growth equipment, and other essential materials and products.

Q3. It has been noted that some solicitations have lines of effort with subsequent subsections. For example, if the line of effort is numbered 1, it will have subsections numbered 1.1, 1.2, etc. The ceiling and budget amounts of the said LOEs is assigned at the subsection level as per the example above. Could you

please advise if one proposal should be submitted at the subsection level or to the entire LOE? Can you please clarify if only one proposal can be submitted for all lines of effort? Or if one proposal can be submitted per each line of effort.

A3a. – You can submit one application per sub-LOE for LOE #1 (entitled "Substantive and Logistical Support to International Workshops/Conferences"). Alternatively, you may submit one application inclusive of **all sub-LOEs** (e.g., one application covering 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3). Your application should budget according to the amount(s) specified in the LOEs. Each application must have a distinct application number (SAPP000XXXXX). As previously stated in the response to Q1, applicants may choose to team (a prime and sub-awardee[s]) on one LOE, and not team on another.

A3b. For LOE #2 (entitled #2 "Research and Case Study Development") if an applicant is interested in submitting proposals for multiple sub-LOEs then one application must be submitted per sub-LOE. Each application must have a distinct application number (SAPP000XXXXX). As previously stated in the response to Q1, applicants may choose to team (a prime and sub-awardee[s]) on one LOE, and not team on another.

Q4. Activity 2.2 notes that “Applicants may also map related industries, such as mining of rare earth elements, as applicable, in their analysis.” Should the optional addition of such industries help support the study of semiconductors or can the main focus of the effort be on other industries? Would a proposal addressing mining & processing of critical minerals rather than semiconductors be considered for funding?

A4. The primary focus of 2.2 is the semiconductor supply chain. Proposals must be written with semiconductors as the focal point. Applicants are encouraged to include REEs in their analysis, as they relate to semiconductors.

Q5. We would like to clarify a section of the call, regarding the pilot proposal of the ISN/ECC to develop a tool aimed at ensuring software cannot be registered by entities of concern. The call states *‘Applicants should propose development of an*

app that companies can check when authenticating software license keys that runs the party through sanctions entity lists or other databases.'

We would like to clarify whether the app is part of the deliverables required for a proposal, whether you envisage the successful applicant to help feed into the ISN/ECC's scoping for the development of this tool, or whether you would like the applicant to develop the tool themselves.

A5. Proposals must include creation of the app prototype as a deliverable.

Q6. On section J and K of the application components for NOFO SFOP0009314. Can you clarify if the 6 page limit noted in section J includes the narrative as well? If it does not is there a limit for the budget narrative?

A6. Section J doesn't include the budget narrative. There is not a limit of pages for the budget narrative as far as the narrative is detail and complete.

Q7. Line of effort 2.1 of the NOFO () states: "Scoping Study on Cross-Border Semiconductor Investment. A small group of experts may travel to Washington, D.C. (likely at the end of the project) to present results". Could you please clarify who these experts are – are they to be from the implementing team? Should their travel be budgeted? If so, how many people will travel and from where will they travel?

A7. Yes, the experts are those from your implementing team. We would like the experts who write the study to come to Washington, DC and meet with ISN/ECC (and other invited USG stakeholders) to present their findings and answer questions. Yes, you should budget for this trip to DC. They would travel from wherever they reside within the U.S. If they reside overseas, we would propose connecting them virtually to save time and cost. We anticipate two individuals would be ideal for this DC trip, but you may budget for three, if necessary.

Q8. For the regional workshops in item 5 of Activity 2.2, 20 markets implies at least 2 to 3 workshops if not more. Considering time and travel for participants and the research team, the budget for the workshops could consume much of the

available funding for this entire activity. Would virtual workshops be acceptable? If not, will the State Department be able to provide additional resources to support the workshops?

A8. This effort is anticipated to be awarded at approximately \$1.48M. ISN/ECC will consider additional funding, but proposals must be submitted using the figure published in the NOFO. Yes, you may consider virtual, hybrid, and/or in-person workshops.

Q9. Specifically, LOE 3: "Setting Supply Chain Protection Frameworks."

Q9 a. The NOFO is a bit unclear on whether implementers should budget for travel costs for event participants within the expected funding amount for LOE 3. Given that this event would be very large (100+ people) and last several days, international travel costs would make up the vast majority of project funds if it is to be included. If travel is NOT expected to be covered by implementers, this significantly changes the scope of what is possible within the budget.

A9a. Yes, travel costs are absolutely expected to be included in an applicant's budget. US Federal Per Diem rates may be used as the basis for calculating local M&E costs.

Q9b. Related to Q1, if travel costs ARE to be covered by implementers, can ECC provide guidance on what is acceptable when paying for foreign government officials and/or corporate representatives? Is it acceptable to provide a fixed travel stipend assuming some invited attendees may wish to supplement this with their own resources? Is it acceptable to expect that certain participants would be asked to attend at their own cost if they fall into a certain economic category?

A9b. Participants from high income countries would be expected to self-fund their travel. High income countries are defined by the World Bank using the GNI per capita (Atlas method). As of FY 2023, the current threshold for high income countries is a GNI per capita of \$13,206 or more in 2021. Applicants should refer to this criterion when determining inclusion of high-income countries in their proposal. For other participants, implementers will be expected to cover the cost

of international travel, as necessary, including economy airfare, ground transportation to and from the airport and lodging/meeting venue, lodging for the duration of the engagement, meals, and travelers' insurance. It is not allowable for participants to supplement any stipend with their own resources.

Q9c. The NOFO says the event should have "3 reps from roughly 30 countries, plus microelectronics manufacturers." Is ECC open to a more balanced mix of government, industry, and civil society?

A9c. While ISN/ECC is open to including representatives from outside governments, the focus of EXBS capacity building is on the national authorities. To this end, these engagements must facilitate improved relationship between national governments and their respective private sector stakeholders. Participant designations must support these objectives.

Q9d. What role are US government experts expected to play in this workshop either as contributors or co-hosts, and how will ECC support engaging them?

A9d. ISN/ECC will lead in identifying and engaging US Government stakeholders.