

Questions and Answers for the FY22 CWMD Academic Research Initiative (ARI) NOFO

As of May 10, 2022

1. The Topic #3 description mentions “Materials of interest...”. Is this topic limited to the development of materials that can act as indicators, or would you also consider optical sensor technologies?
 - A. This topic is intended to develop and demonstrate novel indicators that provide rapid, unique spectral or optical responses to airborne TICs and CWAs. While such materials could ultimately find application in chemical sensing technologies, the topic is not intended for advanced sensor instrument development.
2. For Topic #3, what is the definition of “low cost”?
 - A. Offerors should determine the approach which they believe will achieve the best results with respect to indicator materials costs vs. performance, keeping the desired capabilities and ultimate end users in mind. Potential end users include DHS operational personnel; other federal field personnel; state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) first responders, and industry.
3. Topic #1 states that a university team working in collaboration with an industry partner or national laboratory that can test the material in accordance with Technical Capability Standards for Radiological Detection is of interest. Can DHS provide a list of companies/national labs which can do the testing, or help find the right partner?
 - A. DHS cannot provide recommendations for laboratory or industry partners. Please see references #2 and #3 under this topic for more details on Technical Capability Standards for Radiological Detection.
4. In reference to Topic #3, are subwavelength grating metamaterial waveguides that can improve optical absorption sensitivity of chemical threats of interest for this topic, if we integrate the metamaterial waveguides as a sensor/instrument platform?
 - A. This topic is intended to develop and demonstrate novel indicators that provide rapid, unique spectral or optical responses to airborne chemical threats, with the TICs and CWAs of highest interest listed in the topic. The topic is not intended for advanced sensor instrument development.

As of May 17, 2022

5. For Topic #2, are there preferred types of diseases (exotic pathogens, toxins, viruses, and infections)?

- A. Please refer to the topic description. The DHS mission is to defend against biological threats of high consequence, to include those on the US Select Agents and Toxins List, and emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. However, the topic will allow initial phases of research to include samples infected with more common pathogens.
6. For Topic #2, if there is collaboration with international partners, what kind of funding do they need (U.S. funds or other international sources)?
- A. Refer to section D11b of the NOFO (p. 26). Personnel funded under ARI awards must be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S., its territories, or its possessions. Foreign nationals may be involved in the project at the discretion of DHS, but may not receive funding through this program in the event that their involvement is approved. Award recipient institutions will receive instructions for reporting to DHS of any foreign nationals that the lead institution wishes to nominate to be involved in the project, prior to their involvement in the project.
7. Could you please confirm how many PIs may collaborate on a proposal?
- A. Refer to sections C3f-h of the NOFO (p. 8). There is no specific limit to the number of PIs from a lead institution or a sub-awardee institution may be listed in a single proposal. However, an individual researcher may not be named as a funded participant on more than one proposal submitted to this solicitation. Offerors should determine the team composition which they believe will achieve the best results in terms of technical and programmatic performance. Note that if a project is invited to submit a full proposal, the offeror will need to provide information on all senior/key personnel (section D8j, p. 23). Full proposals must also contain a programmatic narrative that includes personnel qualifications, roles in the proposed effort, and coordination of the group effort (section D8k, p. 25).
8. Page 6 of the NOFO states that the availability of funding is up to \$7 million for the first year of the program, and that 11 to 14 awards are anticipated. Does this mean the budget is \$7 million the first year for an individual award? Or does that mean \$7 million is distributed among the 11 to 14 anticipated awards?
- A. The NOFO is for incrementally funded multi-year projects with a total duration of up to 5 years (60 months). Each award agreement will be funded in 12-month increments called budget periods. The funding listed on p. 6 is anticipated for the first year of the entire program for the FY22 topics (up to \$7M) over 11-14 awards. Individual award annual funding guidelines are stated for each Topic in Appendix A of the NOFO.