Questions and Answers to the FY21 CWMD Academic Research Initiative (ARI) NOFO

As of June 29, 2021

1. Please clarify the amount of funding that is available for this ARI program. Is it $5M over 5 years, or $5M per year?

   A. The NOFO is for incrementally funded multi-year projects, for up to 5 years (60 months). Each award agreement will be funded in 12-month increments called budget periods. The funding listed on p. 4 is for the first year of the entire program ($5M total) over 8-11 expected awards. Individual award annual funding limits are stated for each Topic Area in Appendix A of the NOFO.

2. The proposed duration in the NOFO (page 4) is indicated as up to 60 months, while the projected period is for 12 months. Should the cover sheet be completed for a 12-month or 60-month effort?

   A. The overall project duration can be up to 5 years (60 months). There are up to five 1-year budget periods. The budget period listed on p. 4 of the NOFO refers to year 1 of the program. On the technical proposal cover sheet, please list the full duration of the effort, and provide budgets for each 1-year budget period in your application. We understand that the out years' budgets are estimates. With each continuation package, the budgets can be updated.

3. Topic Area 3 references the current DHS project, "MAIN." Are additional details about MAIN available?

   A. Proposals for projects under the Mobile Active Interrogation using Neutrons (MAIN) program were solicited under CWMD solicitation #70RDND18R00000001 in 2018, which may be found at the following link:

   https://sam.gov/opp/f6c18d305dcbe9ee1ac015b3df74514c/view

   An excerpt of the solicitation is provided below:

   "This topic is looking to develop a mobile active interrogation system that can quickly detect SNM, as well as other types of contraband, such as explosives and drugs. By the end of the project, the system will be built such that it can undergo a proof of concept (POC) demonstration on a mobile platform. During system demonstration, the objects envisioned to be scanned by the MAIN system range from small packages (backpack size) to sea cargo containers."

   For the purposes of this ARI program, current MAIN vendors are expected to advise awardees throughout the period of the effort. The current MAIN vendors cannot be part of a proposed ARI team under this NOFO.

4. For Topic Area 2, will data from national measurement campaigns be available?

   A. DHS CWMD will not be providing data to offerors at this time. Awardees are expected to generate data in their proposed research, per the Topic Area 2 description. If opportunities arise in the future for DHS to share data gained from operations, deployments, testing, or measurement campaigns, it will be made available to awardees upon request. Currently, no data sets are available to be shared.

5. For Topic Area 2, do we need to identify partners with access to these data sets?

   A. An offeror may identify partners who can provide access to data that can support the proposed research.

As of July 7, 2021

6. Are sub-awards with non-academic institutions, such as federal/national labs or companies, allowed?

   A. The prime offeror must be a US academic institution as outlined in Section C of the NOFO. However, sub-awards with non-academic institutions are allowed. The sub-awardee must accept the DHS grants terms and conditions as flowed down from the prime offeror. Prime offerors may contract with for-profit entities as long as the contract follows 2 C.F.R. Part 200 requirements for contracting by grant recipients.

7. Is a Letter of Intent required in order to submit a proposal?

   A. No. As described in the NOFO, a letter of intent is completely optional and is not required in order for an offeror to submit a proposal. The letters of intent are only for internal DHS planning purposes, and are not considered part of an application nor are used in any way to evaluate an application.