



Exploration Announcement (EA) Master Solicitation

for

Advanced Research Concepts (ARC)

Defense Sciences Office

DARPA-EA-25-02

November 27, 2024

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1 Overview Information

- **Federal Agency Name** – Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Defense Sciences Office (DSO)
- **Funding Opportunity Title** – Advanced Research Concepts (ARC)
- **Announcement Type** – Exploration Announcement (EA) Master Solicitation
- **Funding Opportunity Number** – DARPA-EA-25-02
- **NAICS Code:** 541713, 541714, 541715, 541720; Small Business Size: 1000
- **Dates** (All times listed herein are Eastern Time.)
 - Posting Date: November 27, 2024
 - Closing Date: November 26, 2025, 4:00 PM
- **Purpose:** This represents the master solicitation for the Advanced Research Concepts (ARC) Exploration Announcement (EA). DARPA will release EA Topics against this master solicitation, and DARPA will not accept any proposals under this master solicitation. Funding decisions are reserved at each ARC Opportunity level.
- **Concise description of the funding opportunity:** The Advanced Research Concepts (ARC) program will rapidly solicit and explore a high volume of promising new ideas for limited-scope investments. Projects will focus on answering high-risk/high-reward questions to assess the impact of further investment by the Department of Defense.
- **Anticipated individual awards:** Multiple awards are anticipated.
- **Types of instruments that may be awarded:** Research Other Transactions under the authority of 10 U.S.C. § 4021.
- **Funding Scope:** ARC topics are designed for ideas that would take a full year effort (1 full time equivalent (FTE) over a 1-year period) to properly validate. Multiple researchers from the same organization may be proposed, however it is expected that the individual(s) working on the proposed idea primarily focus on the effort for the entire period of performance to the maximum extent practical.
- **Funding Limitation:** DARPA will issue a Research Other Transaction (OT) award instrument to only cover the cost of the proposed FTE and required materials, equipment, and Other Direct Costs. While resource sharing is not expected, it may be offered in the proposal. It is anticipated proposer costs will range from \$100,000 to \$300,000, and the Government expects the total award value to be limited to a maximum of \$300,000 in Government funding.
- **Agency contact:**
 - Email:** Each ARC Opportunity will identify a specific email address. General inquiries can be sent to innovation@darpa.mil.
 - Address:** 675 N Randolph Street
Arlington, VA. 22203

2 Funding Opportunity Description

2.1 Introduction

The mission of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Defense Sciences Office is to identify and create the next generation of scientific discovery by pursuing high-risk, high-reward research initiatives across a broad spectrum of science and engineering disciplines and transform these initiatives into innovative technologies for U.S. national security. As part of this mission, DSO makes high-risk, high-reward investments in science and technology with the potential to disrupt current understanding and/or approaches. The pace of discovery in both science and technology is accelerating worldwide, and to capitalize on these new opportunities, DSO looks to include targeted and limited-scope investments through an initiative called Advanced Research Concepts (ARC). ARC Projects will focus on answering high-risk/high-reward questions to assess the impact of further investment on problems of importance to the Department of Defense.

DSO will issue ARC Opportunities via targeted solicitations issued under this Exploration Announcement (EA), DARPA-EA-25-02. Each ARC Opportunity will concentrate on a specific question across disciplines represented in all DARPA technical offices, focusing on high-impact exploratory efforts to identify breakthrough technologies. More information about DSO's technical domains and research topics of interest may be found at <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices>.

Additional ARC Opportunity details:

- Proposals submitted under an ARC Opportunity will consist of a short (five (5) pages) Abstract consisting of a technical description of the proposer's idea in response to the question posed in the ARC Opportunity. ARC Opportunities will remain open for Abstract submissions for a period of up to six (6) months, with rolling submissions and evaluations (see Section 3.4 of this EA for additional details). Each ARC Opportunity released under this Master Solicitation will outline the submission period.
- Abstract submitters selected for further evaluation will be invited to submit an Oral Proposal Package (OPP) and participate in an Oral Presentation to DARPA. Abstracts and OPPs submitted in response to ARC Opportunities will be evaluated and selected in accordance with Section 4 of this EA.
- ARC topics are designed for ideas that nominally would take a full year effort to properly validate and expects the aggregate level of effort for a proposed research concept to be equivalent to one FTE and 12 months, with the total cost ranging from \$100,000.00 to \$300,000.00. DARPA understands not all ideas and organizations may fit in this parameter range and may decide to work with a proposer to ensure truly innovative ideas can be explored with the required resources.
- Subawardees are not permitted. All proposed individuals must be from the same organization.
- If selected, DARPA expects to issue a Research Other Transaction award instrument. Once issued, awardees will have a maximum of 5 business days to sign and return the agreement to DARPA. DARPA does not expect to negotiate changes to the terms and conditions of this agreement in any OT issued to an awardee, with limited exceptions as determined appropriate by DARPA. Under no circumstances will profit be authorized.

Each ARC Opportunity will: (1) identify specific details regarding the research topic of interest; and (2) provide Abstract and OPP content and submission instructions in addition to those outlined in this EA, including the final due date for Abstract submissions. Abstracts must only be submitted in response to an ARC Opportunity. OPPs must only be submitted in response to an invitation to submit an OPP and provide an Oral Presentation to DARPA. Abstracts or OPPs submitted in response to

this EA without an active, corresponding ARC Opportunity will not be considered. OPPs submitted in the absence of an invitation to submit will not be considered. See Section 3.2 for submission instructions.

2.2 ARC Structure

The ultimate goal of each ARC Opportunity is to invest in exploratory research that may result in new, game-changing technologies for U.S. national security. Each ARC Opportunity will be designed to rapidly explore a large number of new technical concepts while enabling individuals and organizations to focus on creative ideas.

The aggregate level of effort (LOE) for a proposed research concept is expected to be equal to one FTE for 12 months. Multiple researchers from the same organization may be proposed; however, DARPA expects the individual(s) working on the proposed idea primarily focus on the effort for the entire period of performance to the maximum extent practical. For example, two individuals working full time for six months on an effort would be considered equivalent to one FTE. Conversely, two individuals working full time for twelve months on an effort would equate to two FTE and would exceed the anticipated LOE. The maximum period of performance is 12 months. Specific technical objectives to be achieved will be addressed in each ARC Opportunity.

The maximum total award value of each ARC award is anticipated to be \$300,000.00 in Government funding, inclusive of direct and indirect costs. Proposed costs are limited to \$10,000.00 or less for materials, equipment, and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) which are defined as costs normally incurred in the operation of a business, such as equipment/facility usage, equipment maintenance, computer services, communication expenses, and general office supplies. Graduate student tuition is considered an ODC but is independent of the \$10,000.00 limit above. No travel or publication costs are permitted. No subawardees are permitted; all proposed individuals must be from the same organization. All awards made as a result of an ARC Opportunity issued under this EA will be Research OTs awarded under the authority of 10 U.S.C. § 4021.

Currently, there are no specific follow-on acquisition options planned once a performer has completed the effort. However, the goal of this initiative and each selected ARC project is to fund research that may potentially lead to a revolutionary new capability. At the conclusion of the ARC effort, if a performer has demonstrated the potential for additional research and development, the Government may elect to issue a new OT agreement to fund additional tasks to pursue additional research efforts.

The flexibility of the OT award instrument is beneficial to the ARC program because the performer will be able to apply its best business practices, which may be outside of the traditional Government requirements, to carry out the research project. DARPA will use streamlined practices, such as pre-specified milestone-driven performance measures, which are intended to reduce time and effort on award administration tasks and permit performers to focus on the research effort. OTs provide the Government and the proposer the flexibility to create an award instrument containing terms and conditions promoting commercial transition, reduce administratively burdensome regulations, and meet DSO program goals.

ARC agreements will allow the performer to retain ownership of the intellectual property created during performance under each ARC Opportunity. The Government will require all performers provide limited license rights in any intellectual property developed or generated under these agreements. The attached model agreement (Attachment E - Model Research Other Transaction (OT)) defines the scope of the limited rights. Intellectual property rights will not be negotiated in the award. Any proposer who is not prepared to grant the Government a limited license right should not submit a proposal under any ARC Opportunity.

The Government will only award Research OT agreements under this solicitation and will not consider any other award options. A Research OT is a federal award instrument, therefore is not subject to any state or local laws, regulations, or requirements. No additional documentation, outside of the terms and conditions of this agreement, will be authorized or executed. Refer to the model OT agreement provided as an attachment to this EA for additional information (Attachment E - Model Research OT). Specific milestones will be based on the Research Project Objectives detailed in the ARC Opportunity and the proposed concept. No negotiated changes to the OT terms and conditions are expected, except in rare, limited circumstances as deemed appropriate and accepted by the Agreements Officer. The Government reserves the right to reject proposed changes to the terms and conditions of any award. The milestone payments will be contingent on the proposed individual(s) continuing work on the proposed ARC idea for the entire Period of Performance at their proposed LOE.

Please see Appendix A and <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/contract-management> for more information on OTs and DARPA's OT authority.

3 Application and Submission Information

3.1 Abstracts

Proposers must submit an Abstract against an ARC Opportunity to be considered for an award. DARPA will only accept UNCLASSIFIED Abstracts. Proposers must use the Abstract template provided as **Attachment A** to this EA. The submitted Abstract must consist of the following sections and is limited to five (5) pages in length.

- **Title page:** Proposer name, title, date, point of contact name, e-mail address, phone, and mailing address. The title page does not count against the five (5) page limit.
- **Cover Letter:** The cover letter must include a statement that the terms of the model OT agreement (Attachment E - Model Research Other Transaction (OT)) are acceptable to the proposing organization without changes, with limited exceptions (i.e. awards including Human Subjects Research if the ARC Opportunity allows it). The proposer shall also include a statement that no individual in the proposer's organization work for DARPA as Scientific, Engineering, and Technical Assistance (SETA); Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS); or similar support service contractors, as DARPA has a policy prohibiting such individual from working as a technical performer. The cover letter must also certify the individuals proposed to perform the research will be able to work as proposed on the effort. The cover letter does not count against the five (5) page limit.
- **The proposed idea addressing the ARC Opportunity:** Describe the technical idea that will be pursued to address the problem presented in the ARC Opportunity. The concept should be an innovative approach and scoped sufficiently such that the feasibility of the proposed idea can be explored within level of effort as stipulated in Section 2.1.
- **Scientific analysis of the proposed idea and its fundamental limits:** Provide a first order calculation or analysis to justify the proposed idea is feasible.
- **Analysis of current state of the art:** Describe the current state of the art of potential competing technologies and their associated limitations.
- **Proposer Qualifications:** Describe the technical background of each/all individual(s) performing the research and how their past efforts and qualifications will contribute to achieving the ARC Opportunity goals.
- **Estimated Cost and Schedule:** Include the name of each/all individual(s) who will be working

on the project and their LOE (DARPA prefers the individual(s) be proposed at as near full-time on the effort as is practical, but not to exceed one FTE for 12 months), the estimated total labor cost, and estimated materials and ODCs (equipment, materials, and ODCs combined must not exceed \$10,000.00, with the exception of graduate student tuition). No travel or publication costs are permitted, and total costs shall not exceed \$300,000.00 of requested Government funding.

- **Organization FTE Calculation:** Include organization's methodology on one (1) FTE calculation.
- **Summary Slide:** The summary slide as outlined in the abstract template. The Summary Slide does not count against the five (5) page limit.
- **Bibliography:** The bibliography does not count against the five (5) page limit. Do not include links to websites.

Proposers may attach a maximum of two technical papers to the submission and are not counted towards the five (5) page limit. A cover page for Proprietary Information (See Section 3.5) is not counted towards the five (5) page limit.

Organizations may submit multiple Abstracts, but since individuals are expected to be proposed at or near full-time for each effort, an individual may not be Key Personnel on more than one OT award simultaneously. In addition, multiple abstracts or OPPs proposing the same individual as Key Personnel will not be reviewed concurrently. If the Government receives an Abstract with an individual proposed as Key Personnel while another Abstract or OPP is under review with the same individual, the subsequent Abstract will be deemed non-conforming.

The Government will review all conforming submitted Abstracts for technical comprehension and ability as described in Section 4.1. If DARPA selects an Abstract for further evaluation, the Government will issue an invitation to submit an OPP and participate in an Oral Presentation to DARPA. Proposers providing Abstracts who are not invited to submit an OPP or participate in an Oral Presentation will be notified in writing as soon as practicable after abstract reviews. See Section 7.1 for additional information regarding Government responses. Proposers will be notified of non-conforming determinations.

3.2 Oral Proposal Package (OPP)

Each ARC Opportunity will solicit for Abstracts only. DARPA may respond to conforming Abstracts with a Notice of Non-Selection, or an Invitation to Submit an OPP and participate in an Oral Presentation (see Section 7.1). Proposers will be notified of non-conforming determinations. The following information is provided to ensure potential proposers know the anticipated content and format of the OPP. If the invitation to submit includes deviations from this content and format, the invitation to submit will take precedence.

A notional OPP will consist of:

1. Oral Presentation

Oral Presentations are limited to no more than 20 slides, including any back-up slides, in either a .pptx or .pdf format, and should be planned for 30 minutes total (15 minutes for slide presentations and 15 minutes for questions and answers). The Oral Presentation should include the following information:

- Proposed Concept/Idea:** A concise description of the idea and approach; not simply a restatement of the questions posed in the ARC Opportunity.
- Technical Overview:** This is the key section of the OPP. The overview should

include a scientific analysis of the proposed idea, potential limits, and the research plan for the 12-month effort.

- c. **Proposer overview:** Provide information regarding the individual(s) dedicated to the program and how their past efforts and qualifications will contribute to achieving ARC Opportunity goals. This must contain enough details to assess the capability of the proposer to the proposed work. Provide information on non-key personnel.
- d. **Cost and Schedule:** Provide total labor cost, estimated materials, and ODCs, and include a program plan in Gantt form.
- e. **Milestones:** Include a slide for milestones from “Task Description Document” below. This slide must match word for word the Milestone Description table that will be submitted as part of the Task Description Document (TDD) and not a summary.

2. *Supplementary Documents (not to be briefed during the Oral Presentation) to include:*

- Attachment B* - Administrative Requirements
- Attachment C* - Cost Proposal
- Attachment D* - Cost Proposal Spreadsheet
- Attachment E - Model Research Other Transaction (OT)
 - OT ATTACHMENTS* – TDD, Schedule of Milestones and Payments, Certifications for Agreement

*Attachments B/C/D and instructions on completing OT ATTACHMENTS will be provided in the invitation to submit an OPP

3.3 General Submission Guidelines

- Do not include elaborate brochures; only include information relevant to the submission requirements or evaluation criteria.
- Use of a diagram(s) or figure(s) to depict the essence of the proposed solution is permitted.
- All Abstracts and OPPs must be UNCLASSIFIED.

Proposers must submit Abstracts and OPPs via the DARPA Submission website at <https://baa.darpa.mil/>. Note: If an account has recently been created for the DARPA Submission website, this account may be reused. Accounts are typically disabled and eventually deleted following 75-90 days of inactivity. If you are unsure when the account was last used, it is recommended that you create a new account. If a proposer does not have an account for the DARPA Submission website, visit the website to complete the two-step registration process. Proposers will need to register for an Extranet account (via the form at the URL listed above) and wait for two separate e-mails containing a username and temporary password. The “Password Reset” option at the URL listed above can be used if the password is not received in a timely fashion. After accessing the Extranet, proposers may then create an account for the DARPA Submission website (via the “Register your Organization” link along the left side of the homepage), view submission instructions, and upload/finalize the proposal.

Proposers who already have an account on the DARPA Submission website may simply log in at <https://baa.darpa.mil/>, select the appropriate ARC Opportunity from the list of open DARPA solicitations and proceed with their proposal submission. DARPA may disregard abstracts and OPPs submitted through this EA as opposed to the appropriate ARC Opportunity.

Proposers must upload all Abstracts and OPPs electronically through DARPA’s Submission website as zip archives (i.e., files with a .zip or .zipx extension). The final zip archive should be no greater

than 100 MB. Only one zip archive will be accepted per submission – subsequent uploads for the same submission will overwrite previous uploads, and DARPA will reject submissions not uploaded as zip archives.

Technical support for DARPA’s Submission website may be reached at BAAT_Support@darpa.mil, and is typically available during regular business hours (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Eastern Time). Questions regarding submission contents, format, deadlines, etc. should be emailed to the specific email address listed in the ARC Opportunity. Questions/requests for support sent to any other email address may result in delayed/no response.

Note: Proposers submitting an Abstract or OPP via the DARPA Submission website MUST (1) click the “Finalize” button for the submission to upload; AND (2) do so with sufficient time for the upload to complete before the deadline. Failure to do so will result in a late submission.

DARPA will acknowledge receipt of complete submissions via email and assign identifying numbers that should be used in all further correspondence regarding those submissions. If the proposer does not receive confirmation within two (2) business days, please contact the email address listed in the specific ARC Opportunity to which the proposer is responding to verify receipt.

When planning a response to an ARC Opportunity, proposers should consider the submission time zone and that some parts of the submission process may take from one business day to one month to complete (e.g., registering for a System for Award Management (SAM) Unique Entity ID (UEI) number or Tax Identification Number (TIN); see Section 7.2.1 for information on obtaining a UEI and TIN).

3.4 Submission Deadlines

ARC Opportunities will remain open for Abstract submissions for a period of up to six (6) months, with rolling submissions and evaluations. DARPA will strive to respond to Abstracts received between the 1st and the 15th of each month, but no later than the 30th of that same month. Abstracts received after the 15th of each month, but before the end of the overall submission period, may be evaluated and responded to by the 30th of the following month. The DARPA response will be either a Notice of Non-Selection letter or an Invitation to Submit an Oral Proposal Package and provide an Oral Presentation. See additional information in Section 7.1, Award Notices. Funding set aside for each ARC Opportunity will be limited and may be exhausted before the end of the open period. Should funding for an ARC Opportunity be exhausted before the stated closing date, DARPA will issue an amendment to the ARC Opportunity updating the closing date. Potential proposers are encouraged not to wait until the last month to submit Abstracts.

Proposers must submit Abstracts per the instructions outlined herein and received by DARPA no later than the closing date and time listed in the ARC Opportunity (or amendment) to which the Abstract is submitted. Abstracts and Abstract modifications, unless requested by the Government Agreements Officer, received after the final due date set forth in the ARC Opportunity (or amendment) will be considered late and may not be evaluated.

DARPA will evaluate Abstracts submitted in response to an ARC Opportunity, as detailed in Section 4. If the Government selects an Abstract for an Oral Presentation, the Government will issue an invitation to submit an OPP. The invitation will include the submission instructions and deadline.

3.5 Proprietary Information

Proposers are responsible for clearly marking proprietary information. Submissions containing proprietary information must have the cover page, and each page containing such information is clearly marked with a label such as “Proprietary.” The cover page does not count toward page limits. NOTE: “Confidential” is a classification marking used to control the dissemination of U.S. Government National Security Information as dictated in Executive Order 13526 and should not be

used to identify proprietary business information.

3.6 Security Information

DARPA/DSO will only accept UNCLASSIFIED Abstracts and OPPs submitted against an ARC Opportunity; proposals deemed to be classified will not be considered. Selected performers will not be issued a DD Form 254, “DoD Contract Security Classification Specification.” See Section 7.2.2 for Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) compliance requirements.

4 Evaluation of Abstracts and Oral Proposal Packages

4.1 Abstracts – Process and Basis of Evaluation

ARC Opportunities will solicit for Abstracts only. If the proposer’s Abstract is deemed selectable, DARPA will issue an invitation to submit an OPP and participate in an Oral Presentation. Abstract evaluation criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

4.1.1 Evaluation Criteria for Abstracts

Individual Abstracts will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria described below:

a. Technical Rationale and Approach: The proposed idea is innovative and addresses the technical problem posed in the ARC Opportunity. Scientific understanding is accurate, and technical challenges are identified. The proposed idea is supported by clear calculations.

b. Technical Ability: The proposer has a demonstrated ability to rigorously explore the proposed idea.

c. Level of Effort: The proposed effort is for one FTE and the total person-hours add up to 12 months of work as relevant. The key individual(s) proposed for the effort will be at or near full-time, to the maximum extent practical.

DARPA will evaluate Abstracts using the evaluation criteria listed above and not against any other criteria or other Abstracts submitted in response to an ARC Opportunity. Proposers are required to submit an Abstract for evaluation by DARPA to be considered for any subsequent award. DARPA will respond to the five (5) page Abstract as described in Section 7.1.

4.2 Oral Proposal Package and Oral Presentation – Process and Basis of Evaluation

In addition to the format and content of the OPP, the invitation to submit an OPP and participate in an Oral Presentation will also include details relevant to the Oral Presentation. In the event the instructions in the invitation to participate deviate from the following list of expectations, the instructions in the invitation to participate take precedence.

- **Location (On-Site versus Virtual Attendance):** All Oral Presentations will be virtual. Rules for the Oral Presentation will be included in the invitation to participate.
- **Timing:** In the invitation to submit an OPP and participate in an Oral Presentation, DARPA will include information regarding the date and time for the Oral Presentation.

4.2.1 Evaluation Criteria for Oral Proposal Package and Oral Presentation

DARPA will evaluate conforming OPPs, including the Oral Presentation, using the following evaluation criteria, listed in descending order of importance:

a. Overall Scientific and Technical Merit

The proposed idea is relevant to the technical topic in the ARC Opportunity, is innovative and technically sound, and may potentially lead to a new and revolutionary capability. The scientific understanding is accurate, and technical challenges are identified. The proposed idea is supported by valid and clear calculations.

b. Technical ability and Potential Contribution to the DARPA Mission

The proposed technical personnel have the expertise and experience to scientifically explore the proposed idea with a defined research plan.

The potential contributions of the proposed effort bolster the national security technology base and support DARPA's mission to make pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent technological surprise.

c. Cost Realism and Level-of-Effort

The effort is scoped for one FTE and the total person-hours add up to 12 months of work to the maximum extent possible. All individual(s) proposed for the effort are dedicated to the effort at near full-time to the maximum extent possible. All costs are directly related to and are realistic for the proposed tasks. All costs should be substantiated by the details provided in the OPP (such as the type and number of labor hours proposed per task and any other applicable costs).

DARPA will evaluate OPPs using the evaluation criteria listed above and not against any other criteria. The submitted OPP, to include the Oral Presentation, will be evaluated independent of the previously submitted Abstract which resulted in an invitation to submit an OPP. DARPA will respond to the OPP submission as described in Section 7.1.

4.3 Review and Selection Process

DARPA's policy is to ensure impartial, equitable, and comprehensive proposal evaluations based on the evaluation criteria listed above and to select the source (or sources) whose proposal meets the Government's technical, policy, and programmatic goals.

DARPA will conduct a review of each conforming Abstract and OPP. All evaluations will be based solely on the evaluation criteria in Section 4.

Using the evaluation criteria, the Government will evaluate each Abstract and OPP in its entirety, documenting the strengths and weaknesses relative to the evaluation criteria. Based on the identified strengths and weaknesses, DARPA will determine whether an Abstract or OPP is selectable. DARPA will not evaluate Abstracts and OPPs against each other during the scientific review process, but rather evaluate the Abstracts and OPPs on their own merit to determine how well the proposal meets the criteria stated in this EA.

DARPA will make an award to a proposer whose Abstract and OPP are determined to be selectable by the Government, consistent with instructions and evaluation criteria specified in the EA, and based on availability of funding. Given the limited funding available for each ARC Opportunity, not all proposals considered selectable may be selected for a potential award.

For the purposes of this proposal evaluation process, DARPA defines a "selectable" Abstract or OPP as follows:

Selectable: A selectable Abstract or OPP is one that the Government has evaluated against the evaluation criteria listed in the EA, and the strengths outweigh the weaknesses.

For the purposes of this proposal evaluation process, DARPA defines a "non-selectable" Abstract or OPP as follows:

Non-Selectable: An Abstract or OPP is considered non-selectable when the Government has evaluated it against the evaluation criteria listed in the EA, and the strengths do not outweigh the weaknesses.

4.4 Handling of Competition Sensitive Information

It is DARPA's policy to protect all Abstracts and OPPs as information and to disclose their contents only for the purpose of evaluation and only to screened personnel for authorized purposes. Restrictive notices notwithstanding, during the evaluation process, submissions may be handled by DARPA

support contractors for administrative purposes and/or to assist with technical evaluation. All DARPA support contractors are expressly prohibited from performing DARPA-sponsored technical research and are bound by appropriate non-disclosure agreements. Input on technical aspects of the Abstracts or OPPs may be solicited by DARPA from non-Government consultants/experts who are strictly bound by appropriate non-disclosure requirements. No submissions will be returned. Upon completing the evaluation process, DARPA will retain an electronic copy of each submission received and all other copies will be destroyed. A certification of destruction may be requested, provided the formal request is received via the specific email identified in the ARC Opportunity within five (5) business days after notification that a proposal was not selected.

5 Award Information

5.1 General Award Information

DARPA anticipates multiple awards. The amount of funding made available under each ARC Opportunity issued under DARPA-EA-25-02 will depend on the quality of the submissions received and the availability of funds.

The Government reserves the right to communicate with proposers if it is later determined to be necessary. If warranted, portions of resulting awards may be segregated into pre-priced options.

The Government reserves the right to request any additional, necessary documentation to support the award process. The Government reserves the right to remove a proposal from award consideration should the proposer fail to provide requested additional information in a timely manner or sign the OT agreement as provided.

5.2 Fundamental Research

It is Department of Defense (DoD) policy the publication of products of fundamental research will remain unrestricted to the maximum extent possible. National Security Decision Directive 189 defines fundamental research as follows:

“Fundamental research” means basic and applied research in science and engineering, the results of which ordinarily are published and shared broadly within the scientific community, as distinguished from proprietary research and from industrial development, design, production, and product utilization, the results of which ordinarily are restricted for proprietary or national security reasons.

As of the date of publication of this EA, the Government expects program goals as described herein may be met by proposed efforts for (1) fundamental research, and/or (2) non-fundamental research. Based on the anticipated type of proposer (e.g., university or industry) and the nature of the solicited work, the Government expects some awards may include restrictions on the resultant research that will require the awardee to seek DARPA’s permission before publishing any information or results relative to the program.

Proposers should indicate in their Abstract and OPP whether they believe the scope of the research included in their proposal is fundamental or not. While proposers should clearly explain the intended results of their research, the Government will have sole discretion to determine all instrument terms and conditions with selectees. DARPA will include appropriate terms in resultant awards for non-fundamental research to prescribe publication requirements and other restrictions, as appropriate.

6 Eligibility Information

6.1 Eligible Applicants

All responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs may submit an Abstract that will be considered by DARPA. Other Transactions for research do not require participation by non-

traditional performers.

6.1.1 Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and Government Entities

Proposals from Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC) and Government Entities may be considered for award but are subject to applicable direct competition limitations. FFRDCs and Government Entities cannot propose to this announcement in any capacity unless they meet the specific conditions. FFRDCs and Government Entities interested in proposing to an ARC Opportunity should first contact the specific ARC Opportunity email box prior to the Abstract due date listed in that ARC Opportunity.

6.1.2 Non-U.S. Organizations

Non-U.S. organizations and/or individuals may participate to the extent that such participants comply with any necessary nondisclosure agreements, security regulations, export control laws, and other governing statutes applicable under the circumstances.

6.2 Organizational Conflicts of Interest

Without prior written approval or a waiver from the DARPA Deputy Director, a contractor/awardee cannot simultaneously provide SETA, A&AS, or similar support and also be a technical performer. If invited to submit an OPP, the proposer must disclose in the OPP if they are providing SETA, A&AS, or similar support to any DARPA office(s) through an active prime award or subaward and all facts relevant to the existence or potential existence of an Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI).

If SETA, A&AS, or similar support is being or was provided to any DARPA office(s), the OPP must include:

- The name of the DARPA office receiving the support
- The prime contract number
- An OCI mitigation plan

Under this section of the OPP, the proposer is responsible for providing this disclosure with each proposal submitted in response to an ARC Opportunity. The disclosure must include the proposer's OCI mitigation plan. The OCI mitigation plan must include a description of the actions the proposer has taken or intends to take, to avoid, neutralize, or mitigate such conflict; prevent the existence of conflicting roles that might bias the proposer's judgment; and prevent the proposer from having an unfair competitive advantage. Before the start of proposal evaluations, the Government will assess potential conflicts of interest based on the proposals submitted. DARPA will promptly notify the proposer if any appear to exist. The Government assessment does NOT affect, offset, or mitigate the proposer's responsibility to give full notice and planned mitigation for all potential organizational conflicts.

If, in the sole opinion of the Government after full consideration of the circumstances, an OPP fails to fully disclose potential conflicts of interest and/or any identified conflict situation cannot be effectively mitigated, the OPP will be rejected without technical evaluation and withdrawn from further consideration for award.

If a prospective proposer believes a conflict of interest exists or may exist (whether organizational or otherwise) or has questions on what constitutes a conflict of interest, the proposer should send his/her contact information and a summary of the potential conflict via the specific email address identified in the ARC Opportunity the proposer is responding to before time and effort are expended in preparing a proposal and mitigation plan.

7 Award Administration Information

7.1 Award Notices

The following notices will be provided for conforming Abstracts and OPPs as applicable:

- Notice of non-selection (not invited to submit an Oral Proposal Package and Oral Presentation)
- Invitation to submit an Oral Proposal Package (OPP) and participate in an Oral Presentation
- Notice of non-selection (for potential award of a Research OT)
- Notice of selection (for potential award of a Research OT).

As soon as DARPA completes Abstract evaluation, DARPA will notify Abstract submitters that (1) they are invited to submit an OPP, or (2) they are not invited to submit an OPP. DARPA may elect to invite all, some, or none of the Abstract submitters to submit an Oral Proposal Package and participate in an Oral Presentation. Only Abstract submitters invited by DARPA to submit an OPP and participate in an Oral Presentation are eligible to provide one. As soon as the evaluation of OPPs and Oral Presentations is complete, DARPA will notify proposers that (1) their proposal has been selected for funding, subject to OT agreement acceptance, or (2) their proposal has not been selected for funding. DARPA will send the above-listed notifications via email to the Technical and Administrative point(s) of contact identified on the Oral Proposal Package coversheet. Proposers will be notified of non-conforming determinations.

7.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

7.2.1 System for Award Management Registration and Universal Identifier Requirements

All proposers must be registered in SAM and have a UEI number to propose to this EA. You must maintain an active registration in <https://SAM.gov/> with current information times during which you have an active Federal award or idea under consideration by DARPA. Information on <https://SAM.gov/> registration is available at <https://SAM.gov/>. This is a quick process, and you must be registered in order to be paid under any resultant agreement. See www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/additional-baa for further information.

NOTE: New registrations can take an average of 7-10 business days to process at <https://SAM.gov/>. Registration requires the following information:

- SAM UEI number
- TIN
- Commercial and Government Entity Code (CAGE) Code. If a proposer does not already have a CAGE code, one will be assigned during SAM registration.
- Electronic Funds Transfer information (e.g., proposer's bank account number, routing number, and bank phone or fax number).

7.2.2 Controlled Unclassified Information or Controlled Technical Information on Non-DoD Information Systems

The research under this announcement is intended to be fundamental research, and the information this section may or may not apply to the resulting Research OT. Further information is provided in Attachment E – Model Research Other Transaction (OT).

Proposers and awardees are subject to the statutory requirements related to protection of CUI and CTI IAW Executive Order 13556, Controlled Unclassified Information, see <http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/additional-baa> for additional guidance on protecting CUI on Non-DoD Information Systems.

CUI is defined as unclassified information that requires safeguarding or dissemination controls,

pursuant to and consistent with applicable law, regulations, and Government-wide policies.

CTI is defined as technical information with military or space application subject to controls on its access, use, reproduction, modification, performance, display, release, disclosure, or dissemination. The term CTI does not include information that is lawfully publicly available without restrictions.

Examples of technical information include research and engineering data; engineering drawings and associated lists; specifications, standards, process sheets, manuals, technical reports, technical orders, catalog-item identifications, data sets, studies and analyses and related information; and computer software code. Note, such technical information may or may not be controlled (i.e., CTI), depending on whether it has military or space application.

If the proposer is invited to submit an OPP, the proposer's submitted TDD (sample template included as ATTACHMENT 2 to the Model Research Other Transaction (OT)), should distinguish between work proposed to be Fundamental Research versus work proposed to be CUI. Proposers will provide a short explanation for why each subtask should be categorized as Fundamental Research or CUI. If the proposer includes CUI tasks in the TDD, proposers must provide a plan for protecting Controlled Unclassified Information as part of Attachment B - Administrative Requirements.

Proposers should indicate if they believe their approach will need to access or generate CUI or CTI in their proposal. Proposers who believe their efforts may involve CUI or CTI should provide a plan for protecting it as part of Attachment B - Administrative Requirements. DARPA may also require submitting a plan in individual ARC Opportunities, in which case the requirement will be stated in the ARC Opportunity. See the attached model OT (Attachment E - Model Research Other Transaction (OT)) for the terms that may be included in each negotiated OT related to safeguarding CUI/CTI and cyber incident reporting. If needed, DARPA will issue a CUI/CTI guide with the applicable ARC Opportunity.

7.2.3 Human Subjects Research/Animal Use

Proposers who anticipate involving human subjects in the proposed research must comply with the approval procedures detailed at www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/additional-baa, to include providing the information specified therein as required for proposal submission. Use of animal subjects in the proposed research is prohibited. The DoD defines an animal subject as a living or dead vertebrate, a larval fish or amphibian, or an egg-laying vertebrate after hatching. For details, refer to DoD Instruction 3216.01: Use of Animals in DoD Conducted and Supported Research and Training at: <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/321601p.pdf>.

7.2.4 Electronic Invoicing and Payments

Awardees will be required to submit invoices for payment electronically via the Wide Area Workflow module in the Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment (PIEE) at <https://piee.eb.mil/>, unless an exception applies. Registration in PIEE is required prior to any award under this EA.

8 Communications

DARPA intends to use email for all correspondence regarding solicitation DARPA-EA-25-02. The exception is for proposals, which the agency will accept only via the BAA tool detailed in each ARC Opportunity Notice. Proposals must NOT be sent by fax or email; any proposals sent by fax or email may be disregarded.

Administrative questions regarding this Exploration Announcement should be emailed to Innovation@darpa.mil. Technical and award questions related to a specific ARC Opportunity should be emailed to the specific email address listed in the ARC Opportunity. All questions must be in English and must include the name, email address, and telephone number of a point of contact.

DARPA will attempt to answer questions in a timely manner; however, questions submitted less than ten (10) calendar days before the Abstract due date listed in the ARC Opportunity Solicitation Notice may not be answered. DARPA may post a Q&A list on the designated ARC Opportunity page on the DARPA website, www.darpa.mil. The list for each ARC Opportunity may be updated on an ongoing basis until the solicitation closing date stated in the ARC Opportunity.

For those new to DARPA or national security, DARPA makes available a free, comprehensive resource via DARPACONnect on how to do business with the agency. In addition to DARPA 101 materials, relevant preparatory modules include “Making the Most of a Proposers Day” and “Understanding DARPA Broad Agency Announcements.” Registration and access are free at www.darpaconnect.us.

Appendix A: Research Other Transactions (OT) Authority

Research OT projects are awarded under the authority of 10 U.S.C. § 4021. OTs are award instruments that are generally not subject to the Federal laws and regulations governing procurement contracts. OTs are not subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations Supplement (DFARS), or any regulations governing grants or cooperative agreements. OT awardees are also not subject to the FAR/DFARS cost accounting standards. As a result, the use of OTs should streamline the award process, making it faster than the traditional Government contracting process and more akin to a commercial contract award timeline. For additional information on OTs and how they are used in the Department of Defense, please go to acquisitioninnovation.darpa.mil.

Generally, there are no prescribed clauses in an OT agreement, and the agreement terms can be negotiated between the awardee and the Government. However, in the case of the ARC program, DARPA does not expect to enter into negotiations and intends to provide the awardees with a simple agreement with consistent terms and conditions such that DARPA can ensure awards are made quickly, and selected proposers can begin work expeditiously. After the OT is issued, the selected proposer will have 5 calendar days from the issue date to agree to the terms of the OT, sign, and return the agreement to DARPA. If the proposer fails to sign and return the OT within 5 calendar days, DARPA may withdraw its OT award.