

**DARPA-PA-25-05**

**Microsystems Technology Office (MTO) Pitch Day Solicitation**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**as of 04/18/2025**

**Q1:** Are large businesses like Raytheon still eligible to submit an abstract for MTO Pitch Day?

**A1:** Research OTs are governed by 10 U.S.C. § 4021 and therefore are not subject to the same stipulations with respect to eligibility that Prototype OTs are subject to under 10 U.S.C. § 4022. DARPA notes one of the goals of the MTO Pitch Day is to encourage participation by new and first-time or non-traditional proposers. However, all responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs, including both traditional defense contractors and non-traditional defense contractors, may participate.

**Q2:** What is the target TRL (technology readiness level) in this program? Would a STTR Phase 1 type of topics (e.g., feasibility study about an innovative or revolutionary solution, TRL 1~3) be suitable for this program, since the POP is short?

**A2:** There is no TRL target. The scope should be commensurate with the estimated total cost of phase (\$200k or \$400k).

**Q3:** In Thrust Area 1, it is mentioned “*quantum computing is explicitly excluded* from this thrust area.” Can quantum computing be considered for Thrust Area 2, e.g., DNA based quantum computing?”

**A3:** Quantum computing can be considered for Thrust Area 2 – Biologically inspired microsystems (BIMs), but the proposer must detail how the effort would be electronic microsystems centric.

**Q4:** It’s mentioned that “the aim is to explore alternative physical, logical, and mathematical frameworks that could provide new ways to process information.” Would theoretical formulation, numerical analysis and computational studies be of interest to this program if proposing an entirely new computing paradigm where the relevant hardware may not be available or exist at all?

**A4:** Theoretical formulation and numerical analysis are of interest, but the proposer must discuss relevant hardware properties, requirements, or characteristics in detail.

**Q5:** In Section III.B “Proposers must clearly mark and identify their Abstract as responding to one (1) of the Thrust Areas identified in Section 1.A. Proposers may only submit one (1) Abstract.” Can a proposer / organization only submit an abstract in total, or do you mean submitting an abstract to either Thrust Area is sufficient and allowed while multiple would also be fine?

**A5:** Proposers may only submit one (1) Abstract per Thrust Area. Multiple Principal Investigators (PIs) from the same entity/company may submit separate abstracts to the other thrust areas. However, the separate abstracts must be technologically distinct.

**Q6:** We would like to submit an abstract under the category of: Commercially Catalyzed Defense Deployment.

Does innovation at component level also fit into this program? In other words, developing components that when put into larger functioning sensors could provide significant improvements to the performance of the system.

**A6:** Yes.

**Q7:** Can multiple PIs at the same company submit separate abstracts?

**A7:** Proposers may only submit one (1) Abstract per Thrust Area. Multiple Principal Investigators (PIs) from the same entity/company may submit separate abstracts to the other thrust areas. However, the separate abstracts must be technologically distinct.

**Q8:** Could you please confirm whether a traditional defense contractor can still be eligible to bid on this program?

**A8:** Research OTs are governed by 10 U.S.C. § 4021 and therefore are not subject to the same stipulations with respect to eligibility that Prototype OTs are subject to under 10 U.S.C. § 4022. DARPA notes one of the goals of the MTO Pitch Day is to encourage participation by new and first-time or non-traditional proposers. However, all responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs, including both traditional defense contractors and non-traditional defense contractors, may participate.

**Q9:** Would our company only be able to submit a maximum of three abstracts, one per TA? And each of those must come from a different PI?

**A9:** Correct. Maximum of three (3) abstracts, one (1) per thrust area, each with a different PI.

**Q10:** While FFRDCs are not eligible as prime for the MTO Pitch Day DARPA proposal could we be subrecipients?

**A10:** Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC), University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs), and Government Entities are not eligible to propose to this solicitation, DARPA-PA-25-01. In addition, as stated within the solicitation, no sub-awardees are permitted.

**Q11:** Are Pitch Day and Spark Tank the same event or two separate events?

**A11:** They are separate events. MTO Pitch Day is occurring in conjunction with MTO Spark Tank. The invited proposers of Pitch Day have the option of attending Spark Tank.

**Q12:** What is the registration fee?

**A12:** As stated in the Pitch Day special notice [DARPA-SN-25-52](#), the registration fee for all attendees of the Spark Tank event is \$450.00 and is solely for the purpose of covering the cost of the event. DARPA will not provide reimbursement for costs incurred to participate in MTO Pitch Day and/or MTO Spark Tank.

**Q13:** Can you please let us know how to sign up for the DARPA Pitch Day?

**A13:** Proposers are not required to sign up to participate in Pitch Day; however, proposers must submit an Abstract consisting of a technical description of their idea in response to one of the Thrust Areas listed in DARPA-PA-25-05 Section I.A. If the Abstract is selected for participation at Pitch Day, DARPA will notify the selected proposer by email with an invitation to present their idea at Pitch Day. If the proposer would like to accept DARPA's invitation to Pitch Day, the proposer must register for MTO Spark Tank (see Q11 and Q12). Participation in the MTO Spark Tank event is optional and not a requirement for submitting an Abstract to this solicitation and/or attending the invitation-only Pitch Day. The MTO Pitch Day funding opportunity description, instructions, and dates are outlined within the solicitation (<https://sam.gov/opp/b2507ad585714764b454127163debc88/view>). See Section III: Submission Information.

**Q14:** As the solicitation says "no subawardees are permitted," does this mean that the submission needs to be from a single institution (rather than a multi-institution collaboration)?

**A14:** No subawardees are permitted. This means there will only be one Prime proposer (i.e., a single entity/institution) where all team members are part of the same entity/institution.

**Q15:** Does a particular area “X” align with the objectives of thrust “Y”?

**A15:** Proposers must clearly mark and identify their Abstract as responding to one (1) of the Thrust Areas identified in Section 1.A: Unconventional computing (UC), Biologically inspired microsystems (BIMs), Commercially catalyzed defense deployment (C2D2).

**Q16:** How much technical information should I provide in my abstract?

**A16:** Proposers must use the Abstract template provided as Attachment A and follow the guidance there within. Do not include any brochures or advertisements about your organization; only include information relevant to the submission requirements or evaluation criteria. See Attachment A: Abstract Instructions and Template.

**Q17:** Can multiple people work on the effort, so long as the total cost remains below \$200k/\$400k?

**A17:** A Prime proposer (i.e., a single entity/institution) may have one or multiple team members. The Prime proposer must have an active SAM registration with a CAGE. Note that no subawardees are permitted. See Q14.

**Q18:** Can the costs run above \$200k/\$400k if the company puts in its own funds or receives funds from another source?

**A18:** While the intent of the program is to keep the total within the two different Phases dollar value (Phase 1 for \$200K, or Phase 2 for \$400K), proposals with a dollar value higher than the Phase value are to identify the resource sharing contributions and total dollar value of the project.

Government funding will only cover proposed labor, required materials, equipment, and Other Direct Costs. The Government will not fund Travel, Publication cost, or other cost the agency deems inappropriate.

**Q19:** Can the PI change from the first 4 months to the second 4 months? (For example, can we propose that one PM perform theoretical calculations to verify a new idea for the first 4 months and then propose a different PM to validate the idea in software over the following 4 months)?

**A19:** There must be a single Principal Investigator (PI) per proposal, for the duration of the proposed effort. However, Co-PIs are acceptable.

**Q20:** Solicitation states that "Key personnel must be available to present in-person, or the PDP will be deemed non-conforming." Just to clarify, are the "Key Personnel" who must be available only the researcher(s) and any project manager, or do you require that somebody with authority to sign agreements also attend, even if this person will not be involved in the project itself.

**A20:** Proposers are required to identify and list research Key Personnel. The research Key Personnel listed in the proposal must be available to present in-person. Proposer's Administrative/Contracting POCs and Program Managers normally are listed as non-research personnel.

**Q21:** The project will have 2 phases. Should we show the technical approach and budget for both the phases (8 months)?

**A21:** Proposers must present, for a particular Thrust Area, two pricing phases in \$200K increments up to \$400,000. The second phase must build on the first phase so that total costs do not exceed \$400K of Government funding. Phase 1 at \$200K-four months, and Phase 2 at \$400K-eight months. The technical approach must be consistent with the Phase dollar value and duration.

**Q22:** Can you clarify the cover letter statement regarding the authorized signatory being available either in-person or virtually to sign the final agreement? Is the purpose of this to guarantee that an authorized official will be able sign the agreement when issued? Or does this mean an authorized signatory will have to sign the OT agreement on Pitch Day?

**A22:** The purpose of this is to guarantee that an authorized official will be able sign the agreement when issued.

**Q23:** Do you allow institutions to budget indirect costs based on their negotiated rate agreement?

**A23:** Government funding will only cover proposed labor, required materials, equipment, and Other Direct Costs. The Government will not fund Travel, Publication cost, or other cost the agency deems inappropriate. Also see Q18.

**Q24:** Will a copy of the OT agreement be provided if invited to present at Pitch Day? If the institution needs to take exceptions to the OT agreement, should they be submitted with the abstract?

**A24:** The model OT agreement will be provided in the PDP invitation. Specific milestones will be based on the Project Objectives detailed in the solicitation and the proposed solution. Due to the nature of Pitch Day, no other negotiated changes to the OT terms and conditions are expected.

**Q25:** What is the timeframe for organizations to review and sign the OT agreement after it is issued?

**A25:** Entities are to return a signed OT agreement within 24 hours after an Agreements Officer officially requests their signature for partial execution.

**Q26:** Should costs be listed in budget categories, or can a lump sum amount of \$200,000 just be provided for labor and materials?

**A26:** The pricing Phases include the total labor, and estimated materials and ODCs. However, proposers should detail the subtotal for each category. Also see Q21.

**Q27:** Can you please help with the BAAT Submission Portal?

**A27:** Please see Attachment B DARPA BAAT Submission Portal Guide of DARPA-PA-25-05 for portal information. Technical support for the DARPA BAA Submission website is available during regular business hours, Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Requests for technical support must be emailed to BAAT\_Support@darpa.mil. Please refer to the solicitation (DARPA-PA-25-05) in all correspondence.

**Q28:** How do I submit my Abstract?

**A28:** Proposers are required to submit Abstracts before the due date and time specified in the Overview Information section via the Broad Agency Announcement Tool (BAAT). See Attachment B for DARPA's BAA Tool guidance. Submissions sent through other mediums, channels, or after the prescribed Program Announcement deadline will not be considered, reviewed, or evaluated. See Q27.

**Q29:** Can you clarify the due date for Abstract submission?

**A29:** As stated in the solicitation, the abstract deadline is April 23, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., Eastern Time Zone (ET).

**Q30:** Should the Authorized Signatory be physically available at the site, if invited, or would remote or virtual availability be acceptable? Or how important is this in the review process?

**A30:** If invited to MTO Pitch Day, proposers must have an Authorized Signatory official readily available to sign the agreement if selected for funding. While selections for funding will be made the same day of the event, selected proposers can expect to be awarded a Research OT the same day or within five (5) business days following the event. Proposer must have an active SAM registration with a CAGE. See Q24 and Q25.

**Q31:** The provided template says fonts must be in 12 points, but the provided document is in 11. Shall we use the template as provided or update it to be 12 points?

**A31:** Proposers must use the Abstract template provided as Attachment A and follow the guidance there within. All submissions must be written in English and all pages shall be formatted for printing on 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins and font size not smaller than 12 point. Font sizes of 8 or 10 point may be used for figures, tables, and charts.

**Q32:** In the provided template for the abstract, the table has rows for “Thrust Area” and “Identify which Focus Area has been proposed.” Should those be filled out identically?

**A32:** Yes. Proposers should consider “Focus Area” as a synonym for “Thrust Area”.