

**DARPA Guide to Broad
Agency Announcements and
Research Announcements**

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FOREWORD

The DARPA Guide to Broad Agency Announcements and Research Announcements is issued under the authority of DARPA Instruction (DI) No. 20, "Soliciting, Evaluating, and Selecting Proposals under Broad Agency Announcements and Research Announcements," current version, and is effective immediately.

This Guide implements processes and procedures established under DI 20, including how to prepare and process a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) or Research Announcement (RA) and how to evaluate and select for award proposals received in response to BAAs and RAs. All government employees and support contractor personnel involved in acquisition at DARPA shall read and become familiar with procedures and responsibilities outlined by the Guide to prepare them to solicit and select proposals for award under a BAA or RA.

Please submit comments or suggestions for improvement of this Guide to the Contracts Management Office via e-mail or call 703-526-4168. Copies of this document may be obtained electronically from the Policy section on the Support Services Office (SSO) intranet site.



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PURPOSE

The purpose of the DARPA Guide to Broad Agency Announcements and Research Announcements, hereafter referred to as the DARPA Guide to BAAs and RAs or BAA Guide, is to provide guidance and instructions for how to (1) prepare, route, and advertise BAAs and RAs and (2) evaluate and select proposals received in response to BAAs and RAs for negotiation of award. Chapter 1 describes the process leading up to issuance of a BAA or RA. Chapter 2 discusses the procedures for reviewing and selecting for award proposals received in response to BAAs and RAs and documenting the results of this review.

This Guide is intended to be a living document, subject to revision due to lessons learned and DoD best practices.

APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

The DARPA Guide to BAAs and RAs is applicable to DARPA employees and contractor support personnel engaged in the acquisition of research and development through the use of BAAs and RAs, including, but not limited to: program management, requirements development and contracting. It also applies to DARPA contracting agents to the extent that they make awards resulting from proposals submitted in response to DARPA BAAs and RAs.

This Guide is intended to be consistent with Federal law, regulations and policies. If there is any inconsistency between this Guide and Federal law, regulations and policies, the Guide shall not be effective on the particular issue.

DEFINITIONS

Key terms used in the Guide are defined in the Glossary of Terms, Appendix 2.

Chapter One

Soliciting Proposals Under Broad Agency Announcements and Research Announcements

CHAPTER ONE: SOLICITING PROPOSALS UNDER BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS (BAAs) AND RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS (RAs)

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

This Chapter provides guidance and instructions for how to prepare, route and advertise BAAs and RAs based on Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 35.016 and DARPA Instruction No. 20, "Soliciting, Evaluating, and Selecting Proposals under Broad Agency Announcements and Research Announcements." Guidance regarding BAAs provided herein also applies to RAs, unless specifically designated otherwise.

1.A. BAA Overview. DARPA's authority to issue BAAs is derived from FAR Subparts 6.102 and 35.016. Subpart 35.016 prescribes procedures for the use of the BAA for the acquisition of basic and applied research and that part of development not related to the development of a specific system or hardware procurement. BAAs may be used by agencies to fulfill their requirements for scientific study and experimentation directed toward advancing the state-of-the-art or increasing knowledge or understanding rather than focusing on a specific system or hardware solution. The BAA technique shall only be used when meaningful proposals with varying technical/scientific approaches can be reasonably anticipated."

The BAA should be general in nature. If the Government's need is for the development of a specific system or hardware solution, proposals must be solicited by a Request for Proposal (RFP) rather than a BAA. Further, a BAA will not be used if the Government's need is for supplies or services (e.g. SETA support), even though research and development (R&D) funding may be used and the project may be in support of R&D.

DARPA may award procurement contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as a result of proposals submitted in response to a BAA.

1.B. RA Overview. The term "Research Announcement" refers to "BAA-like" solicitations that may result in the award of assistance instruments only. No procurement contracts or Section 845 Other Transactions for Prototype may be awarded as the result of a RA. Assistance instruments include grants, cooperative agreements, and Technology Investment Agreements. Assistance instruments are governed by the DoD Grants and Agreements Regulations (DoDGARS). DoDGARS Subpart 22.315, "Merit-based, competitive procedures," requires DoD to use competitive procedures for soliciting its assistance proposals. DARPA issues RAs when it is known in advance of proposal receipt that only grants or agreements will be awarded.

2. TYPES OF BAAs

A BAA should describe the Agency's research interest, either for an individual program requirement, a Program-specific BAA, or for broadly defined areas of interest covering the range of the Agency's requirements, an Office-wide BAA. While there may be minor procedural differences in how DARPA administers Office-wide BAAs, all Federal, DoD or DARPA regulations and policies applicable to Program-specific BAAs are also applicable to Office-wide BAAs (e.g., FAR Subpart 35.016)

3. MODEL BAA

DARPA's Contracts Management Office (CMO) maintains a Model BAA on the CMO intranet page. The model BAA format was written to comply with Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act (Public Law 106-107), which intended to streamline and standardize the format for announcements of funding opportunities to result in grants or cooperative agreements under Federal programs. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published a Policy Letter in the Federal Register in June 2003 that prescribed a streamlined format that all Federal agencies must follow. The Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations (DoDGARs) Section 22.315 mandates this format for DoD. By law, all BAAs posted to Grants.gov must follow this prescribed format; DARPA mandates that all BAAs must comply with this format whether posted to Grants.gov or not.

The model is color-coded to distinguish mandatory from discretionary language. Statutory and Federal regulatory language is typed in black and is mandatory. Language required by the Director, DARPA's policy is typed in blue and is also mandatory. Instructional text is typed in red. Language typed in green may be freely edited. However, the intent of the information typed in green must be included unless red instructional text states otherwise. All instructional language that will not be included in the final version of the BAA is typed in red. Additional language may be incorporated into individual BAAs as appropriate with the concurrence of the cognizant Contracting Officer (CO). Proposed changes to the Model BAA may be submitted to CMO.

4. SECTIONS OF A BAA.

DARPA BAAs consist of two parts. Part 1 serves as a summary page that includes a basic description of the announcement. Part 2 is the full text of the announcement and is broken down into eight sections, as described below:

- Section I: Funding Opportunity Description
This section details the technical areas of interest for the potential awards and gives a general outline of the purpose of the research resulting from the BAA. See Section 9, below, for guidance on content.

- **Section II: Award Information**
The information in this section includes number of awards anticipated (single or multiple), total funds expected to be awarded, anticipated award types (contracts, agreements, etc.), and the negotiating rights reserved by DARPA (e.g., requesting additional information, removing proposers from consideration, etc.). This section also provides information regarding the anticipated type of research (Basic, Applied, Advanced), whether the research will likely be considered fundamental and publication approval requirements. (See DI 21, "DARPA Agent General Requirements," for definitions).

- **Section III: Eligibility Information**
This section provides all information regarding proposer eligibility. This includes government entities, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), foreign participants, and any security clearance requirements for any proposers. This section also addresses procurement integrity, standards of conduct, ethical considerations and organizational conflicts of interest, and cost sharing/matching, as applicable.

- **Section IV: Application and Submission Information**
This section provides all information necessary to submit a response to the BAA. This section must include:
 - Any content/format requirements (e.g., page limits, classified/proprietary markings, font size, number of copies).
 - Submission instructions for all acceptable methods of transmission (electronically via DARPA-approved website and/or Grants.gov, hard copy/direct mail, hand-carried, classified).
 - Submission due dates and times. The BAA must specify the period of time during which proposals will be accepted. Program-specific BAAs must include a submission "cut-off" date that is within six months of the date of issuance. Office-wide BAAs may be open indefinitely, but must be re-advertised at least annually. Per FAR Subpart 5.203(e), BAAs must allow a response time of at least 45 calendar days between the date of the posting in Federal Business Opportunities (FBO) and/or Grants.gov and receipt of proposals. There is no response time requirement for receipt of abstracts/white papers.
 - If applicable, whether abstracts/white papers are permitted. And, if so, submission instructions and content/format requirements.

- Section V: Application Review information
This section describes the proposal review and selection process including the evaluation criteria to be used and the relative importance of those criteria. DI 20 identifies the three criteria mandated by the FAR: Overall Scientific Merit; Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission; and Cost Realism. Program Managers may include additional evaluation criteria. This section must also inform proposers if non-government personnel, to include subject matter experts from FFRDCs or University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs), will have access to the proposals.
- Section VI: Award Administration Information
This section includes notification of award information and all the national policy requirements, including:
 - Human Subjects Research
 - Animal Use
 - Export Control
 - Subcontracting
 - Section 508 compliance
 - E-Verify Information
 - Reporting Requirements (SAM, Representations and Certifications, WAWF, i-Edison)
- Section VII: Agency Contacts
This section provides proposers with all relevant points of contact for administrative, technical and contracting questions.
- Section VIII: Other Information
This section provides proposers with any other relevant information. This may include Proposers' Day details, Teaming websites, etc.

5. DISCRETIONARY COMPONENTS OF BAAs AND RAs

5.A. White papers or abstracts. The Technical Office may allow proposers to submit white papers or abstracts before submitting a full proposal. If this option is available, then it must be included in the BAA/RA. Submission of a white paper or abstract allows the proposer to receive feedback on the viability of the proposed concept and the likelihood that a proposal would be of interest to DARPA. The BAA must give instructions to the proposer regarding how to submit a white paper or abstract and what format is required for the white paper or abstract.

The Program Manager (PM) must respond to white papers and white papers or abstracts in writing with a statement as to whether DARPA is interested in the idea. (See Exhibit 6, Sample Letters 1 and 2.) The PM should attempt to reply to the white papers and abstracts within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt. If the PM indicates no interest in the idea, the PM should explain the rationale for this decision in writing. Section 6 of this Guide provides general guidelines for what information the PM should or should not provide when communicating with proposers prior to receipt of proposals.

5.B. Proposers' Day (a.k.a. Industry Day). At DARPA, Proposers' Day meetings are typically held in conjunction with a solicitation and allow the DARPA PMs to outline challenges, concerns, or expectations to potential proposers within a technology area, allowing dialogue with respect to technical approaches for solving or addressing these issues. Proposers' Day meetings may also be used as a forum to allow participants to provide presentations about their specific or unique technical capabilities that others may wish to learn more about or exploit via potential teaming arrangements or collaborative partnerships.

Proposers' Days may occur prior to the issuance of a BAA or shortly after a BAA has been publicized at FedBizOpps/Grants.gov. It is critical to note that any qualified and responsible source may still respond to any solicitation, regardless of whether that particular entity attended any prior Proposers' Day activities.

If the PM wishes to hold a Proposers' Day after the issuance of a solicitation, the Proposers' Day serves as an opportunity to review the specific details of the BAA and hold additional dialogue with the interested parties to clarify portions of the BAA. Section 6 of this Guide provides general guidelines for what information the PM should or should not provide when communicating with proposers prior to receipt of proposals. . DARPA PMs typically provide presentations and take questions and provide answers at Proposers' Days meetings. Thus, the CO is also strongly encouraged to attend. Other government personnel, to include General Counsel (GC), Security and Intelligence Directorate (SID), and/or the Small Business Program Office, may be invited to participate in the briefing, as appropriate.

Because briefings will be provided in an open forum during Proposers' Day, all briefing charts that contain information generated under a DARPA contract must be submitted to DARPA's public release submissions system and approved for public release in advance.

6. COMMUNICATIONS WITH PROPOSERS PRIOR TO THE RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS (OPEN COMMUNICATIONS)

The PM is encouraged to maintain open communications with proposers after release of a BAA and prior to the receipt of proposals, including during the abstract/white paper phase of a BAA or RA. See the DARPA Proposer Communication Plan memo dated May 5, 2011.

General guidelines for communicating with potential proposers prior to receipt of proposals include the following:

- The PM cannot attempt to replace the proposer's original ideas with his or her own.
- The PM cannot share ideas or technical solutions that were provided to him or her by a competing proposer.
- If a PM provides information concerning the objectives/goals/requirements of the BAA/RA to one proposer, he or she must provide this information to all proposers. Responses to proposer questions must be coordinated with the CO.
- If a proposer is provided with information that expands on/contradicts/retracts information contained in the published solicitation or other publically available information, this same information must also be made publically available to all potential proposers in an FAQ document. In some cases, this will also require an amendment to the BAA.
- It is important to treat communications with personnel from FFRDCs and government entities that are potentially interested in responding to a solicitation the same as communications with other potential proposers. The government affiliation of FFRDCs and government entities does not afford them any special status as proposers, and the PM and CO must take care not to provide them an unfair competitive advantage.

Exceptions to Communications: If a program manager should determine that no communications with proposers shall take place relative to his or her BAA, then he or she must justify in writing the rationale supporting the ban on communications, and such written justification must be approved by the DARPA Deputy Director prior to the release of the BAA.

7. CLASSIFIED BAAs

If the nature of the BAA effort is classified or is anticipated to involve access to or generation of classified information a DD Form 254, "DoD Contract Security Classification Specification," will be required as an attachment to the BAA.

Solicitation of proposals in response to classified BAAs is often limited to one or a small group of proposers for national security reasons. The PM and CO must document in a Justification and Approval (J&A) document for other than full and open competition the rationale for limiting competition to the selected source(s). The authority for limiting competition for classified BAAs is found at FAR Subpart 6.302-6. Refer to DI 13 for further details regarding drafting and approving J&As.

The DARPA PM should coordinate early in the process with SID if classified information will be included in the BAA package sent to proposers.

8. FOREIGN PARTICIPATION

The potential for including/excluding international participation must be discussed with SID and any necessary authorizations obtained from DoD and other Departments or agencies of the U.S. Government prior to routing the BAA beyond the Assistant Director, Program Management (ADPM), level. The need for early contact with SID is vital to preclude the inadvertent exclusion of potential international proposers.

9. SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

As stated at FAR Subpart 19.201, it is the policy of the Government to provide maximum practicable opportunities in its acquisitions to small business. Research conducted by small business has been integral in the advancement of U.S. technology. DARPA seeks and encourages small businesses to participate in its research programs. However, due to the broad nature of DARPA research and development programs and the fact that DARPA is seeking the best ideas available, it is generally not feasible to set-aside all or some portion of a BAA for small business. The DARPA Small Business Activities Guide details the required process for documenting small business set-aside decisions on the DD Form 2579, "Small Business Coordination Record." The DD Form 2579 is prepared by the CO and accompanies the BAA for review and coordination by the Program Director, Small Business Programs Office (SBPO).

10. PREPARATION AND ROUTING OF BAAs AND RAs

The PM is responsible for drafting the BAA. He or she will comply with the Model BAA when creating the draft. There are many issues to consider prior to issuing a BAA; addressing these issues early in the process can avoid problems later during review and award. Consult with CMO, GC and SID, as applicable. The following issues should be considered and addressed in the BAA/RA:

- How many awards are anticipated? What are the estimated award amounts?
- Are there security clearance requirements? If so, what level will be required and when (at time of proposal submission or time of award)?
- Are there any anticipated Intellectual Property issues (e.g., open source encouraged to facilitate transition)?
- What are the estimated total program funds?
- Are assistance instruments (e.g. grants and cooperative agreements) appropriate for the research?

- Will any part (prime or sub) of the research be considered fundamental (see DI 21 for definitions)? If so, is the corresponding type of funds available, i.e. 6.1 basic research or, if the effort will be performed on campus, 6.2 applied research? Will the effort result in any restricted publications?
- Will there be any issues involving export control (International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) or the Export Administration Regulations (EAR))?
- Do you anticipate the research will involve human or animal subjects?
- Does DARPA anticipate the use of Government Furnished Property, Equipment, or Information? If so, when will it be available and how will it be provided?
- How will the program be structured? If there are multiple phases, how will decisions be made to continue the program (e.g. down-selects)?
- Are there potential conflicts of interest between technical areas (e.g., one area is performing development and another is performing evaluations)?

Each Technical Office may establish its own internal review and approval process for BAAs. However, all BAAs must, at a minimum, be reviewed by the cognizant PM, ADPM, Technical Office Director (OD); SID; GC; the Program Director, SBPO (for coordination on the accompanying DD Form 2579); the CO; and the Director, CMO. The Director, CMO, or his or her designee, approves all BAAs prior to their issuance. In parallel action, an informational copy must be provided to Public Affairs (PA) once it has been approved by the OD.

11. PUBLISHING BAAs AND RAs

After the BAA has been approved by the Director, CMO, or his or her designee, it will be forwarded to the CO for posting. The CO will be responsible for posting the BAA. The CO will notify Public Affairs and the Congressional Affairs Liaison when posting the BAA to fulfill public and Congressional notification requirements.

11.A. Posting BAAs and RAs. The CO will post all BAAs and RAs to the appropriate portal. All BAAs and RAs will be posted to the Federal Business Opportunities website (www.fbo.gov); all RAs, and BAAs where it is anticipated that assistance instruments (grants, cooperative agreements, and TIAs) may be awarded, will also be posted to Grants.gov. Program BAAs will be posted for no longer than 180 days from the date they are published at fbo.gov.. Office-wide BAAs may be open indefinitely, but must, at a minimum, be updated as necessary and re-announced once a year.

11.B. Exceptions to Posting. Exceptions to the requirement to advertise BAAs are found at FAR Subpart 5.202. Examples of situations when the CO need not post the BAA to www.fbo.gov include when:

- The posting cannot be worded to preclude disclosure of the Agency's needs and such disclosure would compromise the national security (e.g., would result in disclosure of classified information).
- The proposed contract action is made under the circumstances described in FAR Subpart 6.302-2, and the Government would be seriously injured if the Agency complies with the required publication time periods.
- The DARPA Director determines in writing after consultation with the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy and the Administrator for Small Business Administration, that advance notice is not appropriate or reasonable.

12. ASSISTANCE WITH THE BAA OR RA PROCESS

For assistance with the BAA process, PMs should consult with their office BAA Coordinator, ADPM, and/or CO.

Chapter Two

Evaluating and Selecting Proposals for Negotiation of Award Under BAAs and RAs

CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATING AND SELECTING PROPOSALS FOR NEGOTIATION OF AWARD UNDER BAAs and RAs

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

This Chapter provides guidance and instructions for how to evaluate and select for award proposals submitted under BAAs and RAs based on Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 35.016 and DI 20.

2. PREPARING FOR REVIEW

Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 35.016 (d) requires that “proposals received as a result of the BAA shall be evaluated in accordance with evaluation criteria specified therein through a peer or scientific review process.” DARPA employs a scientific review process to evaluate proposals received in response to BAAs and RAs. However, some preparatory work must be accomplished before anyone actually begins to review proposals.

2.A. Participants in the Scientific Review Process. The key individuals involved in the Scientific Review Process are the PM, Reviewers, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), and the Scientific Review Official (SRO).

2.A.1. The PM is the lynchpin in the Scientific Review Process. He or she selects the Reviewers and SMEs and determines which proposals should be designated as recommended for funding based on the review conducted by the Reviewers and technical information provided by SMEs. When selecting Reviewers, the PM should ensure the Reviewers have the requisite background and experience to readily grasp the scientific concepts discussed in the proposals, cogently analyze the proposal in accordance with the stated evaluation criteria, and must sufficiently document their findings. The PM may also be a Reviewer, at his or her discretion. While a PM may choose to not be a Reviewer (i.e., fill out an individual Evaluation Report), he or she must still read the proposals as part of their duties as outlined in Section 3.B.

2.A.2. The Reviewers review proposals, as assigned by the PM in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Chapter, in accordance with the evaluation criteria stated in the BAA, and must sufficiently document their findings in a written Evaluation Report. (See Appendix 1, Exhibit 1, for the format). Reviewers must be government employees.

2.A.3. SMEs review those sections of proposals within their area(s) of technical expertise, as assigned by the PM, and document their findings on the Subject Matter Expert Worksheet. (See Appendix 1, Exhibit 2, for the format.)

2.A.4. The SRO is generally the Technical Office Director. The role of the SRO is to ensure the integrity of the Scientific Review Process. He or she reviews the PM's recommendations to ensure they adequately match DARPA's needs and mission requirements, and that the process undertaken to review proposals was in accordance with DI 20. Under no circumstances shall the PM and SRO be the same person.

2.B. Scientific Review Memorandum. The PM must identify the Review Team Members, including the PM, SRO, Reviewers, and SMEs by name in the Scientific Review Memorandum (SRM) (see Appendix 1, Exhibit 4). The PM may also consider identifying a Delegate PM and Delegate SRO by name in the SRM to minimize delay later should a financial conflict of interest (COI) be identified. Any changes to the membership of the team must be documented in an amendment to the SRM prior to that individual being permitted to review proposals. The SRM also includes the proposed schedule for conducting the scientific review. The SRM is signed by the PM and SRO with coordination by the CO. The SRM may be routed in conjunction with the BAA review but must be completely signed prior to the review of any proposals.

2.C. Financial Conflicts of Interest.

2.C.1. Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Personnel. IPAs are generally subject to the same ethics laws and regulations as appointed federal employees. As such, IPAs have a financial conflict of interest (COI) for particular matters at DARPA that directly and predictably affect their sending institution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208. Without exception, an IPA shall not serve as the PM, Reviewer, or SRO for any proposal in which his/her sending institution is a proposer or a subcontractor/team member (conflicted proposal). However, following consultation with GC, under certain circumstances an IPA may serve as PM, Reviewer, or SRO for the non-conflicted proposals submitted under the same BAA.

2.C.2. COI Tables. The following tables provide guidance concerning Review Team financial COI and appearance issues. As shown by the tables, no delegation of source selection duties is authorized for financial COIs except for IPAs that have a financial COI based on a proposal submitted to the BAA by the IPA's sending institution.

Category of Review Team Member (SRO, PM, Reviewer/SME)	BAA proposal received from IPA's sending institution?	Financial COI (e.g., Review Team Member owns >\$15K stock in a BAA proposer)?	Appearance issue (e.g., Review Team Member's daughter is an unpaid intern for a BAA proposer)?
IPA SRO	<p>Option 1 (default): IPA SRO disqualified from the entire BAA. Delegate SRO is the SRO for all proposals.</p> <p>Option 2 (DIRO approval required): IPA SRO disqualified from reviewing the sending institution proposal. IPA SRO can review other BAA proposals after Delegate SRO reviews the sending institution proposal and makes funding selection decision.</p>	Disqualified from the entire BAA.	DIRO decides in consultation with CMO and GC.
All other SROs	n/a	Disqualified from the entire BAA.	DIRO decides in consultation with CMO and GC.
IPA PM	IPA PM disqualified from reviewing the sending institution proposal. IPA PM can review other BAA proposals. Delegate PM reviews the sending institution proposal and serves as the PM if the proposal is selected for funding.	Disqualified from the entire BAA.	SRO decides in consultation with CMO and GC.

All other PMs	n/a	Disqualified from the entire BAA.	SRO decides in consultation with CMO and GC.
IPA Reviewers/SMEs (including Non-DARPA employees)	IPA Reviewer/SME disqualified from reviewing the sending institution proposal. IPA Reviewer/SME can review other BAA proposals.	Disqualified from the entire BAA.	SRO decides in consultation with CMO and GC.
All other Reviewers/SMEs (including Non-DARPA employees)	n/a	Disqualified from the entire BAA.	SRO decides in consultation with CMO and GC.

2.C.3. IPA Reviewers. Because proposals submitted in response to DARPA BAAs are not submitted in accordance with a common work statement, Reviewers are not required to review all proposals received in response to a BAA. They may review a subset of proposals. Generally then, an IPA Reviewer will be able to review proposals except those submitted by his/her sending institution. However, prior to commencing any review under a BAA to which his/her sending institution has submitted a proposal, the IPA shall consult with GC.

2.C.4. Delegate PMs for Conflicted IPA PMs. A Delegate PM may be named if it is determined by GC that naming a delegate to review the conflicted proposal negates the IPA PM's direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of his/her sending institution (conflicted proposal). The Delegate PM must be, at a minimum, another PM; however, a Deputy Office Director or Office Director may also serve as Delegate PM, if appropriate. Under no circumstances may the SRO act as delegate for the PM. In order to act as a delegate, the individual must be determined to have no COIs or appearance issues with any of the submitted proposals. Delegate PMs must have access to all of the information available to the IPA PM, including all proposals, the Review Team evaluations, and IPA PM briefings provided to the SRO so that the Delegate PM can determine if the conflicted proposal best meets overall program objectives based on the results of the Scientific Review Process. The Delegate PM will review the conflicted proposal(s) and make the recommendation decision for that proposal. If an award is made based on the conflicted proposal, then the Delegate PM will conduct the day-to-day program management of the resultant contract, grant or agreement. This includes signing all PRs/MIPRs. At no time during the Scientific Review Process, may the Delegate PM communicate with the IPA PM about the conflicted proposal.

2.C.5. Delegate SROs for Conflicted IPA SROs. An IPA serving as SRO has a COI for proposals from his sending institution and is disqualified from participating in the Scientific Review Team unless approved by the Director or Deputy Director, DARPA, in

consultation with CMO and GC. There are two options for IPA SROs that have a COI with a proposal from their sending institution (conflicted proposal). The two options are discussed below.

2.C.5.a. IPA SRO Option 1 (Default Procedure): When an IPA SRO has a COI because his/her sending institution has submitted a proposal under a BAA, the IPA SRO may choose to appoint a Delegate SRO for the entire Scientific Review Process. In this situation, the IPA SRO is disqualified from any participation in the Scientific Review Process for that BAA. At no time during the Scientific Review Process, may the Delegate SRO communicate with the IPA SRO about the conflicted proposal or any of the other proposals. In effect, the Delegate SRO becomes the SRO and acts in accordance with the responsibilities outlined for that role.

2.C.5.b. IPA SRO Option 2 (Requires Director or Deputy Director, DARPA Approval): Subject to the prior approval of the Director or Deputy Director, DARPA given on a case-by-case basis, the IPA SRO may appoint a Delegate SRO to oversee the Scientific Review Process for the conflicted proposal as well as control the budget necessary to fund that proposal. The IPA SRO may select proposals for funding for which he/she does not have a conflict, but only after the Delegate SRO has reviewed the Scientific Review Process documentation and decided on funding for the conflicted proposal. The IPA SRO cannot participate in the review or selection decision of the conflicted proposal, nor may he/she have control over the budget for the conflicted proposal. In accordance with section 3.C. below, the Delegate SRO shall be provided access to all of the information available to the IPA SRO, including all proposals, the PM/Reviewer/SME evaluations, PM briefings provided to the IPA SRO, as well as any Delegate PM or Reviewer evaluations, reports, and briefings. The Delegate SRO may select the conflicted proposal for funding only if he/she determines that it is the most advantageous to the Government, all factors considered, including the potential contributions of the proposed work to the overall research program and the availability of funding for the effort. If the Delegate SRO determines that the conflicted proposal will not be selected for funding, the funding that was set aside for that proposal is reinstated to the total program budget. At no time during this process, may the Delegate SRO communicate with the IPA SRO about the conflicted proposal. Only after the Delegate SRO's determination is complete and funding is returned to the total program budget, as applicable, can the IPA SRO proceed with making funding selection decisions for the remaining proposals. Those decisions must be documented in accordance with section 3.C.

2.C.5.c. Appointing Delegate SROs: The IPA SRO shall appoint a Delegate SRO who is outside of his/her chain of command and who is equivalent in rank to SES/SL. The Delegate SRO must have no financial COIs or appearance issues for any of the submitted proposals. This is to ensure that at least one SRO can review all of the Scientific Review Process documentation to choose proposals most advantageous to the Government. Under no circumstances may the PM as delegate for the SRO.

Process documentation to choose proposals most advantageous to the Government. Under no circumstances may the PM act as delegate for the SRO.

The Delegate SRO will also sign as “Office Director” on Purchase Requests/Military Interdepartmental Purchase Requests (PRs/MIPRs) for selected proposals for which he/she acts as Delegate. *Practice tip: When using Option 1 (paragraph 2.C.5.a.), the Delegate SRO will sign all of the PRs/MIPRs for that BAA, not just those where the IPA SRO has a conflict. When using Option 2 (paragraph 2.C.5.b.), the IPA SRO may approve the PR/MIPRs for the proposals where there is no conflict.*

On a case-by-case basis and after consulting with GC, the Deputy Director, DARPA may authorize the IPA SRO’s deputy director to act as Delegate SRO. In these cases, the Deputy Director, DARPA may choose to grant only limited authorization whereby the Delegate SRO role is split by function: (1) approval of PRs/MIPRS would be executed by the IPA SRO’s deputy director and, (2) making funding selection decisions, i.e., approving Scientific Review Process documentation would be executed by a Delegate SRO who is outside of his/her chain of command.

Should the Delegate SRO not be equivalent in rank to SES/SL, or in other rare circumstances where the Delegate is unable to sign the PR/MIPR as “Office Director”, the Comptroller, DARPA or Deputy Comptroller, DARPA will sign the PR/MIPR as “Office Director.” Office Directors (ODs) are prohibited from signing subsequent PRs/MIPRs for actions where their COI is still in effect. For subsequent PRs/MIPRs, the Delegate SRO or Technical Office Deputy Director with rank equivalent to SES/SL, or the Comptroller or Deputy Comptroller, are authorized to sign as “Office Director” in place of the Office Director. If the COI is not still in effect (e.g., the proposal from the IPA SRO’s sending institution was not funded), the SRO may sign subsequent PRs/MIPRs once the original (“New Start”) awards have been made.

2.C.5.d. Other Reasons to Appoint a Delegate SRO: If a SRO needs to name a delegate for non-COI reasons, e.g. planned leave, travel or other such reasons, the SRO must submit a request to delegate the SRO function for the BAA to the Deputy Director, DARPA for approval.

2.C.6. Limitation on Delegate SRO/PM. The above procedures for naming delegates are applicable only to IPAs who have financial COIs based on proposals submitted to a BAA from their sending institution. The procedures do not apply to other types of DARPA employees. The procedures do not apply to other kinds of COIs, such as seeking or negotiating employment, conflicts due to spousal employment, stock or sector fund interests, etc., because additional laws or regulations impact the conflicts analysis. Any Reviewer, SME, PM or SRO with a COI (other than for an IPA with a financial COI created by their IPA sending institution) must disqualify him or herself from the entire Scientific Review and consult with GC to

determine whether his/her participation in the Scientific Review Process for the BAA is authorized.

2.C.6.a. Appearance Issues. Any Reviewer, SME, or PM COI that GC determines to be an appearance issue will be reviewed by the SRO in conjunction with the CO to determine if it may be waived so the individual may continue to participate in the Scientific Review. SRO appearance issues (as determined by GC) will be decided by the Deputy Director, DARPA. The circumstances surrounding any appearance issue will be documented along with the rationale relied upon to make the decision that the individual may continue to participate in the Scientific Review Process for the BAA

2.D. Scientific Review Team Kick-off Meeting. This meeting is held once proposals are received in response to a BAA and prior to beginning any proposal review. Key aspects of this meeting are the GC Standards of Conduct briefing and Scientific Review training. In addition to these two portions of the meeting, the PM may also discuss how the Scientific Review will proceed, including schedule for completing the reviews and any electronic evaluation tool that will be used.

2.D.1. Standards of Conduct. Prior to beginning any review, all Reviewers and SMEs shall receive a briefing prepared and conducted by GC regarding procurement integrity, financial COIs, organizational conflicts of interest, and personal and business relationship laws (appearance) and regulations relevant to the Scientific Review Process. This briefing will generally be conducted as part of the Scientific Review Team Kick-off Meeting for proposals submitted in response to Program BAAs. The briefing will include the relevant prohibited conduct under 18 U.S.C. 208, 41 U.S.C. 2101-2107 and 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, organizational conflicts of interest, and the information contained in the non-disclosure/self-certification agreement. If a Scientific Review Team Member has received the ethics briefing at least once in the three months prior to the Scientific Review Team Kick-off Meeting, he/she is not required to attend the ethics portion of the briefing, but must be provided a copy of the presentation slides for reference. Review Team Members shall be required to sign and submit a written self-certification to the PM documenting any known or apparent COIs or else stating that they have none relevant to reviewing BAA proposals. The PM will retain the self-certification forms as part of the program documentation in accordance with paragraph 4.C below. The briefing charts and the self-certification form are available on the DARPA Portal under Forms and Templates on the General Counsel Home Page. The PM will need to complete the self-certification form and ensure that each Review Team Member has access to or receives a copy of both the self-certification form, the briefing and sufficiently completes the self-certifications. The PM shall review the self-certifications and will consult with the CO and GC regarding anomalies in the self-certifications, as necessary. The PM also shall brief all support contractor personnel having access to the proposals and ensure that they have a non-disclosure agreement on file signed when they began their duties with DARPA. The PM shall remind them of the restrictions and requirements that are contained in that agreement as it relates to the handling of and review of

Proposers' proposal materials in accordance with section 2.E. below. A copy of a non-disclosure agreement is available in DI 70, "Contractor Relationships: Inherently Governmental Functions, Prohibited Personal Services, and Organizational Conflicts of Interest."

2.D.2. Scientific Review Training. The CO will attend the Scientific Review Team Kick-off Meeting and provide training in how to sufficiently document proposal reviews.

2.E. Protection of Sensitive Data. All participants in the Scientific Review Process (including SMEs and support contractor personnel) are prohibited from, unless permitted by law, knowingly disclosing contractor bid, or proposal information, or source selection information in accordance with FAR, Subpart 2.101, and the Procurement Integrity Act, 41 U.S.C. 2101-2107 (implemented in FAR Subpart 3.104). Unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information, either before or after the award, is prohibited by the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. 1905, the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and by other laws and regulations. Prior written authorization from the Director, DARPA SRO or CO must be obtained prior to releasing protected information outside the scientific Review Team. The requirement for prior written authorization does not apply to the personnel associated with standard infrastructure activities such as preparing/processing/reviewing funding requests for selected proposals by financial/Comptroller personnel, or archiving solicitation documentation on the agency server or SharePoint sites by IT or SETA support personnel.

2.E.1. The PM shall monitor and maintain all source selection information (as defined by FAR Subpart 2.101) within a secured physical and network area; this data includes proposer-produced or reviewer-generated data, proposal information, working papers, and any other material relating to the scientific review. If at any time during the scientific review it is determined that there has been an unauthorized data disclosure, the matter will be brought to the immediate attention of the PM, SRO, GC, and CO for investigation. When reproducing or working with any documents pertaining to the scientific review, precautions will be observed to safeguard the information in accordance with FAR Subparts 2.101 and 3.104 and the DARPA Security Guide and other SID policy. Questions concerning the protection of classified or ITAR/EAR information should be directed to the SID International Security Section.

2.E.2. All copies of proposals, including any attachments or exhibits, and evaluation documentation (e.g., evaluation reports) will be marked "Source Selection Information – See FAR 2.101 and FAR 3.104."

2.F. Conforming proposals. Only conforming proposals, as defined in Appendix 2 hereto, will be reviewed and considered for award. The CO, with assistance from the PM and GC, as necessary, determines whether a proposal is conforming. When a proposal is found to be nonconforming, a letter will be sent to the proposer explaining why the proposal is nonconforming and that it will receive no further consideration. From this point forward, all references to proposals in this guide are referring to conforming proposals only.

2.G. Communications After the Receipt of Proposals (Restricted Communications).

All communications must always avoid “technical leveling,” which is the sharing of a proposer’s technical solution, including unique technology, innovative and unique uses of commercial items, or any information that would compromise a proposer’s intellectual property to another proposer. Communications must not reveal information that will give one proposer an unfair competitive advantage over another. It is important to note that the communications cannot advise or direct the proposer on how to revise the proposal. Sometimes the questions are more significant and require face-to-face or telephonic communication sessions among the Review Team, CO, and proposer. The CO must be present during entire face-to-face and telephonic communication sessions.

3. SCIENTIFIC REVIEWS

Once any conflicts of interest have been mitigated, all participants have been briefed on standards of conduct, and for Program BAAs, the PM has held the Scientific Review Kick-off Meeting, the scientific review may begin. The PM may assign proposals for scientific review to all Reviewers and SMEs or some subset thereof, at his or her discretion, with a deadline for when reviews must be completed. Each conforming proposal must be reviewed by a minimum of three Reviewers. The length of time provided for scientific review can vary based upon the length and complexity of proposal, the number of proposals received and other factors, but, generally, reviews should take no longer than two weeks to complete.

3.A. Scientific Reviews. All scientific reviews are based on the evaluation criteria detailed in the published BAA. Proposals shall not be evaluated against one another since they are not submitted in accordance with a common work statement. Using the evaluation criteria detailed in the published BAA, the Reviewers will evaluate each assigned proposal in its entirety, sufficiently document strengths and weaknesses for each evaluation criterion, and ultimately make a determination of the proposal’s overall selectability. SMEs shall review only those portions of proposals assigned to them by the PM based on their technical area(s) of expertise and document their findings on the Subject Matter Expert Worksheet (see template at Appendix 1, Exhibit 2). The results of the Reviewer’s scientific review must be documented in an Evaluation Report (see template at Appendix 1, Exhibit 1). Each Reviewer must complete a separate Evaluation Report for each proposal. Each Evaluation Report must contain a detailed, substantive narrative describing his or her findings relative to each evaluation criterion and supporting his or her selectability determination. (For definitions of terms, see Appendix 2). Guidance regarding appropriate narrative statements is included in Appendix 3.

3.B. PM Review and Recommendation for Award. Once complete, the Reviewers’ Evaluation Reports and Subject Matter Expert Worksheets are forwarded to the PM (or the Delegate PM, as appropriate) for review. The PM will review each proposal and associated Evaluation Reports and Subject Matter Expert Worksheets to ensure that the Evaluation Reports adequately document the review conducted. It is the PM’s responsibility to ensure that the

Reviewers have provided sufficient, substantive rationale for their review findings. For example, adjectival descriptions such as “Good” or “Excellent” without further detailed narrative elaboration are not sufficient. The PM shall consult with the CO, prior to making a formal recommendation of funding as outlined in section 3.B.2. If there is any question about the sufficiency of the evaluation narratives (see also guidance in Appendix 3).

3.B.1. Should the PM disagree with the rationale provided on an Evaluation Report, he or she may discuss it with the Reviewer. If the Reviewer concurs with the PM’s assessment, the Reviewer will modify the Evaluation Report. If the reviewer does not concur, the PM may still select the proposal for award, but must specifically document the rationale that overrides the reviewer’s Evaluation Report on the PM Summary Sheet.

3.B.2. Once the PM is satisfied that all Evaluation Reports are complete and substantive, he or she shall consider these documents in determining which of the proposals best meet his or her program objectives. This determination must include consideration of available funding and appropriate levels of risk. The PM designates the proposal(s) he or she is recommending for funding in a PM Summary Sheet (see template at Appendix 1, Exhibit 3) that will be attached as a cover sheet to all of the Evaluation Reports and Subject Matter Expert Worksheets. The PM must include sufficient rationale to support his or her funding decisions to the SRO. For each recommended proposal, the PM must include a short statement describing the rationale for funding that particular proposal. If the PM is recommending partial funding, he or she must include sufficient rationale to support why only part of the work is recommended. Cutting and pasting the same rationale for every recommended proposal and just changing the performer name is insufficient (see sample language in the guidance in Appendix 3). The resultant recommendation package and all of the selectable proposals shall be made available to the SRO for his or her review and concurrence. In accordance with DI 66, should any proposals involving Human Subjects Research be recommended, the PM must inform the SRO.

3.C. SRO Review and Concurrence. The PM must conduct a live briefing with the SRO and the CO regarding the overall scientific review and his or her specific award recommendations. A read-ahead package consisting of all the review documents must be provided to the SRO and CO prior to the briefing with adequate time for its review. A pre-briefing with the CO is encouraged.

3.C.1. The SRO will review the recommendation package to ensure the PM has adequately justified and documented the rationale for selecting proposals for award. The SRO may review any of the proposals and may also request any additional information necessary for him or her to make the funding decision. Should the SRO take exception to the documentation or recommendations included in the recommendation package, he or she will discuss his or her concerns with the PM.

3.C.2. As a result of this discussion, any of the following actions may occur:

(1) The SRO may withdraw his or her concerns and approve the recommended proposals for funding.

(2) The PM may modify the recommendation package in accordance with the SRO's concerns and resubmit it to the SRO for approval.

(3) The SRO may direct the PM to cancel and reissue the BAA to clarify program objectives.

(4) The SRO may require the PM to re-evaluate one or more proposals.

(5) The SRO may withdraw approval and funding for the program.

(6) In rare circumstances, the SRO may substitute his or her funding selection decision for the PM's recommendations.

3.C.3. The SRO must document in writing the substantive rationale supporting his or her decision. A single, concise memo signed by the SRO addressing the SRO's independent review of the materials and his or her decision to concur or non-concur with the PM's recommendations will be attached to the review documents before the package is forwarded to the CO for negotiation and award (see example in Appendix 1). The SRO's final concurrence is indicated by his or her signature on the PR/MIPR for each proposal, indicating that funds are available for the effort. In accordance with DI 66, should any proposals involving Human Subjects Research be recommended the SRO must receive approval from the DARPA Human Protection Administrator. *Note: For subsequent PRs/MIPRs once the original ("New Start") awards have been made, the Technical Office Deputy Director with a rank equivalent to SES/SL, the Comptroller or Deputy Comptroller are authorized to sign as "Office Director," in place of the Technical Office Director.*

4. POST-SELECTION ACTIVITIES

4.A. Documentation for CO. The PR/MIPR as well as the proposal, and any other required documentation required by DI 13, "Program Funds, Commitment, and Acquisition Procedures," to be included in the PR/MIPR package will be forwarded to the appropriate CO to facilitate negotiation and award. To protect source selection sensitivity, Evaluation Reports, PM Summary Sheets, and SME Worksheets should be forwarded via encrypted email or in a password-protected email, with the password sent in a separate email.

4.B. Notification to Proposers. The PM shall send letters to the proposers notifying them of their selection/non-selection for award. See sample letters at Exhibit 6. However, when the SRO has selected a proposal for partial funding, notice of this partial selection and a request for revised proposal must be sent by the DARPA/CMO Contracting Officer to the proposer. Note, if the selected proposal involves Human Subjects Research, approval from the DARPA HPA must be received prior to the proposer being notified.

4.C. Informal Feedback Sessions. FAR Part 35 allows for informal feedback sessions with prime proposers after the proposers have been notified of the funding selection decision for their proposal(s). Prior to informal feedback sessions, the proposer must provide the CO with a

planned discussion with the CO prior to the feedback session. In the feedback sessions, the PM and other government representatives may only discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal that is the subject of the feedback session. PMs shall not disclose reviews or reveal information from other proposals submitted against the same BAA. Likewise, the PM shall not discuss how many proposals were received in response to the BAA or how many proposals were selected for funding. The CO shall advise the PM and other government representatives regarding appropriate responses that may be given during an informal feedback session. After the Informal Feedback session has concluded, the PM or the CO will prepare a memorandum which documents the session (e.g., who attended, questions asked and answers given, etc.), if warranted.

4.D. Document Retention. All conforming proposals and formal documentation (see Appendix 1) generated during the Scientific Review Process and selected for award must be retained for 6 years and 3 months after final contract payment, as part of the contract file. All conforming proposals and formal documentation (see Appendix 1) generated during the Scientific Review Process and not selected for award must be transferred to the Support Services Office (SSO)/Records Management and be retained for 6 years and 3 months after notification has been made to the proposer.

4.E. Quarterly Reporting. Once per quarter CMO will provide a randomly selected complete scientific review selection package to the DARPA Deputy Director for his or her review.

Appendix 1

Forms

Exhibit 1: SAMPLE EVALUATION REPORT

(Instructional note: Ensure each criterion from the BAA is included on the Evaluation Report.)

BAA/RA Number: _____

BAA/RA Title: _____

Reviewer Name: _____

Date: _____

Selectable

Non-Selectable

Proposer: _____

Proposal Title: _____

Evaluation Criteria (address strengths and weaknesses in each narrative. Use a continuation sheet as necessary for each criterion.)

1. Overall Scientific and Technical Merit

Narrative Evaluation: _____

2. Potential Contribution and Relevance to DARPA's Mission

Narrative Evaluation: _____

3. Cost Realism

Narrative Evaluation: _____

Source Selection Information – See FAR 2.101 and 3.104

Exhibit 2: SAMPLE SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT WORKSHEET

BAA/RA Number: _____

BAA/RA Title: _____

SME Name: _____ Date: _____

Proposer: _____

Proposal Title: _____

Technical Area: _____

Findings: _____

Source Selection Information – See FAR 2.101 and 3.104

Exhibit 3: SAMPLE PM SUMMARY SHEET

BAA/RA Number: _____

BAA/RA Title: _____

PM Name: _____ Date: _____

Proposer: _____

Proposal Title: _____

I have reviewed the attached proposal and Evaluation Report(s) and find that this proposal merits DARPA funding based on the evaluation criteria included in the BAA. Rationale for this decision is as follows:

PM Signature/Date

Source Selection Information – See FAR 2.101 and 3.104

Exhibit 4: SAMPLE SRO INDEPENDENT REVIEW MEMO

BAA/RA Number: _____

BAA/RA Title: _____

PM Name: _____ Date: _____

I have reviewed the PM's analysis of proposals received in response to the subject BAA as well as conducted my own independent review of proposal documentation. Based on these reviews, I select the following proposals for negotiation:

<LIST ALL SELECTED PROPOSALS BY PROPOSER NAME AND TITLE>

My decision concurs/non-concurs (Circle one) with the recommendation made by the PM. *(If decision non-concurs with PM, SRO must provide an explanation as part of the rationale below.)*

Rationale supporting selection of proposals:

Source Selection Information – See FAR 2.101 and 3.104

Exhibit 5: SAMPLE SCIENTIFIC REVIEW MEMORANDUM

DARPA-BAA/RA-XX-XX

Program Manager (PM): _____

Scientific Review Official (SRO): _____

Delegate PM: _____

Delegate SRO: _____

The following individuals will act as reviewers for the subject BAA/RA as members of the Scientific Review Team

Name:	Organization:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The following individuals will act as subject matter experts (SMEs) for the subject BAA/RA:

Name:	Organization:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Proposed Scientific Review Schedule

Receipt of Proposals	X
Completion of Conflicts of Interest Review	X+3 days
Complete Individual Scientific Reviews	X+18 days
PM Recommendations	X+25 days
SRO Concurrence	X+28 days

PM Signature/Date

SRO Signature/Date

Source Selection Information – See FAR 2.101 and 3.104

Exhibit 6: SAMPLE FORMAT LETTERS 1-6

Sample Letter #1: Advises an organization to submit a full proposal based on the review of its Proposal Abstract and gives advice to the organization to focus on certain items contained in the Proposal Abstract. This letter should be signed by the Program Manager.

<Date>

<Inside Address>

Dear <Proposer> :

This letter is in reference to your abstract titled, "<title>," submitted in response to the Broad Agency Announcement/Research Announcement xx-xx <Program Name> posted on Federal Business Opportunities/Grants.gov on <FedBizOpps/Grants.gov date>, requesting proposal abstracts.

Your abstract was reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth in that announcement. We recommend you submit a full proposal according to the guidelines set forth in the BAA/RA xx-xx. The following feedback is provided to assist in proposal development. The full proposal should focus on: <details of items to be focused upon>.

Thank you for your participation in this announcement. Your efforts in expressing the concepts and plans in your abstract are appreciated.

Sincerely,

<Name>

<DARPA Program Manager>

cc: Contracting Officer, CMO

Sample Letter #2: Advises an organization *not* to submit a full proposal based on the review of its *Proposal Abstract*. This letter must be signed by the Program Manager.

NOTE: All letters must provide feedback to the proposer as to the rationale behind not recommending submission of a full proposal.

<Date>

<Inside Address>

Dear <Proposer> :

This letter is in reference to your abstract titled, "<title>," submitted in response to the Broad Agency Announcement /Research Announcement xx-xx <Program Name> posted on Federal Business Opportunities/Grants.gov on <FedBizOpps/Grants.gov date>, requesting abstracts.

Your abstract was reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth in that announcement. Based on careful review of the abstract, we cannot recommend that you submit a full proposal for the following reasons: <Provide feedback to the proposer regarding the rationale for the decision not to recommend a full proposal be submitted>.

If you decide to submit a full proposal, the proposal should be submitted according to the guidelines set forth in the BAA xx-xx.

Thank you for your participation in this announcement. Your efforts in expressing the concepts and plans in your abstract are appreciated. DARPA encourages your participation in future programs.

Sincerely,

<Name>

<DARPA Program Manager>

cc: Contracting Officer, CMO

Sample Letter #3: Informs an organization its Proposal is *selected* for negotiations.

<Date>

<Inside Address>

Dear <Proposer> :

This letter is in reference to your proposal titled, "<title>," submitted in response to the Broad Agency Announcement/Research Announcement xx-xx <Program Name> posted on Federal Business Opportunities/Grants.gov on <FedBizOpps/Grants.gov date>.

Your proposal was reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth in that announcement. I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been selected for negotiation for a potential contract award. A government agent will contact you in the near future to start the contracting process. Please note that should the negotiating parties not be able to come to terms, DARPA is not required to make a contract award. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (703) 696-xxxx, or contact me by e-mail at xxxx@darpa.mil. This letter is not a notice of award or an authorization to incur costs.

Thank you for your participation in this announcement. I look forward to working with you on your exciting project.

Sincerely,

<Name>

<DARPA Job Title>

cc:

Contracting

Officer,

CMO

Sample Letter #4: Informs an organization that its Proposal is *selected in part*.

<Date>

<Inside Address>

Dear <Proposer>:

This letter is in reference to your proposal titled, "<title>," submitted in response to the Broad Agency Announcement/Research Announcement xx-xx <Program Name> posted on Federal Business Opportunities/Grants.gov on <FedBizOpps/Grants.gov date>.

Your proposal was reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth in that announcement. I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been selected for negotiation of a potential contract award based upon a proposed modification to your statement of work as follows: <details of partial funding>. Please submit a revised proposal to recognize this reduced scope to the attention of the undersigned by <Insert date>. Please note that should the negotiating parties not be able to come to terms, DARPA is not required to make a contract award. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (703) 696-xxxx, or contact me by e-mail at xxx@darpa.mil. This letter is not a notice of award or an authorization to incur costs.

Sincerely,

<Name>

Contracting Officer

DARPA PM

Sample Letter #5: Informs an organization that its Proposal is not selected for funding.

<Date>

<Inside Address>

Dear <Proposer> :

This letter is in reference to your proposal titled, "<title>," submitted in response to the Broad Agency Announcement/Research Announcement xx-xx <Program Name> posted on Federal Business Opportunities/Grants.gov on <FedBizOpps/Grants.gov date>.

Your proposal was reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth in that announcement. We regret to inform you that your proposal has not been selected for funding.

Thank you for your participation in this announcement. Your efforts in expressing the concepts and plans in your proposal are appreciated. We look forward to your continued participation in future solicitations. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (703) 696-xxxx, or contact me by e-mail at xxxx@darpa.mil.

Sincerely,

<Name>
<DARPA Job Title>

cc: Contracting Officer, CMO

Sample Letter #6: Informs an organization that its Proposal is *nonconforming*.

<Date>

<Inside Address>

Dear <Proposer> :

This letter is in reference to your proposal titled, "<title>," submitted in response to the Broad Agency Announcement/Research Announcement xx-xx <Program Name> posted on Federal Business Opportunities/Grants.gov on <FedBizOpps/Grants.gov date>.

Your proposal was reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth in that announcement. We regret to inform you that your proposal was found to be non-conforming to the requirements in the Broad Agency Announcement and will not be reviewed.

Thank you for your participation in this announcement. Your efforts in expressing the concepts and plans in your proposal are appreciated. We look forward to your continued participation in future solicitations. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (703) 696-xxxx, or contact me by e-mail at xxxx@darpa.mil.

Sincerely,

<Name>
<Contracting Officer>

cc: DARPA PM

Appendix 2

Glossary of Terms

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abstract or White Paper: Under many of its BAA/RAs, DARPA uses a screening-for-relevance factor called “white papers” or “abstracts.” The response to many DARPA BAAs/RAs has been inordinately large, with over a hundred proposals not uncommon. In order to keep the job of evaluation manageable and to spare proposers any undue proposal expense, a BAA/RA may call for submission of short white papers prior to the submission of full proposals. These white papers are reviewed and proposers are either encouraged to submit full proposals or discouraged from further submissions. This white paper phase neither guarantees nor rules out eventual contract award. The full proposal phase is totally open, even to those who were discouraged from submission. There is no minimum required response time for proposers to submit a white paper. Having a white paper phase does not change the requirement for a minimum response time of 45 calendar days for proposal submission. The white paper phase potentially saves time and money for both the evaluators and the proposers, by giving an early indication of the relevance and acceptability of the technical ideas.

Broad Agency Announcement (BAA): The Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) is a solicitation procedure used to obtain proposals for basic and applied research and that part of development not related to the development of a specific system or hardware procurement. Pursuant to FAR, Subpart 6.102, the BAA solicitation procedure is considered a competitive acquisition if the BAA is general in nature identifying areas of research interest, includes criteria for selecting proposals, solicits all capable proposers, and is evaluated using a peer or scientific review. The BAA is described in FAR, Subpart 6.102, and FAR, Subpart 35.016, (Reference (a)). Under FAR, Subpart 35.016, BAAs, unlike Requests for Proposals (RFP) as defined in FAR, Subpart 15.203, do not necessarily require a formal Source Selection Plan. However, either the BAA or the BAA together with supporting documentation must describe the agency’s research interest, the criteria for selecting the proposals, their relative importance, the method of evaluation, the period of time during which proposals will be accepted, and must contain proposal submission instructions in accordance with FAR Subpart 35.016(b). There are two types of BAAs at DARPA: Program BAAs and Office-wide BAAs.

Program BAAs are issued to solicit proposals for a specific program. While there is no common statement of work for Program BAAs, the Program BAAs seek proposals that address a common problem or issue.

Office-wide BAAs are issued by each technical office within the Agency or by the Agency itself and allow proposers to submit proposals that support the mission of the technical office or the broader Agency mission.

Conforming Proposal: Proposals that comply with the requirements of the BAA or RA will be considered conforming. Conforming proposals will be evaluated. The PM may solicit input from the Reviewers and GC, as appropriate, and will coordinate with the CO who will make the determination as to whether a proposal is nonconforming.

Contracting Officer (CO): The Contracting Officer is the person with the authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts and make related determinations and findings. The DARPA Contracts Management Office (CMO) may or may not be the contracting agent. Therefore, for purposes of this Instruction, CO refers to a member of the CMO staff unless reference is expressly made to the CO being a contracting agent. For grants and agreements, the CO will be referred to as the Grants Officer or Agreements Officer, respectively.

Nonconforming Proposal: Proposals that do not comply with the requirements of the BAA or RA will be considered nonconforming. The CO will determine if proposals are nonconforming and inform proposers via letter if their proposal has been deemed nonconforming. A sample letter is provided in Appendix 1, Exhibit 5, Sample Letter #6. The PM may solicit input from the Reviewers and GC, as appropriate, and will coordinate with the CO who will make these determinations.

Not Selectable: A proposal is considered not selectable when the proposal has been evaluated by the Reviewers against the evaluation criteria listed in the BAA or RA, and the positive aspects of the overall proposal do not outweigh its negative aspects, and there are deficiencies or accumulated weaknesses that would require extensive negotiations and/or a resubmitted proposal.

Program Manager (PM): The PM designates which proposals should be recommended for funding based on the review conducted by the Reviewers and SMEs. The PM is responsible for drafting the BAA or RA and reviewing the final BAA or RA as part of the routing chain. The PM must also draft the SRM and name the Reviewers and SMEs prior to the commencing of reviews. After naming the Reviewers and SMEs and receiving proposals, the PM will be responsible for ensuring there are no conflicts of interest. In the event of a conflict involving the PM, the SRO will name a Delegate PM. The PM will review white papers and abstracts as they are received and notify the proposer as to whether or not a full proposal should be submitted. The PM will also participate in any informal feedback sessions for proposers not selected for award.

Research Announcement (RA): A Research Announcement (RA) is a competitive solicitation for research efforts when only assistance instruments are the contemplated award type. At DARPA, an RA is similar to a BAA and evaluated under the same procedures as a BAA, as detailed in Chapter 1, "Guide to BAAs and RAs." Under an RA, only non-procurement instruments or assistance-related instruments (i.e., grants, cooperative agreements, and TIAs) may be awarded.

Reviewers: Every reviewer must be a federal government employee. Reviewers shall review every conforming proposal received in response to a BAA or RA and assigned to them by the PM in accordance with the evaluation criteria in the published BAA or RA. Reviewers may be DARPA PMs and/or qualified personnel from other DoD organizations and government agencies who are deemed proficient in the pertinent technical area(s) of the solicitation.

Scientific Review Official (SRO): The Technical Office Director will usually function as the Scientific Review Official, unless there is a Conflict of Interest that precludes the Office Director from taking on this role, in which case the SRO names a delegate. The SRO will review all BAA and RA selection documentation and ensure that they adequately match DARPA's needs and mission requirements, as well as relevant agency policy. The SRO will draft a memo summarizing their independent review of the materials and his or her decision to concur or non-concur with the PM's recommendations. The SRO also signs the Purchase Requests/Military Interdepartmental Purchase Requests for proposals receiving funding.

Scientific Review Process: The process whereby proposals submitted against DARPA BAAs or RAs are reviewed and selected for potential award.

Selectable: A selectable proposal is a proposal that has been evaluated by the Reviewers against the evaluation criteria listed in the BAA or RA, and the positive aspects of the overall proposal outweigh its negative aspects, and there are no deficiencies or accumulated weaknesses that would require extensive negotiations and/or a resubmitted proposal.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs): Subject Matter Experts review only portions of proposals assigned to them by the PM based on their area of expertise. The SME's findings will be documents in the Subject Matter Expert Worksheet.

Appendix 3

Scientific Review Narratives

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW NARRATIVES

Procedures for scientific review are detailed in Section 3 of the Guide to Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs) and Research Announcements (RAs) (i.e. "BAA Guide"). All scientific reviews are based on the evaluation criteria as published in each individual BAA. According to DARPA Instruction (DI) 20, each DARPA BAA must contain at least three required evaluation criteria: Overall Scientific and Technical Merit; Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission; and Cost Realism. The Program Manager (PM), in consultation with the Contracting Officer (CO), may include other evaluation criteria in the BAA as necessary and appropriate.

As detailed in the BAA Guide, each reviewer must complete an Evaluation Report for each conforming proposal assigned. For each evaluation criterion in the BAA, the Report must contain a detailed and substantive narrative describing the Reviewer's findings which will ultimately support his or her selectability determination. These findings should be stated in the form of "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" in relation to each criterion and should reflect the Reviewer's expert judgment of the proposal. It is important that these findings reference details in the proposal to enable the PM to ultimately defend the recommendation to the Scientific Review Official (SRO), as well as explain the rationale in informal feedback sessions with unsuccessful proposers and potentially in response to audit or protest.

It is important to remember that every BAA is different and there is no rule about how long or complex the narrative descriptions must be. A good rule of thumb, however, is that they should be written such that the reader is able to recognize and understand the opinion of the Reviewer without having to read the proposal in depth. Also the narratives should be thorough enough to provide sufficient detail to defend the decision to unsuccessful proposers or oversight agencies. While it is difficult to provide sample narratives or a template that would work well for all BAAs, some examples of both good and bad narrative practices have been provided below as guidance.

- Each Evaluation Report requires the Reviewer to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of each evaluation criterion against each proposal. On occasion, a proposal will not have an identified strength or weakness for a particular criterion. This is an acceptable opinion; however, writing nothing in the appropriate section on the Evaluation Report is not appropriate. Silence or lack of a statement implies that the Reviewer ignored or skipped that section. Every section should contain a narrative, even if that narrative is as simple as "The proposal had no strengths in this area."
- Certain words used without further explanation do not provide enough detail to support the review.
 - Use of adjectival descriptions such as "Good," "Excellent," "Fair," or "Poor" are a good starting point but need more detail to explain what specifically about the proposal justified this opinion. However, Reviewers should not substitute a scoring scale (including an adjectival or numerical scale) of their own in lieu of providing a narrative for each criterion that clearly calls out the strengths and weaknesses the proposal contains.

- Certain words are too generic or open to interpretation to stand alone. These terms include, but are not limited to, “(in)adequate,” “(un)reasonable,” “(ir)relevant,” “(un)satisfactory,” “(in)significant,” and “(un)realistic.” More detail referencing specific content within the proposal is necessary to explain why the Reviewer believes this was a positive or negative review point.
- It is not enough to just restate the evaluation criteria as the narrative. For instance, if the evaluation criterion is the “Potential Contribution and Relevance to the DARPA Mission,” a narrative that states “This effort is extremely relevant and will make a significant contribution to the DARPA mission” is not detailed enough. How is it relevant and to what mission objective? Why does the Reviewer believe, not only would the Proposer make a contribution to DARPA’s objectives, but that the contribution would be significant? Significant in what way?
- Subjective opinions in a review are not only acceptable but encouraged. However, these opinions must be supported by specific details from the proposal. For instance, stating “Proposers have plans and a proven track record that points to successful transition of the technology they are developing” does not contain enough supporting information. What are the plans and what gives the Reviewer confidence that they will be successful? How is their track record proven? What information have they provided that will support that conclusion? Why does the Reviewer believe that the transition efforts will be successful?
- Merely stating the proposal is strong in a certain area or weak in another is not sufficient. Point to specific details from the proposal that were relied on to form that opinion. Copying or restating language from the proposal itself is not enough. The narrative should also include the value judgment of the Reviewer regarding the completeness, credibility and feasibility of the proposed approach.
- For each strength and weakness comment created, Reviewers should include the corresponding page from the proposal where the necessary supporting information was found. Not only will this make future discussions with other Reviewers, the PM or the SRO easier if the review is questioned, it will also facilitate the informal feedback sessions with unsuccessful proposers. Being able to point to specific language in their own proposal often diffuses any challenges (or a potential protest) from an unsuccessful proposer as well as showing the Reviewers performed a fair and complete review of the proposal.
- It is critical that each Reviewer complete a narrative for each evaluation criterion for each proposal. Reviewers can only consider the criteria published in the BAA when reviewing a proposal and can only consider the information that is contained in the proposal. Ignoring a criterion, evaluating a criterion that was not in the BAA, or considering information that is not contained in the proposal may result in a protest being sustained.
- Each proposal should receive an individualized review tailored to the information contained in the proposal. It is not appropriate, for instance, to utilize the following language in reviewing one proposal – “[Proposer’s name] has proposed work that is of value to the DARPA mission. [Proposer’s name] has demonstrated they have the subject matter expertise and resources to successfully complete the work

proposed” – and then utilize the exact same language for the other proposals with just the contractor’s name changed. Not only is the language too vague and generic to support a funding decision, such a practice shows a detailed and tailored evaluation of each proposal was not completed.

While it is critical that each Reviewer provide the necessary detail on their Evaluation Reports, it is equally important that PMs should consider the guidance above when crafting a detailed narrative to support their funding recommendations. It is especially important that the PM provide a statement if he or she decides to override a Reviewer’s rationale or if he or she decides not to fund a proposal that has been determined to be otherwise selectable (e.g., all Reviewers deemed it as such). When overriding a Reviewer’s rationale, the PM should include specific proposal information or an argument supported by his or her own opinion or expertise to justify the decision. When explaining why a selectable proposal was not funded, the rationale can be based on practical concerns. Examples could include statements such as “With limited funding, selections were limited to those proposals with the greatest chance of success or the most likely technological advancement. While this proposal was feasible, [the inherent risk factors made accomplishment of the objectives a concern] [the associate cost/benefit consideration did not make it a credible option] [it was a duplicative approach and the chance of success was questionable].” There are any number of acceptable statements that could be created but PMs and Reviewers should be careful not to include statements that would appear as though they directly compared proposals in making their funding determination.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that there is no “right” way to craft these narratives and each BAA will have its own criteria and issues. The examples given above are intended to give Reviewers and PMs insight into the general concepts but are not intended to be used as form language or repeated verbatim. BAA evaluations are very subjective and are intended to allow Reviewers to use their unique expertise and value judgment in creating their opinions. Each BAA should be approached with a fresh eye and the length and complexity of the narrative statements will vary accordingly. It is critical to keep in mind that the length of the narrative is not nearly as important as the content. Being clear, concise and brief is preferred as long as the argument is made with some specificity and clarity.