

Disruption Opportunity
DARPA-PA-25-07-06
Selective Harnessing of Intrinsic Neuroplasticity Engineering (SHINE)

I. Opportunity Description

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Defense Sciences Office (DSO) is issuing a Disruption Opportunity (DO), inviting submissions of innovative basic or applied research concepts in the technical domain of targeted neuroplasticity. This DO is issued under the Program Announcement for Disruptioneering, DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1. All awards will be made in the form of an Other Transaction (OT) for Prototype Agreement. The total award value for this DO is limited to \$2,000,000 per award. This total award value includes Government funding and performer cost share if required or proposed.

To view the DARPA Program Announcement (PA) for Disruptioneering, visit SAM.gov under solicitation number DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1:

<https://sam.gov/opp/af580f92ade44eb997a3c47ba74888f5/view>

Important Dates (All Times are Eastern Time Zone (ET)):

- DO Information Session (DARPA-SN-26-111): August 25, 2026
- DO Posting Date: August 28, 2026
- Question Submittal Closes: October 2, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.
- Proposal Due Date: October 9, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.
- Planned Program Start Date: January 2027

A. Introduction

The adult brain retains a remarkable capacity for structural and functional adaptation through neuroplasticity. Pharmacologic agents, neuromodulation technologies, and behavioral interventions have demonstrated that this capacity can be substantially enhanced, enabling recovery from injury, modification of maladaptive behaviors, and restoration of neurological function. Despite these advances, one fundamental limitation remains: we cannot fully determine the control and specify the neuroplasticity.

Current approaches increase the brain's capacity for adaptive change broadly rather than selectively. Whether induced through pharmacologic agents, electrical stimulation, focused ultrasound, or behavioral interventions, neuroplasticity is generally engaged across large portions of the nervous system, exposing neural circuits well beyond the intended therapeutic target. This lack of spatial precision limits therapeutic efficacy, narrows dosing windows, and introduces unintended remodeling of healthy circuitry.

The central hypothesis of this effort is that spatially and temporally confined induction of neuroplasticity will substantially improve the therapeutic index of neuroplastic interventions by increasing adaptive remodeling within intended neural substrates while minimizing off-target plasticity. This program seeks to establish the technical feasibility of this hypothesis and provide the foundational capability for future precision neuroplasticity technologies. Rather than globally increasing plasticity, future technologies should create localized, controllable windows of adaptive change that can be engaged with spatial and temporal precision while preserving surrounding circuitry.

SHINE seeks technologies capable of establishing circuit-selective neuroplasticity through innovative approaches that spatially localize plasticity-inducing biological signals. Because achieving this transformative capability requires both near-term clinical solutions and long-term paradigm shifts, SHINE equally prioritizes two technical avenues for targeted neuroplasticity interventions: accelerated transition and foundational technology development.

Proposed solutions may integrate advances in molecular engineering, precision delivery, biomaterials, neuromodulation, synthetic biology, cellular engineering, or other novel strategies that confine adaptive

remodeling to defined neural substrates. The objective is to establish a new technological capability, whether through state-of-the-art clinical hardware or ground-up molecular engineering, in which neuroplasticity itself becomes a controllable, circuit-selective biological process.

B. Objective/Technical Scope

SHINE is a focused, 18-month project to design, develop, and demonstrate functional biological, chemical, or physical prototype systems capable of inducing circuit-selective neuroplasticity. The program seeks to determine whether adaptive neuroplasticity can be selectively induced within predefined neural substrates while minimizing comparable effects in nontarget tissue. Successful demonstration of this capability will establish the foundational engineering basis for future programs aimed at precise control of adaptive brain remodeling.

SHINE is intentionally scoped as a proof-of-concept effort rather than a comprehensive neuroplasticity program. The objective is not to maximize neuroplasticity or demonstrate durable circuit remodeling, behavioral recovery, or clinical efficacy. Instead, the program is designed to overcome a single critical technical risk: determine if adaptive neuroplasticity can be induced with sufficient selectivity to preferentially modify intended neural substrates while limiting off-target remodeling. Long-term measures of synaptic stability, behavioral outcomes, and persistent circuit reorganization are outside the scope of this effort.

SHINE seeks enabling methodologies capable of inducing highly specific and adaptive neuroplasticity. Proposed approaches may employ pharmacologic, biologic, biomaterial, cellular, physical, behavioral, neuromodulatory, or hybrid interventions. Technologies that achieve selectivity through regional targeting, cell-specific engagement, activity-dependent gating, state-dependent activation, precision neuromodulation, or other innovative mechanisms are all within scope. The emphasis of the program is not on the intervention itself, but on demonstrating selective induction of adaptive neuroplasticity.

To accelerate capability maturation while encouraging disruptive innovation, SHINE pursues two complementary technical tracks that target the same technical objective using technologies at different stages of development.

Track A – Accelerated Translation

Track A is intended for the design, assembly, and integration of clinical-ready prototype systems with a credible pathway toward human application. The delivered prototype must consist of an integrated intervention system combining therapeutics, biologics, devices, physical modalities, behavioral interventions, or combination approaches with existing human safety data or established regulatory pathways. Performers will demonstrate and validate this integrated prototype system in clinical populations or translationally relevant animal models to quantitatively confirm the selective induction of adaptive neuroplasticity, culminating in a prototype package suitable for future clinical evaluation.

Track B – Foundational Technology Development

Track B is intended for high-risk, high-payoff design and laboratory-scale synthesis of novel, proof-of-concept prototype platforms that establish fundamentally new approaches for selectively inducing adaptive neuroplasticity. The delivered prototype may include novel biologics, engineered cellular systems, biomaterials, synthetic biology, precision neuromodulation, behavioral paradigms, or other enabling technologies. Performers may construct and evaluate these prototypes in vitro or in preclinical animal models, but should establish proof-of-concept and demonstrate a credible pathway to imminent or ongoing animal trials for proof of discovery as compared to positive control.

C. Structure

Submissions in response to this DO must be unclassified. This program is designed to be one continuous phase for an 18-month period of performance. Each proposal must address either Track A or Track B. Proposers wishing to propose to both Tracks must do so in separate, independent submissions, and be prepared to work on both tracks simultaneously if selected for both. Total proposal price is limited to \$2,000,000 per award. This total award value includes Government funding and performer cost share, if required or if proposed.

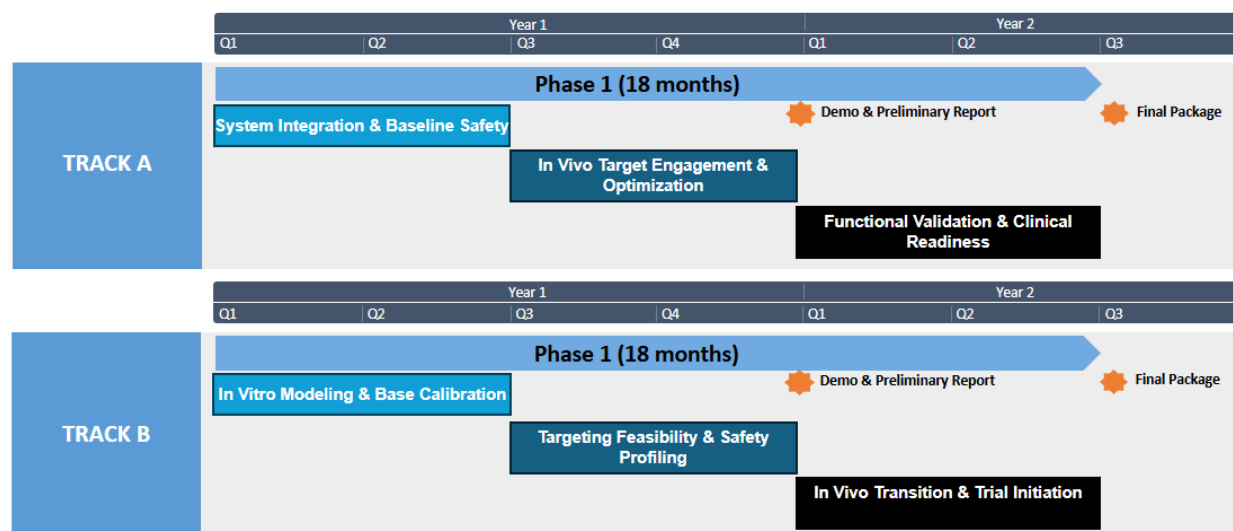


Table 2: SHINE Program Schedule

Both Track A and Track B operate on a synchronized 18-month timeline and share the same core evaluation milestones, including a site visit at Month 8-10 and a final transition package at Month 18. While performers in both tracks are expected to progress through technical risk-reduction at a similar rate, their specific workflows reflect different starting maturities and end-point expectations. Specifically, Track A projects begin with translationally mature technologies and must culminate in the imminent ability for clinical trials. Track B projects begin with foundational, high-risk concepts and must culminate in technology ready for imminent (or ongoing) animal testing.

D. Detailed Technical Description

Proposals shall present a scientifically rigorous technical approach to demonstrate the feasibility of selectively inducing adaptive neuroplasticity within predefined cell-type, region or circuit in the brain.

At a minimum, proposals must include:

- Identification of the intended brain region, cellular population, or functional circuit and the scientific rationale for target selection.
- Identification of a plausible positive control(s) for comparison in targeted vs non-targeted approach to evaluate intervention specificity.
- A description of the proposed intervention and the mechanism by which selective induction of adaptive neuroplasticity will be achieved.
- A quantitative experimental strategy demonstrating how intervention selectivity, biological target engagement, and selective neuroplasticity will be assessed.
- Quantitative success criteria for each stage of the proposed technical demonstration.
- A discussion of technical risks and proposed risk mitigation strategies.
- Clearly outlined description of the intervention prototype, as defined in Section B Objective/Technical Scope

The proposed technical approach shall establish a clear chain of evidence demonstrating:

1. **Intervention Selectivity** – The proposed intervention preferentially influences the intended neural substrate, where appropriate to the proposed mechanism.
2. **Biological Target Engagement** – The intended biological mechanism is selectively engaged within the target relative to appropriate nontarget controls.
3. **Selective Neuroplasticity** – The intervention produces greater adaptive neuroplasticity within the intended neural target region as compared to a positive control intervention.

The methods and experimental models used to demonstrate each objective shall be appropriate to the proposed technology and biological mechanism. Quantitative endpoints may include molecular, cellular, structural, electrophysiological, imaging, functional, behavioral, or other scientifically justified measures. SHINE does not prescribe specific biomarkers or assays; however, proposers shall justify how the selected endpoints demonstrate selective induction of adaptive neuroplasticity.

While in vitro, animal, and human research models are all permitted under SHINE, proposed research models must comply with the specific constraints of Track A or Track B. Proposers must clearly justify their choice of model and its capacity to demonstrate neuroplasticity in existing neural circuits that have not experienced severe cellular loss. For example, whenever technically appropriate, proposals shall include comparator groups, such as systemic or nonlocalized interventions, sham controls, inactive controls, or current standard approaches, to determine whether the proposed strategy improves the selectivity of the neuroplastic response.

Finally, proposals must include sufficient quantitative justification to support technical feasibility. Supporting evidence may include preliminary experimental data, published literature, theoretical analyses, computational modeling, first-order engineering calculations, or other scientifically rigorous evidence demonstrating a reasonable likelihood of achieving the proposed technical objectives.

Exclusion criteria: To ensure the program remains focused on the foundational capability of selective neuroplasticity induction, the following approaches and research areas are considered out of scope for the SHINE program:

- Non-Targeted Systemic Drug Discovery. Efforts focused on screening or optimizing systemic drugs where the agent acts globally.
- Isolated Physical Neuromodulation: The use of physical or electromagnetic modalities in isolation (e.g., standard transcranial magnetic stimulation, focused ultrasound, or transcranial electrical stimulation with temporal interference). While high-resolution physical targeting may be utilized as a delivery or activation mechanism, relying solely on the physical energy itself to drive targeted neuroplasticity without coupled biological or pharmacological mechanism, is out of scope.
- Solely Behavioral/Cognitive Therapies. Standard behavioral therapies (e.g., exposure therapy, cognitive training) used in isolation.
- Invasive Surgical Implants. Approaches requiring craniotomies or the permanent implantation of depth electrodes (e.g., traditional Deep Brain Stimulation hardware), as the program prioritizes non-invasive or minimally invasive targeting.
- Hardware-Only Iteration. Device engineering efforts that lack a robust experimental plan to biologically validate the induction of targeted neuroplasticity.
- Severe injury or disease models or populations where there is significant neuronal and/or cellular loss.

E. Milestones and Deliverables

Proposers must address the following fixed payable milestones in their proposals; these milestones apply to both Track A and Track B. Proposers must complete the “Schedule of Milestones and Payments” tab of the Streamlined Cost Buildup Workbook provided with this DO to fulfill the requirements under Volume 2, Price Volume. If selected for award negotiation, the fixed payable milestones provided will be directly incorporated into Attachment 3 of the OT agreement (“Schedule of Milestones and Payments”).

The month 9 milestone represents a planned program evaluation point to assess performer progress towards phase 1 metrics and target engagement to this point. This milestone evaluation, which will be informed by technical data and site visit demonstrations, will serve as a key decision point for continued performance. While this milestone is a structured opportunity for assessment, the Government reserves the right to make programmatic adjustments, including the restructuring or termination of agreements, at any time. Proposers must use the Task Description Document (TDD) template provided with the Program Announcement DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1, which will be Attachment 1 of the OT agreement.

The fixed milestones for this program must include, at a minimum, the below five (5) milestones, (for both Track A and Track B). Should the Proposer want to propose additional milestones, they must revise Attachment 1 (TDD) and the Schedule of Milestones and Payments tab in the Streamlined Cost Buildup Workbook to include the additional Milestones for consideration.

Month	Milestone	Required Demonstration
3	Experimental Baseline & Validation Protocol	Finalize experimental design; identify intended neural target(s) and predefined nontarget control(s); establish quantitative validation strategy, success criteria, and comparator(s); obtain regulatory approvals as appropriate; complete baseline characterization.
6	Selective Substrate Localization	Complete initial testing and deliver a quantitative dataset and analysis evaluating the localization, confinement, or activation of the intervention within predefined neural substrates relative to appropriate controls.
9	Localized Target Engagement Verification	Perform target engagement assays, deliver the associated dataset analyzing and quantifying biological mechanism activation within targeted substrates using molecular, physiological, imaging, or functional biomarkers. Progress towards the final metrics must be quantifiably demonstrated with statistically significant changes found in target engagement.
12	Circuit-Selective Neuroplasticity Demonstration	Complete comparative evaluations of the neuroplastic response within predefined target substrates relative to nontarget substrates and submit a Preliminary Report along with the comparative experimental dataset.
18	Intervention Prototype Finalization	Deliver the fully integrated, validated intervention prototype (comprising physical hardware, biological constructs, or therapeutic delivery platforms) along with the execution of complete end-to-end intervention prototype validation testing across the full chain of evidence (selectivity, target engagement, and neuroplasticity). Delivery should include 1. The prototype assembly (or certified laboratory configuration specifications), 2. A final prototype technical data package detailing the system’s performance metrics, and 3. An end-to-end validation report demonstrating the prototype’s capability to meet program goals of either A) clinical trial readiness or B) animal testing capability.

For planning and budgetary purposes, Proposers should assume a program start in January 2027.

All proposals must include the following meetings and travel in the proposed schedule and costs:

- To foster collaboration between teams and disseminate program developments, a two-day virtual Principal Investigator (PI) meeting will be held at approximately Month 9.
- Regular teleconference meetings will be scheduled with the Government team for progress reporting and problem identification and mitigation.
- Proposers must anticipate hosting one site visit by the DARPA Program Manager at approximately Month 8-10 to execute an in-person technical demonstration of progress towards milestones.
- Conference and publication costs should not be included.

F. Metrics

The metrics outlined in the following table establish the quantitative thresholds required to successfully demonstrate circuit-selective neuroplasticity. Rather than driving diffuse biological effects, proposed solutions must prove spatial confinement, localized mechanistic activation, and measurable structural or functional tissue remodeling with statistical reproducibility.

Metric	SHINE Target	Track A – Specific	Track B – Specific
Intervention Selectivity	3:1 Ratio (Target vs. Off-Target)	<i>In vivo</i> : $\geq 80\%$ targeted delivery, $\leq 10\%$ off-target dispersion	<i>In vitro</i> / preclinical: $\geq 90\%$ spatial containment
Biological Target Engagement	≥ 2 -fold increase ($\leq 20\%$ off-target variance)	Statistically significant change on mechanistic and clinical biomarkers, $p \leq 0.01$	Statistically significant change on mechanistic pathway or region markers, $p \leq 0.01$
Quantifiable change in Neuroplasticity	Demonstrate effects of neuroplasticity with effect size > 0.6	Plasticity consistently persists with quantitative proof in vivo	Proof-of-concept: Acute plasticity (≥ 72 hours)
Transition Readiness	$N \geq 3$ cohorts / comparators	Therapeutic Index ≥ 5 , roadmap to clinical use	In vivo maturation plan

While all proposed solutions must achieve the universal biological baselines for targeting ($\geq 3:1$ ratio), pathway activation (≥ 2 -fold increase), and remodeling ($\geq 25\%$ increase), the track-specific metrics are calibrated to address two distinct engineering and translational hurdles.

- Track A: Metrics for this track are calibrated to de-risk immediate clinical viability. The in vivo delivery requirements combined with a Therapeutic Index ≥ 5 ensure the intervention can overcome systemic clearance mechanisms (e.g., the blood-brain barrier) without causing off-target toxicity. The mandate for quantitative clinical and mechanistic biomarkers (e.g., fMRI, PET) ensures foundation for clinical transition in the future. The roadmap to clinical use must include a drafted IRB submission for an immediate follow-on study.
- Track B: Metrics for this track prioritize the rigorous validation of novel targeting physics or de novo molecular gating. The stricter spatial containment threshold ($> 90\%$) is required to definitively prove the fundamental selectivity of the mechanism within a controlled in vitro or early preclinical system. By allowing for mechanistic biomarkers and acute 72-hour endpoints, the criteria enable performers to rapidly confirm that the intended molecular cascades and initial synaptic protein synthesis have been successfully triggered, proving the foundational concept works before scaling to complex in vivo safety models. The in vivo maturation plan is meant to describe a clear and feasible path of the proof-of-concept technology towards eventual first-in-human studies.

To successfully meet these criteria, regardless of the chosen track, proposers must explicitly define their baseline measurements, establish sham or inactive controls, and utilize robust statistical powering to validate all claimed ratios, fold-changes, and variances. Proposers must clearly justify in their proposals how their selected endpoints, assays, and experimental models will accurately and reliably measure against these track-specific quantitative expectations. Experimental models must be clearly defined, justified, and appropriate for each Track. Human subject research (HSR) is allowed in Track A. Animal subject research (ASR) is allowed in both Track A and B. Preclinical in vitro models (such as cellular and organoid models) are allowed in Track B if the proposers can justify a credible pathway toward future in vivo validation.

Proposals involving human subjects or animals in the proposed research should briefly describe plans and the expected timeline for obtaining the appropriate regulatory approvals, detailed at <https://www.darpa.mil/policies/human-animal-research>. All DARPA funded Human Subjects Research (HSR) must be first reviewed and approved by a local Institutional Review Board (IRB) and again reviewed and approved by a DoW Headquarters Level Office (Human Research Protection Office, HRPO). **Proposer must verify in their technical proposal that their protocol has been submitted to their local IRB (for HSR) or IACUC (for Animal Use) as appropriate for their chosen testing model and prior to proposal submission.** DARPA funding cannot be used toward HSR until all approvals are granted. Similarly, all DARPA funded Animal Subject Research must be reviewed and approved by a local Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and a DoW veterinarian at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command (USAMRDC) Animal Care and Use Review Office (ACURO).

II. Award Information

Selected proposals that are successfully negotiated will result in the award of an OT for Prototype Agreement. See Section 4 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1 for information on awards that may result from proposals submitted in response to this announcement.

Proposers must review the “Disruptioneering –Other Transaction for Prototype Agreement SAMPLE” (DO OT Sample) for Prototype agreement provided as an attachment to DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1 prior to submitting a proposal. DARPA has provided the DO OT Sample to expedite the negotiation and award process and ensure DARPA achieves the goal of Disruptioneering, which is to enable DARPA to initiate a new investment in less than 120 calendar days from idea inception. The DO OT Sample is representative of the terms and conditions that DARPA intends to include in all DO awards. The TDD, schedule of milestones and payments, and data rights assertions requested under Volumes 1, 2, and 3 will be included as attachments to the OT agreement upon negotiation and award.

Proposers may suggest edits to the DO OT Sample for consideration by DARPA and provide a copy of the DO OT Sample with track changes as part of their proposal package. DARPA may or may not accept suggested edits. The Government reserves the right to remove a proposal from award consideration should the parties fail to reach an agreement on OT award terms and conditions. If edits to the DO OT Sample are not provided as part of the proposal package, DARPA assumes that the proposer has reviewed and accepted the award terms and conditions to which they may have to adhere and the DO OT Sample agreement provided as an attachment, indicating agreement (in principle) with the listed terms and conditions applicable to the specific award instrument.

DARPA’s goal for this DO is to achieve an award by December 11, 2026. To ensure that, DARPA reserves the right to cease negotiations when an award is not executed by both parties (DARPA and the selected proposer) on or before December 11, 2026.

Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification Requirements

As codified in 32 CFR Part 170, the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Program is designed to ensure Department of War (DoW) performers are properly safeguarding Federal Contract Information (FCI) and Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) that is processed, stored, or transmitted on performer information systems. FCI and CUI must be protected to meet evolving threats and safeguard nonpublic, unclassified information that supports and enables the warfighter. The CMMC Program provides a consistent methodology to assess a defense contractor's implementation of required cybersecurity requirements. Proposers are encouraged to visit the DoW Chief Information Officer CMMC Resources & Documentation site for more information on CMMC: <https://dodcio.defense.gov/cmmc/Resources-Documentation/>.

This provision outlines the CMMC requirements pertaining to this solicitation, to include the required CMMC level and the corresponding proposal requirements. All DARPA-awarded Procurement Contracts and Other Transactions, including those involving Fundamental Research, at a minimum require prime performers and subcontractors to demonstrate compliance with CMMC Level 1, which focuses on the protection of FCI and consists of the security requirements that correspond to the 15 basic safeguarding requirements specified in 48 CFR 52.204-21.

A. Required CMMC Level

The required CMMC level for this solicitation is: CMMC Level 1 (Self-Assessment). Level 1 focuses on the protection of FCI and consists of the security requirements that correspond to the 15 basic safeguarding requirements specified in 48 CFR 52.204-21. Additional information can be found in Section 8.2.2 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1.

B. Eligibility for Award

To be eligible for award under this solicitation, the CMMC Unique Identifier (UID) associated with the prime proposer must reflect a current CMMC status (representing either Final or Conditional status) posted in the Supplier Performance Risk System (SPRS) indicating compliance at the required level above. Additionally, the proposer must have a current annual CMMC affirmation, submitted by an authorized Affirming Official, posted in SPRS. Further, as some entities may have multiple business segments, multiple CAGE codes, etc., DARPA must reasonably be able to relate the CMMC UID in SPRS to the proposing entity.

(Note: SPRS is housed within the Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment <https://piee.eb.mil>; an additional resource on SPRS is located here: <https://dodcio.defense.gov/Portals/0/Documents/CMMC/CMMC-SPRS.pdf>)

C. Subcontractor Flow-Down

Prime proposers are responsible for verifying subcontractor compliance. In the proposal, the prime proposer must attest that all subcontractors who will process, store, or transmit FCI or CUI under a resultant award will meet the applicable CMMC level required by 32 CFR § 170.23. The proposal must also describe the verification method the prime proposer will use to ensure subcontractors have the required CMMC status in SPRS prior to subcontract award.

Specifically:

If the Subcontractor will process, store, or transmit...	...the Subcontractor's Minimum Required CMMC Level is:
Federal Contract Information (FCI) only	CMMC Level 1 (Self-Assessment)
Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)	The CMMC Level required by this solicitation

III. Eligibility

Due to their specialized roles and longstanding regulatory relationships with the Government, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), University Affiliated Research Centers (UARC)s, and Government Entities to include National Laboratories present potential conflicts and advantages that would compromise fair and open competition. These entities typically may only receive funding through existing awards they hold with their sponsoring agencies. If these entities are proposed as subawardees, their costs must be clearly segregable in cost proposals. If scientifically merited, DARPA may fund work proposed by these entities with the following caveats:

- FFRDCs: (1) FFRDCs must clearly demonstrate that the proposed work is not otherwise available from the private sector. (2) FFRDCs must provide a letter, on official letterhead from their sponsoring organization, that (a) cites the specific authority establishing their eligibility to propose to Government solicitations and compete with industry, and (b) certifies the FFRDC's compliance with the associated FFRDC sponsor agreement's terms and conditions. DARPA, under this solicitation, will not award separate contracts to FFRDCs as prime or subawardees but will instead leverage their existing sponsors' agreements.
- UARCs: While UARCs typically have statutory authority to compete with industry, internal DARPA policy views them as trusted advisors who are only eligible to act as performers in fields where they do not serve in an advisory role. Even in those situations, DARPA still considers UARCs as having organizational conflicts of interest (OCI) when applying for a performer role. Proposals with UARCs as prime or subawardees must include an OCI mitigation plan.

For this solicitation, DARPA will not establish new contractual agreements for their participation. Accordingly, any proposal submitted directly by these entities in a prime contractor capacity may be deemed non-conforming and not evaluated. Proposals that include a UARC, FFRDC, Government entities, or National Laboratory as a subcontractor may also be deemed non-conforming unless: (1) their role is clearly defined in the technical proposal with a point of contact, and (2) a rough order of magnitude cost is provided in the technical proposal only—cost proposals must exclude their funding, as DARPA will not fund them through the prime. It is important to note that if funded, these organizations will be required to share their work and findings with other performers also supporting the same program. Additionally, DARPA may contact these entities directly to discuss proposed activities.

See Section 7 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1 for additional information on who may be eligible to respond to this announcement.

IV. Disruption Opportunity Responses

A. Proposal Content and Format

All proposals submitted in response to this announcement must comply with the content and format instructions in Section 5 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1. All proposals must use the templates provided as Attachments to DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1 and the "Streamlined Cost Buildup Workbook" Excel Attachment provided with this DO and follow the instructions therein.

As of the date of publication of this opportunity, the Government expects that program goals as described herein may be met by proposers intending to perform fundamental research and does not anticipate applying publication restrictions on research results (i.e., papers, journal articles, etc.) to individual awards for fundamental research that may result from this opportunity.¹ Please see Section 4.2 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1 for details about the Fundamental Research Risk-Based Security

¹ Press Releases announcing awards or previewing the publishing of fundamental research results are not considered to be the results of fundamental research and are subject to publication restrictions.

Review Process (FRRBS).

Information not explicitly requested in DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1, its Attachments, or this announcement may not be evaluated.

B. Submission Instructions

Responses to DARPA-PA-25-07-06 shall be submitted electronically to DARPA's Broad Agency Announcement Tool (BAAT) Portal (<https://baa.darpa.mil>).

DARPA will acknowledge receipt of complete submissions via email and assign identifying numbers that should be used in all further correspondence regarding those submissions. If no confirmation is received within two (2) business days, please contact SHINE@darpa.mil to verify receipt.

When planning a response to this DO, proposers should take into account the submission time zone and that some parts of the submission process may take from one (1) business day to one month to complete (e.g., registering for a SAM Unique Entity ID (UEI) number or Tax Identification Number (TIN)).

Electronic Upload

First-time users of the DARPA BAA Portal must complete a two-step account creation process. The first step consists of registering for an extranet account by going to the URL above and selecting the "Account Request" link. Upon completion of the online form, proposers will receive two separate emails; one will contain a username, and the second will provide a temporary password. Once both emails have been received, the second step requires proposers to go back to the submission website and log in using that username and password. After accessing the extranet, proposers may then create a user account for the DARPA Submission website by selecting the "Register your Organization" link at the top of the page. Once the user account is created, proposers will be able to see a list of solicitations open for submissions, view submission instructions, and upload/finalize their submission.

Proposers who already have an account on the DARPA BAA Portal may log in at <https://baa.darpa.mil>, select this solicitation from the list of open DARPA solicitations and proceed with their submission. Note: proposers who have created a DARPA Submission website account to submit to another DARPA Technical Office's solicitations do not need to create a new account to submit to this solicitation.

All submissions provided electronically through the DARPA Submission website must meet the following requirements: (1) uploaded as a zip file (.zip or .zipx extension); (2) only contain the document(s) requested herein; (3) only contain unclassified information; and (4) must not exceed 100 MB in size. Only one zip file will be accepted per full submission. The DARPA Submission website will reject submissions not uploaded as zip files. Technical support for the DARPA Submission website is available during regular business hours, Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Requests for technical support must be emailed to BAAT_Support@darpa.mil with a copy to SHINE@darpa.mil. Questions regarding submission contents, format, deadlines, etc., should be emailed to SHINE@darpa.mil. Questions/requests for support sent to any other email address may result in delayed/no response.

Since proposers may encounter heavy traffic on the web server, DARPA discourages waiting until the day submissions are due to request an account and/or upload the submission. Note: Proposers submitting via the DARPA Submission site MUST (1) click the "Finalize" button for the submission to upload AND (2) do so with sufficient time for the upload to complete prior to the deadline. Failure to do so will result in a late submission.

C. Proposal Due Date and Time

Proposals in response to this announcement are due no later than 4:00 p.m. EST on October 9, 2026. As described in Section 5 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1, full proposal packages must be submitted per the instructions outlined in this DO *and received by DARPA* no later than the above time and date. Proposals received after this time and date may not be reviewed.

Proposers are warned that the proposal deadline outlined herein is in Eastern Daylight Time and will be strictly enforced. When planning a response to this announcement, proposers should consider that some parts of the submission process may take from one (1) business day to one (1) month to complete.

V. Proposal Evaluation and Selection

Proposals will be evaluated and selected in accordance with Section 6 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1. Proposers will be notified of the results of this process as described in Section 8.1 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1.

VI. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Section 8.2 of DARPA-PA-25-07 Amendment 1 provides information on Administrative and National Policy Requirements that may be applicable for proposal submission and performance under an award.

VII. Point of Contact Information

Robin Bonomi, Program Manager, DARPA/DSO, SHINE@darpa.mil

VIII. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

All technical, contractual, and administrative questions regarding this announcement must be emailed to SHINE@darpa.mil. Emails sent directly to the Program Manager or any other address may result in delayed or no response.

All questions must be in English and must include the name, email address, and telephone number of a point of contact. DARPA will attempt to answer questions publicly in a timely manner; however, questions submitted within seven (7) calendar days of the proposal due date listed herein may not be answered.

DARPA will post an FAQ list under the DO on the DARPA/DSO Opportunities page at (<http://www.darpa.mil/work-with-us/opportunities>). The list will be updated on an ongoing basis until one (1) week before the proposal due date.

For those new to DARPA or national security, DARPA makes available a free, comprehensive resource via DARPAConnect on how to do business with the agency. In addition to DARPA 101 materials, relevant preparatory modules include “Understanding DARPA Broad Agency Announcements.”

Registration and access are free at www.darpaconnect.us.

DSO has been using various solicitation formats to speed award timelines. These include Pitch Days and the accelerated award option for the Office-wide BAA. These are focused, milestone-based contracts designed to reduce negotiations and emphasize the quality of the idea and its potential for disruption over the proposer's ability to write a proposal. The milestone structure, where payment is tied to research execution rather than meeting aggressive metrics, is intended to incentivize ideas with high potential for disruption even if they are riskier. We are seeking feedback regarding these mechanisms from our proposer community. Please consider completing the survey at this link: <https://events.sa-meetings.com/esurvey/126974>