

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON STRONG CYCLE 3 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

QUESTION: Can you clarify this? Proposals from junior investigators (e.g., students, research fellows, and early-career researchers with less than 5 years past reception of their PhD or less than 5 years' experience within the primary field of their organization) are appropriate under this opportunity. Does that exclude senior investigators?

ANSWER: Senior investigators are definitely NOT excluded. We just encourage junior investigators to apply as well. "Building community" involves a focus on the current and future scientists contributing to Army modernization priorities over time.

QUESTION: I am a new PhD working at a small business, am I eligible for applying for the grant on part of the small business.

ANSWER: Yes. As long as the proposed research is fundamental/basic research (6.1), proposers can submit from industry or academia.

QUESTION: For graduate students as applicant, do you have constraint on their nationality?

ANSWER: There are no stated constraints in the funding announcement. This announcement is open to all eligible entities, assuming these entities can meet the requirements of attendance at the Innovation Summit Series, which is part of the evaluation criteria.

QUESTION: Is there any proposal template available we can use?

ANSWER: No specific template outside of the guidance provided in the Cycle 3 Call (FOA).

QUESTION: You mentioned that N agents only, M humans only, and 1 agent-1 human team is not of your interest. Should we assume $N > 1$ and $M > 1$ is the area of interest or $M = 1$ and $N > 1$ is also of interest?

ANSWER: The STRONG program is focused on teamwork in teams of multiple humans and multiple intelligent agents (ultimately heterogeneous agents) working together on interdependent tasks. We understand that pilot or validation efforts of dyads (1 human - 1 agent) may be a component of a specific proposal or part of a collaborative effort, building to more complex team dynamics. Evaluation criteria includes the overall scientific and technical merit with regard to the specific research area to be addressed in the Funding Opportunity Announcement, how the proposal will contribute to the long-term goals of the STRONG program.

QUESTION: How tailored to military teams should these proposals be?

QUESTION: Should the research context be in military? Maybe OK in other contexts of N humans- M agents teaming?

ANSWER: Part of the evaluation criteria is "the long-term relevance of the proposed research and the likelihood the proposed research will address scientific challenges and research barriers facing the Army". Basic Research Funding will be utilized to fund selected proposals, with the goals of developing generalized knowledge, advancing scientific understanding of human agent teaming within multiple contexts. Therefore, the task, teams, and/or scenarios proposed do not have to be military specific. However, according to the evaluation criteria, the likelihood the proposed research will address the scientific challenges and research barriers facing the Army is important.

QUESTION: Would you say that symbiotic adaptation (within Cycle 3) is reflective of response to a dynamic environment (e.g., in-situ adaptation) or symbiotic adaptation with respect to how the agent

responses to different team members (e.g., generalizability across different teams)? Or something completely different.

ANSWER: We are open to creative and novel exploration of symbiotic adaptation to enhance team performance in any form. The need for adaptation can arise from many places, including external sources, internal individual and team dynamics, etc.

QUESTION: For the seedling proposal (in year 1), is it OK to make a team of people from academia (and/or industry), not with Army researchers?

ANSWER: Yes. Collaborations with Army researchers is not expected until the seedling award phase. Knowledge of how your proposed effort might have collaborative potential with internal Army researchers can be included in the proposal, but is not necessary. Army personnel are NOT permitted to offer any individual guidance on a specific proposal.

QUESTION: What proportion of the total effort should the Innovation Summit account for? I suppose I am indirectly trying to get a sense of the scope of the proposed technical effort.

ANSWER: The Innovation Summit will likely account for a larger portion of the proposed effort, particularly if more travel is required. However, a clear technical idea should be proposed, ideally with supporting data/evidence either from prior efforts or pilot data during the seedling Period of Performance. The proposed seedling effort may not exceed \$100,000 (12 month period of performance).

QUESTION: Question regarding whether particular topics are within the scope of the call.

ANSWER: Unfortunately, we cannot review or provide guidance on specific proposals or drafts prior to their official submission. Please refer to the Section 4 (Cycle 3 Updates) within the Funding Opportunity Announcement for specifics on the scope of the STRONG Cycle 3 effort.

QUESTION: I plan to work with an ARL scientist. Could I mention in a proposal that the researcher and I have skill sets that would be synergistic?

ANSWER: Yes. Mentioning potential collaborative partners is permitted. However, ARL scientists will not provide any specific guidance or input on specific proposals and will only engage in collaborative discussions after seedlings are awarded.

QUESTION: The solicitation encourages seedling submissions from junior scholars. If post docs and junior folks from University A lead a seedling and we (senior scientists from University B) are on their team (subawardee on seedling), can the follow-on effort be led by one of the senior members on the seedling team or does the PI on the larger effort HAVE to be a PI (not just a member) on the seedling?"

ANSWER: The prime (university/organization) on the seedling contract will remain the prime on the follow-on award, as follow-ons are awarded by exercising an option on the initial Cooperative Agreement. Subawardees from multiple organizations can be added to the agreement at the time of the follow-on. From the government perspective, we do not foresee constraints on the amount of time allocated to each university/organization and who is technically designated as a Principal Investigator assuming this prime and subawardee structure is maintained.