

STRONG 11-16-2018 Webinar Q & A

1. Do you have a list of ARL participants / collaborators and personnel who will be working with seedling winners?
 - a. We do not have a list – all ARL employees are encouraged to participate as collaborators, but the collaboration will begin after award of the recipients. The CAST website (<https://www.arl.army.mil/cast>), does not currently list individual participants, but does provide more context into the internal research and development activities related to the STRONG program.
2. Is it okay to have senior academic faculty from other universities as consultants on the seedling proposal?
 - a. Yes. Any number of other institutions can be included on the proposal as subrecipients. Just remember that the seedling budgets are small and independent of the number of people or organizations listed on the proposal.
3. May a postdoc who will change academic institute during 2019 submit a proposal?
 - a. It is possible for the cooperative agreement to follow the PI to the new institution.
4. What is the expected budget for the seedling proposals?
 - a. As detailed in the FOA, each seedling budget is expected to fall between \$50-100k, with an absolute maximum of \$150k per seedling. The seedlings are primarily intended to enable the collaborative development of the larger follow-on proposals at the Summer Innovation Summit as noted in the FOA.
5. Are the seedling budgets \$50-100k in direct costs or in total costs?
 - a. Total costs.
6. I noticed that the CAST acronym has changed from Center for Adaptive Soldier Technology to Center for Agent-Soldier Teaming. Is that a pivot or a clarification?
 - a. We renamed and changed the focus of the Center for Adaptive Soldier Technologies to the Center for Agent-Soldier Teaming. The new website and focus was launched in conjunction with the STRONG FOA.
7. Should the seedling proposals be scoped from February through January?
 - a. We expect awards in February - March of 2019. We can only give an estimate at this time, but that is approximately the budget period for the Cycle 1 award which has a period of performance of one year as noted in the FOA.
8. The announcement indicates that profit/fee is not permitted during the Year 1 CA. If option year(s) are awarded, may for-profit firms incorporate fee into the contract?
 - a. The contract mechanism that will be utilized for the Year 1 "Seedling" and the follow-on option is a Cooperative Agreement, which does not allow for a for-profit fee for any

recipients or subrecipients.

9. Should travel expenses for the summer innovation summit be budgeted for in the seedling proposals, or will those expenses be covered separately?
 - a. Travel expenses for the summit should be built into the seedling proposal budget; there is no additional funding for those travel costs. Any cost-saving measures (e.g., lodging, local transport, etc.) for summit-attendance expenses will be publicly announced as they become available, but, for now, just budget based on per diem values.

10. What is meant by “agent?”
 - a. As detailed in the FOA, we expect future teams to be composed of humans as well as distributed sensors, robots, autonomous ground and air vehicles, intelligent assistants, and other advanced technologies that can perform task work as part of the larger team. Hence, an agent is a non-human team member that can perform interdependent task work. We reserve the term technology for those devices, software, protocols, and other interventions that target the members of the team with the goal of improving team processes. It is entirely possible that a technology will both perform task work and provide interventions that target team processes. We use the term technology when referring to its role as assisting in team performance as opposed to satisfying its role in the team (i.e., completing its assigned task work).

11. May non-U.S. organizations apply?
 - a. Yes. Just keep in mind that attendance at the Summer Innovation Summit is required, so plan and budget appropriately if traveling internationally.

12. Are seedling proposals expected to already have interdisciplinary teams from across academia, industry, and government?
 - a. No. The seedling proposals have small budgets that preclude large, cross-spectrum, interdisciplinary teams. Rather, they are intended to foster (e.g., at the Summer Innovation Summit) the collaboration, networking, and knowledge transfer needed to develop successful larger follow-on proposals that may involve such teams.

13. May a multi-organization team apply?
 - a. Yes, with one organization as the Recipient and any others as subrecipient.

14. Are individual researchers able to receive the seedling awards, or is a team required?
 - a. The awards will be granted to individual institutions (universities, companies, etc.) rather than individual people. The PI on the proposal may be the only person on the proposal from the institution – a team of researchers is not required, but is allowed.

15. Will an institution awarded a seedling one year be guaranteed a follow-on proposal or another seedling the next year?
 - a. No. Each seedling cycle is separate, in that a previous seedling recipient would need to reapply each year. Similarly, the follow-on proposals are another separate round of

competition, open to the seedling recipients of that year.

16. In the seedling proposal, how much detail is needed regarding plans for the follow-on proposal?
 - a. In short, none although ensure you address the proposal evaluation criteria. Follow-on proposals will be developed during the course of the seedling proposals. Describing how your proposal fits technically within the larger program and briefly describing a vision for a follow-on is appropriate in a seedling proposal, but not required.
17. Who are the program leaders on this solicitation, and are they the authors of the IEEE article?
 - a. Arwen DeCostanza is the Program Lead. Greg Lieberman is assisting with program execution and will lead the Summer Innovation Summit at ARL Northeast. Many other ARL researchers are, or will be, involved with the STRONG program, including the authors of the IEEE interactive paper.
18. Should an ARL collaborator be listed on the seedling proposal?
 - a. No. ARL personnel are explicitly forbidden from providing any assistance in the development of the seedling proposals that would give a particular applicant an advantage. Collaboration with ARL researchers will begin after the seedling awards.
19. May the seedling proposal specify a particular ARL researcher as a proposed collaborator?
 - a. No. ARL personnel are explicitly forbidden from providing any assistance in the development of the seedling proposals that would give a particular applicant an advantage. Collaboration with ARL researchers will begin after the seedling awards.
20. What does this text in the solicitation, "The project summary must not exceed 3 pages, to include any cover page," mean?
 - a. The project summary is a section of the proposal, as detailed in the announcement. That section has an absolute 3-page limit.
21. Does ITAR come into consideration with this program?
 - a. We don't expect ITAR to come into play, but if it does become relevant at some point down the road, then any Recipients would have to abide by those regulations just as ARL does.
22. Is there any chance to submit proposals without attending the Summer Innovation Summit?
 - a. No. Attendance at the Summer Innovation Summit is a program requirement; however, we are flexible in how that requirement is met. The summit is an opportunity to collaborate and network with relevant parties to develop successful follow-on proposals; it is not a punishment. A plan for attendance should be included in all proposals. We are open to flexible arrangements for how this is accomplished, but plans for participation at the Summer Innovation Summit is part of the rating criteria for Factor 3: Collaboration.

23. Does a particular team member have to be present at the entire Summer Innovation Summit?
- No. We understand that there are circumstances where flexibility in attendance at the Summer Innovation Summit is required, however "a plan for attendance at the Summer Innovation Summit is required". Additionally, we see this as a great opportunity to foster collaborative relationships to propose new ideas for collaborative follow-on proposals and beyond. A plan for attendance should be included in all proposals. We are open to flexible arrangements for how this is accomplished, but plans for participation at the Summer Innovation Summit is part of the rating criteria for Factor 3: Collaboration.
24. Should a seedling project conduct the research required to develop the needed technologies or develop the needed technologies itself?
- This is a 6.1 basic research program focused on conducting the research required to develop the needed technologies; however, a primary goal is to push research and technology transition.
25. While companies are invited to participate, the role of a company isn't clear. How would a company participate?
- If your company conducts research addressing the FOA Cycle 1 topics, then it can consider submitting a proposal in response to the FOA. **You can also register as an interested party on the STRONG website even if you don't think submitting a proposal makes sense for your institution, to share your contact information and interest in the topic with the government and other interested parties, as future opportunities to get involved may exist.**
26. Are only seedling recipients eligible for the follow-on efforts?
- While seedling recipients are the only ones eligible to submit follow-on proposals, those follow-on proposals may include, as subrecipients, people and organizations not involved in any seedling cycle.
27. If a proposal involves more than one institution, what is the relationship between ARL and those institutions?
- Each Cooperative Agreement (developed from a proposal) will be awarded to a single institution (*i.e.*, Recipient), with all other institutions on the team being subrecipients to that prime institution. As such, there is no contractual relationship between ARL and those other institutions, and the prime institution is responsible for all the performance outcomes expected from their subrecipients.
28. Is any level of human-subjects experimentation expected in the seedling year? If so, will the proposer need to be self-sufficient with respect to human-subjects protection and IRB oversight?
- It is reasonable that there will be human-subject experimentation in the seedling year, though it is not required. If needed, ARL's Human Research Protection Program can

provide the required human-subjects protection and IRB oversight.

29. Will the career status of the applicants affect proposal selection at all? Will preference be given to a junior investigator's proposal in the case where two proposals are similarly scored?
 - a. The evaluation factors detailed in the FOA are the factors that will affect proposal scoring and selection. Factor 2 specifies plans for junior investigator development and mentorship as an evaluation criterion. Junior investigator development is an important part of this program, but the career status of the PI on the proposal is not an evaluation criterion.
30. 10-15 seedlings are expected to be awarded each cycle. How many 3-year follow-on proposals are expected to be awarded?
 - a. 2-3 of the collaboratively developed follow-on proposals are expected to be awarded each year at \$300-500k, but the number of follow-on proposals awarded and their period of performance will depend on the evaluation of the proposals and the Government funding available at the time.
31. Will all program cycles be structured the same way? Will they all focus on 6.1 basic research?
 - a. This funding opportunity will always be focused on 6.1 basic research. 6.2 funding in related research areas could be utilized to facilitate technology transition outside of this specific funding opportunity and other government attendees at the Summer Innovation Summit could provide opportunities for other types of funding. While the focus topic can change each year, the overall structure of the program cycles is expected to stay the same. That being said, we are trying something new with this program, so some aspects of the program could change in the future as we adapt and adjust to lessons learned.
32. How important is the focus area of this year's program cycle?
 - a. Proposals submitted this year should target the Cycle 1 focus area. Within that area, there are NOT weights assigned to particular aspects, paradigms, or fields.
33. How much local travel is expected to area partners at the Summer Innovation Summit?
 - a. Some local travel is expected. We will know more as the summit details are finalized, and we will announce if we are able to arrange any local transportation through area partners. For now, cost estimates should include daily transportation to and from Kostas Research Institute or another local partner (in Boston, MA).
34. Will estimates of the costs for the Summer Innovation Summit be provided before the proposal deadline for proper budgeting?
 - a. You should budget per diem plus travel and local transport.
35. Who will attend the Summer Innovation Summit?
 - a. It will grow over time as more proposals are awarded. The summit will include awardees, ARL researchers, DOD collaborative partners, Army stakeholders, area ARL

partners and industry. The summit schedule will determine who the attendees are on a given day.

36. Please describe the physical space / facilities available to participants during the Summer Institute. Can we request more than just a desk? For example, if a professor wants to set up human model data capture cameras, or create a local area network connecting various PCs or simulators, will space be provided?
 - a. The majority of the time during the Summer Innovation Summit will be spent at the Kostas Research Institute in Burlington, MA. In this facility, we have different types of work spaces and are working to have as much flexibility in the physical space as possible. Additionally, area partners may offer additional capabilities that the Kostas Research Institute cannot provide. After award, recipients will work collaboratively with ARL and other partners to develop critical capabilities.

37. I would like to know about the funding details. If a PhD student is selected for collaboration based on her/his proposal, will s/he receive something like an RA stipend (with tuition) or something similar?
 - a. Within the cost section of the proposal, personnel, hours, and cost should be listed. The exact mechanism for payment of the recipients is decided within the institution, not through the cooperative agreement. Whether a student receives tuition or stipend is a decision of the student's institution. The purpose of this effort is not to provide student stipends to tuition.

38. Is there any limitation on the number of proposals one organization can submit each cycle?

There does not seem to be, but we would like to verify.

 - a. We have not restricted the number of proposals from any one organization. While the number of proposals is not restricted and there may be some circumstances when multiple proposals from a single institution make sense, we encourage researchers from one institution to work together to submit the best possible proposal. The contract mechanism, a Cooperative Agreement, will be established with the institution, not the individual.