

IARPA-BAA-16-08

Fun GCAT BAA Questions 1 through 8

Q1) Has a contractor performed similar work to this for the government in the past?
If available, please provide the incumbent contract number.

A1) This exact work has not been performed for the government in the past.

The Functional Genomic and Computational Assessment of Threats (Fun GCAT) program is a new Funding Opportunity. No incumbent contractor support exists for this effort.

Q2) If you are unable to provide a contract number, is it safe to assume this is a new requirement for the government?

A2) NA

See Answer to Question 1.

Q3) In the “out of scope” section, what does “commercialization plan development technology” mean?

A3) We are encouraging the proposal of novel ideas that may potentially be transitioned to a government partner.

The Government seeks to develop new approaches and tools under this Funding Opportunity. Proposals seeking funding to develop plans for commercialization of existing technologies and/or to directly commercialize existing technologies are considered out of scope for this program (see Section 4.D. Funding Restrictions).

Q4) DURC is out of scope: does that mean we can't use, e.g., the publicly available 1918 flu sequence as part of the screening information used to train Thrust 1 software, or that we have to have special plans to mitigate potential threat from using this sequence?

A4) The Government will evaluate the potential for Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC) on an individual proposal basis based on the U.S. Government Policy for Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern. According to policy (Section III.1.j), Reconstructed 1918 Influenza virus is an agent or toxin with potential risk, and as such determination as DURC would be dependent on the category of experiment (Section III.2.a-g).

Q5) Develop 3-5 tools: what if we want to develop one or two really significant tools? What counts as a different tool? For example, if we have a unified workflow in the software that we propose, would the different components of the workflow count as different tools?

A5) While preferences for 3-5 tools are provided to assist in framing the scale and scope of approaches sought, the number of tools to be developed and integrated in Thrust 1 is not prescribed under this BAA.

This Funding Opportunity allows for a wide range of innovative ideas and concepts, and all proposals will be evaluated against the selection criteria.

Q6) Will T&E tests be potentially against anything from any taxa, or would it be acceptable to build a system that focuses on a particular taxa, e.g., viruses but not bacteria?

A6) Bacteria, viruses, and toxins are all components of the program.

The BAA does not prescribe specific sequences or families of sequences that proposers' systems must address. In both Thrusts 1 and 2, Independent Test and Evaluation sequences may include examples from a wide variety of sources.

Q7) Is 1TB a hard limit? That is a fairly small number for a potentially cloud-based system, and a larger system might be quite reasonable to maintain.

A7) The vision is to have a system that can operate on a conventional high performance computing system.

The evaluation of Analysis Time and Resources Required under Thrust 1 is intended to encourage reduction in the time and resources required in order to allow for increased throughput and provide extensibility to systems with limited resources. The demonstration of performance in cloud-based or other architectures may be performed for demonstration purposes. However the performance criteria for the program is based on the standalone system. The goal for Thrust 1 is for performers to not exceed 1TB of required memory as stated in the BAA.

Q8) At the bottom of page 9, there is a section related to scope of the proposal and lists the following as out of scope:

- Commercialization and/or commercialization plan development technology.

Should we understand from this that any work that is funded by this BAA will not be eligible for eventual patenting? Any additional clarification you can provide on this would be very helpful.

A8) See answer to Question 3. This Funding Opportunity does not prevent performers from protecting Intellectual Property developed as part of this program (see Section 6.B.2 Intellectual Property). However, USG will not pay for costs related to protecting IP of the performers.