DARPA-PS-26-119
AMPED
Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Version 1, May 20, 2026

Q1) PCSELs are the future of all semiconductor lasers, wonder if AMPED includes lasers of wavelengths in the blue or UV.

A1a) Proposers may select any wavelengths of their choice. This includes blue, UV, mid-infrared, long-infrared, or any other spectral region, provided that the proposed AMPED approaches for those wavelengths meet all program metrics.

A1b) The reference to PCSELs in the program solicitation is for illustrative purposes only. Any technical approach that meets the program goals is welcome.

Q2) My company/university is still in the process of being NIST SP800-171 CMMC/CUI compliant, am I eligible?

A2a) The CUI requirement applies to the ability to receive a digital copy of the CUI packet. A physical (printed) copy can be made available with a request following the guidance in Appendix B of the CUI Release Form.

A2b) In all cases, it is the proposer's responsibility to protect CUI information including the IT systems used in Abstract and Proposal preparation.

A2c) If selected for Award, Prime performers must 1) be able to handle CUI during performance of the project, and 2) protect CUI, including determining applicability and appropriate flow down to subcontractors

Q3) Are there specific partnering or subcontracting arrangements that would allow restricted entities (e.g., UARCs/FFRDCs/National Labs) to participate in this effort, or are such entities excluded entirely?

A3) UARCs, FFRDCs, and National Laboratories cannot be proposers, performers, or consultants on the AMPED program in any capacity (prime or sub).

Q4) If a proposed technical approach utilizes a laser architecture other than a Photonic-Crystal Surface-Emitting Laser (PCSEL), would such a proposal be deemed non-responsive to the requirements of the Program Solicitation (PS)?

A4) The solution does not need to be a PCSEL but does need to be of chip-scale form factor.

Q5) What is the maximum allowable number of proposal participation one person can have? Specifically, if I lead a submission as a PI (Prime), am I allowed to also participate in other teams as sub-award?

A5) There are no restrictions in the PS towards the number of proposals an individual or organization can be attached to. However, proposers should carefully consider the practicality of serving as a Prime PI on one project while supporting other projects, particularly if multiple projects are selected for award. Proposed personnel commitments, availability, and schedules should be realistic and non-conflicting

Q6) What is the definition of a device in this program? Are mode-locked arrays considered a device?

A6) Please refer to the DARPA-PS-119 AMPED Amendment 02 regarding the definition of a device. Under that definition, mode-locked arrays would not be considered a device.

Q7) Are there any polarization requirements for the emission?

A7) There are no polarization requirements for the emission.

Q8) Are there any operating bias limits for the device?

A8) There are no operating bias limits for the device.

Q9) Are there any threshold current requirements for the device?

A9) There are no threshold current requirements.

Q10) It was said that only proposers who received CUI addendum can propose – is attendance of Proposers Day fulfilling this requirement?

A10) Yes, if you picked up a physical (printed) copy of the CUI Addendum.

Q11) Is it allowed to scale efficiency or power metric with wavelength?

A11) Scaling of metrics is not allowed based on wavelength or any other design choices.

Q12) Does the program limit to a single surface emitting laser device approach? Is any edge-emitting approach out of scope?

A12) As specified in the PS, CUI Addendum page 3 (table 2), footnote b, out-of-plane emission is required.

Q13) Do you anticipate that universities and graduate students can participate? i.e. will there be opportunities to publish.

A13) Universities and graduate students may participate as long as the university protects CUI and can accept non-fundamental research restrictions. All publications will be subject to review by DARPA prior to release.

Q14) Can universities have fundamental research carve-out as part of a non-fundamental program?

A14) For AMPED, the Government has made a non-fundamental designation and carve-outs will not be accepted. All publications are subject to review by DARPA prior to release.

Q15) Do subcontractors/all team members need to be CUI-compliant?

A15) The prime is responsible to protect CUI and determine applicability and appropriate flow down to subcontractors.

Q16) If a number of coupled PCSELs cavities collectively meet the metrics, but each cavity does not, would you consider the approach out of scope?

A16) Such an approach consisting of an array of devices is out of scope.

Q17) Is electrical pumping (as opposed to optical pumping) required, if the total wall-plug efficiency target is met?

A17) Any device approaches that are fully integrated and meet the program metrics (see table 2 of the CUI Addendum) are welcome.

Q18) Can UARCs or FFRDC's be on our team if we (the prime) pay them with our own matching funds?

A18) UARCs, FFRDCs, and National Laboratories cannot be proposers, performers, or consultants on the AMPED program in any capacity (prime or sub).

Q19) How many awards? How much per award?

A19) Multiple awards are anticipated. The solicitation only states the available total budget per phase.

Q20) What TRL and MRL expectation do you have for Phase 1 and Phase 2?

A20) There are no specific TRL/MRL requirements.

Q21) Is there a preference for using InP, GaSb, or GaAs?

A21) There is no preference for the material system used as long as the metrics are fully met.

Q22) How is the thermal solution viewed by the government?

A22) As outlined in the PS, proposers are expected to present thermal management strategies enabling device operation. This is discussed on pages 9-12 of the PS, with a number of associated Milestone acceptance criteria listed in Tables 1 and 2. Development of new thermal solutions should not be the main technical focus of the proposed effort. Use of existing thermal solutions, where possible, is encouraged.

Q23) Do the metrics apply to system-level power consumption, such as supporting electronics and cooling?

A23) All metrics reference only device inputs and outputs.

Q24) Does the far-field have to be single-lobe? Does diffraction limited multi-lobe far-field meet the program requirement?

A24) The beam quality metric assumes a single symmetric beam in the far-field.

Q25) Must a photonic crystal approach be used?

A25) No, any approach that meets the program metrics as described in the solicitation is welcome.

Q26) Are there any restriction on non-US nationals participating in the program. Are there restrictions on specific countries?

A26) Per Amendment 02 of the PS:

1. Eligibility: Participation in the AMPED Program is restricted to U.S. Citizens and U.S. Permanent Residents (Green Card holders) representing U.S. companies only.

2. It is the responsibility of the prime to protect CUI and respective flow-down.

Q27) Can we propose using a foundry process/service abroad?

A27) Use of domestic manufacturing capabilities, where available, is preferred. Proposers should provide justification for using foundries abroad and discuss a pathway for shifting the capability domestically in the future.

Q28) How should the CUI requirement be handled in experimental labs. Is there any special requirement on how we ensure security of raw data and growth/fabrication procedures?

A28) Any element of information, as described in the table on pg. 5-7 of the AMPED CUI guide, must be handled via CUI compliant handling procedures. The prime is responsible for protecting CUI and determining applicability and appropriate flow down where applicable.