TACTICAL
Broad Agency Announcement
(BAA)

Industry User Guide

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***The Government reserves the right to amend this user guide as necessary. The most current version will be updated to Government wide Point of Entry (GPE).**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Overview: Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs) are solicitation methods for Research and Development (R&D) efforts based on synopses published in the Governmentwide Point of Entry (GPE) that provide for full and open competition in accordance with (IAW) Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 6.102(d)(2) and merit-based, competitive procedures IAW Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards," published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 2 CFR part 200 and implemented by the DoD at 2 CFR part 1103, "Interim Grants and Cooperative Agreements Implementation of Guidance in 2 CFR part 200" (79 FR 76047, December 19, 2014). BAAs are established in FAR 35.016 and are authorized for the acquisition of basic and applied research and that part of development not related to the development of a specific system or hardware procurement. The objective of a BAA is to encourage participation by science and technology firms and educational institutions in meeting Air Force Research and Development goals for innovative ideas and approaches for research that is general in nature.

2. Criteria for Use: Use of a BAA to solicit for research and development is encouraged when:

- The Government desires new and creative solutions to problem statements.
- Using a conventional statement of work could result in unintentionally stifling ideas and concepts given many possible approaches.
- Fulfilling requirements for scientific study and experimentation directed toward advancing the state-of-the-art or increasing knowledge or understanding rather than focusing on a specific system or hardware solution.
- The Government must be able to state its objectives in terms of areas of need or interest rather than specific solutions or outcomes.
- Meaningful proposals with varying technical/scientific approaches are reasonably anticipated.

CHAPTER 2: BAA CALL VARIATIONS: Variations of the BAA process are available for use. The following types are commonly used but are not considered all inclusive.

One-Step: The one-step process is used to request full technical and cost proposals from each offeror. The proposals are reviewed in accordance with the solicitation criteria and typically all of a selected proposal, part of a selected proposal, or none of the proposals may be selected for award.

Two-Step: The two-step process is sometimes used when a large number of proposals are anticipated. Potential offerors are invited to submit brief descriptive white papers in lieu of full proposals. The BAA must state whether an unfavorable white paper review will bar the offeror from further consideration. Full proposals are requested from those offerors selected in the white paper review process. When proposals are received, they are reviewed consistent with the process for one-step BAAs.

Open BAA: This approach allows for white paper and/or proposal submittals at any time within a specified period. BAAs must be publicized no less frequently than annually. White papers/proposals are reviewed when received during the period that the BAA is open.

Closed BAA: This approach allows for white paper and/or proposal submittals at a specified date and time as set forth in the BAA. Late bid and proposal provisions (IAW FAR 52.215-1(c)(3)) are usually included in the BAA.

BAA with Calls: This technique allows for publication of a basic BAA solicitation that contains overarching information. The basic BAA often functions as a framework identifying the technical areas and giving the basic terms and administrative information of the BAA, and it is usually open for at least 12 months. The requests for white papers and/or proposals are transmitted via Calls that are published separately from the basic BAA at various times during the open period of the basic BAA (Note: The first Call(s) may be published with the basic BAA). The Calls may further define the technology/government needs or just request white papers or full proposals. The Calls may also include specific terms that apply to that Call such as further technical details and any pertinent clauses such as available GFP or specific Organizational Conflict of Interest requirements. Typically, proposals or white papers are submitted only when Calls to the basic BAA request them. However, the BAA can be structured to accept proposals or white papers at any time against the basic BAA in addition to requesting proposals or white papers for specific requirements identified in Calls. Late bid and proposal provisions (IAW FAR 52.215-1(c)(3)) are usually included in the BAA as applicable to the individual Calls.

Staggered-Closed BAA: The staggered-closed BAA states a specified date and time for receipt of proposals or white papers, but also allows for proposals/white papers after the date and time set for proposal receipt. All offerors should be cautioned, however, that the likelihood of funding proposals received after the specified date and time is substantially reduced.

Combinations of the above may result in subsets such as but not limited to the following; closed one-step; closed two-step; open one-step; open two-step; two-step with calls; one-step with calls; or two-step staggered-closed.

(See Exhibit A for graphic depiction of some common BAA variations.)

CHAPTER 3: BAA SUBMISSIONS PREPARATION

Offeror Submission Information

1. Overview: The submission process consists of three separate processes described in detail below. Executive Summaries, white papers, and full proposals, when requested by the Government, shall be submitted in accordance with the TACTICAL announcement.

The Government anticipates executive summaries and white papers will be unclassified. **Offerors shall NOT submit classified executive summaries, white papers, or proposals to the TACTICAL Org Mailbox.** Special instructions will be provided in the event a classified submittal is required.

Dialogue between prospective Offerors and Government representatives is strongly encouraged. Any Offeror intending to submit a white paper in response to a Call, RFP, or RFWP is encouraged to notify the Contracting Officer (CO) in advance.

Due to the dynamically evolving nature of US warfighter directed energy needs, the TACTICAL announcement is subject to updates, revisions, and/or changes to the topic areas. Therefore, Offerors are highly encouraged to continually monitor https://sam.gov to ensure they receive latest guidance for this announcement.

2. Executive Summary Submission Instructions:

a. General: Executive Summaries will be requested at least annually as Call on the TACTICAL Announcement on the GRP, or as a direct Request for White Paper (RFWP) to previously selected TAGs.

b. Amendments to the TACTICAL announcement will request an Executive Summary (ES). The ES shall include a discussion of the offeror's qualifications for a specific Topic Area Group. The cost of preparing Executive Summaries in response to this Solicitation is not considered an allowable direct charge to any resulting or any other contract; however, it may be an allowable expense to the normal bid and proposal indirect cost as specified in FAR 31.205-18.

1. Page Limitation: The Executive Summary shall be limited to a 1 (one) page Cover Page and 2 (two) page Executive Summary Narrative. Executive Summaries shall be submitted on full 8.5-inch x 11-inch pages, prepared and submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat® 7.0 or later using Optical Character Recognition to allow the Government to search documents. The font shall be Times New Roman 10 point with no less than one-inch (1") margins (left, right, top and bottom). Headers and/or footers may be included in the margin parameters. Standard single line spacing shall be used for all paragraphs. Except as authorized by this announcement, all executive summary pages shall be presented in portrait page layout orientation. Pages shall be numbered starting with the cover page being Page 1 (one), and the last page being no greater than Page 3 (three). The page limitation covers all information including indices, photographs, foldouts (counted as 1 page for each 8.5 by 11 portion), tables, charts, appendices, attachments, resumes, etc. The Government will not consider pages in excess of these limitations. Executive Summaries must be submitted to the TACTICAL Org Mailbox (afrl.rdlb.tacticalbaa@us.af.mil). If it is determined that a classified Executive Summary is required, please DO NOT deliver any classified portion of the submission to the email address listed above, but rather contact the POCs listed in this BAA for specific delivery instructions. If files contain links, the links must be intact and

maintained through all revisions. Files shall not be read/write/password protected (i.e., must be unlocked, non-password protected, and/or unprotected).

2. Format: The Executive Summary shall be formatted as follows:
    i. Offerors shall submit the following.
        1. Cover Page (Limited to 1 Page):
            a. BAA Number (FA9451-24-S-0001)
            b. Specific Topic Area (Identify only ONE)
            c. Name of Company
            d. Mailing Address
            e. Business Size to NAICS 541715
            f. Company's Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) number
            g. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number
            h. Contracting POC and Technical POC with appropriate telephone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses for the POCs
            i. Facility and Safeguarding Classification levels, relevant to the Topic Area (if applicable)
            j. Mailing address for forwarding classified material (name, address, zip code)
            k. Cognizant security office (name, address, zip code), and Offeror's security officer's name and telephone number)
        2. Executive Summary Narrative (Limited to 2 Pages):
            a. Executive Summary narrative should include but not be limited to the following:
                i. The Offeror’s understanding of the scope of work in the Topic Area.
                ii. The Offeror’s experience performing work of the nature of the Topic Area.
                iii. The Offeror’s availability of competent and experienced engineering, scientific, or other technical personnel are available to perform work in the identified Topic Area.
                iv. The Offeror’s availability of, from any source, necessary research, test, laboratory, or shop facilities to perform work within the Topic Area.
                v. The Offeror’s ability to research, design, model, develop, and test innovative solutions within the Topic Area.
                vi. The Offeror’s ability to establish and maintain effective partnerships.
                vii. The Offeror’s ability to submit a proposal within thirty (30) calendar days, and commitment to an expedited negotiation and award schedule.

3. White Paper Submission Instructions:

a. General: Full white paper instructions will be provided within the Calls or Request for White Paper Letter from the PCO.

a. The Request for White Paper Letter requests a white paper and a rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost estimate. The white paper shall include a discussion of the nature and scope of the research and the Offeror's proposed technical approach. The cost of preparing white papers in response to this Solicitation is not considered an allowable

direct charge to any resulting or any other contract; however, it may be an allowable expense to the normal bid and proposal indirect cost as specified in FAR 31.205-18.

viii. Page Limitation: The White Paper shall be limited to 5 (five) full 8.5-inch x 11-inch pages (not including cover page), prepared and submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat® 7.0 or later using Optical Character Recognition to allow the Government to search documents, or as specified in the Call or Request for White Paper. The font shall be Times New Roman 10 point with no less than one-inch (1") margins (left, right, top and bottom). Headers and/or footers may be included in the margin parameters. Standard single line spacing shall be used for all paragraphs. Except as authorized by this announcement, all white paper pages shall be presented in portrait page layout orientation. Charts, graphs, matrices, tables, and similar depictions (including spreadsheets) shall be in clearly legible and presented in Times New Roman 10-point font; portrait or landscape page layout orientation may be used as well as 11" x 17" paper; however, any 11" x 17" page shall be counted as two pages. All electronic data must be virus free. Pages shall be numbered starting with the cover page being Page **1** (one), and the last page being no greater than Page **6** (six).

ix. The page limitation covers all information including indices, photographs, foldouts (counted as one page for each 8.5 by 11 portion) tables, charts, appendices, attachments, etc. Blank pages, title pages, tables of content, lists, tabs, or cover sheets are not included in the page count. The proposal page limit does not include the Offeror's proposed Contractor Statement of Work (CSOW); however, the same formatting rules apply to the CSOW.

b. The Government will not consider pages in excess of these limitations. *White Papers must be submitted to the TACTICAL Org Mailbox (afrl.rdlb.tacticalbaa@us.af.mil) and the Contracting Point of Contact (POC) specified in the CALL or letter Request for White Paper.* If it is determined that a classified white paper is required, please DO NOT deliver any classified portion of the white paper to the email address listed above, but rather contact the POCs listed in this BAA for specific delivery instructions. If files contain links, the links must be intact and maintained through all revisions. Files shall not be read/write/password protected (i.e., must be unlocked, non-password protected, and/or unprotected).

c. Format: The white paper shall be formatted as follows:

1. Section A. Cover Sheet: Offerors shall submit the following information on the cover sheet. Any white paper that does not have a complete coversheet will not be accepted. The following information is required on the coversheet:
    b. BAA Number (FA9451-24-S-0001) and unique Call Number (000X)
    c. White Paper Title
    d. Name of Company
    e. Mailing Address
    f. Business Size under NAICS 541715
    g. Company's Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) number
    h. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number

i. Contracting POC and Technical POC with appropriate telephone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses for the POCs
j. Facility & Safeguarding Classification levels (*if applicable*)
k. Mailing address for forwarding classified material (name, address, zip code)
l. Cognizant security office (name, address, zip code), and Offeror's security officer's name and telephone number)
m. Proposed Period of Performance (allow 90 days for drafting final report)
n. ROM cost estimate
o. Proposed Contract Type (Firm-Fixed-Price, Cost-Plus-Fixed-Fee, etc.)
p. Any requested Government Furnished Property
q. Proposed Data Rights
r. Date through which white paper is valid.
s. Teaming Arrangement or Subcontractors/consultants, including Cage codes.

2. Section B. White Paper Narrative: The narrative should include but not be limited to the following:
    a. Discussion of the nature and scope of the research; the problem statement; the Offeror's proposed objectives and technical approach/solution; all relevant assumption; an overview of tasks and methods to achieve each objective; and expected results.
    b. Evidence of current Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and a description of state-of-the-art knowledge or methods to be employed, along with a clear strategy, resources, and schedule for maturing the technology to the proposed level.
    c. Description of final products to be delivered (prototypes, demos, software, etc.)
    d. Mapping of effort to specific need(s) outlined in the topic area description, with a strategy for transition of deliverables to a government acquisition program. Transitions can be specific to an existing/future system or have broad application to several existing/future systems.
    e. Explanation of how the proposed effort provides benefits to the national defense and a strategy for verifying those intended benefits.
    f. Any restrictions on Government use, release, or disclosure of technical data
    g. Key personnel, consultants, or subcontractors to support the effort and evidence of expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed tasks.

NOTE: Resumes, descriptions of facilities and equipment, and proposed Statement of Work are not required at this point.

3. Section C. White Paper ROM Cost: Provide a ROM cost estimate for planning purposes utilizing the TACTICAL standard White Paper ROM template **(See Attachments)**. The ROM shall provide top-level details on major cost items such as labor, indirect costs, special equipment that will need to be purchased, materials, and any subcontracts or other organizations'

costs (to include government furnished facilities, equipment, or personnel) for the proposed effort. The ROM cost estimate will be used to assess best value (cost versus benefit) and determine if there are sufficient funds available for the proposed effort. Any second step RFPs will require a full cost proposal.

d. Other Information: If the O*fferor* wishes to restrict its white papers, they must be marked with the restrictive language stated in FAR 52.215-1(e).

e. White Paper/Proposal Content Summary: **Your white paper may not be read if all requirements of this announcement are not met.**

4. Proposal Submission Instructions: Full proposal Instructions will be provided Calls or Request for Proposal Letter from the PCO.

a. Offerors should apply the restrictive notice prescribed in the provision of FAR 52.215-1(e) Instructions to Offerors—Competitive Acquisition. Properly marked proprietary information will be treated in accordance with DFARS 252.227-7016, Rights in Bid or Proposal Information.

b. Technical/management and cost volumes shall be submitted in separate volumes and shall be valid for 180 days. Proposals must reference the BAA announcement number, the Call number, and include a unique Contractor-generated proposal identification number. Unnecessarily elaborate brochures or presentations beyond that sufficient to present a complete and effective proposal are not desired.

c. Submit with a cover letter and one electronic copy of the technical proposal and the cost/business proposal. The electronic copy must be submitted to the TACTICAL Org Mailbox as listed in the Point of Contact (POC) section above in a PC-compatible file format and must be readable by Microsoft Office. The electronic copy of the cost proposal worksheets must be in Microsoft Office Excel .xlsx version and must contain all cell formulas.

d. Proposals should be submitted to the TACTICAL Org Mailbox as listed in the Point of Contact (POC) section above and to any subsequent address identified in the Call. Proposals sent to any inappropriate address are ineligible for award. Proposals sent via mail or facsimile will not be accepted. Offerors may submit the electronic copy of the proposal through secure electronic mail (DoD SAFE or Encrypted E-mail). Please request a DoD SAFE drop link at least three business days before the proposal due date.

e. Offerors are advised that data included in the technical and cost/business proposals submitted to the Government (in response to this BAA) may be released to non-Government advisors for review and analysis. Any non-Government advisor will strictly serve in an advisory capacity only to the Government evaluators. Non-Government advisors will have appropriate Organizational Conflict of Interest clauses in their contracts with AFRL and will initiate any required Non-Disclosure Agreements. The use and identification of non-Government advisors will be identified in the Call. All offerors must clearly indicate in their proposals if they have any objections or concerns regarding the use of non-Government advisors.

1. **Specific Proposal Preparation Instructions**

   a. **Cover letter -** A cover letter shall accompany each proposal. The cover letter will identify the BAA number, Call number, and Technical Area under which the proposal is submitted, a statement that the proposal is valid for 180 days (from the due date specified in the Call), provide technical and contracting points of contact, CAGE code, and include a statement indicating if the firm is a small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUBZone small business, small disadvantaged business, 8(a), or woman-owned small business concern. The proposal must be signed and dated by an authorized official of the organization.

   b. **Technical Proposal**:

      i. **Page Limitation**: The Technical Proposal shall be limited to 20 (twenty) full 8.5-inch x 11-inch pages (not including cover page), prepared and submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat® 7.0 or later using Optical Character Recognition to allow the Government to search documents, or as specified in the Call or Request for Proposal. The font shall be Times New Roman 10 point with no less than one-inch (1") margins (left, right, top and bottom). Headers and/or footers may be included in the margin parameters. Standard single line spacing shall be used for all paragraphs. Except as authorized by this announcement, all Proposals pages shall be presented in portrait page layout orientation. Charts, graphs, matrices, tables, and similar depictions (including spreadsheets) shall be in clearly legible and presented in Times New Roman 10-point font; portrait or landscape page layout orientation may be used as well as 11" x 17" paper; however, any 11" x 17" page shall be counted as two pages. All electronic data must be virus free. Pages shall be numbered starting with the cover page being Page **1** (one), and the last page being no greater than Page **21** (twenty-one). The page limitation covers all information including indices, photographs, foldouts (counted as 1 page for each 8.5 by 11 portion), tables, charts, appendices, attachments, resumes, etc. The Government will not consider pages in excess of these limitations.

      ii. The page limitation covers all information including indices, photographs, foldouts (counted as one page for each 8.5 by 11 portion) tables, charts, appendices, attachments, etc. Blank pages, title pages, tables of content, lists, tabs, or cover sheets are not included in the page count. The proposal page limit does not include the offeror's proposed Contractor Statement of Work (CSOW); however, the same formatting rules apply to the CSOW.

      Please note: The Government will check the proposal and CSOW for conformance to the stated requirements. Any pages in excess of the stated page limitation (after the format check) will not be considered.

      iii. **Content**: The proposal shall include a discussion of the nature and scope of the research and the technical approach. The technical proposal must convey an understanding of the problems or limitations of the general Technical Area and the intended application(s). The technical proposal shall include the following items.

iv. Summary: Describe the proposed program, objectives, and approach. A description of the innovation and benefits of the proposed approach and relationship to previous efforts should be discussed. It should summarize the technical issues addressed by the offeror's proposal without repeating the requirements. This should provide a vision of what will ultimately be achieved and what solution this effort will produce.

v. Program Description: Describe the techniques, methods, materials, or ideas that will be addressed in this proposal, their innovativeness, and to what degree they advance the state-of-the-art.

vi. Program Plan: Describe in detail the planned approach and how the plan will be executed. This section should include all technical aspects of the approach. Provide technical detail and analysis necessary to support the technical approach proposed. Clearly identify the core of the intended approach. The "new and creative" solution to the problem(s) should be developed and analyzed in this section. Include a risk assessment of key technical, schedule or cost areas and their potential impact on the program. Identify why proposed subcontractors were selected and what tasks they are to perform.

vii. Contractor's Statement of Work (CSOW): The CSOW, a stand-alone document, should detail the research to be accomplished under the Technical Area and should be suitable for incorporation into the awarded document. The proposed CSOW should summarize the technical methodology and the task description, but not to the extent to make the awarded instrument inflexible. Do not include any proprietary information in the CSOW. Copies of our contracts may be requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Consequently, it is imperative that no company-sensitive information be included in the CSOW. The CSOW should include the anticipated deliverables (hardware, software, reports, etc.).

viii. Milestone Chart: A Milestone Chart should indicate when specific objectives are expected to be met in the overall program schedule and should identify the specific accomplishments necessary to proceed to the next task. Provide a schedule of when the deliverable items identified in the Call are to be delivered.

ix. Facilities and Equipment description: Describe the facilities that can be used to achieve the goals of the program, in terms of manufacturing capability, testing facilities, and/or any relevant specialized equipment.

x. Description of Relevant Prior Work: Provide a list of related previous or current Government, commercial, or internally funded work performed during the past five years. For each such effort, provide the principal investigator, title of effort, contract number, brief summary of results, dollar value, and a technical and contracting point of contact (including phone numbers), for the funding organizations.

xi. Management Plan: Offerors should provide an approach that demonstrates the ability to effectively and efficiently manage and administer the research program to a successful conclusion.

xii. Resumes of Proposed Personnel: Include resumes for all proposed personnel, consultants, or subcontractors (that might be proposed). Provide Position Descriptions for any positions not filled at the time of proposal submittal.

c. **Cost/Business Proposal**: Full cost proposal Instructions will be provided in Calls or Request for Proposal Letter from the PCO. The PCO may require the TACTICAL Standard Cost Proposal Spreadsheet **(See Attachments)** be utilized and will be provided with the Call or Request for Proposal Letter. The file must contain all cell formulas. Cost proposals have no page limitations.

i. Completed Proposal Content Checklist (provided at the Call level)

ii. Completed Representations and Certifications and any specific representations and certification identified in a Call.

iii. Prospective offerors are to identify any foreign nationals that are anticipated to be working on the project, both at the Contractor and subcontractor level. Information required includes, but is not limited to, place of origin, current status (copy of documentation required), and provide an explanation of their anticipated level of involvement on the proposed effort.

iv. Price Competition is determined not to exist because the absence of precise Government specifications and varying technical approaches proposed for R&D efforts. The Government will require certified cost or pricing data from the offeror whose proposal exceeds the thresholds listed at FAR 15.403-4.

3. **Proposal Content Summary**: You may be ineligible for award if all requirements of this solicitation are not met on the proposal due date. Failure to provide a complete proposal may result in a determination that the proposal is non-responsive and may be eliminated from consideration for award.

4. **Submission Dates, Times, and Address:** Will be posted in the Call Announcements. Proposals received after the due date and time specified shall be governed by the provisions of FAR 52.215-1(c) (3).

*** AFRL/RD reserves the right to collapse a white paper/Two-Step into a One-Step if the situation warrants the white paper contains sufficient technical detail to do full Technical Proposal Evaluation instead of a white paper Evaluation.**

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNICATION

All communications with the Government program manager or Acquisition Team members must follow communication guidelines as follows:

- Communication with Acquisition Team members is encouraged prior to the issuance of an RFP, after which time all communication must be submitted, in writing, to the Contracting Office.
- Acquisition Team members cannot attempt to replace the potential Offeror's original ideas with their own ideas or the program office's preferred approach.
- Acquisition Team members cannot share ideas or technical solutions provided in conversations, white papers, or proposals to a competing potential proposer or anyone else outside the team.
- If the Acquisition Team member provides information concerning the objectives/goals/requirements of the BAA to one potential Offeror, this information must be provided to all potential Offerors with the CO/AO's coordination via an BAA amendment.
- If a potential Offeror is provided with information that expands/contradicts/retracts information contained in the published announcement, this same information must be made publicly available to all potential Offerors in a Questions and Answers document. In some cases, this will also require an amendment to the BAA.
- In addition to the above the following guidelines apply for one-on-one communications:
  - The Acquisition Team members may discuss whether the potential Offeror is "on-track" and/or consistent with the needs of the AF. However, while the potential Offeror may be "on-track" is no way intended to imply the potential Offeror will be awarded a contract or issued an RFP.
  - Any one-on-one communications are not a pre-screening process.
  - The Acquisition Team members cannot answer requests for advice regarding technical approach / desired solution or individual proposal elements, e.g., subcontractors, materials, labor hours, etc.
  - Notwithstanding anything discussed during a one-on-one communication, all terms and conditions of the announcement remain unchanged unless and until an amendment is issued.

NOTE: Pre-proposal communication procedures will be established at the Call level for all Calls by the CO.

CHAPTER 5: CALL PROCESS

Calls under this BAA will be announced on the GPE. Calls will request interested Offerors to submit either a white paper or full proposal (depending on the BAA Call variation selected, see Chapter 2). The BAA Call announcement on the GPE will be the only solicitation. This may be a short announcement that links to further information or the full announcement. It is recommended interested Offerors read each Call very carefully. Typically, the following information will be included in Call announcements:

- An identifying Call number and program name.
- Points of contact for both contracting and technical matters. Offerors are encouraged to contact the listed points of contact for any assistance or questions.
- A description of the stated areas of potential research or a description of the scientific or engineering problems needing new and creative solutions. A short summary of areas of program interest, expanded as appropriate, to include problems, objectives, and deliverable items (reports, software, prototypes, etc.).
- Information on proposal or white paper format and submission requirements.
- The address and/or method for submittal.
- If a two-step variation is used, a description of the full proposal invitation procedures.
- Criteria for selecting white papers and proposals.
- If an informational briefing is scheduled, details as to time, date, place, number of attendees permitted, clearances needed, etc.
- Advice to foreign-owned firms that their participation is subject to foreign disclosure review procedures and that they should immediately contact the contracting focal point for information if they contemplate responding.
- If export-controlled technical data is involved, a note advising that only firms holding certification under the US/Canada Joint Certification Program (JCP) http://www.dla.mil/HQ/InformationOperations/Offers/Products/LogisticsApplications/JCP.aspx) are allowed access to such data.
- The total dollar value or range of dollar values as well as anticipated period of performance may be stated in the announcement.
- A statement that multiple white papers or proposals addressing different topic areas, within the purview of the announcement, may be submitted by each Offeror.
- Notice to Offerors that only Contracting Officers are legally authorized to commit the Government.
- Date and time when white papers or full proposals will be due. If an Open BAA variation has been selected white papers or proposals may be allowed over a specified extended period.

CHAPTER 6: REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Evaluation Criteria: Evaluations for executive summaries, white papers, and proposal submitted under the BAA will be conducted by a peer or scientific review process and will use the following criteria:

a. **Technical Merit**: Technical Merit is first in order of priority (more important than Relevance to AFRL Programs or Value/Cost) and shall be evaluated based on the following criteria, which are of equal importance.

(1) Overall scientific or technical merit
- Problem statement, objectives and deliverables are clearly defined
- Objectives and expected results are anchored by theory, analysis, or data
- Assumptions are logical, reasonable, and appropriate
- Offeror demonstrates knowledge of and applies state-of-the-art methods

(2) Soundness of the Offeror's technical approach
- Approach is defined, logical and feasible
- Schedule, speed of delivery (tech readiness date), and required resources are reasonable and appropriate
- Proposed results are measurable and testable
- Key staff have appropriate qualifications to perform proposed effort

b. **Relevance to AFRL Programs:** Outlined in topic area description
- Proposed effort is logically mapped to one or more topic area need(s)
- Proposed effort provides valuable contribution to meeting one or more topic area need(s)
- Benefits appropriately off-set identified risks

c. **Value/Cost:** Value/Cost is subject to funds availability.

(1) For white papers: The ROM cost estimate will be evaluated on whether it is appropriate for the expected benefit and if sufficient funding is available. While papers that satisfy the technical merit factor, demonstrate benefits that are commensurate with the cost, and for which sufficient funding is determined to be available will be evaluated as best value to the Government.

(2) For proposals: Cost will be evaluated on the degree to which it is realistic, reasonable and represents the best value to the Government. Cost realism will assess the likelihood that the proposed technical approach can be successfully accomplished for the cost proposed. Cost reasonableness will consider the cost proposed in conjunction with program objectives and availability of funding. Prior to award of a potential successful offer, the Contracting Officer will make a final determination regarding price reasonableness.

NOTE: Evaluation criteria for Calls will be addressed at the Call level.

2. Executive Summary Review and Selection Process:

1. Executive Summaries (ES) Evaluations will be conducted by a peer or scientific review process and will use the criteria listed on the Executive Summary Review memo.

2. Executive Summaries that meet the criteria specified on the Review memo will be considered qualified for the specific Topic Area Group (TAG). Qualified offerors will remain in the TAG for the duration of the TACTICAL BAA (unless Offeror withdraws

membership or fails the annual recertification process) and are eligible to receive letter Requests for White Paper or Requests for Proposal. Letter requests will be sent ONLY to the qualified members of the TAG.

3. Qualified members of TAGs will receive an annual request to recertify that the submitted ES remains valid and applicable to the chosen Topic Area Group. Any offeror that cannot certify the continued validity of their submitted ES will be removed from the group and is eligible to submit a new ES for TAG qualification during the annual ES request period.

4. Each selected Executive Summary only permits acceptance into the specific TAG proposed – Offerors must submit and have selected separate Executive Summaries to gain membership into multiple TAGs.

5. The completed Executive Summary Review memo **(See Attachments)** will be provided as feedback to any offeror that submits an ES.

3. **White Paper Review and Selection Process:**

1. Evaluations will be conducted by a peer or scientific review process and both white papers and proposals will use the following criteria:
   a) **Criteria:** The selection of one or more sources for award will be based on an evaluation of each Offeror's response to determine the overall merit of the submission in response to this announcement. Responses will be evaluated in accordance with FAR 35.016. The responses will be evaluated utilizing a peer or scientific review process and shall be evaluated based on the following criteria that are listed in descending order of importance:

   b) **Technical**

      1. Overall scientific and technical merits;
      2. Importance to AFRL/RD program requirements;
      3. Fund(s) availability

   c) **Cost/Price:** Once selected for possible award, cost/price will be analyzed for Realism and Reasonableness. Cost/Price is considered, but not an evaluation criterion.

2. **White Paper Review and Selection Process:** Evaluation of white papers will be conducted by a peer or scientific review process, using the criteria described above. Based on the evaluation, white papers will be categorized as Highly Recommended, Selectable, or Not Selectable, using the definitions in paragraph 10 below. White papers that are evaluated as Selectable/Highly Recommended and Best Value will be sent a Request for Proposal Letter from the PCO. The Government's goal is to notify Offerors of the disposition of their white paper within 30 days of receipt. Unsuccessful Offerors will be notified in writing and will have the opportunity to receive feedback.

NOTE: The Government reserves the right to collapse a white paper/Two-Step announcement into a One-Step if the situation warrants, and the white paper(s) contains sufficient technical detail to do full technical evaluation.

4. **Proposal Review and Selection Process:**

Criteria: The selection of one or more sources for award will be based on an evaluation of each offeror's proposal to determine the overall merit of the proposal in response to this announcement. Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with FAR 35.016. The proposals will be evaluated utilizing a peer or scientific review process and shall be evaluated based on the following criteria that are listed in descending order of importance:

Technical

1. Overall scientific and technical merits;
2. Importance to AFRL/RD program requirements;
3. Fund(s) availability

Cost/Price: Once selected for possible award, cost/price will be analyzed for Realism and Reasonableness. Cost/Price is considered, but not an evaluation criterion.

NOTE: The Government reserves the right to change the evaluation criteria for a specific Call. If the evaluation criteria differ from the above it will be stated in the Call.

Review and Selection Process: Responses (White Papers and Proposals) will be evaluated and categorized as follows:

a) Highly Recommended: Well-conceived scientifically and technically sound response pertinent to accomplish program goals and objectives. Responses are recommended for acceptance (subject to availability of funds) and normally are displaced only by other Highly Recommended responses.

b) **Selectable:** Scientifically or technically sound responses that may require additional development. Responses are recommended for acceptance if sufficient funding is available, but at a lower priority than Highly Recommended proposals. To ensure a diversity of approaches, a Selectable response may be prioritized over a Highly Recommended response if the Selectable response presents a unique approach unlike any of the Highly Recommended responses.

c) Not Selectable: Response is not technically sound or does not meet agency needs. Even if sufficient funding existed, the response should not be funded.

Note: The Government reserves the right to award some, all, or none of the responses. When the Government elects to award only part of a proposal, the selected part may be categorized as Highly Recommended or Selectable, through the response as a whole may not merit such a categorization.

CHAPTER 7: AWARD PROCESS (for White Papers and Calls)

1. Notification of Award Decision: The CO or CS will notify, in writing, any Offeror(s) selected for negotiation of potential award and Offeror(s) that was/were not recommended for award. Such notification will only occur after the technical peer or scientific review has been approved. The notification of recommendation for award is not to be construed to mean an award is assured, as availability of funds and successful negotiations are prerequisites to any award. During this notification process, the CO/CS may request any required updates or revisions begin immediately.

a. **More Than One Award and Flexibility in Awards made:** Under this BAA, more than one award may be made based on the quality of the proposals and availability of funding. Occasionally, the Government may be interested in awarding only a certain portion (or portions) of a white paper or proposal. This BAA method provides the flexibility to make an award for only those portions or tasks of the white paper or proposal that are of interest to the Government. The Offeror will be notified in writing if the Government intends to make an award based on the white paper or proposal. The notification will indicate if all or only portions of the proposal will be included in the award.

b. **Sequence of Awards:** Awards will be made to Selectable / Highly Recommended proposals. However, because of the uniqueness of the BAA review process, it may be the case that while the overall white paper or proposal is ranked Not Selectable a certain part of it may be ranked Selectable / Highly Recommended. In this case the flexibility of the BAA process will allow the Government to make an award for that portion of the proposal that is of high interest to the Government. Not Selectable proposals, with the exception of certain parts of the proposal (as described above) are generally not awarded. Offerors whose proposal(s) are not recommended for acceptance will be notified by the CO.

2. Model Document: The CO/CS may transmit the Government's anticipated award format (Model Document) to the selected Offeror(s). The model document provides the basis for negotiations on all award requirements, terms, and conditions, and will be attached to the Call announcement or RFP.

3. Technical and Cost Negotiations

a. **Technical**: Any unresolved technical issues will normally be addressed first. Typically, negotiations involve specific language issues or determining Government needs versus effort proposed. Most of these negotiations are conducted via telephone/online meeting resources and supplemented by email. If many complex issues arise, the Government negotiator may request face-to-face meetings to resolve them.

b. **Terms and Conditions**: Any exceptions, changes, or additions to the model document should be clearly identified and justification should be provided. Some may affect pricing or technical considerations (e.g., limited and restricted rights, licensing agreements, or royalties) and should normally be resolved before negotiating cost/fee/profit and total price.

c. **Cost/Fee/Profit (if applicable)**: Price should be addressed last. If rates, factors, or other cost elements change after proposal submission, the CO must be informed as quickly as possible to preclude any delays. The Offeror may be asked to document these changes. The CO is responsible for evaluating the reasonableness of offered prices. The analytical techniques and procedures employed are meant to ensure that the final price is fair and reasonable.

d. **Agreement**: Once negotiations have been concluded, the CO will ask the Offeror to confirm the negotiations in writing. The confirmation should include the cost/fee/profit or price, and any terms and conditions agreed upon. Depending on the award type, the CO will finalize any pre-award requirements and submit to the Offeror for final execution.

4. Science & Technology (S&T) Program Protection

Science & Technology (S&T) Program Protection: Offerors notified that subsequent Call Announcements shall include a requirement for submission of: 1.) A completed Standard Form (SF 424), Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) Form (See Attachments) for all Senior/Key Personnel proposed; and 2.) A Completed Security Program Questionnaire (See Attachments). Offerors may be asked to provide a mitigation plan for any identified S&T Protection risks.

The Government reserves the right to determine an Offeror unawardable on the grounds of unacceptable S&T Protection risk based on its review of the SF 424 and Security Program Questionnaire. During the security review process, if it is determined that personnel listed to perform work are identified as potentially having a conflict of interest/commitment. The Government will not award the contract at this time.

By submitting a proposal, the Offeror certifies that it is in compliance with Section 223(a) of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 which requires that: (a) the Principal Investigator (PI) and other key personnel certify that the current and pending support provided on the proposal is current, accurate and complete; (B) agree to update such disclosure at the request of the agency prior to the award of support and at any subsequent time the agency determines appropriate during the term of the award; and (c) the PI and other key personnel have been made aware of the requirements under Section 223(a)(1) of this Act. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. code, Title 218, Section 1001).

CHAPTER 8: DEFINITIONS

Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS): Those services provided under contract by nongovernmental sources to support or improve: Organizational policy development; decision-making; management and administration; program and/or project management and administration; or R&D activities. It can also mean the furnishing of professional advice or assistance rendered to improve the effectiveness of Federal management processes or procedures (including those of an engineering and technical nature). In rendering the foregoing services, outputs may take the form of information, advice, opinions, alternatives, analyses, evaluations, recommendations, training and the day-to-day aid of support personnel needed for the successful performance of ongoing Federal operations.

Contract Specialist: Term used interchangeably to include the Contract Negotiator or Buyer. Be advised only a Contracting Officer is warranted to obligate the Government. Regulations specify several other functions that must be performed by a Contracting Officer.

Contracting Officer (CO): Title given to a person with the authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts or agreements and make related determinations and findings. Only a Contracting Officer has the authority to obligate the Government.

Cost Realism Analysis: The process of independently reviewing and evaluating specific elements of each Offeror's proposed cost estimate to determine whether the estimated proposed cost elements are realistic for the work to be performed; reflect a clear understanding of the requirements; and are consistent with the unique methods of performance and materials described in the Offeror's technical proposal. Cost realism analysis shall be performed on cost-reimbursement contracts to determine the probable cost of performance for each Offeror. (See FAR 15.404-1(d).)

Government wide Point of Entry (GPE): The single point where Government business opportunities greater than $25,000, including synopses of proposed contract actions, solicitations, and associated information, can be accessed electronically by the public. The GPE is (See FAR 2.101). The GPE is located at https://sam.gov

Government Furnished Property (GFP): Property in the possession of, or directly acquired by, the Government and subsequently furnished to the contractor for performance of a contract. Government-furnished property includes, but is not limited to, spares and property furnished for repair, maintenance, overhaul, or modification. Government-furnished property also includes contractor-acquired property if the contractor-acquired property is a deliverable under a cost contract when accepted by the Government for continued use under the contract. (See FAR Part 45.)

Independent Research and Development (IR&D) Cost: The cost of effort which is neither sponsored by a grant, nor required in performing a contract, and which falls within any of the following four areas: (a) Basic research, (b) Applied research, (c) Development, and (d) Systems and other concept formulation studies. (See FAR 31.001.)

Peer or Scientific Review: The process where each proposal is reviewed against the criteria called out in the ARA. It may also address the technical team's assessment of applicable quantitative elements, to include number of labor hours proposed, skills mix, materials, subcontracting, etc.

Price Analyst: A contracting professional whose function is focused on analyzing an Offeror's cost proposal and documenting the results of the negotiation. A Price Analyst is not a Contract Specialist.

Program Manager (PM): The individual responsible for overseeing/managing a Science & Technology (S&T) acquisition or assistance project. This individual may have a different job title in their primary position.

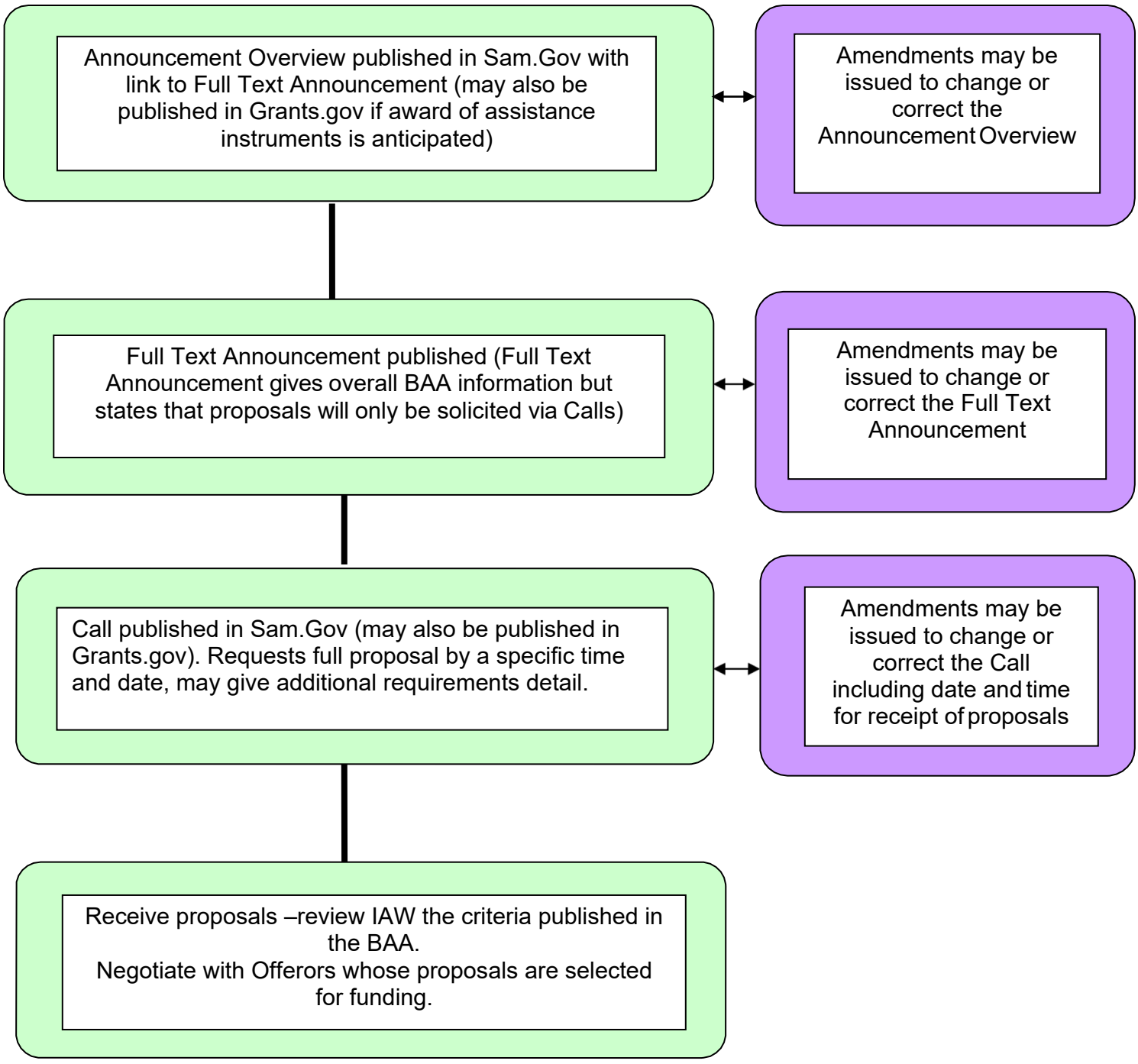
Statement of Work (SOW): The document that captures the technical content of the contractual effort. The contract may incorporate portions of the Offeror's technical proposal instead of a formal SOW. For BAAs, Offerors are often required to submit a non-proprietary contractor statement of work (sometimes referred to as a C-SOW) when responding to the RFP.

Technical/Cost Peer or Scientific Review: The team's review of each proposal against each criterion. The team is required to document this review and provide a recommendation to the Contracting Officer.

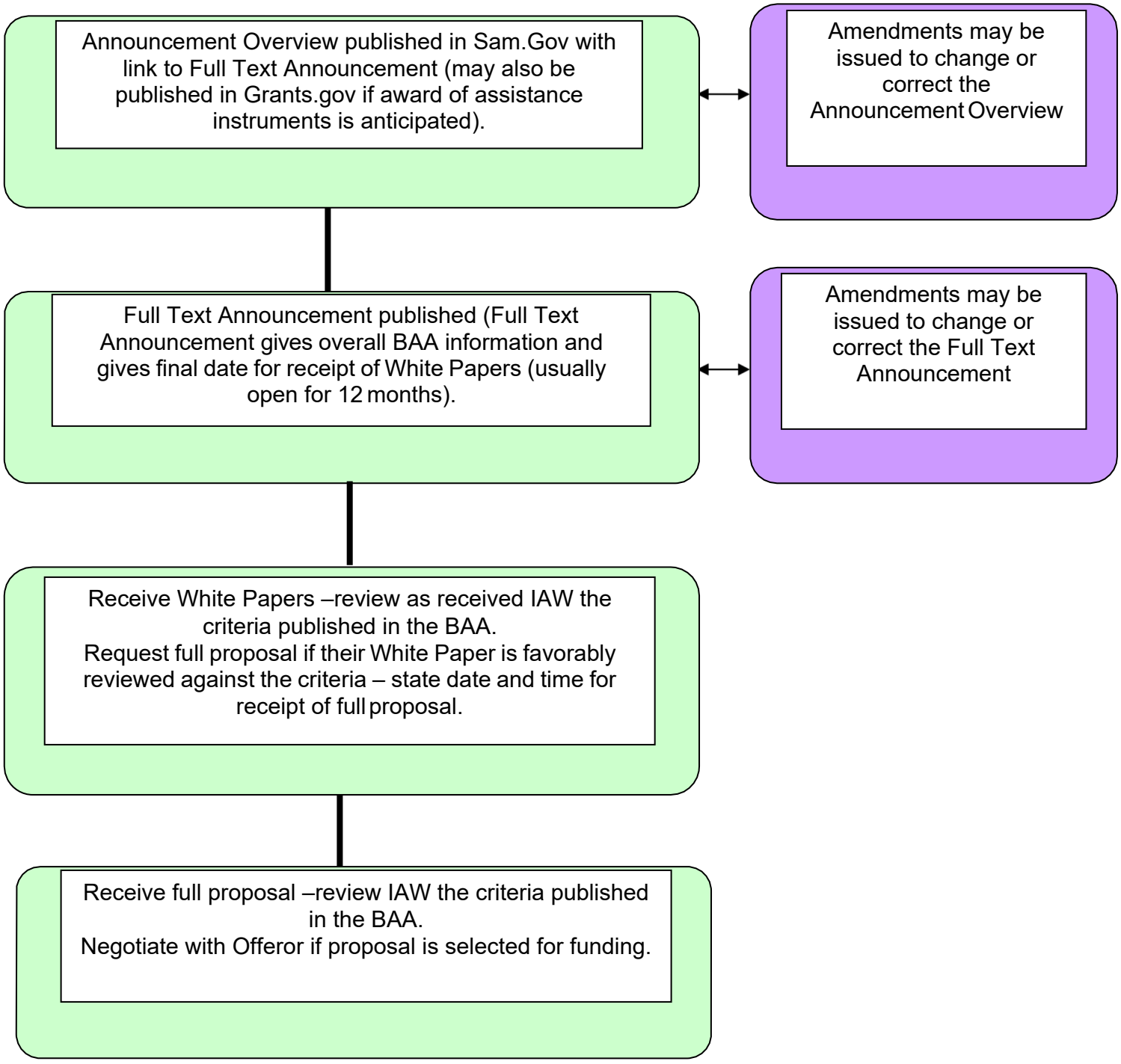
White Paper: A brief (usually 2-5 pages) summary of the proposed technical approach with an accompanying rough-order-of-magnitude (ROM) price.

EXHIBIT A: GRAPHIC DEPICTIONS OF COMMON BAA CALL VARIATIONS

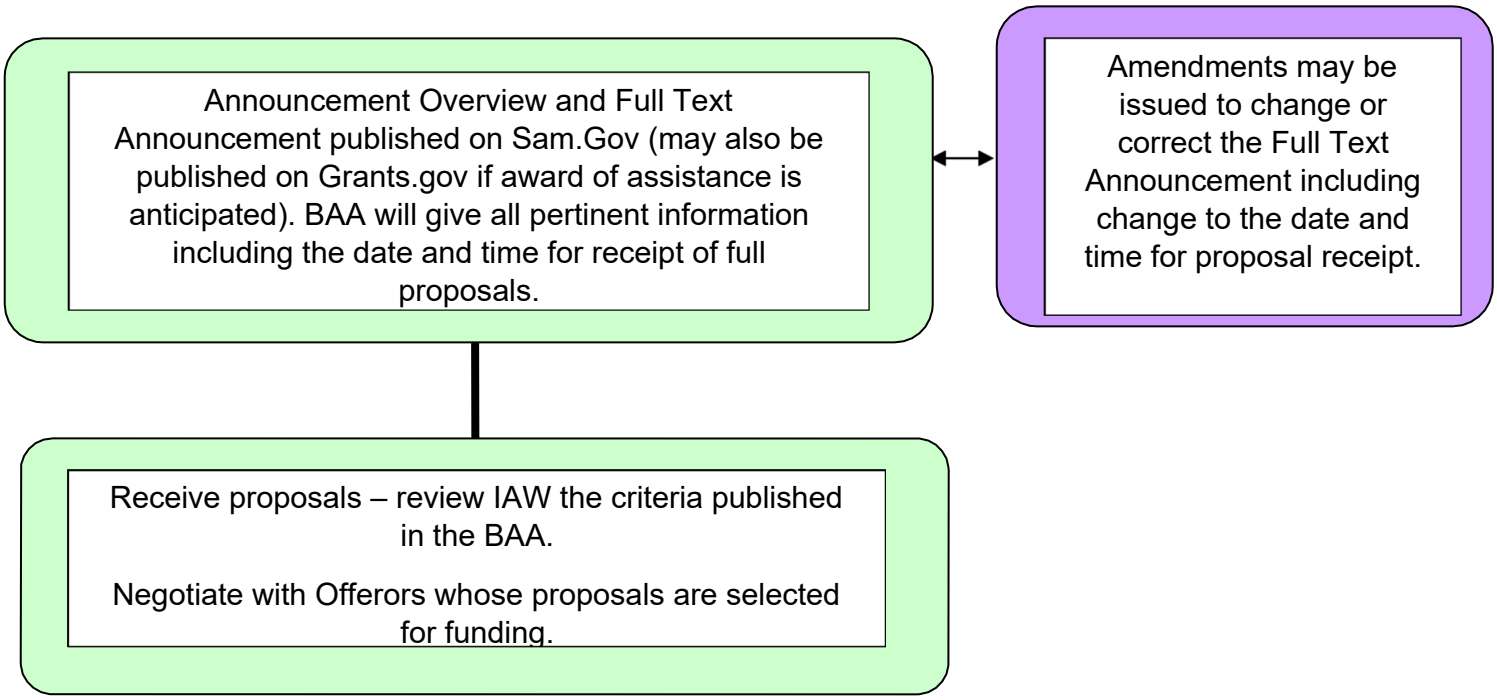
BAA with Calls (TACTICAL)



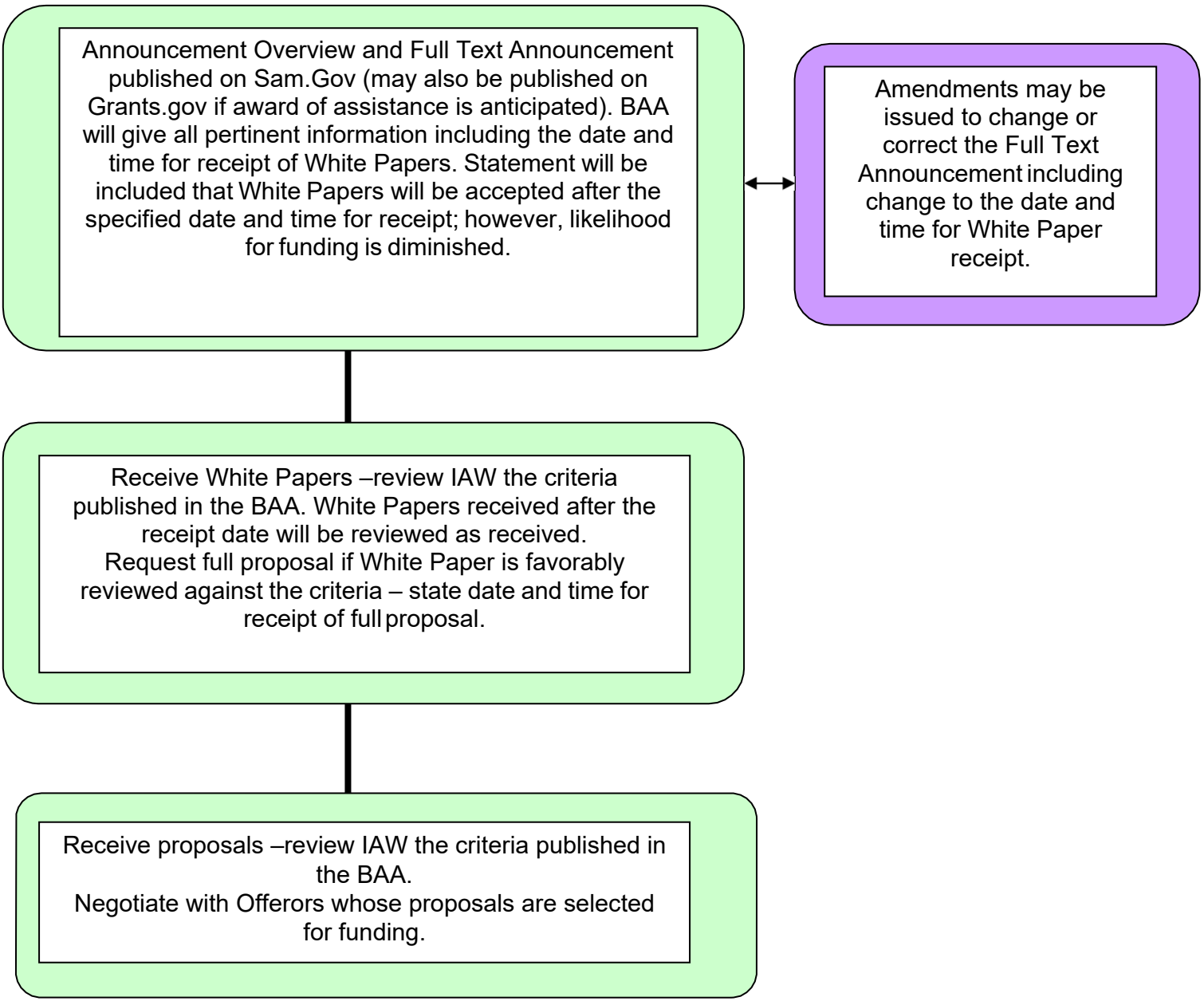
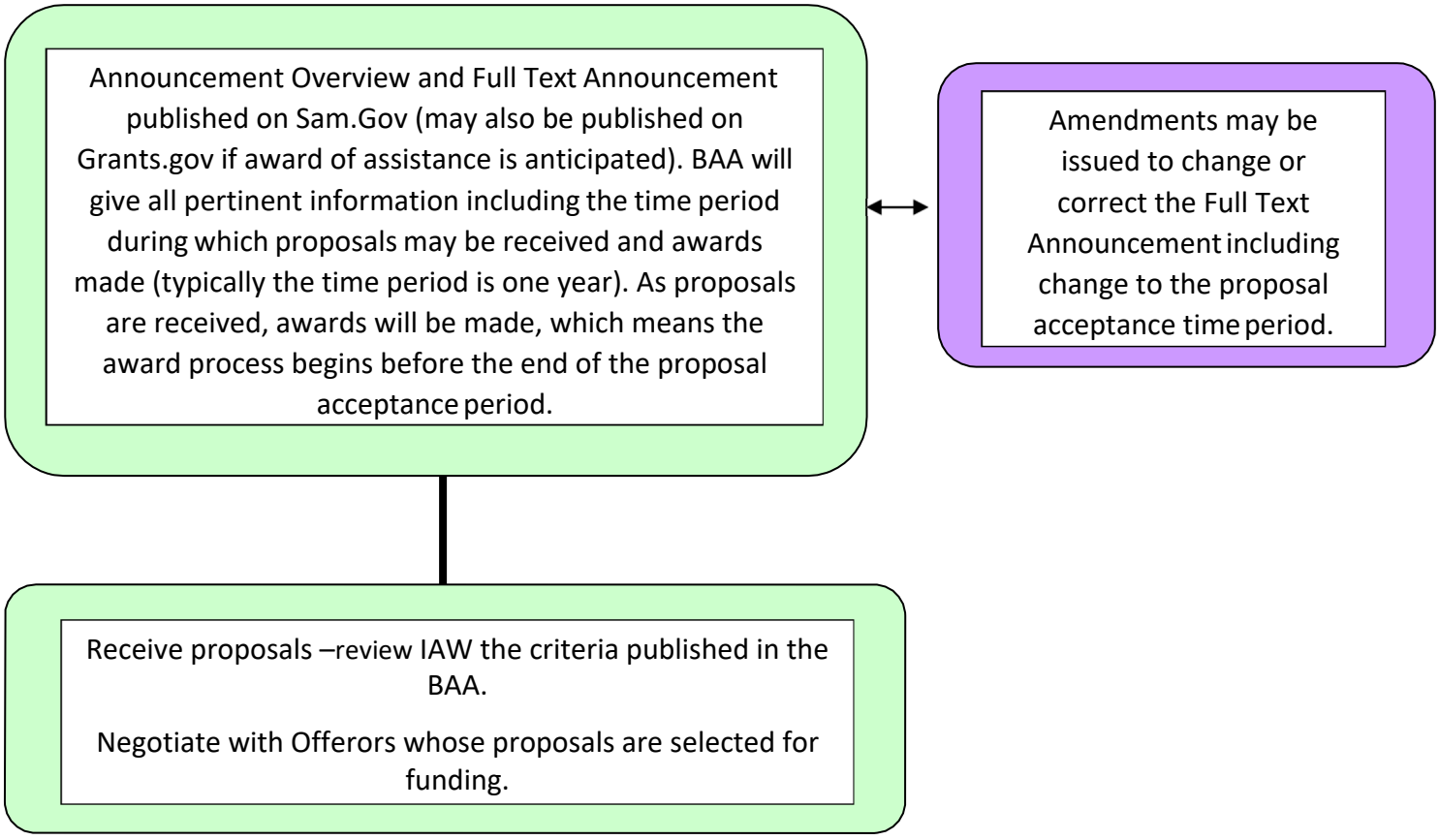
Two-Step Open Call



One-Step Closed Call



Two-Step Staggered-Closed Call



Open One-Step BAA