

SPECIAL NOTICE DARPA-SN-23-68
Ethical, Legal, and Societal Implications (ELSI) of Emerging Technologies RFI

Point of Contact: Catherine Stevens, DARPA/CMO
Email: DARPA-SN-23-68@darpa.mil
Responses Due: June 9, 2023 at 4:00 PM EDT

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) seeks to explore the ethical, legal, and societal implications (ELSI) of emerging technologies. ELSI has a vital role in the responsible development of emerging technologies by guiding innovation, maximizing the potential application space, and facilitating the dialogue with future end-users, the public, and policymakers to ensure all perspectives and implications are considered.

To understand the state of the art, this RFI seeks input from experts who study the effective integration of ELSI considerations within disruptive, multi-disciplinary technology development and transition.

Information Requested

This RFI is intended to solicit a broad community perspective on ELSI considerations for emerging technologies. Examples include autonomous systems, AI assurance, space, human-machine teaming, distributed manufacturing, biotechnology, neurotechnology, novel sensing capabilities, and many others across DARPA's broad portfolio. DARPA invites responses from all capable and qualified sources, including, but not limited to, universities, university-affiliated research centers, and private or public companies. Presentation of any available published or preliminary data is encouraged, and responses will be used to inform and guide a future potential DARPA workshop on this topic to connect subject matter experts across multiple technical topics to discuss current ELSI research and practice.

To assess approaches for incorporation of ELSI into emerging technology development and transition, DARPA is specifically interested in current research ideas across technical areas that address the following ELSI topic areas:

1. Broad, comprehensive risk frameworks for effective ELSI evaluation of disruptive technologies.
2. Operationalized processes/methods for developing technology that performs in line with ethical and legal standards.
3. Practical definitions of responsible oversight and equitable access for emerging technologies.
4. Current ELSI paradigms and considerations that may need to be adapted or reconsidered due to disruptive technologies.
5. Portability of existing ELSI processes/frameworks to new technical areas and at different technological maturities.
6. Additional ELSI considerations for military-focused technology with civilian applications or use by non-U.S. populations.
7. Equitable sharing of benefits and burdens for developing technologies.
8. Initial ELSI groundwork for fast-paced emerging technology development that the broader research community can incorporate.

Format

Respondents to this RFI should limit responses to no more than 4 pages and indicate which numbered topic(s) above each response addresses. Respondents may address multiple topics in a single response. Respondents are encouraged to be as succinct as possible while providing actionable insight. If specific published articles are relevant to the response, please provide these within the appropriate section of the citations only. Each submission should be typed in 12-point, single-spaced font on 8.5 by 11-inch pages, with 1-inch margins. All submissions must be electronic, adhere to the content formatting described above, and use one of the following file formats: Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word.

Submission

All technical and administrative correspondence, questions regarding this announcement, how to respond to this RFI, and submissions should be sent to DARPA-SN-23-68@darpa.mil. Please refer to ***Ethical, Legal, and Societal Implications (ELSI) of Emerging Technologies*** RFI in all correspondence. Emails sent directly to Program Managers may result in delayed or no response.

Administrative

This RFI is issued solely for information and new program planning purposes; it does not constitute a formal proposal solicitation. Under FAR 15.201(e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. Submission is voluntary and is not required to propose to a subsequent Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) (if any) or other research solicitation (if any) on this topic. DARPA will NOT provide reimbursement for costs incurred in responding to this RFI. NO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE RFI RESPONSE. The submitter is responsible for clearly defining to the Government what is considered proprietary data. Any proprietary information should be clearly labeled as "proprietary." DARPA will disclose submission contents only for review and evaluation. DARPA is not obligated to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents concerning any information submitted under this RFI.