

Questions & Answers – MATERIAL IARPA-BAA-16-11

Responses to Questions # 1 to 8

Note: Questions posted verbatim and in order of time received.

Q1: I'm sure you agree that it's in the best interests of everyone to have the most appropriate technologies available for consideration. Can you direct me to individuals in larger organizations who I can make aware of our excellent language analysis developments, to see if they would like us to join their proposal?

A1: IARPA cannot recommend potential partnerships. We encourage you to add yourself to the "interested vendors" list for the MATERIAL program and see other registered interested vendors here: <https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=b9fe325434c8c668b66b7499cf435b85&tab=ivl&tabmode=list&subtab=list&subtabmode=list&=>

Q2: Will the surprise language evaluations be open to public, so volunteers in addition to performers can participate, as in the case of Babel?

A2: While public challenges using data from the MATERIAL program are indeed anticipated, IARPA cannot commit at this time to opening the surprise language evaluations to the public.

Q3 (edited version): We are writing with regards to the [MATERIAL RFP](#). We were wondering if the call is limited to MT-based technologies or if you also encourage QA/IR capabilities over the machine translated text... *[Text removed by IARPA]* We'd like to hear your thoughts on whether this direction fits with your vision for MATERIAL or how we can refocus for a better fit.

A3: Multiple technologies will be required to address the MATERIAL problem. Proposers should detail reasonable solutions they expect will exceed the target metric given the constraints of the program. The Government will not provide an opinion on any technical approach during the source selection process of this BAA.

Q4: Can you clarify the meaning of "PLD Domains (X)" and "CLE Domains (Y)" in table 1 on page 17? Does this mean "domains for which queries are initially released during the PLD cycle" and "domains for which queries are initially released during the CLE cycle"? If this is the case, would it be correct to amend row 3, column 2, line 2 of Table 1 to read "50% of Queries in PLD/SLD Domains (X)" and to amend row 4, column 2, line 2 of Table 1 to read "75% of Queries in PLD/SLD Domains (X)"?

A4: For each PLD and SLD period, two domains will apply to the released queries (noted as X in the table) but they will differ by language. As stated in the second paragraph on page 16, during the CLE period, four domains (the two PLD/SLD domains X plus two new domains noted as Y) will apply. They will differ by language. Performers will know which domains will apply for each period upon query

release because queries contain the domain information. It is indeed the case that the SLD cycle has the same structure as the PLD cycle, per Figure 4, page 16, so Table 1 will be amended as suggested.

Q5: Is it the case that the PL and SL cycles are generally distinct, i.e. the Build Packs, Documents, Queries, and Domains for the PL are not [necessarily] the same as for the SL?

A5: The PL and SL cycles have the same structure for development and evaluation but with different languages and timelines (See Figure 4, page 16). A general timeline is given in Figure 5, page 17. Build packs, queries, domains and documents will indeed differ by language.

Q6: The BAA, on pages 16-22, details the time between kickoff and CLE, and between CLE and CLE+S, in each of the periods and for each of the cycles (PL and SL). It also notes that Evaluation Data for CLE Test is released "At end of PLD and SLD Period" (Table 1, row 4, column 3) and that Evaluation Data for CLE+S Test is released "After CLE Evaluations" (Table 1, row 5, column 3). Further, the "End of development period" is noted in Figure 5 for each period and each cycle. The lengths of the Development periods and the periods between development and CLE Test are not provided, as far as I could tell. Can clarification be provided as to the lengths of each of these 12 periods?

A6: The development period when performers have access to the NIST server to establish their methods ends as detailed in Figure 5, page 17. There will only be one development period per language release. Figure 5 also provides an overview of the time frames associated with each period.

Q7: Will Evaluation Data for CLE+S Test be provided immediately after the CLE evaluation point, in each period and cycle? If not, what is the length of the period between CLE+S Test Evaluation Data release and CLE+S evaluation for each period and cycle?

A7: We do expect to provide evaluation data shortly after each CLE test, most likely within a week of scoring.

Q8: Is the Volume 1 Section 2 – Summary of Proposal length of estimated NTE 4 pages a hard limit? i.e. can we make it 5 pages without being considered non-responsive?

A8: In accordance with the BAA, the summary of proposal is estimated not to exceed 4 pages, but it is not a hard limit. Potential offerors are reminded of the hard 30 page limit for Volume 1; any pages exceeding this limit shall be removed and not considered during the evaluation process.