NCITE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND EDUCATION CENTER

A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

2024-2025 NCITE Research Projects Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP Issue Date: December 18, 2023
Proposal Due Date: February 9, 2024
Submit proposals by email to NCITERFP@unomaha.edu.

About NCITE

The National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE) is the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Center of Excellence for terrorism prevention and counterterrorism research. NCITE is a consortium of universities and industry partners whose mission is to conduct research, education, and workforce development activities that will respond to challenging problems and offer innovative solutions to issues faced by counterterrorism and targeted violence prevention professionals – both in the public and private sectors. Led by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the focus of NCITE is to support operationally relevant research and development efforts. More information may be found at https://www.unomaha.edu/ncite/.

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NCITE Research Grant Program Overview

NCITE's vision is to be the premier U.S. academic provider of counterterrorism research, technology, and workforce development.

NCITE's research seeks to innovate, educate, and create new counterterrorism and prevention strategies while building a workforce pipeline where it's desperately needed: in STEM and Homeland Security fields.

As DHS' trusted partner for counterterrorism and terrorism prevention research, NCITE seeks to bring together the brightest minds in the field and leverage the capabilities of colleges, universities, federal laboratories, industry, and nonprofit organizations to help thwart terrorism.

Our mission is to make these research findings relevant and ready. Our hope is to help America's Homeland Security frontline be known as first in-class in terrorism and targeted violence prevention.

Because NCITE is sponsored by the Office of University Programs in DHS' Science and Technology Directorate, the intent of this call is to spark innovation from university labs and research teams. As such, only proposals led by universities will be considered for funding. However, we do welcome collaborative proposals that include non-government organizations, individual consultants, and technology partners (although such partners are not required).

Moving from Year 4 to Year 5, NCITE is requesting proposals across our four research themes:

1. The nature of counterterrorism and targeted violence operations
2. The nationwide suspicious activity reporting initiative
3. Terrorism and targeted violence prevention and program evaluation
4. Counterterrorism and targeted violence workforce development

With those objectives in mind, NCITE requests proposals intended to address research questions and challenges that NCITE, DHS, and/or its partners in the Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE) have posed. NCITE will lead a scientific review of proposals and facilitate a DHS relevancy review after scientific merit has been evaluated.

Estimated Funding

Pending receipt of funding, NCITE intends to award approximately 2-3 new projects in 2024-2025. These projects will be conducted from approximately July 1, 2024, through 12 to 36 months following grant award, with the opportunity for continuation pending performance and DHS funding availability. Average award in 2023-2024 for a one-year period of

performance was $153K, and individual awards varied depending on level of effort and evaluation of impact to DHS mission areas.

Eligible Grantees

As noted above, organizations eligible to receive NCITE grants for 2024-2025 are institutes of higher education. NCITE does not award grants to individuals, private non-higher education organizations, or to federal, state, county, or local government entities — though those groups may be partners in the work conducted by the grant recipient. The proposal's designated principal investigator must be an employee of the higher-education organization applying for an NCITE grant.

Eligible Projects

In 2024-2025, NCITE will fund projects that should either generate new knowledge (research projects) or inspire and develop the current and/or future HSE workforce (workforce development and education projects). Funding decisions will be based on how well an invited proposal meets the evaluation criteria detailed in Appendix D. Quantitative scoring of the evaluation criteria will be provided by scientific reviewers and then advanced to DHS for a relevancy review. We are particularly interested in funding projects that align to the challenge questions listed in Appendix A.

Please note that all selected projects must be able to complete the proposed research using non-DHS data sources or simulated and/or synthetic data. DHS is unable to provide operational data suitable for algorithm development and testing to performers under this award. Each proposal must identify how and where it will acquire real, simulated, or other synthetically generated data.

NCITE reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this request for proposals. Submission requirements for this grant program may be waived at the discretion of NCITE.

In accordance with University of Nebraska at Omaha policy, NCITE does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran.

Submission Guidance

Deadline

The due date for grant proposals is 11:59 p.m. EST on February 9, 2024, via email. NCITERFP@unomaha.edu

Format

See Appendix B for cover page guidelines and Appendix C for details on proposal requirements.

Multi-Year Project Proposals

Applicants may submit multi-year proposals with deliverables and budgets with a period of performance beginning July 1, 2024. If submitting a multi-year proposal, applicants are advised to structure their workplan so that meaningful milestones and deliverables will be delivered in each one-year period of performance. Partners awarded multi-year projects must follow the same reporting schedule for semiannual and annual reports.

Budgets submitted in the proposal will be reviewed each year. Continued funding after the initial 12-month period of performance will be contingent upon acceptable performance in reviews by NCITE and DHS, available funding, and continued need. Funding for year one of a project is not a guarantee that NCITE will continue to fund the program in successive years.

Applicant Notification and Timeline

NCITE will strive to notify applicants regarding our intent to fund in June 2024 for a period of performance beginning on July 1, 2024. Please note that research project start date is contingent upon IRB, DHS Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO), and DHS Privacy approvals.

Privacy Guidelines

Research grant awards will be subject to the terms and conditions found on the NCITE webpage at https://www.unomaha.edu/ncite/request-for-proposals/rfp-year5.php. Applicants are encouraged to review the terms and conditions prior to drafting and submitting a proposal to determine their ability and/or willingness to adhere to the proposal requirements and to accept the terms and conditions in a subaward should one be awarded.

Due to the nature of the cooperative agreement that governs the NCITE grant from DHS, subaward projects are subject to additional privacy guidelines. NCITE's review of proposals will include an evaluation of risk to individuals' privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. As a result, applicants must complete the attached Data Acquisition Management Plan to provide a description of the data they intend to use in the proposed project (particularly third-party data, defined below) and how they will acquire and manage that data, to include the use of privacy-enhancing technologies.

- Third-party data is data which is not generated via project activities. This could include social media data, existing datasets shared by other researchers, commercial datasets, etc. Examples of data that is not third-party would include data generated through surveys,

interviews, focus groups, or experiments conducted by the research team.

If a project that includes methods or data sources that could result in the collection, generation, or use of personally identifiable information (PII), sensitive PII, or other privacy sensitive information is awarded, the principal investigator shall incorporate safeguards to ensure alignment with the Fair Information Practice Principles (FIPPs) and to adequately protect the data. Information on those safeguards should be provided in the proposal, and NCITE will work with awardees to ensure they are in accordance with the FIPPs.[1]

- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information that permits the identity of an individual to be directly or indirectly inferred, including any information that is linked or linkable to that individual, regardless of whether the individual is a U.S. citizen, legal permanent resident, visitor to the U.S., or employee or contractor to the Department.
- Sensitive PII is PII which, if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual.
- Privacy sensitive means that the research activity could have an impact on an individual's privacy – be it bodily privacy, communications privacy, territorial privacy, or information privacy.

Examples of projects that meet the definition of privacy sensitive may include those that use social media data or those that involve commingling information with other data sources that may make it privacy sensitive. Although, in general, NCITE can fund projects that are privacy sensitive, please be advised that those projects may require additional levels of review by NCITE and DHS. This process can take up to 3-6 months, so it is important that researchers build privacy reviews from the funder into their workplans as a funded activity.

Questions about this Request for Proposals

Applicants should direct questions about this request for proposals to NCITERFP@unomaha.edu. Written questions will be accepted until Friday, January 26, 2024.

NCITE will publish a document with all written questions and responses to the RFP page on our website by February 2, 2024, for review by all prospective applicants.

1 https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy-policy-guidance-memorandum-2008-01.pdf

Appendix A: Challenge Questions

The NCITE challenge questions are research questions or homeland security challenges from NCITE, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other partners in the homeland security enterprise (HSE) that new proposals should seek to address. They are aligned to the four NCITE research themes and will guide the direction of new projects for Year 5. As you develop proposals to address the identified challenges, please consider how your proposed project aligns to:

- DHS Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence
- National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism
- FBI and DHS Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism

Please keep in mind that proposals should be research-based and leverage your academic expertise and training to provide foundational knowledge to inform the HSE's strategy and policy for the counterterrorism mission over the next 5-10 years.

Challenge Area 1: Nature of Counterterrorism and Targeted Violence Operations

Threat Landscape

1. What is the nature of extremist threat of violence to unexpected or novel targets in the United States and how can we prevent acts of targeted violence against them? How have these threats changed since October 7, 2023?

2. What upcoming state, local, tribal, or territorial legislation, regulatory restrictions, policies, or court decisions might impact terrorism or targeted violence (e.g., abortion-related violence, climate-related violence, online violence) in the United States?

3. What potential developments overseas are most likely to shape the trajectory in the coming years of the threat from homegrown violent extremists inspired by foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) to mobilize in support of violence in the Homeland or travel to conflict zones to support these FTOs?

4. To what extent is domestic polarization in the coming years likely to contribute to violent threats and attacks impacting public safety and security and democratic institutions in the Homeland?

5. How do attacks by and propaganda/online activity from domestic violent extremists, homegrown violent extremists inspired by foreign terrorist organizations, and targeted violence mass casualty actors not motivated by an ideology *influence* one another and the overall threat of mass casualty violence in the Homeland?

6. How do terrorist groups' leadership and command structures affect their operational structures? How does leader loss or shifts in capabilities affect operational goals and strategies? How do world events (e.g. war, regional conflicts) and state actor violence inspire, shape, fuel, or deter terrorist activities? What are the key indicators of change or predictability of rises or reductions of terrorism?

7. What impact are international (e.g. cross border) military conflicts having on the strategies of global terrorist actors (including FTOs and members of the transnational RMVE movement)? How are those

conflicts affecting terrorist operations and tactics? How are the conflicts affecting global counterterrorism (CT) efforts? How could war contribute to terrorist threats to the United States and its interests worldwide? What are options for mitigating potential negative CT ripple effects?

8. How have terror networks and their affiliated facilitation networks evolved post COVID to facilitate transnational movements globally? Have they further evolved beyond tactics, techniques, and practices addressed globally through UN Security Council Resolutions (such as UNSCR 2178; UNSCR 2396; UNSCR 2482) which sought to identify and disrupt said transnational movements? Have these networks evolved their TTPs to align with larger trends seen in global migration such as the use of Charter flights, as a means of circumventing? What should policy and practitioners in the counter terrorism space consider as these networks seek to align their TTPs to general migration patterns?

9. What are the implications of emerging transnational REMVE threats animated by the convergence of online child exploitation, gore posting, and extortion? To what extent are individuals engaged in such activities part of a larger network? Are there connections between these individuals and others who subscribe to other strains of REMVE ideology?

Emerging Technology

10. How can terrorists make malign use of the emerging technologies associated with additive manufacturing (e.g., 3D printing technologies). What groups and/or individuals are most likely to adopt emerging technology? What specific factors could spur increases or decreases in emerging technology adoption by terrorist groups or violent extremists?

11. How might threat actors use Artificial Intelligence applications to identify vulnerabilities to critical infrastructure and tactics to employ against those vulnerabilities?

Challenge Area 2: Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative

1. How can we facilitate partners' abilities to identify, evaluate, and share tips/leads associated with terrorism and targeted violence? Is the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI) achieving what it was set up to do? How does the deployment of NSI mitigate primary drivers of terrorism and targeted violence?

2. To what extent are Private Sector partners aware of and coordinating with F/SLTT entities in facilitating of reporting tips/leads with regional fusion centers? What does research-based evidence suggest would improve collaboration?

3. What are the most important indicators and signposts in detecting significant shifts in the overall Homeland terrorism threat environment or with specific movements (e.g., homegrown violent extremists, racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, etc.) which comprise this threat? What are best practices in communicating such shifts to SLTT, private sector, and violence prevention practitioner partners, as well as the general public?

Challenge Area 3: Terrorism and Targeted Violence Prevention & Program Evaluation

1. What can academia do to support DHS Regional Prevention Coordinators, CISA protective security advisors, and other federal employees who serve as liaisons with local and regional communities around the country?

2. How can we move beyond self-report measures and counting metrics to measure the efficacy of prevention programs? What innovations in measurement and program evaluation can be brought to bear on the unique challenges in targeted violence and terrorism prevention programming? How can these measures/approaches be used to build a corpus of evidence for targeted violence and terrorism prevention programs?

Challenge Area 4: Research on Counterterrorism and Targeted Violence Workforce Development

1. Using the National Intelligence Council's 2040 Global Trends Report, forecast what work-related competencies might be needed for the counterterrorism professional. With a changing regulatory, social, and technological landscape, what CT-related jobs are emerging that either do not currently exist or need to be scaled up across the U.S.? What are the anticipated or emerging requirements (e.g., KSAOs) of those jobs? What tools (e.g., technologies) will be required for those jobs?

2. What steps can DHS take to create a more cohesive culture focusing on trust and cooperation across its many components who manage the counter terrorism and targeted violence prevention missions? Similarly, what strategies can the Department employ to attract and retain top talent, particularly in competitive fields like data science?

3. What CT-related skills would help fortify non-governmental critical infrastructure owners and operators in securing against new or existing threats? Who are counterterrorism and targeted violence prevention professionals' key partners, and what skills do they need to support keep communities safe?

4. What are the key challenges impacting the recruitment and retention of professional safety and security personnel? What can DHS do to address these challenges?

5. What educational programs (e.g., courses, certifications) for the future are needed to train and develop prevention experts who are adjacent to TVTP career fields (e.g., licensed clinical social workers, first responders)?

Appendix B: Cover Page

Information to be included in your cover page:

- Project Title
- NCITE Research Theme
- Challenge Question (if applicable)
- Project Information
    - Principal Investigator (Name, Institution, and Contact Information)
    - Co-Principal Investigators (Name, Institution, and Contact Information)
    - Administrative Contact (Name, Institution, and Contact Information)

Appendix C: Proposal Requirements

All project proposals – either research and development or workforce development – in response to this call must explicitly include the following sections below. Proposals should be no more than 12 single-spaced pages. A Project Workplan Template can be found under "application documents" on the NCITE RFP website.

Proposals must contain all the following elements. Applicants should strictly abide by this framework.

1. A completed cover page that contains the information shown in Appendix B, identifying the research question/challenge need that your research project will address. Note: cover page is not included in the 12-page limit.

2. Detailed descriptions of your project to include the following sections:

    a. **Abstract (a summary of objectives, outcomes, value proposition)**
    Provide a summary overview of the research concept being proposed, to include a description of:
        - Your research objectives (at a high level)
        - The intended outcomes of your project
        - The value proposition for your project.

    b. **Objectives/Purpose**
    Provide a description of:
        - The tangible objectives and outcomes of your research and detail how those outcomes map onto the DHS Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence.
        - The purpose of the research, including key literature references, demonstrating that this concept will help address a resiliency need identified by DHS, its federal partners, or the homeland security enterprise that is NOT currently being adequately addressed.

    c. **Baseline**

Identify the baseline state of knowledge or practice in your target domain (e.g., currently, the USG does not know the future impact of pending F/SLTT laws on domestic terrorism in the U.S.).

d. **Methodology**

Clearly describe your research methodology to include the proposed method, required data, and analytic technique.

e. **Data**

Describe in detail the types of data and data sources you anticipate using to complete the proposed research.

- Identify if you will be using any third-party data or privacy-sensitive data (e.g., social media data, data requiring execution of a license or consent/cooperation of current owner or custodian, PII or sensitive PII, protected critical infrastructure information, 1st amendment rights information).
- Describe how you anticipate using, storing, and protecting all data.

f. **Project Milestones and Deliverables**

There are several required deliverables and reporting metrics throughout the course of the project as outlined below:

i. Required to begin work:
   - Submission of project to your university's Institutional Review Board (IRB)
   - Submission of institutional approvals to the DHS Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) and Privacy Office via NCITE administrative team and OUP Program Manager
   - Submission of Data Acquisition and Management Plan
   - Government kick-off meeting via Microsoft Teams

ii. Required Reporting
   - Center of Excellence Metrics Spreadsheet (December and June) tracking quantitative metrics including media mentions, publications, presentations, students associated with your project and transition items. A template will be provided.
   - Semiannual Report (mid-December) describing scientific and applied outcomes of research, as well as students impacted, government engagement, and field & industry outreach. A template will be provided.
   - Annual Report (early July) describing scientific and applied outcomes of research, as well as students impacted, government engagement, and field & industry outreach. A template will be provided.

iii. Required Participation
   - Participation in annual NCITE meeting in Omaha, D.C., or virtual

Using the provided table below, add your project's type of deliverable and the intent, organizing by date, keeping the required items in the chart.

Deliverable Type & Sub-type:

Milestones: A milestone is a key project step or activity, included to provide an overview of project timeline.

Deliverables: A deliverable is a tangible product, report, or final outcome delivered by the project team. Types of deliverables include:

1. **Research Report**: This deliverable is a comprehensive, full-length report on a given topic of research. It will go through a full peer review process and is meant to be shared with government stakeholders.
2. **Research Brief**: This deliverable is shorter report (<10 pages), usually describing interim results or providing a summary of a more extensive report. It will go through an abbreviated peer review process and is meant to be shared with government stakeholders.
3. **Infographic**: This deliverable is designed to clearly convey key findings from a research project. It will go through a peer review process, although the type of review will depend on the content/purpose (e.g., standalone infographic vs. infographic explainer of full report).
4. **Interim Deliverable**: This is a pre-deliverable that will be submitted to NCITE to show progress but is not intended to be public facing. Although it will undergo review, it will not be distributed online or directly to stakeholders (exceptions might include when a stakeholder has asked to review). Examples of this might involve data underlying journal articles submitted for peer-review publication.
5. **Other**: Some projects may result in additional types of final products such as presentations, workshops, trainings, etc. Please clearly describe the proposed deliverable in the description of proposed activity column.

Deliverable Type	Description of Proposed Activity (include approximate page count)	Projected Date
REQUIRED MILESTONE	Submission of IRB Approvals	ASAP
REQUIRED MILESTONE	Hold Kickoff Meeting with Project Team/NCITE/Government	August 2024
REQUIRED MILESTONE	Data Acquisition and Management Plan	August 2024
REQUIRED REPORTING	Semiannual Progress Report and COE Accomplishment Sheet	December 2024
REQUIRED MILESTONE	Attendance at Annual Meeting	Spring 2025
REQUIRED REPORTING	Annual Progress Report and COE Accomplishment Sheet	July 2025

g. **Performance Metrics**
Describe the metrics you will use to evaluate progress or impact of your project.

h. **Transition Plan**
Describe how you deliver end-user value to include how you will disseminate

knowledge products or develop, protect, and market technology products.

i. **Stakeholder Engagement**
List and describe current DHS or HSE stakeholders and partner relationships. Describe the benefits that would accrue to DHS and/or the HSE through successful completion of your research. Identify specific DHS components and other HSE agencies, owners, and operators that would benefit. Describe your proposed plan to engage with them throughout the project.

j. **Potential Programmatic Risks**
Describe any potential risks or barriers to completing the work as described.

k. **Project Outcomes and Outputs**
Describe the anticipated outcomes and outputs of your project, including information on how those outcomes and outputs will advance or impact current policies, procedures, technologies, or capabilities. Describe how your project will improve upon the current state of knowledge and practice.

l. **Qualifications**
Provide a summary of the expertise and capabilities of the research team, including:
    - The applicant's credentials in this topic area, including past accomplishments. Experience with the NCITE consortium should be highlighted when relevant.
    - The names of public- and private-sector partners.
    - Commitments from partners in terms of collaboration and resources (letters of support do not count against page counts).

m. **Citations** (not included in the 12-page limit)

n. **Estimated Cost**
Detail the total estimated cost for the project using a 12-month (or multi-year) period of performance with submission of the budget template and budget justification (templates found on the NCITE webpage at www.unomaha.edu/ncite under the research tab).

Note that upon award, NCITE may require additional documentation, such as a human-subject research plan or a research safety plan, if applicable and per the deliverable requirements to conduct this work.

Applicants may append any additional documentation they feel will help the decision process of NCITE. Examples of such information may include resumes of key personnel and letters of commitment from research partners. Although such appendices are not subject to the 12-page limit, applicants should exercise discretion in providing additional material.

Project Reporting

If awarded a research grant – in addition to other promised deliverables – the grantee shall provide NCITE with progress reports throughout the project period as noted above. These include periodic meetings with NCITE and government end-users as well as semiannual and annual progress reports.

Final invoices must be submitted within 30 days following the grant end June 30, 2025.

NCITE may track metrics on funded projects for up to two years after their completion. The metrics will include information on publications, patents, commercialization, student education, external sponsorship, and further collaborations among the partners that were facilitated by NCITE funding.

Templates and Supplemental Documents

The full RFP along with project proposal templates can be found on the NCITE webpage at www.unomaha.edu/ncite under the Research tab.

All proposals must include:

- Required sections listed above as outlined in the appropriate Project Workplan Template,
- A written budget justification,
- An Excel budget sheet,
- University Negotiated Indirect Rate Sheet

Research grant awards will be subject to the Terms and Conditions found on the NCITE webpage at www.unomaha.edu/ncite under the Research tab.

Appendix D: Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The technical description of the proposed project will be reviewed in two phases. First, NCITE will conduct a scientific review of proposals. Second, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stakeholders will evaluate the relevance of proposed projects.

Scientific Review
Full proposals will be evaluated by NCITE on several criteria:

1. Scientific Contribution
    a. Novelty of research questions
    b. Usefulness of proposed research in addressing scientific problems
    c. Methodological quality
    d. Scientific expertise and viability
2. Planning Quality
    a. Identification and mitigation of programmatic risks
    b. Identification of performance metrics
    c. Identification of a clear transition plan for knowledge and deliverables
3. Stakeholder Relevance
    a. Demonstration of baseline understanding of current DHS knowledge or capabilities
    b. New improvements to the DHS baseline
    c. Anticipated impact on DHS operations
    d. Identification of potential DHS stakeholders

Included in this review are: validity of the proposed approach and likelihood of success based on current state of the art and on the scientific principles underpinning the proposed approach; development of a comprehensive and complete workplan and schedule with milestones and interrelated tasks that clearly lead to the successful completion of the project; identification of key technical risks and mitigation strategies to address them; appropriateness of proposed budget for the planned work; and considerations of protections of privacy and CRCL of U.S. persons.

NCITE also looks for teams that are multi-disciplinary and provide an appropriate level of expertise and capability to provide high confidence of success. As part of that, NCITE also encourages inclusion of plans to inspire students – the future generation of the counterterrorism targeted violence prevention workforce.

Relevancy Review
Following scientific review, projects are advanced to relevancy review. In this phase, members of the NCITE government board of directors and other USG stakeholders will evaluate whether a project significantly advances NCITE's ability to address the operational needs identified by DHS and its partners. Projects that do not show potential impact to or relevance for the USG will not be advanced for funding.

Appendix E: Intellectual Property Guidelines

Intellectual Property (IP) that will either be brought into the project (Background Intellectual Property) or will be developed via the project will require a basic IP Management Plan prior to being awarded should your project be selected. The IP plan should address the following if applicable to your project:

1. Identify ownership of Project IP (who will own the IP?);

2. Licensing rights of project-developed IP, including revenue sharing amount for joint owners of project participants, if applicable (who will have what license rights to the IP?);

3. The project participant(s) that will have rights to enforce rights in project-developed IP (who can enforce those rights?);

4. Background Intellectual Property (BIP) needed for the Project and terms (if any) under which that BIP will be made available to Project Participants both during and after performance of the Project;

5. Terms under which the collective IP will be made available to government and/or industry upon its transition to general use;

6. Who will bear the filing and other costs of managing that Project IP, including the cost of prosecuting foreign and domestic patent rights;

7. An affirmation of the adoption, without exception, of the provisions of Article I, Section A, paragraph 15 and Article II, Section J, of the most current Terms & Conditions of Cooperative Agreement #20STTPC00001-04-01.