

“Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment”

NOFO Q&A RECEIVED DURING NOVEMBER 15, 2023

WEBINAR

The following Questions and Answers (Q&As) received during the November 15, 2023, NOFO webinar focus on the Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment discretionary Cooperative Agreement Program and the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) posted on October 26, 2023.

Except for the statutes and regulations cited, the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide information regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

General

1. Will the presentation and recording be available after the session?

The NOFO webinar slides used during the webinar will be posted at the same time as the NOFO Q&As. The NOFO webinar recording was posted in Amendment 1 on 1/12/2024.

2. Will the attendees of this webinar be shared publicly / with those who have attended?

No, the attendees of the webinar will not be shared publicly.

3. How can we submit additional questions after the webinar?

Questions about the NOFO can be submitted to Rob Miller at Rob.Miller@dot.gov. Responses to the questions will be posted to Grants.gov.

NOFO Goals

4. Is improving vehicle safety the main goal/scope of this program? Do you need some aspects of vehicle safety improvement in the proposal with vehicle connectivity?

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

Improving safety of vehicles and vulnerable road users is one of the goals of the Accelerating V2X Deployment Initiative. Please see Section A.4 of the NOFO for a list of the Department and initiative goals applicable to projects funded under this NOFO.

See page 59, Section E of the NOFO on APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION for a listing of the criteria the Government will use for evaluating the applications. “Alignment with Initiative Goals. Degree to which the proposed project and technical approach successfully supports and addresses: a. Safety and as applicable, other Initiative Goals (Section A.4.2).” See page 61, Section E of the NOFO on APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION for information on how Departmental goals will be used in the evaluation of applications. “After completing the merit review, among projects of similar merit, DOT will prioritize projects based on the degree to which the proposed project and technical approach successfully supports and addresses: Safety and as applicable, other Departmental Goals.”

- 5. How does this \$40M NOFO align with the Deployment roadmap in V2X summit announcement, i.e., what deliverables from this fund into Short Term (2024 -2026) roadmap? If specific parameters and goals are addressed directly from the draft V2X interoperability plan and then adjustments are made in the final plan which changes the referenced parameters, can the parameters be adjusted after the fact?**

The latest available version of the Draft National V2X Deployment Plan may be a useful reference for applicants to place this NOFO in the broader context of activities and efforts of USDOT related to V2X deployment. However, in the preparation of applications responsive to this NOFO, please note that this relationship is only contextual. For example, Initiative Goals (NOFO page 14) and Evaluation Criteria (NOFO page 59) do not make specific reference to the National V2X Deployment Plan. Applications will only be evaluated based on the criteria identified in the NOFO solicitation. The contextual aspect is in relation to the NOFO deployment providing reference implementations that support the vision and mission of the Deployment Plan.

Definitions

- 6. How does the USDOT define “interoperability” in the context of this NOFO? Does interoperability mean integrate with commercial cellular? Or just that 5.9 GHz messages have to integrate with other 5.9 GHz messages? What types of interoperability are of highest priority (e.g., Between hardware providers, Between jurisdictions, Between communication channels, Between SCMS, Between OEM vehicles)?**

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

The National ITS Reference Architecture glossary defines Interoperability as the “ability of two or more systems or components to exchange information and to use the information that has been exchanged” ([Glossary \(arc-it.net\)](#)).

Consistent with this definition, the NOFO states on page 8, Section A.3: “...the notion of interoperable connectivity – that is, that a diverse range of mobile, in-vehicle, and roadside devices can communicate ubiquitously, efficiently, and securely in a privacy-protected manner using multiple wireless communications technologies, wireless messages, open data formats, and standards.”

For discussion regarding interoperability for the project, see page 10 in Section 3.1 of the NOFO on Deployment Site Features and Attributes: “Interoperability demonstrations must provide over-the-road evidence of successful and secure communications as well as the effective operation of ITS applications among diverse roadside equipment, in-vehicle, and mobile devices. Demonstrations of interoperable connectivity are sought both among equipment and processes within a deployment site as a first step, and utilizing technologies from across all awardee sites in a second step.”

For additional discussion regarding the vision of interoperability and the specific nature of the interoperability to be tested, please see the discussion in Section 3.2, page 12 of the NOFO:

“The DOT is cognizant that the vision of *interoperable connectivity* (See Section A.3) is aspirational and imprecise in nature, while testing and demonstration of interoperability must be concretely and precisely defined. For this Initiative, DOT expects awardees to focus (first) on the key interoperability building blocks in a deployed system, namely the transmission and reception of fundamental standards-conformant messages (e.g., Basic Safety Messages, Signal Phase and Timing and Map messages, and messages related to security credential management). In Phase 1, DOT expects that equipment from multiple vendors will demonstrate this fundamental level of interoperability. Note that all interoperability testing must be conducted with relevant security management processes “live” and connected with an operational SCMS.”

7. The NOFO mentions mobile devices several times. Is there a definition of mobile devices? Does the NOFO require the use of mobile devices?

The NOFO does not include a definition of mobile devices. The NOFO does not require the use of mobile devices. However, mobile devices may be proposed as a part of a comprehensive deployment approach, if required to address the specific problems identified in the application.

8. What is the definition of “vulnerable road users” for this grant?”

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

Page 7 of Section A.1 of the NOFO defines vulnerable road users by reference to the FHWA Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Guidance. That guidance document is located here: <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip/vru-safety-assessment-guidance>. The definitions on page 3 of the FHWA Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Guidance, the guidance document states:

“A vulnerable road user is a nonmotorist with a fatality analysis reporting system (FARS) person attribute code for pedestrian, bicyclist, other cyclist, and person on personal conveyance or an injured person that is, or is equivalent to, a pedestrian or pedalcyclist as defined in the ANSI D16.1-2007. (See 23 U.S.C. 148(a)(15) and 23 CFR 490.205). A vulnerable road user may include people walking, biking, or rolling. Please note that a vulnerable road user:

- Includes a highway worker on foot in a work zone, given they are considered a pedestrian.
- Does not include a motorcyclist.”

Technical

9. For VRU protection, can we use cellular technology, such as LTE or 5G incorporated with CV2X?

The type of communication being used should depend on the problem being addressed. Page 9, Section 3.1 of the NOFO states: “The initiative seeks innovative technical approaches featuring conformant and effective utilization of the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum, potentially augmented with other forms of wireless communications, enabling both measurable system impact and a path forward towards nationwide interoperability.”

10. For this program, are we to assume that V2X means C-V2X? C-V2X is not part of the FCC rules. The FCC is only allowing for a waiver of the 5.9 GHz rules. Does this program require the use of C-V2X?

For this program V2X is a broader term embracing multiple wireless technologies and standards. Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider the details of the current FCC regulation, including information provided [here](#). See page 10 of the NOFO, which states: “Deployments that do not utilize the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum will not be considered for award.”

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

- 11. Is use of the 5.9 GHz spectrum required? Would a cell-based communication system be considered? Can you include commercial cellular as well to this grant outside 5.9 GHz? Will our application be rejected if we include V2X that uses commercial cellular and NOT 5.9 GHz spectrum?**

Yes. See page 9, Section 3.1 of the NOFO, which states: “The initiative seeks innovative technical approaches featuring conformant and effective utilization of the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum, potentially augmented with other forms of wireless communications, enabling both measurable system impact and a path forward towards nationwide interoperability.”

- 12. Are we only allowed to operate in the upper 20 MHz per the current FCC waiver?**

Page 10, Section A.3.1 states: “Utilization of the ITS licensed 5.9 GHz spectrum must conform to all relevant FCC regulation, including obtaining all required waivers and the use of C-V2X standards.” Additional information on utilizing the 5.9 GHz spectrum may be found [here](#).

- 13. Can DSRC, in compliance with current FCC rules, be used in addition to C-V2X?**

In relation to the use of communication technology, the NOFO states: “The initiative seeks innovative technical approaches featuring conformant and effective utilization of the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum, potentially augmented with other forms of wireless communications, enabling both measurable system impact and a path forward towards nationwide interoperability.”

- 14. If the primary communication method for CV is not RSU, will the application still be accepted?**

The type of communication being used should depend on the problem being addressed. Applicants are encouraged to refer to page 9, Section 3.1 of the NOFO, which states: “The initiative seeks innovative technical approaches featuring conformant and effective utilization of the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum, potentially augmented with other forms of wireless communications, enabling both measurable system impact and a path forward towards nationwide interoperability.”

- 15. Should deployments as part of this grant expected to be 100% compliant with Connected Transportation Interoperability (CTI standards, e.g., CTI 4001, 4501)?**

Page 10 of the NOFO explains that deployment sites are sought with attributes including demonstratable standards-enabled interoperability and conformant, effective utilization of

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum including the use of C-V2X standards. CTI standards were developed based on work done by FHWA and ITE to increase an understanding of how to interpret standards for intersections and increase an entity's ability to deploy interoperable intersection devices.

16. Section 3.2 states IEEE 1602.2.1? Are you meaning 1609.2.1 specification.

Yes. All IEEE standards references are to 1609.2.1.

17. Will applications of Open Radio Access Networks (Open RAN) for C-V2X be considered as viable solution?

The utilization of Open RAN, among other competing alternatives, may be considered as an element of an applicant's comprehensive proposed solution. All applicants, no matter the technical approach selected, should carefully consider how their proposed solution manages both safety-critical and other communications traffic to meet overall deployment goals.

18. For the Onboard Units, do we need to deal with OEMs (car manufacturers), or can we use Off-the- Shelf Onboard Units?

The NOFO does not have any requirements for the Applicant to work with OEMs. The Applicant may choose to work with OEMs or use Off-the-Shelf onboard units, to address the specific problems identified in the application.

Project Scope/Schedule

19. In regard to equipped vehicles, is there a preference around vehicle type?

There is no preference for any specific vehicle type in the NOFO. The type(s) of vehicle(s) utilized within the deployment should depend on the problem(s) being addressed, and the types of applications being deployed to address the problem(s). Please see Section A.4 of the NOFO for a list of the Department and initiative goals applicable to projects funded under this NOFO.

20. Is there recommended size for the deployment (number of roadside units or number of cars) or it is to the proposer to suggest?

There is no recommended size for the deployment. It should depend on the problem being addressed, and the types of applications being deployed to address the problem. Please

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

see Section A.4 of the NOFO for a list of the Department and initiative goals applicable to projects funded under this NOFO.

- 21. Given the anticipated higher effectiveness of Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) technology in urban environments and the requirement of 5.9 GHz, do you foresee a predominant focus on developing V2X applications primarily for urban settings or some rural deployments would be required? Is there a geographic preference for this funding program, e.g., urban, suburban, rural, exurban?**

There is no geographic preference. The Government is seeking applications where there is a need. Please see Section A.4 of the NOFO for a list of the Department and initiative goals applicable to projects funded under this NOFO.

- 22. What are the rules of engagement for partnering with external entities? Especially private partners. Government contracts require an equal opportunity, best value, competitive bid process, however, the timeline does not afford a Request For Offer process. Partnerships are key to developing a strong proposal.**

The prime recipient must comply with the procurement standards identified in 2 CFR §§ 200.317 through 200.327 and 2 CFR § 1201.317. The Prime Recipient should become familiar with the procurement standards in 2 CFR Part 200 in total; however, non-state Prime Recipients should pay close attention to 2 CFR 200.318(a) General procurement standards and 2 CFR 200.319 Competition.

See page 60 of the NOFO explaining how applicant team experience will be evaluated: “The proposed set of deployment partners comprises a strong and qualified team with experience working directly with ITS technologies, applications, and systems.”

Pages 11-12 of the NOFO on Initiative Structure and Phasing, provide the project delivery timelines: “The maximum proposed duration of Phase 1 is 18 months” and “The minimum duration of Phase 2 (either proposed or in execution) is 12 months.” Applicants may propose project timelines of their own design subject to these constraints.

- 23. It says in NOFO - must be commercially (on a road) deployed - but can it be a new deployment if targeted to be commercially deployed?**

The Government encourages innovation. However, pages 11-12 of the NOFO on Initiative Structure and Phasing, provide the project delivery timelines: “The maximum proposed duration of Phase 1 is 18 months” and “The minimum duration of Phase 2 (either proposed or in execution) is 12 months.” Applicants may propose project timelines of their own design subject to these constraints.

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

- 24. Is there any flexibility in the timeline of project delivery for either or both Phases? Is the time it takes to make the Go/No-Go determination considered in the timeline provided? Can you clarify the go/no-go decision point? Is it the intent to fully deploy the proposed solution prior to the Go/No Go decision (within 18 months) or just a proof-of-concept type installation?**

Pages 11-12 of the NOFO on Initiative Structure and Phasing, provide the project delivery timelines: “The maximum proposed duration of Phase 1 is 18 months.” and “The minimum duration of Phase 2 (either proposed or in execution) is 12 months.” Applicants may propose project timelines of their own design subject to these constraints.

Go/No-Go determination to proceed to Phase 2 is based on the status of deliverables and successful completion of system testing and operational readiness demonstrations. See page 44 of the NOFO, Section 6, Approval to Proceed to Phase 2. The section has more information on eligibility to move to Phase 2. Applicants should carefully plan their Phase 1 project timeline to accommodate a rapid transition to Phase 2 that accommodates AO/AOR review of deliverables prior to issuance of written authorization to proceed in Phase 2.

- 25. Is there mandatory reporting during the post-deployment O&M period?**

No, this is not a requirement in the NOFO. Required submittals are discussed on pages 45-47 of the NOFO, section A.7 “Required Submittals or Milestones” and page 74, Section F.3 “Reporting”.

Awards

- 26. How many awards are being planned from this grant funding? What is the \$ range for each award from this NOFO?**

As stated on page 48 of the NOFO in Section B.2, the Government anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this NOFO. The government may make one, multiple, or no awards based on applications received.

- 27. What are the minimum and maximum project amounts that will be considered? Can the total of \$40 million be awarded to a single project?**

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

As stated on page 48 of the NOFO in Section B.1, the maximum total amount of funding available for awards under this NOFO is \$40 million. As stated on page 48 of the NOFO in Section B.2, the Government anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this NOFO. The government may make one, multiple, or no awards based on applications received.

28. The draft National V2X Deployment Plan said there were 20 grants anticipated to be given. Is this referring to other grant sources outside of this NOFO?

Correct. The draft National V2X Deployment Plan is referring to other grant programs outside of the Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment NOFO, such as discretionary grant programs like ATTAIN, SMART, and SS4A grants.

Eligibility / Applicant Requirements

29. NOFO Section C.1 states that private sector entities are eligible applicants. Are there unique requirements or considerations that a private sector entity should be aware of as a lead applicant or co-applicant?

Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C – Eligibility Information. “For both individual applications and joint applications, it is strongly encouraged that the applicant responsible for financial administration of the project be familiar with the requirements associated with managing Federal assistance projects. *NOTE: Eligible applicants should carefully consider the Deployment Site Features and Attributes identified in Section A.3.1.*”

Page 67 of the NOFO, Section F on Federal Award Administration Information provides information on the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to the award.

30. Under Section 3.1, it states that field tests on closed, or otherwise controlled environments will not be considered - We are a Private, secure test bed (proving Ground) so are we not eligible to be an applicant or part of an applicant team?

Page 12 of the NOFO, Section A.3.2 on Initiative Structure and Phasing explains the purpose of phase 2: “The Initiative is a *deployment* initiative, not a field operational test or technology demonstration.” However, a team may choose to use a test bed during Phase 1.

31. What does non-Federal domestic public sector organizations mean? What type of entities would this include/exclude?

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

Non-Federal domestic public sector organizations may include governmental agencies within the United States, exclusive of Federal agencies and organizations. For example, a state, county, or city Department of Transportation is a non-Federal domestic public sector organization.

32. Does private sector include foreign companies as well if it is a member of consortium?

See page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.1, on Eligible Applicants: “Eligible applicants include:

- non-Federal domestic public sector organizations,
- domestic academic institutions, and
- private sector/other entities incorporated in the United States.”

Private sector/other entities need to be incorporated in the United States to be eligible applicants. All entities involved as applicants, in any way, must be incorporated in the United States.

33. If a private company partner provides SaaS (Software as a Service) through grant funding, is the SaaS source code required to become open source? Does this apply to both sub-recipients and vendors?

Page 30 of the NOFO, on Task 1-3.2, addresses Open-Source Software and Supporting Documentation: “Software development, enhancements, alterations, or adaptations for the purposes of the deployment that are developed through Federal Funding are expected to be shared (open-source). Existing applications need not be made open-source, although new interfaces and any enhancements are required to be open-source.”

Application Process

34. Is the lead applicant the only entity that needs to register?

Yes. Only the lead applicant needs to register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov.

35. Do letters of support matter? E.g., from an entity that is not involved in the project?

See pages 53-54 of the NOFO, Section D.2, on Letters of Intent to Participate: “Provide a letter of intent to participate from significant team members as the applicant deems necessary.” In addition, page 56 of the NOFO, Section D.2 states: “The applicant should include letters of commitment from organizations that will provide a portion of the cost-

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

share and identify the source of those funds (e.g., general treasury funds, revolving loan fund, capital budget, in-kind labor, in-kind equipment, etc.).”

36. What about letters of support from elected officials, etc.? Are they part of page count?

See page 51, Section D.2. Letters of support do not count against the page limitations. These should be included as part of Appendix B (see page 53) with the section for letters of support clearly identified.

37. Are per-section page limits true limits (like the “2 page” Abstract) or just recommendations as long as the whole technical narrative is within 50 pages?

Page 50 of the NOFO, section D.2 Application Content Overview states: “Application volumes shall adhere to the page count limitations listed above. The page limit includes all narratives, figures, tables, appendices, and all other ancillary materials with the exception of the items identified below. Material that exceeds the page limits will not be evaluated.”

38. If a private company is proposed as the prime, are fees/profit allowed for the grant?

See page 54 of the NOFO, Section D.2 provides information on the Budget Application and states: “Profit/fee is not allowable for the Prime Recipient.”

39. Can subcontractors to a prime include fee?

Page 54 of the NOFO, Section D.2 provides information on the Budget Application and states: “Profit/fee is not allowable for the Prime Recipient.”

The NOFO does not preclude contractors for the award recipient from including profit/fee; however, the profit/fee must be in accordance with the 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E Cost Principles including that it is reasonable pursuant to 2 CFR 200.404.

40. Does the application need to propose both Phase 1 and Phase 2 effort, even though there is a Gate on go/No-go at the end of Phase 1?

Page 59 of the NOFO, Section E.1 explains how the Government will evaluate applications and includes the following evaluation criteria: “Operational Readiness for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Applicant demonstrates a state of operational readiness aligned with the schedule and required pacing of both phases of the program structure”.

41. Can you submit a scaled proposal, e.g., we could do X with \$\$ or Y with \$\$\$?

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

No. The budget proposed shall be for one proposed technical solution. Page 63 of the NOFO, Section E.4 states: “The FHWA may, during the selection process, enter into discussions with an applicant that may include mutually agreeing upon a lesser amount of a potential award than originally requested in the application if necessary due to the quantity, size and scope of the applications received in response to this NOFO and the results of the application review process.” As instructed in the NOFO page 54, Section D.2 regarding the budget application: “The FHWA encourages applicants to submit the most relevant and complete information they can provide.”

- 42. If the intention is to award one or multiple awards totaling up to \$40M, do the submittals need to be scaled accordingly for both options in case 2 are selected instead of one large one?**

No. The budget proposed shall be for one proposed technical solution. Page 63 of the NOFO, Section E.4 states: “The FHWA may, during the selection process, enter into discussions with an applicant that may include mutually agreeing upon a lesser amount of a potential award than originally requested in the application if necessary due to the quantity, size and scope of the applications received in response to this NOFO and the results of the application review process.” As instructed in the NOFO page 54, Section D.2 regarding the budget application: “The FHWA encourages applicants to submit the most relevant and complete information they can provide.”

- 43. Can a team submit multiple budgets for a scaled deployment that then can be selected based on number of awardees?**

No. The budget proposed shall be for one proposed technical solution. Page 63 of the NOFO, Section E.4 states: “The FHWA may, during the selection process, enter into discussions with an applicant that may include mutually agreeing upon a lesser amount of a potential award than originally requested in the application if necessary due to the quantity, size and scope of the applications received in response to this NOFO and the results of the application review process.” As instructed in the NOFO page 54, Section D.2 regarding the budget application: “The FHWA encourages applicants to submit the most relevant and complete information they can provide.”

- 44. If multiple state DOTs jointly apply for the grant that gets selected for an award, can FHWA separately execute contracts with individual DOTs?**

No. Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.1 states: “Multiple eligible entities that submit a joint application should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact and Recipient for purposes of financial administration of the project.” The joint applicants must decide

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

amongst themselves which organization will be the prime recipient. The remaining joint applicants will be designated as subrecipients, contractors, or stakeholders as decided by the joint parties. Note that Page 48 of the NOFO, section B.3 states that “The planned award type is a cooperative agreement awarded.” A single application will not result in multiple awards.

Funding/Cost Share

- 45. Is this NOFO for a one-time funding opportunity only? On page 3 in the table, “Up to \$40 million for Fiscal Years 2024.” Since the project lasts 30 months, will there be more funding available for FY2025 or FY2026? Or \$40M is all available for this whole grant?**

This NOFO represents a one-time funding opportunity only.

The total amount of funding available for awards under this NOFO is \$40 million. There are other grant programs that make Federal funding available that applicants may apply for to support the 5+ years of operations and maintenance after the completion of the performance under this NOFO.

- 46. Beyond this grant opportunity, are you planning a national deployment similar to the NY, WY, FL Connect Vehicle deployments?**

The Government has not made any decisions regarding national deployments similar to the Connected Vehicle deployments.

- 47. What are the matching requirements for public sector organizations? What counts as a match? Do cost-sharing funds need to be made in cash, or will we be allowed to use "in-kind" money based on the sum of an individual team member's annual salary? Can staffing costs count towards the match? Do the collective partner contributions count? Do public sector contracts and procurements exclusively dedicated to the grant project count towards the match?**

Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.2 on Cost Sharing states: “The Federal share of the cost of a project or activity carried out by the Recipient shall not exceed 80 percent per section 516(c) of Title 23, U.S.C.” The minimum cost share is 20 percent.

Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.2 addresses cost share and states: “Cost sharing or matching means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute). See 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200.306 on Cost Sharing or matching.”

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

Applicants should include detailed information on what is being offered as the match. See page 54 of the NOFO on the Volume 2 Budget Application. The match may be provided in in-kind services or anything else of value in the project. For example, this may be based on staff time. There needs to be explicit details on the individual's hourly rate, anticipated number of hours being used toward the in-kind match, as well as any indirect cost, fringe overhead, etc.

Any cost that is provided in the way of match must meet all of the same Federal regulations as the rest of the grant.

48. What is the match requirement for Phase 2?

Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.2 addresses Cost Sharing or Matching and states: "Cost sharing or matching is required under this award. The Federal share of the cost of a project or activity carried out by the Recipient shall not exceed 80 percent per section 516(c) of Title 23, U.S.C." The match requirement is 20 percent. There is no separate requirement for Phase 2. Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.2 addresses cost share and states: "Cost sharing or matching means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute). See 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200.306 on Cost Sharing or matching."

49. The NOFO states that "additional" federal funding will not be given for the required 5-year post-deployment O&M period. Can any of the grant funds be planned for this use, or is it strictly up to the applicant to fund O&M? Can the applicant's planned funding for the 5-year post deployment O&M period be considered as matching funds for the grant, even if used after the 30-month period of performance?

Page 48 of the NOFO, Section B.4 states: "The award period of performance is anticipated to be 30 months." As stated on page 11 of the NOFO, Section A.3.2 "Further, Initiative awardees are expected to sustain operations for a minimum period of five years after Phase 2 is completed with no supplementary funding from DOT." As stated on page 12-13 of the NOFO, Section A.3.2: "Post-deployment planning should assume no additional Federal funding from the Initiative, that is, all operational costs must be borne by site-identified sources after the conclusion of Phase 2."

The applicant's planned funding for the 5-year post deployment O&M period cannot be considered as matching funds for the cooperative agreement.

50. Will we be allowed to use ongoing USDOT funded projects as part of cost share?

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

Page 49 of the NOFO, Section C.2 addresses cost share and states: “Cost sharing or matching means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute). See 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200.306 on Cost Sharing or matching.” Non-federal cost share cannot be paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs.

Evaluation Criteria

- 51. How is cost evaluated in the application review? The NOFO says that the technical merit criteria are equally important but is cost equally important to the technical criteria? Or, is cost evaluated separately?**

See Page 60 of the NOFO, Section E.1 Criteria, COST, for how cost is evaluated. Cost and Technical Merit criteria are evaluated separately.

- 52. How will existing infrastructure be considered in applications if the existing infrastructure supports the goals of the NOFO or constitutes a cost savings on the proposed project?**

Page 59 of the NOFO, Section E.1 explains how the Government will evaluate applications.

- 53. Is innovative technology encouraged or is technology readiness more emphasized?**

Page 59 of the NOFO, Section E.1 explains how the Government will evaluate applications. The Government does not have preference for innovation over technology readiness. However, as noted on page 11 of the NOFO, the system needs to be designed, built, and tested within a maximum timeframe of 18 months.

- 54. How will collaborations among and between academic institutions and between academic institutions and private sector be viewed in the evaluation?**

Page 49 of the NOFO, section C.1 states: “Multiple eligible entities that submit a joint application should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact and Recipient for purposes of financial administration of the project. Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and should be signed by each applicant.”

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Webinar Q&A

55. What criteria will FHWA use when regarding "funding availability" as an additional consideration?

Page 48 of the NOFO, Section B.2 states: "The government may make one, multiple, or no awards based on applications received." As stated on page 64 of the NOFO, Section E.4, "The FHWA is not obligated to make any award as a result of this notice."

56. Does competition for subcontracting opportunities have to be provided?

Yes. The Prime Recipient should follow the procurement standards identified in §§ 200.317 - 200.327 and 2 CFR 1201.317.

Note: Disregard the response provided in the webinar to this question.

“Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment”

NOFO Q&A RECEIVED BY EMAIL

The following Questions and Answers (Q&As) received by email focus on the Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment discretionary Cooperative Agreement Program and the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) posted on October 26, 2023.

Except for the statutes and regulations cited, the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide information regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

- 1. Will a recording to the NOFO Webinar be added to the website or link to the recording be emailed?**

The NOFO webinar slides used during the webinar will be posted at the same time as the NOFO Q&As. The NOFO webinar recording was posted in Amendment 1 on 1/12/2024.

- 2. Will the attendees of the NOFO webinar be shared publicly / with those who have attended? It would be so helpful for those of us looking to partner with each other.**

No, the attendees of the webinar will not be shared publicly.

- 3. Regarding the grant referenced in the subject line, Company X is a technology company developing products to monitor impact to infrastructure (crash cushions, cable barriers, end terminals, etc.) and to guide drivers around incidents, work zones, etc. We are newcomers to the grant process. Our technology falls squarely into the "Saving Lives" and "Connectivity" space. May we arrange a brief telephone call to learn more about the process? Your assistance is greatly appreciated.**

The grant application, selection, and award process is explained in the NOFO. The [DOT Navigator website](#) also provides information and technical assistance resources about applying for grants. Specific grant application resources can be found [here](#).

- 4. The FCC has not approved C-V2X for use in the 5.9 ITS spectrum. They are only licensing DSRC. Licensees must apply for a rules waiver to use C-V2X.**

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Grants.Gov Q&A

For this program V2X is a broader term embracing multiple wireless technologies and standards. Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider the details of the current FCC regulation, including information provided on the USDOT website [here](#). As stated on page 10 in the NOFO, “Deployments that do not utilize the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum will not be considered for award.”

5. Should deployments as part of this grant expected to be 100% compliant with Connected Transportation Interoperability (CTI standards, e.g., CTI 4001, 4501)?

Page 10 of the NOFO explains that deployment sites are sought with attributes including demonstrable standards-enabled interoperability and conformant, effective utilization of the 5.9 GHz ITS licensed spectrum including the use of C-V2X standards. CTI standards were developed based on work done by FHWA and ITE to increase an understanding of how to interpret standards for intersections and increase an entity's ability to deploy interoperable intersection devices.

6. It is understood that USDOT is looking for operational deployments in this opportunity and systems engineering process would dictate the ability to have testing phases prior to full-scale deployments. The NOFO specifically states “Field tests on closed or otherwise controlled environments separate from operational transportation systems will not be considered for award.” Does this statement speak only to the ultimate/final deployment and interim testing in closed environments is allowable to ensure safety of system users or does the statement mean that the NOFO will not pay for any level of testing that is not in the ultimate deployment environment?

The statement pertains to the ultimate/final deployment site and interim testing in closed environments is allowable to ensure safety of system users. The point of this Program is to accelerate nationwide, interoperable V2X deployment. However, a team may choose to use a test bed for testing solutions before deploying. The grant funds may cover testing.

7. The synopsis on the website says two expected awards, but the PDF NOFO says DOT may make one, multiple or zero. Any clarification on that? Assume it just means that you will make awards based off of applications received and may not make any if you do not receive any applications or ones that meet eligibility.

As stated on page 48 of the NOFO in Section B.2, the Government anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this NOFO. The government may make one, multiple, or no awards based on applications received.

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Grants.Gov Q&A

- 8. I am inquiring if there have been any thoughts of extending the application due date for the “Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment” grant? If the deadline was to be extended, when would that be announced?**

The deadline for submitting applications is posted in Grants.gov and any change in the deadline would be posted there as well.

- 9. Is there any limitation to the number of submissions a potential subcontractor can participate in? For instance, if an entity was asked to participate as a subcontracted participant by multiple entities that plan to submit, is there a restriction to how many projects we can be formally attached to?**

There is no limitation on the number of applications that a subcontractor can participate in as long as the procurement standards identified in 2 CFR §§ 200.317 through 200.327 and 2 CFR § 1201.317 have been followed by the Prime Recipient. The Prime Recipient should become familiar with the procurement standards in 2 CFR Part 200 in total; however, non-state Prime Recipients should pay close attention to 2 CFR 200.318(a) General procurement standards and 2 CFR 200.319 Competition.

- 10. On Pg. 54 of the NOFO, under 3.A, it says that Profit/Fee is not allowable for the prime Recipient. Is profit/fee allowed for sub recipients who provide services, technology, and/or equipment?**

See page 54 of the NOFO, Section D.2, which provides information on the Budget Application and states: “Profit/fee is not allowable for the Prime Recipient.”

An award recipient must follow 2 CFR 200.331 on determining whether an agreement is for a subrecipient or contractor.

The NOFO does not preclude contractors for the award recipient from including profit/fee; however, the profit/fee must be in accordance with the 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E Cost Principles, including that it is reasonable pursuant to 2 CFR 200.404.

- 11. As the proposal does require cost sharing up to 80%, we wondered if the cost-sharing funds must be made in cash, or will we be allowed to use "in-kind" money based on the sum of an individual team member's annual salary?**

Review 2 CFR 200.306 Cost Sharing or matching for the detailed requirements of cost share.

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Grants.Gov Q&A

See page 49, C.2 of the NOFO, which states that “The Federal share of the cost of a project or activity carried out by the Recipient shall not exceed 80 percent per section 516(c) of Title 23, U.S.C.”

Applicants should include detailed information on what is being offered as the match. See page 54 of the NOFO on the requirements for the Volume 2 Budget Application. Subject to 2 CFR 200.306, in-kind contributions may include staff time. The budget application should include specific detail on the individual’s labor category, hourly rate, anticipated number of hours being used toward the in-kind match, as well as any indirect cost, fringe overhead, etc.

Any cost that is provided in the way of match must meet all of the same Federal regulations as all other costs of the grant.

12. What are the maximum funds we can request for this proposal for a 30-month implementation period?

Section B.1 of the NOFO states that the total amount of funding available for awards under this NOFO is \$40 million.

13. Will applicants have to be either a US citizen or a US permanent resident to be eligible for the application?

See page 49, Section C.1 of the NOFO, which states that “Eligible applicants include:

- non-Federal domestic public sector organizations,
- domestic academic institutions, and
- private sector/other entities incorporated in the United States.”

Private sector/other entities must be incorporated in the United States. All entities involved as applicants, in any way, must be incorporated in the United States.

14. Would you fund projects that improve mobility platform interoperability towards the deployment of connected vehicle technologies safely? The project would involve local transit, on-demand transportation, and local and state DOT.

See page 59, Section E.1 of the NOFO for the criteria the Government will use to evaluate proposals. The Government will evaluate applications against the evaluation criteria listed in the section.

15. Does competition for subcontracting opportunities have to be provided?

Accelerating V2X Deployment NOFO Grants.Gov Q&A

Yes. The Prime Recipient should follow the procurement standards identified in §§ 200.317 - 200.327 and 2 CFR 1201.317.