

**Responses to Vendor Questions**  
**(As of May 17, 2011)**

1. **Question:** Is there more detail on raw materials, subassembly components, and/or fabricated hardware parts that make up the \$5.3M Materials amount listed on page 54 of 62, item (5) under ODC. This item states, in part, “The amount of the materials cited above includes all materials necessary for the performance of the contract including hardware fabrication and other miscellaneous materials?”

**Answer:** The \$5.3M value for “Materials” contained under provision L.17 (f) (5) is an estimate for all materials. This value is an estimate to be used for proposal preparation and evaluation purposes only. Since the exact requirements are unknown (consistent with nature of an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract), offerors shall use the ODC amounts included for materials.

2. **Question:** Is the inflation system described in Exhibit A, SOW 4.0, included in the \$5.3MM Materials line?

**Answer:** The \$5.3M value for “Materials” contained under provision L.17 (f) (5) is an estimate for all materials including materials for the inflation system. This value is an estimate to be used for proposal preparation and evaluation purposes. Since the exact requirements are unknown consistent with nature of an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract, offerors shall use the ODC amounts included for materials and travel.

3. **Question:** Our accounting practice relative to subcontract effort is to propose, accumulate and bill these costs as part of our ODC expense of any project. Is it acceptable for this proposal Attachment 1 Cost Template, to include any subcontract costs we include in our proposal as ODC’s (separate line), with a footnote explanation of the subcontract information, including what Company Labor category effort is reduced for the subcontracted effort?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.17 (f) (1), Subcontractor Proposal Information. It is the offerors responsibility to clearly itemize, in Attachment 1, how the labor hours identified in Attachment 3 will be distributed amongst the prime and its subcontractors.

4. **Question:** Exhibits C and E, and Attachment 1 all contain a list of NASA defined labor categories. If there are labor categories that we cannot logically convert to the NASA defined labor categories, should we include the labor rates for those categories that cannot be converted, in our Rates Table?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.17(f)(3), Labor, first paragraph which states: “For proposal evaluation purposes, the Offeror shall assume the number of Labor Hours identified in Attachment 3, Table of Estimated Direct Labor Hours, for each Contract Year (CY) apportioned

among the representative labor categories. If applicable, the prime Offeror shall distribute the appropriate hours to its subcontractors accordingly. If necessary, Offerors shall provide a crosswalk from the represented labor categories to labor categories in the Offeror's current accounting system. See Exhibit E for definitions of the direct labor categories. The Offeror may propose different labor categories and hours from those identified in Attachment 3 but the proposed labor categories and hours must be supported and consistent with the technical approach.”

5. **Question:** The RFP requirement appears to be directed towards the labor proposal being in the NASA defined labor categories as listed in Exhibits C and E, and the Attachments 1 and 3. Our labor estimating, accumulating and reporting within our business application software is programmed for our standard labor categories. Please advise the NASA plan with regards to how contractors will be expected to Estimate (Bid), accumulate actuals, and report on actual labor costs under the Task Orders to be issued under this contract?

**Answer:** In addition to the response to Question 4, please refer clause L.17 (f) (3) which states “The estimates for labor hours are for proposal and evaluation purposes only.” NASA will incorporate the rate schedule provided with the contractor's proposal in any resultant contract. In accordance with clause H.3, Task Order Procedure, paragraph (c), “The Contractor shall use the fully burdened fixed hourly rates set forth in Section J, Exhibit C, Schedule of Rates, for establishing the estimated cost.” The contractor shall accumulate costs based on their approved accounting practices.

6. **Question:** Is there a dollar threshold for an estimated individual subcontract whereby it is a requirement to obtain an Attachment 1 - Cost Template, and Exhibit C - Schedule of Rates, where it would be required?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.17 (f) (1), Subcontractor Proposal Information, and L.17 (f) (10), IDIQ Schedule of Rates. The Offeror, and subcontractor(s) providing direct labor, are required to complete the Cost Forms in Attachment 1. In addition, Exhibit C - Schedule of Rates shall be completed for the prime and all significant subcontracts expected to exceed a total of \$2M.

7. **Question:** Please clarify NASA's intent on levying AS9100 Quality Management Systems Certification clause on some IDIQ tasks. What percentage of the work will require the higher level quality standard? And what portion(s) of the SOW will this apply? Will there be a time period given to become AS9100 certified?

**Answer:** While the percentage of work that will require AS9100 Certification is anticipated to be low, this is based on our best estimate at this time and is subject to change. The AS9100 Certification standard may apply to all areas of the SOW. Since the requirements are not

defined at this time, NASA cannot guarantee that contract holders will be afforded time to become AS9100 certified prior task order solicitation.

8. **Question:** Will there be a defined period of time whereby questions after the May 5<sup>th</sup> pre-proposal conference will be accepted and responded to by NASA?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.9, paragraph (b) which states “Questions or comments should be submitted within 10 calendar days of the issuance of the solicitation to allow for analysis and dissemination of responses in advance of the proposal due date. Late questions or comments are not guaranteed a response prior to the proposal due date.”

9. **Question:** The RFP indicates that multiple awards will be made. Why does an offeror have to be fully responsive to all aspects of the RFP if the task orders will be for specific areas? Is it NASA’s intention that all bidders be able to respond to the entire scope of work or is it acceptable for example that a bidder bid on the inflatable structure portion of the SOW only but not the TPS portion, or as an alternative bid the TPS portion only and not the inflatable structure portion? In other words, is NASA looking to make awards only to those contractors who can provide the complete system or is it NASA’s intention to have multiple contractors that can provide either the complete system or just the components, i.e., just the inflatable structure/or the TPS?

**Answer:** Offeror’s proposal shall be fully responsive to all RFP requirements including the proposal submission requirements identified in Section L. Offerors will be evaluated consistent with the criteria in Section M.

10. **Question:** Can you confirm that bidders are allowed to use their existing labor categories and that we should allocate the total labor hours identified in Attachment 3 to these existing categories?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.17(f)(3), Labor, first paragraph which states: “For proposal evaluation purposes, the Offeror shall assume the number of Labor Hours identified in Attachment 3 - Table of Estimated Direct Labor Hours, for each Contract Year (CY) apportioned among the representative labor categories. If applicable, the prime Offeror shall distribute the appropriate hours to its subcontractors accordingly. If necessary, Offerors shall provide a crosswalk from the represented labor categories to labor categories in the Offeror’s current accounting system. See Exhibit E for definitions of the direct labor categories. The Offeror may propose different labor categories and hours from those identified in Attachment 3 but the proposed labor categories and hours must be supported and consistent with the technical approach.”

11. **Question:** In the event that the pricing exercise, using the specified number of hours comes in less than the \$47M should the contractors adjust the hours to reach the ceiling? As an alternative, if the pricing comes in higher than the specified ceiling of \$47M should the contractor reduce the number of hours to come in under the ceiling? Which is the overriding requirement, the specified number of hours or the ceiling price?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.17 (f) (3) which states “The estimates for labor hours are for proposal and evaluation purposes only and do not obligate NASA to place orders above the required minimum. It is not intended that the resulting cost proposal equal the contract maximum value.” Therefore, regardless of the outcome of pricing the proposal based on the hours provided, the contract ceiling will remain \$47M.

12. **Question:** Does the size standard apply only to the intended prime contractor-bidders total employees; or, the prime plus any planned partners-subcontractors, as well? If the prime contractor is owned by an organization that also owns other unaffiliated companies, are all employees of all companies, including unaffiliated companies of the prime’s owner organization, counted in the total number of employees for purposes of the 1000 & under threshold?

**Answer:** Please refer to FAR 19.1 for guidance pertaining to size standards.

13. **Question:** I was wondering if the solicitation will be limited to US companies or if Europeans will be allowed to answer as well. If not, what about the US subsidiary of a European Company?

**Answer:** Please refer to FAR Part 25 and clauses and provisions included in RFP sections H, I and K related to the Buy American Act, Trade Agreements, Export Licenses, Security Requirements for Unclassified information Technology Resources, and other prohibitions.

14. **Question:** The instruction page item 4 states “...do not move cells and do not insert or delete rows or columns....”. There is not much room at the bottom of each of the worksheets within this file. If there is a need to provide explanatory notes with regards to any of the listed and calculated data, can we add rows at the bottom where necessary for a notes section to each worksheet; or, should there be an inserted worksheet within this file where necessary to provide any specific worksheet explanatory notes if needed (or alternatively, a separate file created (could be excel) for any necessary explanatory notes with regards to any of the worksheets within the Attachment 1 Cost Forms file?

**Answer:** The purpose of the verbiage quoted in the question above is to maintain the basic structure and flow of the worksheets provided, and to establish consistency amongst all offerors. Referring to the notes on the individual cost forms, additional rows and columns may be added. It is acceptable to add rows or columns, insert worksheets within the file, or include a separate file (e.g. excel) if necessary to provide adequate pricing support.

15. **Question:** Will NASA define the environments, technical requirements, or the TPS materials to be used?

**Answer:** Specific requirements will be identified at the task order level.

16. **Question:** A significant subcontractor is defined as \$2M. Is that \$2M total or individual pieces?

**Answer:** For this purposes of this solicitation, NASA defines significant subcontractors as those with contracts over \$2M in value over the five-year Base period.

17. **Question:** When is award expected? Is the money in hand?

**Answer:** Award is anticipated in August 2011. Money is available to fund the guaranteed minimum.

18. **Question:** Will every task be competed?

**Answer:** Pursuant to clause H.4, Task Order Solicitation and Selection Procedures, each contractor will be given a fair opportunity to be considered for each order in accordance with FAR 16.505 but is not required to submit a proposal for any individual task order.

19. **Question:** How do we address retaining staff without specific requirements?

**Answer:** Please refer to provision L.16, Subfactor 2 (b) for instructions. Specifically, the offeror “shall describe its approach to obtain and retain the technical expertise to perform potential task orders received under this contract.”

20. **Question:** Will awardees be locked into the schedule of rates?

**Answer:** NASA will review the offeror’s proposed schedule of rates for the purposes of determining the rates reasonable and realistic. The schedule of rates will be incorporated into the contract(s) for each successful offeror. The Contracting Officer may consider a revision to the rates if the offeror can demonstrate that the rates in the schedule are no longer a reasonable reflection of the offeror’s current rates.

21. **Question:** Please explain the September 1 start date?

**Answer:** Pursuant to provision L.17 (f), the offeror shall assume a period of performance start date of September 1, 2011. This date is used for proposal evaluation purposes only and ensures all offerors are evaluated based on a common start date. The actual period of performance start date may be before or after this date.

22. **Question:** Are offerors held to only using subcontractors identified in its proposal?

**Answer:** No. However, subcontractors not proposed and evaluated prior to award may be subjected to additional review and consent requirements pursuant to FAR clause 52.244-2, Subcontracts, and task order solicitation requirements.

23. **Question:** Is it acceptable to provide only the Quality Plan and the Quality Manual with the proposal and then to make the detailed procedures available upon your request or do we need to print all of the detailed procedures to submit with the proposal?

**Answer:** Please see Amendment 1 for changes to the higher-level quality submission requirements.

24. **Question:** Are Amendment 1 and Amendment 2 currently listed in FedBizOps.gov official amendments?

**Answer:** Amendments 1 and 2 are only solicitation documents and not official amendments. There is only one official Amendment to solicitation NNL11ZB1005R and it is currently listed as Amendment 3 in FedBizOps.gov.