

MIST- Final RFP Questions and Answers

The Government greatly appreciates all of the feedback from the Final Request for Proposal. When possible, we combined similar and/or common questions, and often simplified the questions to avoid possible confusion and get to the specific point we believe the question was referring to. We also appreciate the background and/or feedback establishing the rationale for the questions, and in most cases did not repeat this information due to the confidential nature of the information. Please note that numbering sequence for questions is a continuation of the last posted questions and answers.

Question: #92

Can the offeror modify the position descriptions provided in Exhibit B for proposed incumbent labor? If not, will the government evaluate its own provided position descriptions for incumbent labor, and will it evaluate the offeror's full set of position descriptions for consistency?

Answer: No, the offeror can not modify the Government provided position descriptions as provided in Exhibit B. All non-incumbent non-managerial positions proposed by the offeror must be mapped into a cross reference matrix per Section L.16.3, and will be evaluated accordingly.

However, the Offeror can add additional position descriptions if proposing non-incumbent non-management labor categories provide a cross reference matrix per Section L.16.3. If additional position descriptions are added or proposed, the Offeror must provide labor categories, position descriptions and corresponding labor rates as specified in Section L16. The Government will evaluate the offeror's provided position descriptions for the specific labor categories for adequacy, comprehensiveness and relevance as specified Section M3. It should also be noted that the Government has added an additional 20 Position Descriptions as part of the Amendment 2.

Question: #93

Within the Management Approach of the Mission Suitability Volume, will the Government allow offerors to reference the position descriptions contained in the cost volume, or allow a separate non-page counted appendix in the Mission Suitability Volume for all position descriptions and the cross reference matrix?

Answer: Section L.16.3 Subfactor B has been amended for clarification purposes. The detailed position descriptions will only be submitted in the Cost Volume (per the table in section L.14.b.1).

Question: #94 *Section L.8.* Because of the sensitive nature of the information, our subcontractors are hesitant to submit the Total Compensation Plan (TCP) because we could then calculate their burden rates. Would the Government consider the submission of a sealed package for the individual TCPs?

Answer: A separate sealed package will be allowed for the individual TCPs.

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Question: #95

Cost Exhibit 1A (GPM). The government's answer to Question 31 (DRFP, Group 1) regarding off-site facilities was as follows: "The GPM model will assist in defining off-site labor requirements. Generally, off-site facilities are related to management and corporate functions." The GPM shows nearly one-quarter of the non-management direct labor hours as off-site. Please clarify the off-site labor requirements.

Answer: In addition to management and corporate functions, off-site facilities may also house overflow of non-managerial labor. The GPM provides non-management on-site and offsite hours. Offerors should refer to the revised GPM cost exhibits.

Question: #96

Cost Exhibit 1A (GPM). The GPM, in contract year 1, provides direct labor hours totaling a little over 200 FTEs. Is that to be considered a representative sample of the total required contract labor hours? Do the hours in Exhibit 1A Government Pricing Model represent the approximate average labor loading on the current contract? What is the average number of non-managerial FTEs on the MSES II A Bridge contract over the last 12 months?

Answer: GPM is provided as tool for the evaluation of the Offerors' cost proposal. Historical data does not necessarily represent future work on an IDIQ contract. There are approximately 375 non-managerial FTEs currently active on the MSES II A Bridge. The Government has revised the GPM model to include 20 additional labor categories and added additional labor hours across all contract years.

Question: #97

Cost Exhibit 1A (GPM). Based on the incumbent direct labor rates provided and the hours for each labor category defined in the GPM, two (2) of the defined forty-four (44) labor categories (Chief Engineer, Sr. Project Staff Engineer) account for 50% of the total cost. Is that representative of the expected MIST contract?

Answer: See the revised GPM.

Question: #98

Cost Exhibit 2A. Exhibit 2A provides an offeror to government contract direct labor conversion. For a specific labor category, if the offeror wants to bid a portion of that category as incumbent hire and a portion as other than incumbent hire, how is that accomplished in Exhibit 2A.

Answer: A sample of Exhibit 2A is included in the RFP.

Question: #99

Exhibit 4 requires the offeror to identify the total number of staff by labor category and source of personnel. Should the staffing profile provided in the GPM for Contract Year 1 be used to identify the total number of staff by labor category?

Answer: Yes, except for the management team. The GPM is provided as tool for the evaluation of the Offerors' cost proposals. Proposed staffing profile is at the discretion of the offeror.

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Question: #100

Direct and indirect rate substantiation (Page 96). Can a current incumbent contractor/subcontractor bid their company specific direct labor rate on the current contract versus the composite direct labor rate defined in Enclosure A for their employees they intend to transition to MIST?

Answer: Any offeror proposing to use the incumbent workforce must use the incumbent labor rates provided in Enclosure A. Refer to Section L.17.2.a of the RFP. Additionally, Enclosure A has been updated using the NASA recommended labor escalation rates for 2014-2015.

Question: #101

Total Compensation Plan. Please clarify what the threshold is which requires subcontractors to submit a Total Compensation Plan.

Answer: Offerors shall provide a Total Compensation Plan (TCP) for all personnel proposed, in accordance with NFS provision 1852.231-71, "Determination of Compensation Reasonableness," paragraph (d).

Question 102

Reference RFP Section L.17.2.a, (incumbent labor rates provided in Enclosure A). Is "Enclosure A" the same as Final RFP Document Named: 154497-SOL-001-016.xls?

Answer: Yes, Enclosure A is the same as Final RFP Document Named: 154497-SOL-001-016.xls. However, Enclosure A has been revised as part of Amendment 2.

Question: #103

RFP Exhibits 2A is intended to show how the offeror's individual direct labor categories/rates are proportioned and converted to the Government Contract Non-Management Direct Labor Categories. RFP Section L.17.2.a, states: Any Offeror proposing to use the incumbent workforce must use the incumbent labor rates provided in Enclosure A for those labor categories for which rates are available to develop the proposed estimated cost. It appears that the instructions in the RFP paragraphs listed above are in conflict with each other. Specifically, the offerors compliance with RFP L.17.2.d instructions (i.e. covert the offerors Labor Categories DL Rates to Government Labor Categories DL Rates), would generate proposed Government Labor Categories DL Rates that are different than those provided in RFP Enclosure A, which would be in conflict with instructions in RFP Section L.17.2.a to use RFP Enclosure A rates. Would the Government instruct the offerors to ignore RFP Section L.17.2.d requirement (i.e. leave the offerors Labor Categories DL Info rows blank) for those labor categories that it intends to "to use the incumbent workforce"?

Answer: The Offeror needs to provide direct labor categories/rates for incumbent and non incumbents.

Question: #104

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Reference RFP Section L.17.2.n Escalation and Productive Work Year Calculations (Exhibit 9 summarizes the Contractor's escalation factors and productive work year calculation). It appears that Exhibit 9 is not intended for showing Contractor's escalation factors.

Answer: See revised language in RFP eliminating the requirement for escalation factors on this exhibit.

Question: #105

Reference Government Pricing Model, Exhibit 5 "SUMMARY OF INDIRECT RATES". What is the purpose for requiring the offeror to provide composite indirect rates for "Contract Year 6"? Is the Government anticipating for the contract performance to go beyond the RFP specified five year contract ordering period?

Answer: See Clause I.22 Indefinite Quantity, paragraph (d), which addresses the issuance of orders that have a period of performance up to one year past the effective ordering period that supports the requirement for composite indirect rates for "Contract Year 6."

Question: #106

MSES II A Bridge Task Order Data:

Are the task orders provided expected to be carried over to MIST? Are there others or does this represent the complete set? What are the number of tasks for each year of the MSES contract?

Answer: At this point, it is difficult to determine what tasks may or may not carry over from the MSES II A bridge. The number of tasks vary from year to year; however, typically the Government issues an approximate range of 200-250 tasks per year.

Question: #107

Cost Exhibit 1:

The GPM shows manufacturing related positions offsite. Can the government specify which offsite positions should be priced at an engineering facility vs. a manufacturing site? Typically these rates can be very different. Some positions can exist at both sites and leaving it to the bidder to select the site will make bids hard to compare.

Answer: See revised GPM.

Question: #108

Section L.17(g):Section L and several of the GPM exhibits indicate "Award Fee" not Fixed Fee.

Answer: RFP and Exhibits were corrected to reflect Fixed Fee.

Question: #109

Reference Exhibit B, MIST Position Descriptions, Enclosure A, Direct Labor Rates, and Exhibit 1, GPM. Will the Government address the following inconsistencies between these documents:

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- a. A Direct Labor Rate is provided for the Senior Systems Engineer, however there is not Position Description provided for this category.
- b. There are Position Descriptions provided for the following labor categories, however they are not used in the GPM: Software Engineer, Senior Electrical Engineer, Electrical Engineer (Analog), Electrical Engineer (Digital), and Computer Software Engineer. Are offeror's still required to include these Position Descriptions in their proposals? Is there an incumbent rate for Thermal Development Engineer?

Answer: See revised position descriptions.

Question: #110

Reference MIST RTO Summary, page 2 and RTO 1, page 6. The schedule on page 2 shows the ERI task ending on 9/30/17; however RTO Subtasks (a) and (b) exceed that EOT date. Are the end dates for Subtasks (a) and (b) correct?

Answer: The Government has clarified the task period of performance for RTO #1 and RTO #2. See revised RTOs.

Question: #111

Reference RFP Enclosure A, Incumbent Labor Rates. The rates provided in Enclosure A are shown to be *Direct Labor Rates*. The term "Direct Labor Rate" has different meanings for different organizations. Please define the direct labor rate?

Please confirm that offerors are to assume that incumbent employees for whom the average rate information in Enclosure A is based currently receive customary and standard full time employee fringe benefits (i.e., as opposed to receiving abated or no fringe benefits due to some sort of part time or consultant status).

Answer: The direct labor rate is an employee's hourly base pay rate without fringe and indirect burdens. The rates in Enclosure A have been updated. The Government does not have the data available regarding incumbent fringe benefits.

Question: #112

Enclosure A, please confirm the April 2014 hourly rates provided for the Chief Engineer (\$96.26) and Sr. Project Staff Engineer (\$104.33) are correct.

Answer: Yes, the rates were correct, but have been revised in this Amendment

Question: #113

While it supported a \$450M contract, the Electrical Systems and Engineering Services II (ESES II) solicitation considered past performance engagements sized at \$3M a year in annual revenues as relevant. Given this approach, would the Government consider changing their standard to consider a contract with \$8M in annual revenue as relevant within the MIST procurement?

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Answer: The Government is not changing the size thresholds for Past Performance relevancy. Per Section L.18 (a), “Prime offerors shall furnish the information requested below for all of your most recent contracts (completed and ongoing) for similar efforts with a minimum average annual cost/fee incurred of \$10M that your company has had within the last 6 years of the RFP release date.” However, the Government is modifying the Past Performance recency thresholds from 5 years to 6 years.

Question: #114

The MIST SOW (page 45, element “M. Mission Assurance Engineering”) requires “AS9100 Rev. C compliance”. Given this statement, shouldn’t RFP Section E.2 specifically reference the requirement for compliance with AS9100 Rev. C instead of a general AS9100?

Answer: See amendment to Section E.2

Question: #115

Since GPR 1280.1E requires GSFC to conform with ISO 9001-2008 and the GSFC Quality Management System must conform with ISO 9001-2008, shouldn’t the RFP, Section E.2, also require ISO 9001:2008 compliance to meet the 2013 requirements of of GPR 1280.1E.

Answer: See amendment to Section E.2

Question: #116

While we acknowledge the addition of 10 pages to the page count for this volume in the RFP, we believe the government should allocate additional pages in order to improve the evaluator’s ability to evaluate the bidder’s response through clarity of response.

Answer: The Government is not providing additional pages for the proposals beyond the previously stated limits in Section L.14.

Question: #117

Are compliance matrices required in L.14(a)(5) excluded from the page count? Excluding them allows for more definition of the actual solution.

Answer: Section L.14(a)(5) specifies that the matrices are not included in page count. In addition the RFP as been amended to list “proposal matrix” in Section L.14(b)(1) of the proposal instruction chart as an item excluded from page limitations.

Question: #118

L.16(3), Subfactor B, 7th Paragraph requests information about significant subcontractors. We have two comments. 1) Is the definition of significant for this volume the same as for the Past Performance Volume (i.e. “a proposed significant subcontractor is defined as any proposed subcontractor that is estimated to meet/exceed an average annual cost/fee of

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\$10M”)?) 2) We suggest the government should evaluate all proposed subcontractors with committed work share in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed team. However, we suggest for page count purposes that only items 2 through 5 of the paragraph be required for subcontractors that do not meet the significant subcontractor threshold. Please provide an additional 5 pages for this requirement.

Answer: No, the definitions for significant subcontractors are not the same in the Cost and Past Performance Volumes. The page counts and evaluation criteria will not be changed.

Question: #119

RTO2 (Programmatic Challenge) from the Draft RFP was moved to the Mission Suitability volume Subfactor B (Scenario). Do the same RTO general guidelines still apply to the Subfactor B Scenario?

Answer: No, instructions for addressing the Scenario (Programmatic Challenge) are in Section L.16, Subfactor B.

Question: #120

On RTO Summary page 5 there is General Guidance for the Costing of RTOs. Based on the fact that cost will now be evaluated based on the GPM, please verify that costing of the RTOs is not required as part of the RTO responses.

Answer: General Guidance for Costing of RTOs were removed and is not required as part of the RTO response.

Question: #121

The MSES II A Bridge Task Order Data includes 247 task orders. Of these, 101 have external references to the SOW that is not accessible from the .pdf file. Please provide the missing SOW data so that we may do a complete analysis and the government can more easily understand the value of the approach and technical competency of the Offeror.

Answer: We are planning on posting the MSES II A Bridge Task Order SOW data in the MIST technical library during the week of 3/17/14, with a goal of having all documents released by 3/21/14. The Government does not believe this additional detailed SOW data is critical for understanding the requirements of the MIST proposal.

Question: #122

In Section L.18(a) the last sentence in the first paragraph is exactly the same as the last sentence in the fifth paragraph. Please verify that this information needs to be presented only once.

Answer: The Government acknowledges that the last sentence of the first paragraph is the same as the last sentence in the fifth paragraph. See amended Section L.18 (a).

Question: #123

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On page 93 at the end of the instructions for the Total Compensation Plan (TCP), there is the following statement: “The offeror shall describe its methodology for compliance with Attachment D: DD Form 254.” There is also a requirement to describe the approach in L.16 (3) Subfactor B. Please clarify where the methodology should be discussed, and if in Subfactor B please provide one (1) additional page for this requirement.

Answer: The DD254 is not part of the TCP discussion, but a new topic under Subfactor B, which is the area it should be discussed. No additional pages will be added for the requirement.

Question: #124

Section L, Paragraph L.17.2.(h) Basis of Estimates (BOE), page 100. The last sentence of the referenced paragraph refers the reader to “Section 1(g) Instructions above” – Section 1 Instructions is not broken down into subparagraphs.

Answer: Section 1(g) above was changed to L.17(1) Instructions above for significant subcontract definition.

Question: #125

Reference RFP Section L.14 (a) (2): This paragraph states “... proposed significant subcontractors for cost proposal purposes defined as any subcontract that is likely to exceed 25% of the proposed contract value estimate”. Should this text be changed to read “... proposed significant subcontractors for cost proposal purposes defined as any subcontract that is likely to exceed 25% of the proposed Government Pricing Model total estimated cost” in order to match the definition of a “significant subcontractor” for purposes of the Cost Volume that is found in RFP Section L.17 (1) (Cost Volume Instructions), sixth paragraph.

Answer: Amendment2 changes Section L.14 (a) (2) from “contract value estimate” to “Government Pricing Model total estimated cost..”

Question: #126

RFP Section L.17.2 (d) references “Exhibits 2A and B-2B” in the first sentence. Should this be changed to “Exhibits 2A and 2B”?

Answer: RFP Section L.17.2 (d) was changed to read “Exhibits 2A and 2B.”

Question: #127

RFP Section L.17.2 (d) requires all Subcontractors (regardless of dollar value) to complete Exhibits 2A and 2B. Earlier in RFP Section L17.1 (Cost Volume Instructions), the RFP states that “Prospective significant subcontractors may submit proprietary cost data, under separate cover, directly to the Government no later than the time specified in the instructions for receipt of offers for this RFP.” Because Exhibits 2A and 2B from all subcontractors will have proprietary cost data within them, may all subcontractors, not just significant subcontractors, submit proprietary cost data, under separate cover, directly to the Government no later than the time specified in the instructions for receipt of offers for this RFP?

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Answer: The RFP was revised to “All prospective subcontractors may submit proprietary cost data”

Question: #128

The last sentence of RFP Section L.17.2 (d) directs offerors to provide rates in Exhibits 2A and 2B for only those labor categories specified in Exhibit-1 for the site indicated. There are five labor categories listed in the RFP Enclosure-A (Incumbent Labor Rates) that do not appear in Exhibit-1 in either the Onsite or Offsite sections. These labor categories are Sr. Systems Engineer, Software Engineer, Sr. Electrical Engineer, Electrical Engineer (Digital), and Computer Systems Engineer. Even though the Government has provided offerors the incumbent labor rates for these labor categories, the current directions for completing Exhibit-2A would not have offerors derive and propose loaded rates for these five labor categories. Is that the government’s intent? Or were these five labor categories inadvertently left out of Exhibit-1A?

Answer: See revised GPM.

Question: #129

Reference RFP Enclosure-A (Incumbent Labor Rates) and Exhibit-B (MIST Position Descriptions): There are two Position Descriptions (PDs) in Exhibit-B, specifically the Thermal Development Engineer and the Electrical Engineer (Analog Electronics), that do not appear in Enclosure-A and therefore do not have an Incumbent Labor Rate specified. Are there incumbent labor rates available for those two PDs?

Answer: See revised GPM.

Question: #130

Reference RFP Enclosure-A (Incumbent Labor Rates) and Exhibit-B (MIST Position Descriptions): The labor category of Sr. Systems Engineer appears in Enclosure-A with an incumbent labor rate specified, but there is no corresponding Position Description (PD) in Exhibit-B. Would the government consider providing a PD for this labor category or should the Offeror develop one?

Response: See revised position descriptions.

Question: #131

Reference 14 (b) PROPOSAL CONTENT AND PAGE LIMITATIONS: The table showing page limitations indicates that we have been allocated 95 pages for the Mission Suitability Volume, which now includes the hypothetical management scenario. Would the government allocate an additional 15 pages to this Volume?

Answer: No additional pages will be added.

Question: #132

Reference Cost Exhibit-2A, Cost Exhibit-2B, and RFP Section L.17.2 (b): Cost Exhibit- 2A depicts the calculation of “Loaded Contract DL Rates” from “Unburdened DL Rates” for Non-

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Management Direct Labor and Exhibit-2B depicts the calculation of “Loaded Contract DL Rates” from “Unburdened DL Rates” for Management and Administrative (M&A) Labor. The first sentence of RFP Section L.17.2 (b), “The prime Offeror shall propose unburdened direct labor rates for all labor categories in Exhibit-2A and all individual indirect rates in Exhibit-2B, clearly delineating on-site and off-site rates.”, appears to state a different definition of what appears in those Exhibits. Would the government please clarify?

Answer: See revised GPM

Question: #133

Reference RFP Section L.17.2 (c): The last sentence in the fourth bullet states “If a composite rate is comprised of more than 2 labor categories, the composite rate shall not contain any labor category with less than 20% of the anticipated effort.” Would the government specify a similar minimum percentage for the case where the composite rate is comprised of exactly two labor categories?

Answer: The RFP was revised to change from “more than 2 labor categories” to “2 or more labor categories.”

Question: #134

Reference RFP Section L.17.2 (h) entitled BASIS OF ESTIMATES (BOE): The last sentence states “Emphasis should be placed on a description of the cost estimating processes and methodologies themselves, and how these relate to the technical approach described in the proposal.” Since the RFP has switched from an RTO-based cost evaluation to a Government Priced Model (GPM), and the remainder of the BOE instructions in this Section have been modified (in comparison to the Draft RFP) to have Offerors address Management and Administrative and subcontracting processes and methodologies, would the government change “technical approach” in this last sentence to “management approach”?

Answer: The Government does not consider this change necessary. The Government still requires that emphasis should be placed on a description of the cost estimating processes and methodologies themselves, and how these relate to the technical approach described in the offeror’s proposal.

Question: #135

With the RTO, Section L states: “Technical approach, labor categories, projected hours, and phasing are to be presented at both the sub-task level and the task level.” Section M states: “phasing at both the sub-task level and the task level”. Within the different sets of management best practices, there are multiple definitions of phasing. Without more detailed instruction, it is impossible to discern exactly what the Government requires. Could the Government be more specific with the specification of this requirement?

Answer: The specifications for this requirement refers to resource phasing.

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Question: #136

L.8 DETERMINATION OF COMPENSATION REASONABLENESS (1852.231-71) (MAR 1994)

(c) The offeror shall include the rationale for any conformance procedures used or those Service Contract Act employees proposed that do not fall within the scope of any classification listed in the applicable wage determination.

Question: Will the Government issue a wage determination for the MIST contract?

Answer: The Government has made a determination that the Service Contract Act is not applicable to this contract and therefore will not issue a wage determination.

Question: #137 Will the Government request bonded storage in a task order and ask the contractor to provide pricing in response to the task order or does the Government require bonded storage to be priced in the proposal and if so how?

Answer: Hardware storage, if needed, would be specified at the task order level during contract performance.

Question: #138

Attachment B in the Cost Volume; Cost Template 2A; and L.16.3 Mission Suitability, Subfactor B (paragraph 6, page 91) Please clarify - Attachment B to the model contract appears to require the offeror to provide a list of the offeror labor categories and corresponding direct labor rates that map into the Government SLCs (as also presented in Cost Template 2A). However, in the Mission Suitability, Subfactor B it appears that the offeror is also to list and provide rates for the Government SLCs as part of Attachment B.

Should Attachment B (to the model contract) contain rates and categories for both the offeror labor categories and the Government provided SLCs or should Attachment B (to the model contract) only contain the rates and categories for the offeror labor categories (that will ultimately map to the Government SLCs as in Cost Template 2A)?

Answer: Attachment B, after populated by potential offerors, will contain rates and categories for both the offeror labor categories and the Government SLCs.

Question: #139

Costing for programs such as MIST include costs training and engineering tools for offsite support. The MIST DRFP requires it as well, such as training in the Phase-in Cost Table (Exhibit B-15). The DRFP does not provide adequate information for non-incumbents to size and cost these items. Will the government provide information to allow bidders to size these functions or alternatively provide a plug number to create a more equitable competitive environment?

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Answer: The Government does not have a historical plug number. Any training and engineering tools needed will be based on the training and experience of the potential offerors' proposed personnel.

Question: #140

L16, Subfactor B, paragraph 4

This section requests a discussion of “Consolidations, Improvements, and other Changes”
What is the baseline against which we should respond?

Answer: The response is at the discretion of the Offeror based on their proposed management approach.