

## NASA Balloon Operations Contract (NBOC)

### Additional Industry Questions and Answers

12/11/13

151. Is gaseous helium for large scientific balloon inflations included in amounts provided for “Expendable Gases” in B.12 Non Proposed Costs for CORE Requirements?

NASA’s Response: Yes.

152. Re response to Question 23: Do amounts shown for Range Expenses in Non Proposed Costs for CORE Requirements include New Zealand operations?

NASA’s Response: Yes.

153. Re response to Question 32: Are costs for specific software licensing agreements included in Non Proposed Costs for CORE Requirements – “Range Expenses”?

NASA’s Response: No. Those are included in “Services”

154. Response to Question 32 states that the SOW dated November 18, 2013 (released November 14, 2013) has been revised but review does not indicate that this item has been addressed.

NASA’s Response: The NBOC SOW section 3.2.2 was revised.

155. Re response to Question 51: Does NASA only require responses to SOW sections 3.2.8, 3.3.1, 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 for mission suitability volume and therefore no responses are to be provided for any other SOW sections?

NASA’s Response: Correct.

156. Re response to Question 54: Will the requirement to provide indirect cost data, contrary to FAR and OMB Circular directives, be waived with respect to offeror’s submission provided that a copy of the Official Negotiation agreement be provided to verify rates used? If not, why not?

NASA’s Response: If an Offeror has a Forward Pricing Rate Agreement (FPRA), than the Offeror would state that and those FPRA rates would be incorporated into the appropriate cost exhibit(s). For years not covered by the FPRA, the Offeror shall provide the requested information.

157. Re response to Question 55: Answer does not respond to the question regarding offeror providing past performance with contractual agreements of less than \$10 million annually.

Response refers to reducing limit defining a significant subcontractor; therefore, question remains unanswered.

NASA's Response: The RFP has been revised to state Prime Offerors shall furnish information on most recent contracts (completed and ongoing) for similar efforts with a minimum average annual cost/fee incurred of \$1M. RFP was also changed to state that Significant Subcontractors shall provide information for agreements that meet/exceed an average annual cost/fee of \$1M.

158. Re response to Question 59: In response to Question 53 NASA stated that NASA formats and templates must be used; however, the response to Question 59 implies that offeror may modify NASA formats to accommodate their particular accounting systems. To what extent will modifications to format be acceptable?

NASA's Response: Offerors may add additional rows in the spreadsheet(s), as needed per instructions, to accommodate their accounting system.

159. Re response to Question 65: Does NASA expect offeror to propose costs for any categories other than balloons, labor, travel, and aircraft?

NASA's Response: The above categories are the main areas for proposed cost. There is a cost exhibit for "Other ODC" that can be used to ensure all costs are proposed to meet the SOW requirements.

160. Re response to Question 145: Response does not address question asked. Question is: Will position description pages be included in the 130 page limit for the Mission Suitability Volume especially in light of the length of the position descriptions that NASA released on November 13, 2013?

NASA's Response: The RFP has been revised to replace position descriptions with position qualifications. RFP has been revised to exclude the position qualifications from the 130 page limit in the RFP.

161. Re response to Question 94: Does the NSF pay for NBOC personnel travel to Antarctica; if not, is this travel part of the "plug in" numbers provided by NASA?

NASA's Response: NSF does not pay for NBOC personnel to travel to Antarctica. Costs incurred for travel specifically provided by NSF are paid separately by NASA and are not included in the "plug in" numbers.

162. Re Question 113: Is the Ft. Sumner hangar lease cost included in Range Expenses in Table B.1?

NASA's Response: Yes, please review cost element definitions contained in the non-proposed cost clause.

163. Re SOW dated November 18, 2013 (released November 14, 2013) total Mission Model Table with the total number of balloons needs to be revised.

NASA's Response: The NBOC SOW was corrected.

164. NASA Helium Contract NNN090021B Mod 02 indicates there are 57 GFE HE dewars (Page 8, paragraph (g)) used for CSBF but they do not appear on the CSBF property list, who controls and has custody of this equipment?

NASA Response: In 1998, the 35 X 100L and 22 X 500L LHe and LN2 dewars were transferred to the NASA BPO list of GFE. The dewars had been excessed by GSFC. On May 16, 2012, all 57 dewars were again excessed by PSL through ONR using standard processes. ONR opted to donate the dewars back to PSL as opposed to other administrative means of disposing of them. The dewars are now the property of PSL/NMSU. 19 of the 500L dewars have been refurbished and are able to be used to support the Antarctic LDB campaign.

165. Airworthiness Review Process (800-PG-1060.2.2A) does not address when the "Contract Aircraft Questionnaire," "Contract Aircraft Science Investigator Questionnaire," and "Contract Aircraft Experiment Installation Engineering Requirements" are due. When are they needed?

NASA Response: Section 3.2.3 of the NBOC SOW has been modified to provide clarification.

166. Do the costs in the flight inventory especially the SIP and CIP include CSBF labor costs for assembly and test or they just the cost of procured equipment?

NASA Response: Labor costs are separate.

167. Reference L.14.3, Subfactor A, Paragraph 5: The Section L instructions for Scenario #1 reference standard versus non-standard support. Please define "non-standard".

NASA Response: The "Non-standard support or development systems" notation is included should the offeror propose operations or systems that are not currently used in an effort to meet or exceed minimal, critical, or comprehensive requirements.

168. Are there any PSL proprietary hardware designs, software, or processes in use at CSBF that will need to be replaced?

NASA Response: The following PSL proprietary systems and subsystems are currently used in LDB flight systems:

- 1) Decommutator boards and software
- 2) Bit synchronizers
- 3) PCM encoders
- 4) Stacks (data acquisition systems)
- 5) Solar power system charge controllers.

The current Business/Reporting System used at CSEF is tied to PSL. Offerors will need to provide their own Business/Reporting System for use.

169. SOW paragraph 3.1.3 Reliability and Quality Assurance requires Government Mandatory Inspection Points (GMIP) for critical systems and processes. Please provide the list of GMIPs?

NASA Response: Refer to Section 3.1.3. The Government expects the offeror to identify inspection points with concurrence by NASA in the fabrication and refurbishment processes of flight systems. The SOW has been revised to delete any reference to GMIP.

170. The non-proposed cost provided 11/12/13 are appreciated but we have several questions. Presently the cost data is required by WBS, will we be required to distribute the non-proposed cost across the WBS? Most of the non-proposed costs have clear WBS homes but for example "Services" crosses several WBSs and so does "Range Expenses."

NASA Response: The updated Cost Exhibits have the Non-Proposed costs distributed across the WBS.

171. The non-proposed cost provided 11/12/13 are appreciated but we have several questions. The non-proposed costs represent many material and subcontract procurements. Since offerors may have different wrap rates for subcontracts vs. material procurements, please provide the mix of subcontracts vs. material procurements.

NASA Response: Except for the "services" cost element in non-proposed costs, all the other elements would be considered "material" procurements.

172. Historical data relative to incurred direct labor hours was provided 11/18/13. Do these hours represent all CSBF effort in 2012 or just the "Core" effort? If the hours represent all effort, please also provide the ratio of Core to IDIQ? We need to understand the Core hours for the costing effort.

NASA Response: The historical labor data provided is comparable to our "Core" requirements:

173. The Response to Question #104 indicated anticipated type and amount of IDIQ work expected to be transferred at contract start including the Super Pressure Balloon team. What is the scope of the current Super Pressure Balloon Team?

NASA Response: The current Super Pressure Balloon Team includes support from specialized analysts who provide support for balloon material modeling and design analysis. In addition, specialized fabrication or testing by the balloon manufacturer in support of the development effort is supported under IDIQ tasks.

174. Two aircraft with required modifications are needed day one of contract because of the likely need to continue supporting FY14 Fort Sumner campaign flights. Steps to complete modification (for the seat pack, Iridium and antennas) are listed below: a) Finalize aircraft lease,

b) Obtain technical data needed to create drawings (Not provided yet), c) Complete modification drawings, d) FAA approval of drawings, e) Complete modifications, f) Final FAA certification of modifications, g) Submittal of documents to NASA Airworthiness Review, and h) NASA approval. There is not enough time between contract award (7/31/14) and contract start (10/1/14) to complete this process. BPO has stated the NASA Airworthiness Review can be completed during Phase-in (7/31/14 - 9/29/14). This situation requires the contractor to complete the rest of process before award with significant expenditures. We suggest shifting contract start to November when the aircraft are not needed for several months or otherwise not requiring the aircraft until four months after contract start. This allows us to complete the aircraft lease, modification and NASA Airworthiness after contract award.

NASA Response: See the answer to #165.

175. For the purposes of past performance, the Government has reduced the threshold for a significant subcontractor to be an average annual cost/fee of \$4M. By our estimates, this means that a subcontractor supplying principally labor (having a sub supply materials or services/materials from a second-tier sub typically and needlessly adds cost to the contract) would have to supply more than half of the labor on the contract in order to be considered significant. We feel this limit is unduly restrictive and that a subcontractor could make a significant contribution to the effort for much less than \$4M. We suggest that the government consider reducing the threshold to \$1M.

NASA Response: Threshold will be reduced to \$1M.

176. The response to Question 18 states that the government will not provide balloons as GFE since all offerors have the ability to work with Raven Aerostar directly to determine an approach. While Raven Aerostar has committed to provide us with quotes for NASA standard balloons, we have no assurances that they will provide the same pricing to all offerors. Would the government consider providing the balloon costs as another non-proposed cost element? Alternatively would the government consider having Raven Aerostar to issue a single set of standard balloon pricing and associated terms and conditions for all offerors to use?

NASA Response: The Government will not be including balloon costs as a non-proposed cost element. Potential Offerors will need to work with Raven Aerostar to obtain fair and reasonable pricing. The Government recognizes pricing may be different among Offerors based upon each Offeror's approach to working with Raven Aerostar and meeting the statement of work requirements.

177. The response to question # 112 indicated a sample Super Pressure Balloon SOW has been uploaded to the e-library. Please identify the file in the eLibrary.

NASA Response: The file was uploaded on 12/9/13.

178. Bidding the facilities support requires intimate knowledge of the existing facilities, limited life items, and current state of wear as well as the anticipated usage over the potential five year

period of performance. Will the government be providing such information in the Bidders' Library? Alternatively, will the government consider providing an estimate for the anticipated labor to maintain the facilities?

NASA Response: The Government will not provide additional information than what is currently available. Historical labor hours are included in the "NEOC Additional Historical Information" and the "NEOC Non-Proposed Cost" includes preventive maintenance and repair estimates.

179. The response to question #10 said "Government believes the revised SOW, the historical data for direct labor hours, and the nonproposed costs, will provide offerors the information necessary to develop estimated costs in response to this solicitation." We have received the revised SOW, historical data for direct labor hours and nonproposed costs. We need the Section L instructions on how to use this information to understand the Government's intent. Please provide a draft of the updated Section L instructions on using this new information, so that we can continue preparing for the proposal.

NASA Response: The information was provided for Offerors to consider when developing their proposal. The final RFP is in the final stages of review and approval. We anticipate releasing on or about 1/6/14. We will not be providing a draft section L since it may change from the time the final RFP is released.

180. SOW Paragraph 3.2.8 - Aviation/Aircraft Support requires two aircraft, and says "One (1) aircraft shall be ready to support each mission; a backup aircraft shall be required to support adjacent missions when the primary aircraft is downrange or unavailable." Given the short duration of the Fort Sumner Conventional Flights and the time needed to setup and launch the next flight, there should be little need for a backup aircraft. Having two aircraft modified and available for use is an expensive requirement. Will the government consider reducing the requirement to one aircraft.

NASA Response: The statement of work requirements in 3.2.8 remains unchanged.