

## **GENERAL**

**QUESTION 1:** “Is the government going to issue a Wage Determination or Federal Pay Grade Equivalent table?”

**ANSWER:** No. The government has made the determination that this contract is not subject to the Service Contract Act.

## **RFP SECTIONS B - K**

**QUESTION 2:** RFP, Section G—Contract Administration Data, Submission of Vouchers for Payment, page 12: Instead of the submission of final cost vouchers, will the Government accept the submission of 2-in-1 vouchers electronically using the DOD WAWF system?

**ANSWER:** Offerors must submit invoices in accordance with Article G.2 – GSFC 52.216-103 – Submission of Vouchers for Payment (SEP 2014).

**QUESTION 3:** RFP, Section H.11, page 26, indicates NASA may include historical labor category descriptions, full-time equivalents (FTEs), average direct labor rates, and other information from this contract in the follow-on solicitation for use by all potential offerors. Including these data in the solicitation is intended to ensure a comprehensive and fair evaluation of competitive proposals and increase the probability that realistic pricing is provided in future proposals submitted. Minimizing the potential risk for unrealistic or unsubstantiated pricing materially reduces the risk that cost/price could become an inappropriate discriminator among competing offerors. In order to ensure fair and equitable competition, will the Government please provide the FTEs per labor category and the average direct labor rates per labor category?

**ANSWER:** As stated in the Set 1 Questions and Answers for this solicitation, because the current contract is managed by the National Science Foundation, NASA does not have access to this information.

## **RFP SECTIONS L and M**

**QUESTION 4:** RFP, Section L.9, FAR 52.222-46, “Evaluation Compensation for Professional Employees.” It would be beneficial for each offeror to have the current average direct labor rate for each of the labor categories to serve as a benchmark, to ensure fair and reasonable compensation. Will the Government please provide average direct labor rates by category to ensure compensation aligns with the mission objectives?

**ANSWER:** Because the incumbent contract is administered by NSF, NASA does not have access to this information.

**QUESTION 5:** Section L.19 (b) (1) limits past performance information or qualifications to 5 pages total. The number of required data elements for each contract (e.g. date, contract type, value, nature of award, number of personnel, etc.) consumes significant space even in a table.

This leaves little room to satisfy other requirements to describe the comparability for the diverse SOW elements, explain completion successes, and explain cost management history. Will NASA increase the page limit to allow ability to fully address the requirements?

**ANSWER:** Yes, the RFP will be amended to increase the page limit for the “Information from the Offeror” section in Volume IV from 5 to 8 pages. However, please note that most of the data elements cited in this question are information that is also stated in Section I of the Past Performance Questionnaire.

**QUESTION 6:** Sec L.23 2(w) on page 92 states “Prime Offerors shall complete Attachment B... for each labor category shown in Attachment E, Government Position Descriptions in addition to any labor categories and levels the offeror anticipates will be required to perform the IDIQ SOW.” But notes on Attachment B tables state only “The Offeror shall provide prime direct labor categories, in accordance with the Position Qualifications in Section 6 of this attachment” which are limited to the Government Position Descriptions. The provided Position Descriptions also include language indicating a specific structure or organization, presumably the current structure, and limit ability to propose alternative organization approach providing an advantage to the incumbent.

- a. Please confirm offerors may propose additional labor categories in addition to the list in Attachment E for the IDIQ SOW as noted in L.23 2(w).
- b. Please confirm offerors may also propose additional labor categories for the Core Services SOW which is not mentioned in L.23 2(w).

**ANSWER:** Yes. Offerors may propose additional labor categories for the IDIQ SOW and for the Core Services SOW beyond those identified in the list in Attachment E in accordance with their proposed management approaches. Section L.23 2(w) and Attachment B will be amended to clarify this point.

**QUESTION 7:** L.24(b) of the RFP states that the past performance questionnaire be "submitted directly to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center Contracting Officer no later than the closing date of this solicitation designated in Block 9 of the SF 33." Block 9 of the SF 33 gives a due date of Oct 31, 2014. However, Exhibit 19 Past Performance Questionnaire gives a due date of October 24, 2014. Will NASA confirm the required date is 10/31/14 as indicated by the RFP instructions?

**ANSWER:** As stated in Section L.24(b) the past performance questionnaire must be submitted no later than the closing date of the RFP which is October 31, 2014. However, in the cover letter we have advised Offerors that they should encourage their references to submit their Past Performance Questionnaires directly to the Contracting Officer one week prior to proposal receipt date. In order to further encourage early submission of past performance questionnaires, the earlier date of October 24, 2014 was used on Exhibit 19.

**QUESTION 8:** RFP, Sections L and M, Proposal Content and Page Limitations, page 74: Can offeror staff resumes be included as an appendix to Volume II: Mission Suitability and excluded from the page limitations?

**ANSWER:** Submission of staff resumes is not a requirement for this RFP. If an offeror elects to include resumes, they will be counted toward the page limitations established for Volume II.

**QUESTION 9:** RFP, Sections L and M, Proposal Content and Page Limitations, page 74: In the table, under Past Performance Volume, there is a reference to “Termination/Descope Information.” There is no other reference to this requirement in the RFP. Does the Government seek this information only for the past performance references for which completed questionnaires will be submitted?

**ANSWER:** Yes, the Government seeks termination/descope information only for the past performance references for which completed questionnaires are submitted.

**QUESTION 10:** RFP, Section L.22(3), page 81: The RFP states that the “30-day phase-in period will be accomplished through the issuance of a separate Firm Fixed Price contract.” The Q&A already provided explains that this FFP contract would be with the successor contractor, rather than the incumbent. For purposes of developing a FFP estimate, should the offeror assume that employees of the incumbent contractor would remain on the incumbent’s payroll for the entire phase-in period? If not, could you please provide guidance on how the Government foresees the phase-in period working?

**ANSWER:** Offerors shall provide a firm fixed price proposal for the phase-in contract based on and consistent with their proposed phase-in plans.

**QUESTION 11:** RFP, Sections L-M, Slip Months, page 88: Given that the Estimated Cost and Fixed Fee for Slip Months may be proposed for the Core Requirement, will they be included as part of the Core cost in the evaluation?

**ANSWER:** The slip month costs will be evaluated for reasonableness, but they will not be part of the core cost for presentation to the Source Selection Authority.

**QUESTION 12:** In the RFP, under section L.23 (x), page 92, Exhibits 16-A, 16-B, and 16-C are referenced as exhibits for the Small Business Subcontracting Plan Goals; however in the **Exhibits spreadsheet**, Exhibit 16 is marked as “Reserved.” Would the Government please confirm that Exhibit 16 is reserved and that the exhibits for the Small Business Subcontracting Plan Goals are 17-A, 17-B, and 17-C?

**ANSWER:** The RFP will be amended to correct this discrepancy in Section L.23(x).

In addition, should the Small Business Subcontracting Plan Goals exhibits be placed in Volume II: Mission Suitability or Volume III: Cost?

**ANSWER:** The Small Business Subcontracting Plan Goals should be placed in Volume II: Mission Suitability.

**QUESTION 13:** RFP, Sections L and M, Past Performance Volume, page 95: There is a requirement to provide a Small Business Subcontracting Plan history (both ISR and SSR). Should the offeror provide these for the projects for which we are providing completed past performance questionnaires?

**ANSWER:** Yes.

**QUESTION 14:** RFP, Sections L and M, Mission Suitability Volume Instructions and Evaluation, pages 82 and 98: The Statement of Work describes a number of activities that can and will be done out of an office setting, should not involve the use of hazardous materials, and involve relatively low hazard activities that pose minimal risk and threat—especially compared to many others that NASA oversees—to people, property, equipment, and the environment. While we take the safety and health of our employees and their coworkers and our impact on the environment seriously and have programs in-place to assess and address the risks to them, the sample plan provided in Appendix E seems disproportionate for the type of work envisioned under this SOW. Would the Government consider scaling back the requirements in Appendix E or deleting them altogether?

**ANSWER:** Offerors are instructed to indicate if any of the standard contents of the Safety and Health Plan, as prescribed by NPR 8715.3, would not be applicable to this specific contract, and provide an explanation for that determination.

**QUESTION 15:** RFP, Sections L-M, Cost Evaluation Factor, page 101, includes the following paragraph: “The total FFP Phase-in price and the proposed and probable Core cost assessment will be presented to the Source Selection Authority, as well as any cost risk associated with the proposal.” If the IDIQ portion of the budget will not be presented to the Source Selection Authority, will it not be included as a cost evaluation factor?

**ANSWER:** The IDIQ portion of the contract effort, as reflected in the Attachment B Direct Labor Rates, Indirect Rates and Fee Matrices, will be evaluated as part of the cost evaluation factor and assessed to determine reasonableness and cost realism. Any adverse findings associated with the offeror’s proposed IDIQ rates will be presented to the Source Selection Authority as a potential cost risk.

**QUESTION 16:** RFP, Sections L-M, Cost Evaluation Factor, page 101: Will an offeror’s phase-in price be part of the overall price evaluation, giving an unfair advantage to the incumbent contractor?

**ANSWER:** The total FFP phase-in price along with the proposed and probable core cost assessment will be presented to the Source Selection Authority. The incumbent contractor is also expected to propose a phase-in price comprised of costs typically associated with the start-up of a new contract. The GAO has held that the mere existence of a prior or current contractual relationship between an agency and a contractor does not create an unfair competitive advantage, nor is the agency required to compensate for every competitive advantage inherently gleaned by a competitor's prior or current performance

of a particular requirement. *Optimum Tech., Inc., B-266339.2, Apr. 16, 1996, 96-1 CPD 188 at 7.*

## **COST EXHIBITS**

**QUESTION 17:** In Exhibit 2, is it the government’s intention that the purchase of IT hardware/software is included in the provided amount for materials ODCs or as an IDIQ task?

**ANSWER:** No. The amount of \$50,000/year provided for materials ODCs, does not include costs associated with the purchase of IT hardware and software. Neither should offerors assume that a task order will be issued to provide for this requirement.

**QUESTION 18:** In Exhibit 2, Travel, the grand total is \$300,000. Should this be adjusted to the sum of all 5 years of the contract, or \$1,500,000?

**ANSWER:** Yes. The RFP will be amended to correct this discrepancy.

**QUESTION 19:** Exhibits 14-A and 14-B are basing fringe benefits on labor hours. If an offeror’s approved indirect rates express fringe benefits on the basis of non-fringe labor *dollars* excluding paid leave dollars – rather than labor *hours* – can the exhibits be changed so that they express the fringe rate on a “per labor dollar” basis? If not, does this exhibit need to be completed for every different hourly rate being proposed?

**ANSWER:** No, offerors must complete these exhibits as specified. As noted in the footnote for these exhibits, it is recognized that such costs will be averages for the different employee categories involved (EXEMPT, UNION, etc.); it is not necessary to complete the form for every different hourly rate proposed.

**QUESTION 20:** Sub-Part 22.1103 as relates to FAR 52-222-46 states “Plans indicating unrealistically low professional employees compensation may be assessed adversely.” Given this language, and that firms will have different data sets derived from separate sources resulting in different median compensation rates, what is the Government’s standard for “unrealistically low”? If that standard is the current average direct labor rate by labor category and the number of FTEs by labor category, please provide the average direct labor rate by labor category and the FTE levels by labor category. If the standard for unrealistically low is something other than the current average direct labor rate by category and FTEs by labor category, please provide the standard by which reasonableness will be judged or evaluated.

**ANSWER:** The standard to be used for judging unrealistically low professional employees compensation will be determined by the supporting information provided by each offeror, and will vary based on the specific proposed approach for staffing the requirement. If incumbent staffing is proposed, then the standard for reasonable compensation will include (but not necessarily be limited to) the Government’s estimate of appropriate compensation levels for incumbent personnel. Unrealistically low professional employee compensation would be the point at which the Government considers there to be a risk that the proposed compensation is inadequate to attract/retain

a qualified workforce and/or implement the proposed approach regarding staffing of the requirement. In that case, the Government will establish a probable cost adjustment to reflect reasonableness and realism.

## **ATTACHMENT A - STATEMENT OF WORK**

**QUESTION 21:** Section 6 of the SOW states that “the contractor shall provide IT seats, peripherals, and general shared office support equipment for up to 40 contract employees and government detailees in the NCO.” Further, section 7 of the SOW states that the NCO maintains “infrastructural networking, data management, and connectivity services.”

**21.a.** What is the current inventory of IT seats, peripherals and networking devices?

**ANSWER:** The current inventory comprises approximately 30 IT seats plus supporting printers, scanners and other peripherals. Current USGCRP server capabilities are provided through a mix of commercial hosting and server system capacity of the incumbent.

**21.b.** Is it anticipated that any of these seats, peripherals or networking devices will carry forward to the new contract? If so, what is the age of the current devices?

**ANSWER:** For the purposes of this solicitation, the offeror should assume that no equipment, software, or software licenses will carry forward to the new contract. The offeror will be required to purchase and maintain necessary software licenses and internet access.

**21.c.** What is the current inventory of operating systems on end-user IT seats, and the inventory of GOTS and/or COTS software/applications that fall under the provisioning responsibility of the contractor?

**ANSWER:** The current contract is administered by NSF, and hence NASA does not have access to specific details of the incumbent’s systems.

**21.d.** Is it anticipated that the existing software inventory will carry forward to the new contract? If so, what is the current licensing scheme and license expiration dates for currently used COTS software?

**ANSWER:** For the purposes of this solicitation, the offeror should assume that no equipment, software, or software licenses will carry forward to the new contract. The offeror will be required to purchase and maintain necessary software licenses and internet access.

**21.e.** Is the requirement for providing “help desk” support to IT users, and incident management/response support for the IT environment at NCO 24/7, or just during normal working hours?

**ANSWER:** Help Desk support to IT users will be required during normal work hours. For major incidents that affect the delivery of public services or information (e.g. hacking/intrusions, direct denial of service attacks, or complete disruption of internet services that take down the public websites), 24/7 management/response support is required for the IT environment at NCO.

**QUESTION 22:** The IT security support portion of section 7 of the SOW is driven primarily by the complexity and categorization of the infrastructure.

**22.a.** How many separately accredited and authorized IT systems make up the current IT environment at the NCO? [See Answer below.](#)

**22.b.** What is the FIPS 199 security categorization of each individually authorized IT system? [See Answer below.](#)

**22.c.** Are the NCO IT systems currently compliant with implementation of NIST SP 800-53 Revision 4? [See Answer below.](#)

**22.d.** What is the effective date of the most recent authorization to operate for each of the NCO IT systems? [See Answer below.](#)

**ANSWER:** The current contract is administered by NSF, and NASA does not have access to specific details of the incumbent’s systems. Offerors are invited to propose the levels of accreditation and security categorization that will be necessary to support the USGCRP and meet the requirements identified in the IT section of the Statement of Work and in the Representative Task Order.

**QUESTION 23: SOW, Tasks 6 and 7, page 6:** Will the Government please elaborate on the offeror’s responsibility in terms of the following activities and costs:

**23.a** Will the Government provide hosting for the USGCRP websites?

**ANSWER:** No, the Government will not provide hosting for the USGCRP websites.

**23.b** Will the Government provide the servers for the USGCRP IT system?

**ANSWER:** No, the Government will not provide servers for the USGCRP IT system.

**23.c** If not, what are the specifications for the USGCRP IT system? What servers does the USGCRP IT system use? How many servers comprise the USGCRP IT system?

**ANSWER:** Current USGCRP server capabilities are provided through a mix of commercial hosting and server system capacity of the incumbent. The offeror is

invited to propose the specifications and mix of systems, capacity, and software required to meet the requirements identified in the IT section of the Statement of Work and the Representative Task Order.

**23.d** Will the offeror be required to purchase licenses for software (e.g., Oracle database, Microsoft Office)? If so, which licenses and how many?

**ANSWER:** Yes. The offeror will be required to purchase and maintain the software licenses and internet access required to meet the identified requirements.

**23.e** Will the offeror be required to purchase and provide internet access for the 40 “IT seats” described in Task 6?

**ANSWER:** Yes.