

July 21, 2015

NASA VALUATION STUDY THE VALUE BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF SERVIR
APPLIED SCIENCES TEAM

Questions/Answers

As of July 21, 2015, the following question have been received:

Question 5 : Section L page four states that the proposal uses “not smaller than 12 point type.” We respectfully have the following clarifications:

Please confirm that the font type is Times New Roman.

We respectfully request that Times New Roman 10 point type may be used in diagrams and illustrations.

Answer 5:

Arial or Times New Roman is acceptable. Yes, 10 font for diagrams/graphs is acceptable.

Question 7: In Section L.7a:

Please confirm that the 16 page limit includes:

Proposal cover sheet – title page (1 page)

Proposal summary – purpose and objectives (1 page)

Background and Introduction (Max 3 pages)

Scientific/Technical Approach Section (Max 10 pages)

Please note that page limit for the proposal cover, proposal summary, background and introduction and scientific/technical approach section add up to 15 pages.

Please confirm the page limit – is it 16 page or 15 pages?

If the page limit is 16 pages, please clarify which sections are included and please specify the page limitations for each section.

Answer 7: A max of 15 pages will be accepted for the proposal. The Team/Management Section will be moved below the block that reads Total Sheet Count with a maximum page limit of 1. This entry will not be part of the 15 page limit. Diagrams and illustrations are not part of the page count. This change will be reflected in the amendment.

Question 8: In "SOL Part 2 Instructions", the table on page L-3 contains the following requirement: "Bios of Team: Please provide for each team member a biographical sketch including the past 10 years of work, relevant work experience, professional positions, publication history, and current/pending funding for those with grants/cooperative agreements."

Would you please clarify the underlined requirement, or confirm if it is included in error ?

Answer 8 : The underlined portion of your question regarding current/pending funding for those with grants/cooperative agreements, will not be required.

Question 9 : In the solicitation, there is a cover sheet for "Attachment J-3, Milestone Payment Schedule, TBD". Would you please confirm if Offerors are expected to propose a milestone payment schedule as part of their Cost/Price Estimate?

Answer 9: No offerors are not expected to propose a milestone payment. This will be done after the offeror is selected and prior to award.

Question 10 : On page J-1-1 of the Scope of Work, NASA mentions the limited available data concerning counterfactuals in terms of products like the JASON-2 AST. Does NASA anticipate this evaluation design to include a counterfactual?

Answer 10:

No, it is not required but a counterfactual, if identified, would be considered. Some methods in evaluation allow for the use or creation of an appropriate counterfactual. Quasi-experimental models can sometimes offer viable comparison groups. The proposal must first consider if a viable counterfactual exists, depending on the proposed methodology. Evaluations will still be considered robust under this solicitation, in the absence of a counterfactual.

Question 11: On page J-1-2 of the Scope of Work, NASA references its strategic plan and the five year focus on enhancing value and benefits of tools/products. Does NASA anticipate the JASON-2 tool to change significantly over the 2-year period of performance of this evaluation?

Answer 11:

The model itself, the flood tool and its prediction level, is not expected to change in the next two years. The implementation of the tool and use, by different types of stakeholders, this may change over the 2 year period. There is a possibility more groups will use the tool, and also there could be changes in the way the information from the model is delivered to the stakeholders.

Question 12: What product-user data does NASA currently have and plan to make available to the awardee (e.g., web traffic to the product website, data sources from the Flood Warning System that aren't Jason-2, flood warning email and phone distribution lists for flood warnings)?

Answer 12:

There is some product user-data available, however this is not held by NASA. This information will need to be collected/obtained by the awardee of the solicitation (depending on their approach/method). However, NASA, post award, will facilitate access to whatever data is available at the partner institutions working with the Jason-2 model.

Question 13: On page J-1-2 of the Scope of Work, NASA emphasizes the evaluation's focus on the impact of "stakeholders and decision-making processes." However on page J-1-3, Task 1.b asks for the "value of the data in the flood model to societal benefits." Is the product interested in the impact of the product on both decision-makers and end-beneficiaries (those who receive early flood warnings)?

Answer 13:

The proposals submitted to this solicitation can address measuring impacts of end-beneficiaries (which are a type of stakeholder), or on decision-makers (another type of stakeholder), or both. This solicitation is open to any of the above as long as the proposal provides clear rationale for their selection. This solicitation is looking to get measurement of the value of Jason-2 which can be to individuals/types of groups of

individuals and/or society. Also, proposals may consider identifying what areas of societal benefits (health, agriculture, food security, infrastructure, energy, transportation, education, etc.) might be receiving the most benefits from the presence and use of Jason-2.

Question 14: On page J-1-3, Task 1.b asks the evaluation to measure value (costs, benefits. Please provide a definition of the type of value NASA expects (e.g., monetary value of disasters avoided)?

Answer 14:

This will depend on the type of method suggested by the proposal. Costs and benefits can be provided in various ways, and this solicitation is open to varying types of definitions. As long as the proposer justifies their selection in approach/method and, thus valuation definition (for the various costs and benefits), the proposal will be considered. There are some methods which capture dollar values, and other qualitative approaches which provide categorical information about cost and benefit. This proposal request does imply that at some level and for some of the benefits and costs, the results will have estimates in dollar value.

Question 15: On page J-1-3, Task 2.b asks the evaluation to measure the AST's impact on the scientific and technical capacity in the region. How does NASA define "region" in this context?

Answer 15:

For purposes of this activity, the region for this project is the SERVIR defined Himalaya region (Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan). However, due to Bangladesh's closeness to the SERVIR Mekong region, the solicitation will also consider impact on the countries of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma (if appropriate).

Question 16: How large a sample population does NASA anticipate for this evaluation?

Answer 16:

Sample size is determined by the method and approach, and the suggested expected results, and also sampling methods might be affected by feasibility. Therefore, NASA

has not set a specific sample size number. Sampling methodology will be assessed in the context of the proposed technical approach.

Question 17: Are there specific divisions, districts or villages of interest for NASA? If so, we kindly request that you please specify them.

Answer 17:

Specific districts/villages will be specified post-award through conversations with the Jason-2 researchers and partners. Budget proposals can provide estimated costs per division/district/village (assuming it is for data collection and analysis) using national averages until they can acquire specific location targets.

Question 18: Please confirm that the focus of this evaluation is on the JASON-2 product as it relates to improving the flood warning system; and not the impact of the flood warning system as a whole?

Answer 18:

It is actually both. However, depending on the approach and focus of the proposal, some teams may be more focused on the contribution of the Jason-2 to flood forecasting from which they will derive benefits and impacts to individuals and/or benefit areas. As stated in the task description in the solicitation, the outlined questions are trying to understand who is benefited and how, from the Jason-2 activity. The impacts could be to multiple benefit areas, one of them could be the flood warning system, and other areas include stakeholders who receive the warnings or to the various societal benefit areas.

Question 19: On page J-1-4, section 4 – Deliverables/Outcomes of the Scope of Work, NASA requests a presentation to SERVIR leadership “at the conclusion of the project.” Does NASA expect this evaluation to be conducted in person? If so, where will it be held?

Answer 19:

Yes, the expectation is to have 1 in-person meeting with at the end of the project to present the final results. Therefore, it would be acceptable to estimate a national trip for 1-2 days for Washington DC (as this will be likely be the higher per diem should another

location be selected) in the budget. The location of the meeting will be within the United States to be determined at a later date (as it will be influenced by the schedules of the leaders that will attend).

Question 20: On page J-1-4, section 4 – Deliverables/Outcomes of the Scope of Work, NASA requests “presentation of findings at scientific conferences/meetings.” How many such presentation are anticipated and at what locations?

Answer 20 :

1-2 scientific conferences (or related conference) total for the 2 year period of the contract, between 1-2 people per conference. Location can be local or international. Presentations must be relevant to the work/research of this contract, and go through (if needed) required approval processes/or notification process to NASA.

Question 21: Section F, para. F.1 states Period of Performance as date of award through June 30, 2017 while Section J, para 5.0 states Period of Performance as contract award through August 30, 2017. What is the anticipated start date for pricing purposes, and period of performance completion date?

Answer 21: The contract will be from date of award through June 30, 2017. Attachment J-1 para 5.0 will be amended to reflect the correct date.

Question 22: Section H, para H.10 states “(b) Quarterly Progress Reports. The contractor shall submit separate quarterly reports of all work accomplished during each three-month period of contract performance...” This requirement is not listed in Section J, Statement of Work. Can the Government confirm if Quarterly Status Reports are required?

Answer 22: The Quarterly status reports are not required.

Question 23: Section J, page J-2-14 states the submission frequency of the Monthly Status Reports to be semi-annually. Please confirm this deliverable submission requirement.

Answer 23: The deliverable submission requirement will be semi-annually.

Question 24: Section J, para 4.0 states the deliverable "Presentation of findings at Scientific Conference/Meetings". Are there defined travel requirements for this or other deliverables to permit confidence in pricing as part of the firm fixed price?

Answer 24:

Yes, proposals can provide estimates in their budgets for a specific conference they anticipate to present at, or provide just an estimate for a potential conference as a place holder until the conference is confirmed.

Question 25: Is the objective of this project to evaluate the specific single SERVIR AST project (Jason-2), or to develop a general evaluation methodology that can be applied to any SERVIR AST project with the Jason-2 project serving as an example?

Answer 25:

This solicitation is asking for evaluation/valuation of the Jason-2 project as the primary focus area as outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP)..

Question 26: Will the opportunity to bid on future NASA SERVIR projects be limited if this contract is won?

Answer 26: There is no limitation of bidding on future NASA SERVIR projects if this contract is won.

Question 27: RFP Form 33, page 2 - Item No. 002 - What is the significance of "AST M&E Deep Dive" as a required deliverable with a cost estimate?

Answer 27: This is an internal description of the requirement. It is for internal purposes only.

Question 28: RFP Section B.1 - Is the offeror supposed to fill in this Fixed Price TBD?

Answer 28: No. This entry will be filled in by the Contract Specialist after the offeror is selected and prior to award.

Question 29: RFP Sections F.1 & L.5 notes the period of performance to end on June 30, 2017, while the SOW Section 5.0 of the RFP notes the period of performance to end on August 30, 2015. What is the correct end date for the period of performance?

Answer 29: The contract will be from date of award through June 30, 2017. Attachment J-1 Section 5 will be amended to reflect the correct date.

Question 30: RFP Section F.2 - Is the offeror supposed to fill in the TBD for the place of performance? As an off-site work place?

Answer 30: This entry will be completed by the Contracting Officer prior to award of the contract.

Question 31: RFP Section H.8 (c), page 20 - Is the offeror required to fill in this Key Person TBD now or later at award time?

Answer 31: The offeror is not required to fill-in the key personnel at this time. Key personnel must be identified prior to award.

Question 32: RFP Section I.9 - When is the Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) plan to be delivered by the Offeror? Is it required?

Answer 32: It is not required at this time, however if it is applicable it will be determined if it will be required at a later date prior to award.

Question 33: RFP Section J - Is the offeror required to fill in the Milestone payment schedule TBD in the table shown? or provide it's own projected schedule some where else in the proposal?

Answer 33: No, the offeror is not required to fill in the Milestone Payment Schedule. The Milestone Payment Schedule will be completed after the offeror is selected and prior to award.

Question 34: RFP SOW Section 1 (page 42), the first web link provided does not open successfully. We are, however, able to access the main website <https://servirglobal.net/> for accessing some pieces of other information - but not the web link target / specific information on the SERVIR Science Team.

Answer 34: Due to the new SERVIR website changes (a new website has just been released). The new link for the AST information from the larger perspective:

<https://servirglobal.net/Servir-ast>

For the other link, the catalogue entry for the specific project for the Jason2 is correct, no changes needed. http://catalogue.servirglobal.net/Product?product_id=32

Question 35: RFP SOW DRD # 1547SA-001 and DRD, 1547SA-002 list a set of extensive requirements for preparing, delivering and executing a safety, health and environmental plan that could be too much of an auxiliary effort on this study type contract not involving any hardware and software development or operations. Could these SHE requirements be relaxed or bounded some how on this study and reporting contract?

Answer 35: The Off-site Safety, Health, and Environmental (SHE) Plan requirement has been removed from the Statement of Work. It is not a requirement.

Question 36: RFP SOW Section 4.0 - How many scientific conferences should be considered in the offerors proposal for costing purpose?

Answer 36:

1-2 max

Question# 37 Section F page one of the RFP states that the period of performance of this contract is from date of award through June 30, 2017. Attachment J1 page four states that the period of performance shall begin immediately upon contract award and end August 30, 2017. Section L page two states that the period of performance is estimated to be 2 years from the effective date of contract award until June 30, 2017.

For budget purposes, please confirm that the period of performance will be 2 years from start date (i.e. removing the specific end date, as this is TBD depending on when the project is awarded)?

Answer# 37: The contract will be from date of award to June 30, 2017.

Question# 38 To orient offerors as to the magnitude of the scope and scale, could you please provide a project ceiling amount or range?

Answer# 38 The project ceiling amount or range will not be disclosed.

Question# 39 We see that the total firm fixed price is TBD. Will this information be made available on July 20, in the anticipated RFP amendment? Or at an earlier date?

Answer# 39 The total firm fixed price will remain TBD. The firm fixed price will be disclosed after the offeror is selected and prior to award.

Question# 40 Would the award be 'portable' – if key personnel move to a new university, would it be possible to likewise transfer the award to the new institution?

Answer# 40 The award would not transfer to the new university or institution, it would remain with the university or organization that the contract was awarded to.