

## Questions and Responses

**Question 3:** Can experience and alternative education/training offset the requirements for a bachelor's degree for Key Personnel?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** No. As stated in the solicitation, the identified Key Personnel are required to have a bachelor's degree and experience in the field. These are the minimum requirements for those Key Personnel.

**Question 4:** Can the Government confirm that ONLY resumes for the 3 identified Key Personnel (Program Manager, Manager for Enterprise System, and Manger for Operations & Maintenance) are required as part of Volume II- Technical Proposal File 3: Key Personnel Resumes, or can the resumes of critical personnel also be provided in this section?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** As outlined in the solicitation, the Program Manager, Manager for Enterprise System, and Manager for Operations & Maintenance shall at a minimum be proposed as Key Personnel. Other positions can be proposed as Key Personnel. If an Offeror elects to identify other Key Personnel then resumes for those individuals are required. The Government does not want resumes for any individuals who are not identified as Key Personnel (e.g. critical personnel or others).

**Question 5:** Is it the Government's intention that Attachment K- ES&H Performance Questionnaire be completed by the contractor and submitted as part of Volume II- Technical Proposal- File 5 Past Performance and Experience or should Attachment K be completed by the customer and submitted back to DOE NETL directly?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** As indicated in Section L, "The Offeror and all Prime Participants shall forward the Past Performance Information Questionnaire and the Environment, Safety, Health, and Quality (ESH&Q) Past Performance Information Form as shown in Part III, Section J, for each contract or project cited above to the appropriate point of contact for that contract or project." Therefore, Attachments I and K should be sent by the Offeror to the points of contact for each contract identified to represent past performance, Attachment H should be used as a sample template for the cover letter in transmitting these two items to your references. In addition, each Offeror is required to submit as part of their proposal on past performance a copy of Attachment J and Attachment K for each of the references that sent the questionnaires. The reason Attachment K is submitted both by the Offeror and the Reference is that the Reference Point of Contact may not have all the information necessary to complete that form. Using the cover letter, the Offeror should instruct the reference point of contact to submit completed forms via e-mail to Amanda Lopez at [Amanda.Lopez@netl.doe.gov](mailto:Amanda.Lopez@netl.doe.gov).

**Question 6:** Are Transition Costs to be included in the Total for All Information Technology Operations and Maintenance Support Services (ITOMS) and can the template provided be amended to include a line item for the transition cost?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** Yes, transition costs are to be included in the total and the template may be amended to include a separate line for the transition cost.

**Question 7:** Are Offerors required to utilize the stated estimated level of effort set forth in the RFP for the cost proposal? How or where does an Offeror express a different level of effort that supports the efficiencies from their unique technical approach?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** Yes, all Offerors are required to utilize the stated estimated level of effort in the development of their cost proposals. The staffing plan provided under the Management and Organizational Approach File is where the Offeror is provided the flexibility to develop a staffing plan to demonstrate their innovative techniques, performance efficiencies, and cost saving approaches to be implemented while providing an experienced, qualified, effective, and efficient staff. The staffing plan can deviate from the estimated level of effort required for use in the cost proposal, but should clearly explain the rationale and efficiencies gained from this proposed approach.

**Question 8:** Can the Government confirm that the base year estimated level of effort does not include transition activities?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The estimated level of effort does not include transition activities. Those transition activities are to be included in the fixed-price-no-fee amount identified for transition.

**Question 9:** Please clarify what is the relationship of the AFGE and the Offeror in support of the resultant contract. Are contractors responsible for joining AFGE or is it for DOE Government employees only? What is the specific interaction between the Offeror employees and AFGE?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** There is no relationship between the Offeror and the AFGE. AFGE is the Government union on site. AFGE represents only Federal employees.

**Question 10:** Per Section L.9 under the Exhibit B1 instructions it states: ‘The specified DPLH of 151,680 per year (using 1920 DPLH per FTE per year) shall be used in the development of cost proposals. This level of effort, required by NETL, is equivalent to 79 FTEs per year. For cost proposals purposes, a straight line approach is to be taken in the number of FTEs and DPLH per year to add consistency between cost proposals.’ However, Column C of the sheet ‘Exhibit B1’ in the COST EXHIBITS Excel file states ‘Offeror’s proposed hours.’ Does this imply that Offerors are allowed to deviate from the prescribed hours in Column I or are we use the 151,680 DPLH and labor mix for all contract years?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror is required to propose the DPLH that has been identified by the Government for each of the labor categories. Exhibit B1 may require the Offeror to add rows to split the labor category across the various NETL sites (e.g. column A requires the Offeror to identify the proposed location). In addition, the Offeror may be proposing with various other Prime Participants (Exhibit B1 is set up with two columns as examples but the Offeror may need to add or subtract based on the team

that they are proposing). Therefore, the total DPLH identified may be split across several sites and between several business entities however the total must equal the amount that the Government has pre-established.

**Question 11:** Reference Section L.9. There are several references in this section to Key Personnel being including in the Offeror's On-Site Overhead indirect rate. Is it the Government's intention for Offeror's to alter their Overhead Rate Structure to account for Key Personnel? In a Cost Plus environment, how does the Government expect contractor's to recover Key Personnel costs?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The RFP requires that the Offeror (and their Prime Participants) create a "NETL specific" On-Site Overhead Rate. Since this rate is specific to this requirement it is not expected that there will be a conflict with an Offeror's audited rate structure.

**Question 12:** On page 130 of the Solicitation, as part of required Past Performance information, there is a bullet point for 'Staffing Levels.' Please clarify what kind of information to provide for 'Staffing Levels' (see RFP, Section (F) File 5: Past Performance and Relevant Experience, #2, Past Performance; bulleted list).

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The bullet for Staffing levels refers to the staffing level of the contract for which you are providing past performance information. This information is utilized in determining the relevance of the contract you provided as compared to that of the NETL requirement.

**Question 13:** Section L.8, File 2, Item 5 states "approach to work control processes using a computerized maintenance management system including experiences with planning, scheduling, tracking and root causes analysis of all work. It shall also include discussion on maintaining a work backlog to national standards". This instruction appears to follow a project or facility management terminology and not IT services terminology. Please confirm that this is required for this effort. If it is required, is the Government already using a computerized maintenance management system or looking for the Offeror to propose a system and is that system to track only IT work or other work performed under this contract? Is this system expected to be separate from the help desk service request tracking system?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Government currently uses, or plans to use, various computerized maintenance management systems to plan and track IT related projects (e.g. Project and Issues Tracking System (PITS), Enovia M1, Dashboards, etc.). The Offeror is to describe their experiences with planning, scheduling, tracking and root causes analysis using computerized systems, they are not expected to propose alternative systems to be implemented. NETL is interested in evaluating experience and capabilities demonstrated by the Offeror. Backlogs and re-baseline of projects occurs both with IT related projects and other non-IT related projects. Applying a project minded approach to the planning, scheduling, tracking and root causes analysis of all work is expected and is what this item is describing in the approach that the Offeror is proposing based on their experiences using other similar type systems.

**Question 14:** Please clarify whether the number of FTEs listed in the section identifying the available on-site space reflects actual current staffing levels or maximum available space.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** It reflects neither. It reflects the minimum space that will be made available to the successful contractor. This is expected to provide some insight to the contractor in their planning of locations for their staffing.

**Question 15:** Please clarify the distribution of roles and responsibilities across the SOW at each of the four locations identified

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror is expected to propose an approach that addresses how they will perform the work including the distribution of roles and responsibilities at the various site locations ensuring that the approach provides an efficient and adequate method to fulfilling the requirement.

**Question 16:** Where will the three key personnel be located?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror is required to propose the location for Key Personnel and support their rationale in their staffing plan.

**Question 17:** What levels of clearance (if any) will contractor staff require to start the contract?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** Security clearance requirements, if any, would be identified in the issued subtask orders.

**Question 18:** Please provide a detailed description of the technical environment under which the support for Core IT, CHRIS, and Research IT will be provided, including: Versions and levels of software (for both COTS and custom applications); Types, brands, number, and physical distribution of hardware; networking environment; and other details that will fully identify the services and systems contractors will be supporting under the new contract.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** Operational environment documents that may be useful in obtaining a better understanding of the NETL requirement are provided on the Electronic Reading Room. The Government Furnished Property List is also provided in the Electronic Reading Room. The Electronic Reading Room is located at <http://www.netl.doe.gov/business/solicitations/ssc2008/index.html> near the bottom of the main page there is a link to the specific information page for this requirement.

**Question 19:** Can the Government provide detailed information on the Subtasks to be issued for each area of the SOW, (e.g. Where positions are to be located?; What tools are being used?; What specific performance metrics already exist?; With who will the contractor directly interface?; what governing bodies exist today that govern the IT work performed?; What investments/projects not covered under this contract would fall under the purview of governance support/processes?; How are IT investments currently prioritized, funded and controlled?; What are the top issues that business customers are facing with the current support?; How many current projects are being supported?; What tools are being used?; What is the technology

environment?; How frequent are new releases?; How many lines of code are supported?; What is the software and hardware technology suite?; Where is data currently housed and hosted?; What backup/restore and disaster recovery requirements are there?; When is the next technology refresh?; How many PBX's are there?; How frequent are meetings, where are they held, and what size?; What Help Desk tool is currently used?; and What other software is currently used other than MS Office, Adobe, and GroupWise?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** As stated in the response to question 16, Operational environment documents that may be useful in obtaining a better understanding of the NETL requirement are provided on the Electronic Reading Room.

**Question 20:** Please provide Wage Determinations for Pittsburgh, Houston, and Albany, OR areas.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** Wage Determinations for all the appropriate areas were included as attachments to the RFP. These were provided in FedConnect, E-buy and in the Electronic Reading Room.

**Question 21:** Please clarify how “10% of the proposed effort” is defined as referenced to Prime Participants (e.g. by Dollar value, by # of personnel, by number of hours, or some other measure)

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror should use the dollar value of the work performed as the means for determining the 10% of the proposed effort for identification of Prime Participants.

**Question 22:** If the Offeror's Alliant Small Business contract is as part of a Joint Venture but only one member of that JV will be participating in this project. Does the Government expect past performance from the other members of our JV? Also, is the maximum of “nine contracts identified” relevant to the past performance example only or is it a hard limit regardless of the number of Prime Participants on a team?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** No, only members participating should provide the past performance documentation. The Offeror shall make it clear that the other Joint Venture team members are either not participating or what role they will play if the Joint Venture is selected as the awardee. The “nine” contracts was only provided as part of the example for Offerors to better understand how to calculate the number of past performance references permitted.

**Question 23:** Page 79 of the solicitation references DOE 0414.1C, Quality Assurance. The revised version on the DOE Directives site is DOE 0414.1D, Quality Assurance. Please verify that the revised version is the correct reference.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The referenced instruction is for contract deliverables that are outlined in the Reporting Requirements Instructions. These are reports that are required after award and are not needed for the proposal.

**Question 24:** Are there timeframes established for migrating to the "target" technologies listed in the "EA-IT" Architecture Board" document? Are all locations migrated to the same technology at the same time?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** This information is provided to give the Offeror's an understanding of the current environment. They are not an integral part of the RFP and not necessary for the development of the proposal requested.

**Question 25:** Can you provide a physical inventory of the servers, workstations, routers, etc which would need to be supported under this contract?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** Please reference the Government Furnished Property List in the Electronic Reading Room

**Question 26:** As depicted and referenced in Exhibit A of the COST Exhibit attachment is award fee allowable on ODC's?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror is to propose award fee and to provide a rationale as to the application of said award fee.

**Question 27:** In reference to Exhibits C1 through C4 – Indirect Expenses; since the Government have identified ODC's , is a Material and Handling Fee (M&H) applicable, if so can we provide a C5 M&H tab showing the expense schedule and reflecting the indirect allocation on Exhibit A of the COST Exhibit Attachment?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Cost Exhibit template includes exhibits for Fringe Benefit, On-Site Overhead, Off-Site Overhead, and General and Administrative (G&A) rates. Offeror and Prime Participants shall create additional indirect expense exhibits in the same level of detail required for the four established indirect rates, if other indirect rates such as material handling are proposed. As additional exhibits are created the numbering format should continue (e.g. C5, C6, etc.).

**Question 28:** Can NETL define the roles and responsibilities of the Key Personnel position listed with a "Title" of TBD?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The "TBD" is a place holder for any additional Key Personnel identified by the Offeror (in addition to those required). If an Offeror proposes other Key Personnel then that Offeror would be required to define their roles and responsibilities.

**Question 29:** In the "Corporate Human Resource Information System" section of the SOW, in regards to the requirement to support the Peoplesoft system and Disaster Recovery System: Can the Offeror propose other methods of meeting this requirement?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror is responsible for proposing the technical approach for each area of the SOW and will be evaluated on their proposed technical approach.

**Question 30:** In the “Systems Engineering” section of the SOW it states: “The practice of hosting or housing applications by a third party, such as another DOE or commercial entity is possible.” Can the Commercial space be staffed by non-security cleared personnel?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Offeror is responsible for proposing the technical approach for each area of the SOW and will be evaluated on their proposed technical approach.

**Question 31:** In the “Client Systems Engineering” section of the SOW in regards to the WAN: Are there sections of the network which require Niprnet/Siprnet connectivity?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** There is nothing in the provided documentation to suggest that Niprnet/Siprnet connectivity would be required, and it is not a current requirement. These are network protocols primarily used by the Department of Defense and the State Department.

**Question 32:** In reference to the SOW regarding Information Housing and Hosting. What is the database specifics used for the SOW (brand, version, etc.)?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** This information was provided in the Technology Overview document posted to the Electronic Reading Room.

**Question 33:** Can the Government please clarify whether the Other Direct Costs provided by NETL are inclusive or exclusive of indirect burdens?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Other Direct Costs provided by NETL are exclusive of indirect burdens. This is apparent in the cost exhibit template provided as indirect burdens have separate line items.

**Question 34:** The instructions state that the staffing plan and organizational plan do not count toward the page limit. Please confirm what items are excluded from the page limitation as it pertains to these items.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The entire staffing plan, inclusive of the organizational chart and discussion thereof, does not count toward the page limitation in this section. Similarly, all parts of the Corporate Organizational Plan are not counted towards the page limitation.

**Question 35:** “All pages shall be single spaced using 12 pt. font, 1” margins and when printed shall fit on size 8 ½“X 11” paper.” Will the Government consider allowing a smaller font for tables, graphics and charts?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The 12 pt font is mandatory to ensure readability of the proposal. It is not NETL's intent to require Offerors to redo their graphics, however readability is at the risk of the Offeror and graphics with less than 12 pt font may not be considered in evaluation of the proposal.

**Question 36:** Will the Government extend the due date for proposals based on the Questions and Responses?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Questions and Responses were considered only minor clarifications of the solicitation and did not result in the need for an amendment to the solicitation. Therefore, the Government has determined that no extension of the due date for proposals is necessary.

### **PREVIOUSLY ANSWERED QUESTIONS**

**Question 1:** Would the Government consider accepting either CMMI-DEV or CMMI-SVC Level 3 or higher since there is majority of process areas are shared between the two constellations and repeatability of processes will not be reduced since both will require Level 3 or higher?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** The Government has determined that CMMI-SVC is a relatively new methodology and is in agreement that there is a considerable overlap of process areas shared between the two constellations. The Government is also concerned about unnecessarily restricting competition. Therefore, the Government has determined that it is in our best interest to amend the requirement to allow either CMMI-SVC or CMMI-DEV Level 3 or higher as the required certification. Amendment A001 will be issued through GSA E-Buy, Fedconnect, and on the NETL Electronic Reading Room. The Government does believe that the methodology required under CMMI-SVC Level 3 is the appropriate methodology for this requirement. Therefore, the work performed shall be required to be provided following the methodology of CMMI-SVC Level III when delivering services under this contract. It is our belief that those firms certified at the CMMI-DEV Level 3 or higher are capable of applying the CMMI-SVC methodology to the services provided.

**Question 2:** Is this requirement a follow-on to the Information Technology and Engineering Services (ITES) contract currently awarded to Platinum Solutions?

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:** This requirement is a follow-on to the ITES contract that was originally awarded to Platinum Solutions and currently performed by SRA Platinum Solutions. A FOIA released version of that contract is available at the NETL Electronic Reading Room located at: <http://www.netl.doe.gov/business/solicitations/ssc2008/index.html>. However, Offerors are cautioned that requirements have changed significantly and care should be taken in responding to the current requirement provided in the RFP.