

- Question 1. Have you identified any workflow requirements within the approval process where SharePoint can be used?
Response: No, sharepoint has not been evaluated for that.
- Question 2. Business requirements mentioned that there is need for reports to be downloaded directly to excel or lotus 123 spreadsheet files. Is download into lotus 123 still desired?
Response: The options available in Microsoft Reporting Services, which include Excel format, are sufficient.
- Question 3. In Question 21 from Amendment 3, it states that seven copies of the proposal are to be submitted, plus 3 electronic copies. Does that mean there should be 1 original and 7 copies or just 7 hard copies total? Does the price proposal need to be included in all hard copies?
Response: Offerors are required to provide 7 hard copies, and 3 electronic copies (CDs).
- Question 4. Is the Cover Letter/Statement of Compliance or the table of contents part of the page limit? Questions 2 and 46 of Amendment 3 seem to contradict each other in regards to page limitations for the Technical proposal. Please clarify.
Response: The Cover Letter/Statement of Compliance, Table of Contents, Resumes, Credentials, any Letters of Commitment are exempt from the page limitation for the purposes of this requirement.
- Question 5. In terms of the resumes: The RFP lists 6 key personnel. If we include even a one page resume/summary for each, a letter of commitment, and proof of certification as applicable, we will be well over the 10 page limit. Is the government willing to raise the page limitation for these items? Is there a resume template that USDA would like us to use?
Response: It has now been determined that the resumes will be exempt from a page limitation. See Question 4. and Response above. Offerors may determine the resume format.
- Question 6. The government is asking for a proposed burdened labor rate. Please explain what information should be included in this attachment.
Response: Offerors should provide significant cost and pricing information to detail the proposed burdened labor rates reflected in the proposal.
- Question 7: Section L.10 (pg 91) references L.5 (pg 90) as the section the offeror should reference for the technical outline. Section L.5 does not provide an outline. Is there a specific outline we should follow for the Technical Section?
Response: Amendment 00001, L.10 entitled "Preparation of the Technical Proposal (Part I) provides guidance. Specifically, L.10, subparagraph (e) provide the format to be followed. The substantive content of the technical

proposal should be address the Objectives and Deliverables as detailed in Section C, and specifically C.1.6 through C.1.8, as revised in Amendment 000001. Offerors should follow the guidance in L.11, entitled “Preparation of the Business/Management and Cost Proposal (Part II)” for completion of the Cost Proposal.

Question 8: The technical proposal (Part I) shall be prepared and submitted in the following format with appropriately numbered subparagraphs:

- > PART SECTION DESCRIPTION
- > A. Table of Contents/Introduction
- > 1.0 Technical Approach
- > 2.0 Past Performance – including references I
- > 3.0 Project Management Plan
- > 4.0 Staffing Plan

Was it intended that Question 18's response be "Technical Approach"? If not, please clarify what is expected. There are a few references to SOW/C.1.6 being cross-referenced or indexed into the proposal. Please clarify the expectations.

Response: Yes. Offeror proposal should reflect the “Technical Approach” to be used to meet the Objectives. Please see response to Question 8. above.

Question 9: Is there a page limitation for the Technical Proposal (Part I)?

- > a. If so, what are the specific page limits for each sub-section – Technical Approach;
- > Past Performance; Project Management Plan and Staffing Plan?
- > b. If so, will appendices containing resumes, letters of commitment from contingent
- > hires, representations and certifications, etc., count towards the limitation?

Response: FAS would like the total for each volume to be 30 pages, not including diagrams and charts, etc., which should not exceed an additional 10 pages. The forty page limitation does not include resumes, letters of commitment, and certifications, which will now be exempt from the page limitations. All text should be in a 10 point font, Times Roman font.

Question 10. There is no mention of letters of commitment in the solicitation. Are letters of commitment required or not required?

Response: The letters of commitment are not required, however, a letter of commitment would add strength to the staffing plan.

Question 11. There are seven key positions requiring resumes. It would be impossible to fit into ten pages seven professional resumes of the caliber required, especially with the certifications. Can the Key Personnel resumes be excluded from any page limits?

Do we only have a 30-page limit for Volume #1, or a 40-page limit including charts and tables?

Response: See Response 5. and 9. above. Resumes are now exempt from the page limitations.

Question 12. Is the Cover Page and/or Table of Contents included or not included in the page limit?

Response: No, no longer included in the page limitation.

Question 13. Will the Introduction/Executive summary count as part of the thirty pages?

Response: No, not included in the page limitation.

Question 14. Would it be possible to have a 40-page total limit on Volume #1 with resumes not included in that limit?

Response: See Response to Question 9. and, 11. above.

Question 15. Does the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) currently have any automated testing tools for .NET applications/websites? Will we be able to use FAS's automated testing tools for the UES Upgrade? How many licenses would be available for use?

Response: Visual Studio Team has been purchased by FAS, which includes some testing tools. The necessary licenses would be available.

Question 16. Does the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) currently have any source code control tools (i.e., CVS, Subversion/SVN, etc.)? Will we be able to use FAS's source code control tools for this development effort? How many licenses would be available for use? Would we be able to install CVS or Subversion on FAS servers if we are not able to use FAS source code control tool-sets.

Response: Microsoft Visual Source safe is installed on a server in the FAS environment. That would be the expected source code repository and necessary licenses would be provided.

Question 17. Section 6 (a) of the solicitation states that: The Government will provide PCs, desks, and telephones for each contract employee. The Government will also provide access to printers, FAX machine and photocopiers. Will these machines contain all the project management/planning (i.e., Microsoft Project, etc.), development environments, and source code control tools? Will the FAS staff manage these machines including application installation and repairs?

Response: The government will provide a standard desktop and software that the vendor may have to load. The PCs that the vendor uses will be covered by maintenance by the FAS helpdesk, which includes repairs.

Question 18. At the conference on 30 April, there was discussion about the solicitation being an ID/IQ contract and the UES PM mentioned issuing task orders against the contract. However, there are no pricing instructions for providing rates to support task orders. Is this an ID/IQ contract and if so how and where do we propose labor rates?

Response: This is an ID/IQ contract. Offerors should provide their respective fixed labor rates for the proposed labor categories that are envisioned to complete the objectives of the requirement. Issuance of task orders, will incorporate those labor hour rates.

Question 19. Section C.1.19 Earned Value Management (EVM). According to the FAR, Earned Value Management is not applicable to fixed price contracts since we are not providing cost data and are performing against a fixed price for each phase. How does the Government envision executing earned value reporting for this contract?

Response: The government wants to ensure that the vendor has a way to manage the project using an integrated baseline for time, cost and quality.

Question 20. Section C.1.19 Earned Value Management (EVM). In other solicitations we have seen this section has usually been a Section H requirement and has been submitted as part of our business proposals. Where does the response to this section belong in the offeror's proposal?

Response: Pursuant to Section L, L.10, entitled "Preparation of the Technical Proposal (Part I), Offeror technical responses should be provided in accordance with that guidance. Offerors should follow the guidance in L.11, entitled "Preparation of the Business/Management and Cost Proposal (Part II)" for completion of the Cost Proposal.

Question 21. Section H.1 AGAR 452.237-74 Key Personnel (Feb 1988). Is this section to be completed and submitted with the Business Management Volume?

Response: This should be submitted with the Staffing Plan.

Question 22. Section K.5, Reqs and Certs, subpara (2) states that the small business size standard is 500 employees. However, SBA has established a size standard of \$23M for NAICS 541511. According to the SBA website the only service industries with size standards stated in number of employees are Research and development and Environmental Remediation Services. The 500 employee size standard for this procurement seems to run counter to the SBA guidance and significantly increases the size of 8(a) companies who can compete on this procurement as small businesses and puts those 8(a) companies who normally compete under this NAICS code at a competitive disadvantage. Is that USDA's intent.

Response: No.

Question 23. Section L.10 Preparation of the Technical Proposal (Part I), sub para (e), proposal format. This section identifies Section 3.0 of the proposal to be the Project Management Plan. Is the Project Management Plan submitted in the proposal the draft version of the Project Management Plan that is the deliverable in Phase-1 *Phase 1 (Figure 2: Table/Milestone-based Desired Outcomes and Required Services/Deliverables)*?

Response: No. The vendor is expected to use the discovery period to come up with a more comprehensive project plan, which is a phase 1 deliverable.

Question 24. Section L.11 Preparation of the Business/Management and Cost Proposal, (A) Business/Management (Section 1), sub para (2) requires that this section contain the information specified in Sections B and I of the RFP with the offerors information added to Section B.

Response: Please note the reference to “I” is an error. It should read Section “C”. Additionally with Amendment 000005, Section B. has been clarified to reflect the sequential Phases, as detailed in Section C.1.6., and further delineated in C.1.8., Figure 2: Table/Milestone-based Desired Outcomes and Required Services/Deliverables.

Question 25: (1)What information in Section I is required to be in this section?(2) What information in Section B goes in this section vice the information required for Section 2 – Cost Proposal, which also requires the completed Section B?

Response: See Response to Question 24 above.

Question 26. Section M.2.4 Evaluation Factors – Staffing Plan. This section states that “in particular the résumés will be evaluated to assure that the training and experience are consistent with the proposed positions and to the extent to which the résumés submitted for key personnel adequately meet the requirements of the SOW. There are 6 key personnel required by the Solicitation and along with the résumés we are required to submit copies of qualification and letters of availability. Even at 1 page per résumé, which would make it difficult for UES to evaluate the experience of the proposed staff, this means the staffing section of the proposal consumes 18 pages of the 40 page limit on the proposal. It would seem to be in the government’s best interest to exclude the résumés, availability letters, and certifications from the page count. The government could still maintain the 30 page limit on the Technical Proposal and add the personnel information as an appendix, with a 2 page per résumé limit.

Response: See prior response to page limitation.

Question 27. Page 39 of the Performance Work Statement (PWS) states that for the Program Manager “A PMP certification is required”. Does the PMP certification have to be from Project Management Institute (PMI)?

Response: An alternative PMP would have to be equally rigorous and justified.

Question 28. Will a “Master's Certificate in Project Management” awarded by ESI International (ESI) and The George Washington University be acceptable?

Response: No

Question 29. In Section B, found in SF33, Item 006 asks for a Monthly Price (MO) for “UES System Maintenance, Integration verification and technical reports as applicable”. Similarly Item 008 asks for a Monthly Price (MO) for

“Option year One against CLIN 006 for continued System Maintenance, operations and reporting”. However on Page 13 of the Performance Work Statement (PWS), in Figure 2, for Phase 6, the “Required Performance/Deliverables” are “Documentation updated, Activity Reports, New enhancements, reports, reporting assistance, as needed”. There is a disconnect between what has been mentioned in Section B (Item 006, Item 008, Item 009 and Item 010) and what has been mentioned in the Performance Work Statement – as “new enhancements” seem to be a part of the PWS but not part of Section B. Our questions are as follows:

- a) Do we have to consider “new enhancements” as part of the Price Quote for the “Post-upgrade” UES System Maintenance?
- b) If yes to (a) above, what should we consider as the nature of “new enhancements” that may come up in the future (in the System Maintenance phase)? This information is very important for us to give a realistic price.
- c) If the government cannot define the scope of new enhancements, can we specify hourly rate since it will not be possible to estimate the effort?

Response: Section B. has been clarified to include the sequential phases per Section C. Additionally with Amendment 000005, Section B. has been clarified to reflect the sequential Phases, as detailed in Section C.1.6., and further delineated in C.1.8., Figure 2: Table/Milestone-based Desired Outcomes and Required Services/Deliverables.

Question 30. In Section B, found in SF33, Item 007 asks for a “Locked” Price (LO) for “Miscellaneous services and supply costs that may develop or be discovered during the performance of this contract that are not anticipated or expected during the development of the statement”. The following questions:

- a. We find this description not very clear – can you be more specific on the nature of these “miscellaneous services”?

Response: The abbreviation (LO) stands for a “Lot”. Not at this time.

Question 31. Which Phase in the Performance Work Statement (PWS) does this Item 007 in Section B map to?

Response: This line item is being deleted in its entirety.

Question 32. The answer to Question 53 in the Questions & Answers document released on 04/25/08, states that for the Technical Proposal, the maximum number of points is 100, with the division being Technical Approach – 30, Project Management Plan – 20, Staffing Plan – 20, Past Performance – 30. This indicates that Technical Approach and Past Performance carry equal importance. However Page 93, Section M of the solicitation says “Technical Approach is significantly more important than Past Performance”. Can you please clarify this contradiction?

Response: This information was erroneously stated. Section M, Page 93 of the solicitation, as revised by Amendment 000001, is stated correctly.

Question 33. Similarly the answer to Q. 53 indicates that Project Management Plan and Staffing Plan carry equal importance. However Page 93, Section M says that Project Management Plan is “more important than the Staffing Plan”. Can you please clarify this contradiction?

Response: See Response to Question 32. above.

Question 34. In the evaluation criteria, how are points for Past Performance divided? How many points for the actual Past Performance description and how many for the reference questionnaires?

Response: See Reponse to Question 32. above.

Question 35. Can you please clarify the Font Size: Is the Times New Roman, 10pt. text standard a minimum type size OR the exact type size that should be used in the response?

Response: Times Roman, 10 point.

Question 36. We understand that the overall page limit for the Technical Proposal (Part I) is 40 pages. However the responses to Question #2 and Question #46 in the Questions & Answers document released on 04/25/08 appear to be conflicting. Can you please clarify the following with reference to Page Limit for the Technical Proposal (Part I): You mention the page limit for charts and diagrams as 10 Pages within the overall 40 Page limit. Since we will be using charts and diagrams throughout our Proposal response, which may take only partial space on the page, how will the 10 page limit be verified? In addition, can tables be treated as “text” and not part of the “charts and diagrams” as far as page limit is concerned?

Response: Tables may be treated as “text”, and not a part of the page limit.

Question 37. We would like to present resumes of the key personnel and also the non-key personnel in our Staffing Plan. However we anticipate that resumes will account for a minimum of 30 pages. In addition letters of commitment may account for an additional 10 pages. Copies of certifications will add to that amount. Will the government consider keeping a separate page limit for the resumes and letters of commitment, which is not part of the overall page limit of 40 pages? If so what is the page limit? Additionally for ease

of proposal reading will the government allow resumes and letters of commitment to be placed as Appendices to our Technical Proposal (Part I), rather than as part of “Staffing Plan”?

Response: It has been determined that there will be no page limitation to resumes, certifications and letters of commitment.

Question 38. What is the preferred development language?

Response: Visual Basic

Question 39. What is the size and volume of the database?

Response: 2250 MB (production) and 1530 MB (holding)

Question 40. On the PMP certification, does it have to be a PMI certification or can it be another institution certifying for PMP? There are many these days, and I'm just curious.

Response: A complete PMP certification showing proof of certification would be fine.

Question 41. We understand this is stage 3 of a three stage process. And our question is, is SAIC eligible to compete as a subcontractor or as an SBA 8(a) joint venture on this acquisition?...Because they were actively involved, of course, in stage 1 and stage 2. Are they eligible to compete on the stage 3?

Response: No, if they were actively involved in stages 1 and 2 they are not eligible to compete in stage 3.