

WCROSS Draft RFP Posted to FBO 11/12/2010

Answers to Questions received as of 01/10/2011

Question 1

“Critical infrastructure” consists of systems and assets so vital to the United States that their incapacity would harm the nation’s physical security, economic security, or public health. Critical infrastructure is often geographically concentrated, so it may be distinctly vulnerable to events like natural disasters, epidemics, and certain kinds of terrorist attacks. Disruption of concentrated infrastructure could have greatly disproportionate effects, with costs potentially running into billions of dollars and spreading far beyond the immediate area of disturbance.

The NIST 800 series on IT security, NSPD-51 and HSPD 20 as well as HSPD-7 direct federal agencies to locate critical infrastructure such that it is safe and secure.

The following NOAA functions have been identified as having national-level significance and are identified as Primary Mission Essential Functions for the Department of Commerce:

- Provide satellite imagery: Collect and provide the Nation with critical intelligence data, imagery, and other essential information for predictive environmental and atmospheric modeling systems and space-based distress alert systems by operating NOAA- controlled satellites, communications equipment, and associated systems.
- Provide Meteorological Forecasts: Provide the Nation with environmental forecasts, warnings, data, and expertise critical to public safety, disaster preparedness, all- hazards response and recovery, the national transportation system, safe navigation, and the protection of the Nation’s critical infrastructure and natural resources.

How will NOAA apply these directives in locating the NCEP HPC systems, both primary and back-up, which are critical infrastructure, so they meet the spirit and intent of these directives? Is having one system within the Washington, DC consistent with this approach?

Answer: The facilities geographic location requirement provides WCROSS geographical redundancy for the NCEP Production Suite (NPS).

Question 2

In reference to Question #9 from the document *Answers to Questions received prior and during 12/6/2010 Industry Day*, the Government states that they “believe the incumbent contractor has similar standup costs to any other offeror with regard to proposing a completely new system and facilities.”

This statement appears contradictory in that the incumbent contract have no standup costs for the Primary WCOSS system and facility given it meets the performance and facilities requirements as it stands now with *no* changes needed. Please clarify how the standup costs would be similar to another offeror.

In order for the standup costs to be similar between the incumbent contractor and other offerors, this implies there is must propose a facility and compute solution which is separate from the current WCOSS system. Please confirm.

E.2.3 Acceptance Testing indicates that acceptance testing during the first 15 days will include “*multiple copies of these codes will be run in a random manner so as to employ all resources in an unpredictable manner.*” Please confirm that the acceptance testing requirement would not be waived should the existing WCOSS primary system be proposed.

Answer: The statement “Primary WCOSS system and facility given it meets the performance and facilities requirements as it stands now with no changes needed” is incorrect. The requirements are not the same between the current WCOSS and follow-on WCOSS. Each submitted proposal will be evaluated as stated in the RFP including acceptance.

Question 3

In reference to Question #39 from the document *Answers to Questions received prior and during 12/6/2010 Industry Day*, the APS is separate and independent from the WCOSS solution and question #41 states that NCEP will support the services for the NCEP APS. Please confirm that this will be a separate price element. Additionally, please confirm that since the APS is the Government’s responsibility, there are no disincentives associated with the APS (which is consistent with how the code transition serves in question #51.)

Answer: The APS is a separate price element and should be proposed as a separate price element within the cost/price attachment template provided in Section J. This price element will *not* be included in the disincentive calculation or application.

Question 4

Please confirm that acceptance testing will be performed based on proposed benchmark suite.

Answer: No, acceptance testing is not limited to the benchmark suite.

Question 5

Section F.1.3 - Consideration for not meeting performance requirements. Can the Government be more specific about what monthly charges are subject to performance penalties?

A: Consideration is applied to all hardware, software, facilities and services that the Contractor delivers and/or supports.

Question-- What metrics are to be used for performance to assess penalties based on services?

Answer: The metrics utilized for determining consideration are stated in Section F.1, Consideration. Consideration applies to all hardware, software, facilities and services that the Contractor delivers and/or supports. If the Contractor delivers a solution that is anything less than what is required by the Government, then consideration is applied to the value of the total solution, which includes services.

The RFP does not identify a performance metric specifically for services. Although Section F.1 does not define a performance metric specifically for services, the application of consideration applies against the value of all delivered services since it is part of the total delivered solution. If consideration applies, then by definition, the Contractor delivered a total solution that failed to meet the Government's requirements, of which services were a part. Alternatively stated, services are a cost element of the total delivered solution; therefore, consideration applies against this cost element.

Consideration does not preclude the Government from assessing Contractor performance in its service delivery utilizing separate metrics specifically tailored to measure services. Metrics to measure services will be identified in the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan.

A task/delivery order may subsequently be placed against this contract which does not impact the primary or backup WCOSS total solution. The applicability of consideration will be determined at the task/delivery order level.

Question 6

L.4 Type of Contract, Please explain the circumstances under which the Government would utilize labor hour or T&M type task orders.

A: The Government anticipates utilization of labor hour or T&M task orders for requirements for system optimization, hardware and software maintenance, software development, systems design, and hardware and software analysis, and other situations where there are no clearly defined deliverables. The type of task order will be determined by the CO at the time of issuance.

Question—Services will be T&M and Hardware will be FFP; is that correct?

Answer: That is incorrect. All deliverables, hardware, software, facilities and services will be FFP at the time of contract award.

This is an ID/IQ contract. The T&M and labor hour provisions in the basic contract were included to provide the Government with a robust contract vehicle flexible enough to meet its future requirements. The T&M and labor hour provisions may or may not be utilized during the life of the contract.

Question 7

The Government's answer to Question 7 and the answers to questions #12 and #13 are unclear. Please clarify.

Question 7 from previous Q&A:

7. Q: L.4 Type of Contract, Please explain the circumstances under which the Government would utilize labor hour or T&M type task orders.

A: The Government anticipates utilization of labor hour or T&M task orders for requirements for system optimization, hardware and software maintenance, software development, systems design, and hardware and software analysis, and other situations where there are no clearly defined deliverables. The type of task order will be determined by the CO at the time of issuance.

Q: Can the Government break out which requirements mentioned in the response above will use T&M and which will use FFP? Also, what is a situation where "there are no clearly defined variables" , and can the Government provide an example?

Answer: All deliverables, hardware, software, facilities and services will be FFP at the time of contract award. The CO will determine which requirements are T&M in the event a T&M or labor hour task order is issued during the life of the contract.

Question 8

Question 12 from previous Q&A:

12. Q: 3.15.1 System Administration – Given the Government anticipates a system administration staff of at least five personnel, is this element priced as a T&M or Labor hour task order separate from the end-to-end solution?

A: It is anticipated that staff administration labor is itemized as part of the overall fixed price labor level-of-effort proposed.

Q: In a previous Government response to question 7, the Government noted areas where there would be a T&M or FFP approach. In response to question 12 the Government notes that staff administration will be part of an overall 'fixed price labor level-of-effort proposed.' Is it safe to assume then that systems administration will not be T&M at all and solely FFP?

Answer: Systems administration will be awarded FFP. All deliverables, hardware, software, facilities and services will be FFP at the time of contract award.

Question 9

Question 13 from previous Q&A:

13. Q: 3.15.2 Application Support - Given the Government anticipates an application support staff of at least three full-time personnel, is this element priced as a T&M or Labor hour task order separate from the end-to-end solution?

A: It is anticipated that application support staff labor is itemized as part of the overall fixed price labor level-of-effort proposed.

Q: Why were systems administration and application support not included in the Government response to question 7 and broken out separately from "system optimization, hardware and software maintenance, software development, systems design, and hardware and software analysis"?

Answer: Systems administration and application support were not included in the Government's response to question 7 and broken out separately from "system optimization, hardware and software maintenance, software development, systems design, and hardware and software analysis" because all deliverables, hardware, software, facilities and services will be FFP at the time of contract award.

Question 10

17. Q: For the services and labor provided by the contractor in support of the primary and backup systems, how does the labor factor into the disincentives and payment? Can they be broken out separately to tie into the root cause analysis, and then paid based on this analysis, which could include facilities, labor, operational use time, and development use time?

A: Consideration applies to the value of the total delivered solution. The Contractor is responsible for meeting performance requirements on hardware, software, facilities, and services that the Contractor delivers and/or supports.

Question -- How do the T&M and FFP elements tie to system performance?

Answer: A T&M or FFP task/delivery order may be placed against this contract which does not impact the primary or backup WCOSS total solution. The applicability of consideration will be determined at the task/delivery order level for subsequent orders issued after contract award.

Question 11

Q: 39. How is the pricing for the third system storage and power captured and evaluated since the system is GFE and housed at the contractor facility? Who does the O&M on that system, and are their performance metrics associated with this system as well based on uptime, etc.?

Answer: The requirements and specifications are contained in Section C for the NCEP alternate processing site and include power, space, and hands-only support and will be evaluated in the technical evaluation. The price should be proposed as stated in the above response to question #3. NCEP is responsible for the alternate processing site GFE.

Question 12

Will the government consider a separate contract to provide the program management (IV&V) services and requirements associated with this large contract?

Answer: No, the requirement is for a total integrated solution.