



Questions and Answers No. 2
Request for Proposal 060B2490022-2015
Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services

Ladies/Gentlemen:

This list of questions and responses is being issued to clarify certain information contained in the above referenced RFP. The statements and interpretations contained in the following responses to questions by potential Offerors are final and binding to the State. Nothing in the State's response to these questions is to be construed as agreement to or acceptance by the State of any statement or interpretation on the part of the vendor.

- 1) We've received the hardware expansion RFP, thank you for sending. [Vendor] is already on the master contract however we would like to add new functional areas (specifically FA-IV) to our contract that we can begin to deliver for the remainder of the contract. As we are only looking to augment our existing contract, I was hoping to ask for a bit of help from you to understand how we go about doing accomplishing that.

RESPONSE: This RFP is intended to allow new vendors to enter the Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services program. Current Hardware Master Contractors will be allowed to add Functional Area(s) through a separate modification process and should not respond this RFP. Current Master Contractors will receive a separate communication regarding the modification process.

- 2) What is the procedure for a current Master Contractor to add a Functional Area (for us it would be VI) to our current contract? We're already authorized and contracted for the appropriate manufacturers in most cases, just need to extend them into the new FA.

RESPONSE: See response to question No. 1.

- 3) Can you please confirm that as a current/active authorized vendor participant, the only reason we would need to participate in this expansion window is if we wanted to expand our functional offerings? Non-participation will not affect our future status---correct?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1. This RFP will have no effect on the status of current Master Contractors.

- 4) [Vendor] is already a master contract holder for the Hardware Contract. I see that this is an expansion RFP, so do existing contract holders need to respond or is this just for companies who wish to be added?

RESPONSE: See response to question No. 1.

5) Does Functional Area II include document scanners?

RESPONSE: Yes, this includes multifunction devices which could include document scanners that are a part of the multifunction printer.

6) We wish to add a functional area to our current contract. Are we required to propose all of the functional areas or only the one we would like to add?

RESPONSE: See response to question No. 1.

7) I have received a copy of the RFP for Hardware and Associated Services, and I was wondering if that hardware would include Wi-Fi or WLAN Products? I did not see them specifically mentioned, so before we prepare a response, we want to make sure they are considered for this contract.

RESPONSE: Yes, Wi-Fi or WLAN Products would be included in Functional Area III.

8) The question that I have is centered around the “formatting” of the response that we will now be putting together. Will we still need to respond to all of the aspects of the Technical Proposal? I realize that some of the categories above will/should be required. I would just like to get a response from you detailing what the requirements are for existing contract holders.

RESPONSE: See response to question No. 1.

9) [Vendor] is a manufacturer of hyper converged storage solutions. We sell exclusively through resellers. Should we respond to this RFP by submitting pricing or work through our resellers to provide this information?

RESPONSE: Manufacturers have the option of proposing to join the program directly or authorizing resellers to join. If a manufacturer wishes to provide products exclusively through a reseller, the reseller should submit a proposal on its own behalf.

10) We received notice of the above mentioned RFP. One of the functional areas of the RFP states that you are looking for (Security, Cameras and Associated Peripherals). Would an X-Ray baggage scanner or walk-through/hand-held metal detectors fall in that category by any chance?

RESPONSE: No, they would not be included.

11) If changes are made to the current contract, all of the Master Contractors will receive a Modification. If you are not adding new Functional Areas than you do not have an action at this time.

RESPONSE: See response to question no.1.

- 12) [Vendor] is looking to participate in the RFQ. If [Vendor] have comments or suggestions to make on the document how should this be presented? For example if we have suggestions to alter certain sections can this be provided through redline document with comments?

RESPONSE: **The State will not negotiate separate contract terms and conditions. All Master Contractors will be awarded the same Contract.**

- 13) I have also noted that there are certain references that the document in itself cannot be altered and rather interested parties must agree to the document and its contents in total? Is this the correct position or does it relate to certain aspects of the document only?

RESPONSE: **See response to question no. 12.**

- 14) Also, do you anticipate that the bid due date will be pushed out?

RESPONSE: **Yes. See Amendment #2.**

- 15) We are a Minority owned company based within the state of Florida, do we have to fill out any other forms, other than the RFP to be compliant as an MBE under COMAR 21.11.03?

RESPONSE: **To be considered an MBE in the State of Maryland you must be certified through the MDOT Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE). Please contact the OMBE directly for information on the requirements of the certification process (mbe@mdot.maryland.gov).**

- 16) I have a question about Item 1.28.1 in the RFP document. It appears that I would need to have a Maryland agent to do business in the state of Maryland. Can you give me some advice on the kind of person to get? Should it be an attorney?

RESPONSE: **You should begin by contacting the Department of Assessments & Taxation (410- 767-1340).**

- 17) As far as the letters of authorization, our manufacturers are emailing. D we provide the email of these only, or email and print out too?

RESPONSE: **Copies of LOA's should be submitted with the RFP. A printed version of an electronic letter of authorization is acceptable.**

- 18) I would like to confirm that the attached RFP is not brand specific but for any Hardware and Associated Equipment needed for example Dell, HP, Aruba, etc.? Please advise

RESPONSE: **No, the RFP is not brand specific.**

- 19) As stated in the RFP Page 31, Section 3.1 " Technical Proposal shall contain a section on Offeror experience and capabilities and separate sections for each Functional Area proposed". does that mean, we have to have 3 experiences for each Functional Area (FA) and Each FA should have

separate Executive summaries and Each FA should have its own Offeror's Order Fulfillment Capabilities and Each FA should be separated with section heading having LOA relevance to its FA. Or we have make an overall Executive Summary for all FA addressing every requirement and 3 Experiences covering all FA's and one process for Offeror's Order Fulfillment Capabilities for all FA's. Please let us know what is best as we prefer addressing all the FA's as one proposal and submitting 3 experiences as whole and writing one process of Order Fulfillment Capabilities. Please elaborate your answer.

RESPONSE: RFP Section 3.4.2 contains detailed instructions as to the formatting of the Technical Proposal. Only one proposal should be submitted and that proposal should have one Executive Summary that meets the requirements of RFP Section 3.4.2.2. Similarly, there should be one section relating to the Offeror's Experience and Capabilities, and that section should meet the requirements of RFP Section 3.4.2.5.

- 20) As stated in the RFP Page 32, Section 3.4.2.3 Part A "Offerors must state each manufacturer product line that they propose selling through the Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services Master Contract". Do we have to importantly provide the list of all the products that a manufacturer is supplying. we have manufacturers who supplies 1000's of products and it will be difficult to name all and constitutes lots of documents listing all the names. Please clarify that shall we specify only the product type like servers, switches etc. but not the sub-types under these products.

RESPONSE: No, a detailed product list is not necessary. Pursuant to RFP Section 3.4.2.3, offerors should only provide the proposed product line and a manufacturer's letter of authorization for each proposed product line.

- 21) "The only actual pricing asked for is in Attachment E-Functional Area IV- Installation and Training Services Labor. Are we obligated to give hardware pricing or just list the products we offer under the functional area and represent that our pricing will not be higher than MSRP?"

RESPONSE: You should provide Letters of Authorizations for the applicable functional areas and commit to pricing that is not be higher than MSRP.

- 22) Paragraph 1.5 (page 4) - Is the reference to "COTS program" an error?

RESPONSE: See Amendment No.2.

- 23) Paragraph 2.2.4 (page 17) - Under what circumstances do you anticipate being able to return hardware and receive a full refund?

RESPONSE: Refund requirements will be determined at the secondary level of competition.

- 24) Paragraph 3.3 (page 31) - Is it acceptable to put the two sealed packages into one package for shipping? Is the requirement for an MS Word version AND a PDF version? Please clarify.

RESPONSE: Yes, for shipping purposes it is acceptable to put two sealed packages in one package. Yes, offerors are required to provide both a MS Word version and a PDF version.

25) Do signed attachments need to be "wet ink" or are scanned signatures acceptable?

RESPONSE: Original signatures are required.

26) Is leasing an available acquisition method under this contract? Will PORFPs be offered that include leasing? If so, will the Contractor be allowed to introduce its own lease documentation for those opportunities?

RESPONSE: Leasing is not available under this Contract.

27) Is there any limit to the speed, size or cost of the proposed hardware?

RESPONSE: This will be determined at the secondary level of competition.

28) As an incumbent for the 5 existing Functional Areas for Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services 2012, should our qualifications focus on Functional Area VI only, and not on the FAs we are already contracted/authorized for?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1.

29) How do we convey our standard terms for you, as several provisions are inconsistent with switching products manufacturers?

RESPONSE: The State will not negotiate separate terms and conditions. See response to question no. 12.

30) Secondly, will the RFP response due date be extended as result of snow and re-scheduling of the Pre Bidders meeting tomorrow?

RESPONSE: See Amendments #1 and #2.

31) The State requires Letters of Authorization from Distribution and Manufacturers. How frequently does the State desire that these Letters of Authorization be refreshed?

RESPONSE: Currently there is not a requirement to refresh Letters of Authorization.

32) What is the process for removing products that have gone End of Life (EOL) and are no longer available?

RESPONSE: At the Master Contract level, Master Contractors are authorized to sell overall product lines, and are not tied to specific products. Specific product offerings are only relevant at the secondary competition level, and a Master Contractor has the option to simply not propose products that are no longer available.

- 33) What if the manufacturer increases price on a product during the life of the contract? Are we able to adjust our price in those instances?

RESPONSE: Price will be determined at the secondary level of competition.

- 34) Should the contractor or manufacturer no longer wish to have products available as part of the contract what is the process to terminate the contract or manufacturer's product line?

RESPONSE: The Master Contractor should provide a Letter asking to remove the manufacturer and/or product line from the applicable functional area.

- 35) If the manufacturer has additional terms and conditions for their products do we include those at the order level?

RESPONSE: Requirements are established at the secondary level of competition.

- 36) There are some hardware products that require software to be included with the purchase such as Tape Analytics for Tape Backup purchases, or Exadata Software for Oracle's Exadata. Can these software items be included on this contract or is it not allowed since this is for Hardware only?

RESPONSE: Software may only be included when it is required for use of the hardware being purchased.

- 37) At the top of page 20 the RPF states the following:

“Requesting agencies are expressly prohibited from using the Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services program to obtain and install new security systems or upgrades to existing systems. To that end, requesting agencies may not purchase Functional Area VI components in conjunction with Functional Area IV installation services in a manner that would suggest that they would be integrated into a prohibited systemic use”.

Question: Why would agencies be prohibited as stated above?

RESPONSE: See Amendment No 2. Agencies are permitted to procure security related items under Functional Area VI; however, they may be prohibited from procuring entirely new security systems.

- 38) Paragraph 2.8, page 20 indicates that Requesting Agencies are prohibited from using the Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services program to obtain and install new security systems and upgrades to existing systems. This seems to be in conflict with all of Functional Area VI which specifies that security equipment may be purchased under this program. Would the State please clarify this statement?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 37.

- 39) [Vendor] will not need to add functional areas so we will not submit a response to the expansion RFP. Just to confirm, our existing contract will remain in place with the functional areas we currently have, correct?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1.

- 40) We are struggling with the MBE requirements of your contract. We are a reseller with very little need to get other firms involved in our transactions. And we don't normally do business in the state of Maryland and would anticipate working more with non-Maryland entities that use your contract.

What is the best way to proceed in this situation?

RESPONSE: MBE goals will be set at the PORFP level and Master Contractors are required to use MDOT certified MBE companies to meet MBE goals. See the MDOT Directory of Certified MBE, DBE, SBE and ACDBE firms found here: <http://mbe.mdot.maryland.gov/directory>

- 41) [Vendor] was on the 2012 contract with a multitude of vendors.
Do we need to product new LOAs for all of those companies/partners?

RESPONSE: See response to question 1. Existing contractors should not respond to this RFP.

- 42) As to vendors awarded under the 2012 RFP, will that contract (Ex A to the 2012 RFP) be applicable to purchases from those existing vendors, or will the 2015 contract (Ex A to the current RFP-0060B2490022-2015) be applicable, and if the 2015 contract will be applicable, will it only apply to future purchases?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1.

- 43) The only actual pricing asked for is in Attachment E-Functional Area IV- Installation and Training Services Labor. Are we obligated to give hardware pricing or just list the products we offer under the functional area and represent that our pricing will not be higher than MSRP?

RESPONSE: For functional areas other than Functional Area IV, the RFP requires you provide LOA's for products you are authorized to resell and a commitment to provide pricing no higher than MSRP.

- 44) As an existing vendor on the 2012 contract, we will be able to 'Add' to ALL the Functional Area's via the Modification Method, correct? And, an email will be sent to existing vendors explaining this as well, correct?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1.

- 45) A contractor who is part of the 2012 contract wanting to add a Functional Area to their existing contract will do so as a contract modification to the 2012 contract. The 06082490022-2015 Hardware and Associated Equipment and Services is only for new contractors. Correct?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1.

- 46) Can you clarify the exact way you want the proposal submitted? I have in my notes that it was to be unbound, and also the electronic types and copies that you are requiring.

RESPONSE: See Section 3 – PROPOSAL FORMAT.

- 47) If we are selected for this, how often can you be added to a new functional area? In the meeting you were allowing the existing contract holders to expand in Functional Area 6. If we are selected and do not apply for Functional Area 4, when could we add it down the road? Is that just at the 3 year expansion time?

RESPONSE: Master Contractors will only be allowed to propose to add new functional areas during an Expansion Window.

- 48) Is the MBE 1% requirement an overall goal for the department of information technology (Do-IT) itself or for each master contract proposer.

RESPONSE: The 1% MBE goal is for the aggregate of all the PORFP's awarded pursuant to this RFP.

- 49) For the LOA's that are required for the manufacturer's, is there minimum of these needed for the initial submission?

RESPONSE: Offerors must submit at least one LOA for each product line that they propose.

- 50) Will distributors that we are partnered with, will there LOA's to us meet the requirement for the individual manufactures that they represent.

RESPONSE: The State does not understand this question.

51)

- (a) On the Price Pages in Attachment E do offerers just provide a description of our offerings without having to provide any actual prices?
- (b) How detailed does the description need to be (i.e. do offerers put a description of “digital in-car video systems” or do offerers need to provide the specific brand name for their digital in-car video systems?)
- (c) For all peripherals associated with the base products like “digital in-car video systems” do offerers need to also provide itemized descriptions for each peripheral or do offerers just list the necessary peripheral items based on each PORFP request/requirement?

RESPONSE:

- (a) **The only sub-attachment of Attachment E that requires specific pricing is Attachment E-IV for Functional Area IV. All of the other sub-attachments only require a commitment to provide pricing no higher than the MSRP.**
- (b) **For each proposed offering, the descriptions should list both the manufacturer and the proposed product line.**
- (c) **Specific products will be offered and priced at the secondary level of competition.**

52) It is understood that the term of this contract is 12 years, and that at 3 year intervals there will be Expansion Windows for new offerors and/or new functional areas to be added. In between those 3 year terms, if an existing vendor's MSRP prices change do offerers need to send a Letter of Authorization or a notification to Maryland DoIT for approval, or do offerers just use their updated MSRPs for the next PORFP submission?

RESPONSE: Master Contractors do not need to submit updated LOAs every time there is a price change. Master Contractors only provide current pricing (equal to or below MSRP) at the secondary level of competition.

53) Can DoIT please clarify that current Hardware Contract holders will receive a process to include Functional Area 6 rather than submitting via the new contract?

If this is the case, can DoIT provide a timeline for this process?

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 1.

54) Can we change our pricing in accordance with our manufacturer's price increases? How often?

RESPONSE: Specific pricing is provided at the secondary level of competition.

55) Are there any exceptions to having hardware delivered within the specified 10 business day from the date of the receipt to the PO timeframe? Is there a penalty for late delivery?

RESPONSE: This will be determined at the secondary level of competition.

56) For Training and Installation: Our organization does not have a published price list for services. Can we use an existing State of Maryland Contract Holders Rates that provides similar offerings and services as a comparison?

RESPONSE: The method used by Offerors to set their price ceilings for Functional Area IV is a business decision for the company. The State will not express a preference or suggestion as to how ceiling rates should be set.

57) Will the state of Maryland Accept our home state MBE Certificate,? We are based out of South Florida.

RESPONSE: See response to question no. 14.

58) The Key Information Summary Sheet states the Contract Duration of 12 years and RFP section 1.5 states; “The Term of this Contract shall be for a period of 12 years, beginning on or about May 1, 2016 and will terminate on July 31, 2027.”

Was the initial 2012 RFP award term for 15 years?

The time period between the two dates appears to be 11 years and 3 months and shouldn't the 12 month term have started back in 2012 with the initial RFP award?

Will the existing Master Contractors have to sign up for any additional term changes, if any?

RESPONSE: This Hardware Master Contract Program will end on November 14, 2027. The initial 2012 class of Master Contractors were awarded contracts that expire on November 14, 2027. All subsequent classes of new contractors will also be awarded contracts that end on November 14, 2027. The exact term of each of those respective contracts will depend on the respective effective dates.

59) Can you tell me if [Vendor] is already awarded as a contractor and/ subcontractor on this Hardware Contract?

RESPONSE: A current list of Master Contractors is posted at <http://www.doit.state.md.us/itmc/Default.aspx?smc=13>.

60) Can are we able to update our contact information and subcontractors on this contract?

RESPONSE: Master Contractor contact information can be updated any time through the Master Contractor Login on the DoIT website.

61) Is there a limit to how many partners we are allowed to add?

RESPONSE: No, there is no limit to the number of manufacturer LOAs that may be submitted for a functional area.

Thank you,

Gayle Mealy
Procurement Officer

End of Question and Answer # 2