



**Questions and Answers No. 2  
Request for Proposal 060B4400002  
INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT 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 not binding to the State, unless an addendum expressly amends the RFP. 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) Are you sending out Q & A from today's conference?

**RESPONSE:** The State will formally respond to questions submitted in writing. The questions asked during the pre-proposal conference are non-binding on the State or potential Offerors.

- 2) In section 3, section 3.4.2.8, there is a numbered list of items requested for this section. Under bullet number #2, the RFP references Attachment K. Attachment K is the VSBE Participation forms. Is this a typo? Is this supposed to reference Attachment J?

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1 for the correct Attachment letter.

- 3) In section 4.3 **Financial Criteria**, it states that price proposals will be evaluated separately and that the prices should be maximum prices that State will pay for all proposed labor categories. At the orals, it was stated that prices will be evaluated on Total Evaluated Price, which is form E-3. Could you confirm this and provide additional elaboration on the evaluation criteria for 4.3?

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1. Financial proposals will be evaluated by the Total Evaluated Price. Proposals will be ranked from lowest to highest to determine the financial rankings. The contract shall be awarded to up to six Offeror(s) with the proposals found most advantageous to the State, considering the combination of technical and price submissions. In making this selection, technical merit will receive greater weight than price.

- 4) In section 3.4.2.5 the last sentence says: "This section should include a detailed description of the Offeror's proposed IAS **methodology (ies)** and services as required by Section 2. I'm confused by the singular or the plural of methodology. Are the instructions here to produce one methodology that covers all five assessment areas, or do you wish for separate methodologies for each of the five areas?"

**RESPONSE:** This is up to the Master Contractor. The State is looking to understand the capability of the Master Contractor and the flexibility of its IAS Methodology or Methodologies to provide services in all five assessment areas.

- 5) In section 2.4 Master Contractor Minimum Qualifications – can you confirm that the requirement of 6 examples of past performance as listed in 2.4.1 must come from the Master Contractor (prime) only?

**RESPONSE:** The Master Contractor Minimum Qualification listed in Section 2.4 must be met by the prime contractor only.

- 6) Quality Assurance services can typically include system testing to, per the requirement in 2.3.4.1, “ensure that systems perform to documented specifications.” Will QA services under IAS include elements of system testing?

**RESPONSE:** Agencies may use the IAS for system testing.

- 7) While DoIT responded that a company can be on more than one bid team:
- a. It did not state whether it would actually make awards to teams that include a similar company on more than one winning team. Thus, can a company be on more than one winning team? (A definitive answer from DoIT is needed for this, because if DoIT doesn’t intend to make awards to teams that include a similar company, bidders need to know this before teaming arrangements are finalized.)

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

- b. If a company can be on more than one winning team, we assume this can cause conflicts of interest in the task order process, e.g., where a company on one team performed IAS services for a project, and this makes another team (on which that company is on) ineligible for future IAS work for that project. Is this a correct assumption? Or, can a prime staff a task order with resources from subs other than the one that performed the prior IAS work (e.g. by creating a Chinese wall for that task order)?

**RESPONSE:** All conflict of interest determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

- 8) One of the positives about the current DoIT-sponsored IV&V model is the fact that the IV&V team is independent from the agency being evaluated. A risk of having State agency directed IV&Vs is these IV&Vs can be less independent due to influence asserted by the agency, and the nature of the agency and service-provider relationship. What safeguards will DoIT put in place to ensure integrity in the IV&V process so master contractors can continue to provide unbiased and unflinching IV&V results. (For example, without safeguards, an IAS contractor may soften IV&V findings to ensure continued IAS work from an agency. Or, a State agency may cherry-pick IV&V vendors prone to give more favorable findings.)

**RESPONSE:** IV&Vs that are procured directly by State agencies are not the same as DoIT IV&Vs conducted as part of DoIT’s oversight responsibilities for major IT development

**projects. Agencies choosing to hire a contractor to perform an IV&V for a major IT project, either via the IAS contract or another vehicle, will be subject to all of the requirements of DoIT oversight, including DoIT IV&Vs, where required.**

- 9) Regarding the following past performance requirement, “At least three (3) of the examples must have evaluated information system development projects with a project value in excess of \$10,000,000,”
- a. We assume “project value” is the total cumulative value of the IT development project, e.g, the value the State agency listed on their project ITPR for project costs. Is this a correct assumption?

**RESPONSE: Yes, the assumption is correct.**

- b. For IAS services (e.g., QA services) provided for an Operations and Maintenance IT project (which includes a fair amount of IT development), how is “project value” determined. Is it also calculated cumulatively like for the question above? For example, if the QA services were performed on a 3-year, \$6M a year O&M contract, would this equate to a \$18M project value?

**RESPONSE: Please see the response to Question # 9a.**

- c. If yes to question a, and no to question b, why would cumulative project value for an O&M project (that included IT development) be treated differently from an IT development project?

**RESPONSE: The minimum qualifications refer to the project’s value, not the contract value.**

10) Is identifying an MBE required for this response or is it required for TORFP?

**RESPONSE: Offerors are not required to identify an MBE subcontractor at the time of submission to this RFP. Offerors will be required to identify an MBE subcontractor at the secondary level of competition if that solicitation has an MBE goal.**

11) Will this solicitation deadline be extended?

**RESPONSE: Please see Amendment #1.**

12) If the prime is an MBE, can it be used to meet the MBE goals?

**RESPONSE: No. The MBE goal is for subcontracting only.**

13) Does the initial risk assessment described in section 3.4.2.7. apply to risk associated to requiring or performing IAS?

**RESPONSE: Please see Section 2.3.4.2 of the RFP.**

14) Given there is only 8 calendar days between submission of vendor questions and the proposal due date (and no commitment by the state as to when answers to questions will be provided), will you consider extending the proposal due date to allow 7 to 10 calendar days after answers to the vendor questions are provided?

**RESPONSE:** Please see the response to Question #11.

15) To what extent does the State anticipate using the TOs under this RFP to fulfill SBR objectives?

**RESPONSE:** All solicitations at the secondary level will be assessed for a SBR determination. The State is not able to provide an estimate at this time.

16) If Contractor's experts travel from another state to provide IAS services under this contract, how will travel reimbursement be handled?

**RESPONSE:** Travel reimbursement will be conducted as specified in Section 2.15 of the RFP.

17) Should Contractor's rates include travel costs?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. See Section 2.15.

18) Section 3.5 states: "Offerors shall propose pricing for all labor categories to be considered for Award." Section 4.3 states: "Offerors shall propose prices for all labor categories, for Contract years 1 through 7 regardless of an Offeror's ability to provide resources for the labor category." We may not have the ability to provide all 77 labor categories defined in the RFP (e.g., Internet Site Developer, Geospatial Web Developer). Is it acceptable to the State for Contractors to not propose pricing for those labor categories it expects not to fulfill? In other words, we cannot price labor categories that we do not fulfill – how will the State handle this as part of the evaluation?

**RESPONSE:** Offerors shall propose pricing for all labor categories to be considered for Award. Failure to fully complete or sign the Price Proposal may result in the Offeror's proposal being deemed not susceptible for award.

19) Reference Section 1.25 – Will the State allow the Master Contractor to satisfy their MBE goals with a MBE certified from another state (outside of Maryland)?

**RESPONSE:** MBE goals must be satisfied by companies listed in the MDOT certified MBE listing.

20) Reference Section 2.4.1 – Will the State consider a combination of Prime and Subcontractors past performance in meeting the minimum qualifications? If not, this will exclude a majority of the MBEs from submitting as a prime contractor.

**RESPONSE:** Please see the response to Question #5.

- 21) Reference Section 2.4.2 & 2.4.3 – please confirm our interpretation of the following:
- Project Value and Contract Value separate and distinct – project value in excess of \$10M and \$15M; however, contractor’s contract value is less than the project value. Please confirm contractor satisfies the minimum qualification.

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Please see Question # 9a. The minimum qualifications refer to the project’s value, not the contract value.

- Reference Section 3.2 – Is there a page requirement for any of the submissions in this RFP. Additionally, is there a size limitation for the electronic submissions?

**RESPONSE:** No. Proposals shall not be submitted electronically. Please consult Section 3.3 of the RFP for submission instructions. Electronic versions may be placed on a CD or flash drive.

- 22) Questions are due on November 11, 2013 and proposals are due on November 19, 2013. There is insufficient time for the State to respond and for Offeror’s to incorporate the State’s responses to questions into their proposals. We respectfully request an extension to the closing date from November 19, 2013 to December 3, 2013 to enable the State and Offeror’s to adequately address RFP questions and clarifications.

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1.

- 23) Since no resumes are being submitted for this response who does the State want to be present at the Orals?

**RESPONSE:** An Offeror should bring resources to oral presentations that it believes best present the Offeror’s capabilities.

- 24) It is our understanding that only Attachment D-1A Master Contractor Acknowledgement of Task Order MBE Requirements, must be submitted with our Technical Proposal and that forms D-1 and D-2 will be submitted with subsequent TORFP responses. Is that a correct assumption?

**RESPONSE:** This assumption is correct.

- 25) The table of deliverables for the Sample IV&V Requirements includes several Optional Tasks and Deliverables 9TEAM, Phase II, and Phase III). Does the state require Offeror’s to include these optional tasks and deliverables in their proposed Management Plan (RFP 3.4.2.8) and Staffing Plan (3.4.2.9)?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

- 26) The reference to Attachment K appears to be incorrect. We assume that the reference should be to Attachment J, is this correct?

**RESPONSE:** Please see the response to Question #2.

27) Please explain the specific process that will be used to evaluate Price Proposals. It is our understanding that only the “core” labor categories highlighted in bold print on Attachment E will be used to evaluate pricing. Is that correct?

**RESPONSE: Yes. Also see the response to Question #3.**

28) Please clarify if responders to this RFP required [are] to submit a completed Attachment K-V1As with their technical proposals?

**RESPONSE: Please see Amendment #1.**

29) Our company performed a risk assessment for a Maryland state agency where more than 300+ applications were assessed. Although not absolutely sure, we are confident that the combined value of these applications is more than \$10M. Can we use this as one of the minimum qualification projects?

**RESPONSE: Yes, if the project value is indeed in excess of \$10,000,000.**

30) Are there any other set-asides other than MBE and VSBE?

**RESPONSE: No.**

31) How many TORFP's will be issued each year?

**RESPONSE: The number of secondary solicitations released after award is unknown at this time.**

32) When is the anticipated start date?

**RESPONSE: The State anticipates contract award at the beginning of 2014.**

33) What is the projected value of this contract?

**RESPONSE: The State cannot release this information at this time.**

34) Reference Section 2/ 2.3 – Does DoIT have predesigned templates for the assessments listed in the document?

**RESPONSE: No.**

35) How many instances of assessment services were done last year? Can MDOT break it down by different types?

**RESPONSE: This is a new Master Contract with additional capabilities for other State Agencies to perform. The number of assessments DoIT performs vary from year to year and depends on the needs for MITDP projects.**

36) Please confirm that the Project Schedule is to be embedded in the Project Management Plan and included in the actual proposal, as well as submitted separately and on CD or Flash Drive?

**RESPONSE:** No, the Project Schedule is to be separate from the Project Management Plan. See Section 3.4.1 of RFP.

37) Please confirm that the rates submitted for this proposal are to be firm fixed price.

**RESPONSE:** The labor rates submitted to this RFP shall be fully-loaded, all-inclusive, not to exceed hourly rates chargeable under the Master Contract.

38) Section 3.4.2.12 states that the required Attachments are B, D-1A and F, but does not mention K-V1A. Section 1.38, second paragraph, states that Attachment K-V1A must be included in the Offeror's response. Is K-V1A a required attachment?

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1.

39) For ease of reference within the proposal would it be acceptable to include tabs for each section?

**RESPONSE:** Yes.

40) Should Attachment I (Living Wage Affidavit of Agreement) be included with our IAS proposal response? If so, please confirm that this should be included in Section 10: Required Attachments.

**RESPONSE:** No, the State did not request Attachment I in Section 10. It will be requested at the TORFP level.

41) RFP Page 63, Section 3.4.2.12: Please confirm that Attachment K-V1A should be included in this section of our IAS proposal response.

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1.

42) Since this is a five-year contract, will the State re-issue the procurement during the five-year timeframe to add firms to this list, or will the list of firms selected as a result of this procurement be the only vendors capable of leveraging this contract vehicle?

**RESPONSE:** No, the Offerors awarded to this Master Contract will be the only Master Contractors capable of competing at the secondary level.

43) What is considered an Alternative Proposal?

**RESPONSE:** There are multiple reasons why a proposal may be considered an alternate proposal. Determination of an alternate proposal will be made on a case-by-case basis.

44) It was mentioned at the Pre-proposal meeting that the MBE company being used to meet the MBE goal does not have to be named at the time of the RFP submission, but does have to be

named when task orders are issued. I would like clarification around that. How would the MBE know for sure they are being used?

**RESPONSE:** If an MBE goal is set at the secondary level of competition, Master Contractors will be required to partner with an MBE business to meet the goal.

45) Section 1.25 Minority Business Enterprises - The fourth paragraph of this section requires each Master Contractor, “once awarded a TO Agreement” to submit Forms D-3, D-4, D-5 and D-6. Are these forms required for all TO Agreements, or only when the TORFP contains an MBE goal?

**RESPONSE:** These forms are only required for TO Agreements with an MBE goal.

46) Section 2.5.3.1 - Does the requirement to obtain these background checks apply to only to Master Contractor employees assigned to work on a TO Agreement who will be working on-site at one of the State’s locations? For example, if the Master Contractor has an employee working on the TO Agreement, but that employee works solely at the Contractor’s location, are these background checks required for that employee?

**RESPONSE:** This is for “each employee assigned to work on the TO Agreement”. Additionally, all clauses in Section 2.5 are “where applicable to a TORFP”.

47) Section 3.4.1 Format of Technical Proposal - This section states that Offeror’s should provide an unbound original of the Technical Proposal. Can Offeror’s provide three-hole punched proposals held together in a 3-ring binder or is that considered bound?

**RESPONSE:** Please submit 1 unbound original and 1 bound copy. The unbound original should not be in a binder.

48) This section states that “the Offeror’s Technical Proposal shall be organized and numbered in the same order as this RFP.” Does the numbering requirement refer to 3.4.2.1, 3.4.2.2, etc. or should proposals be numbered by section (i.e. Section 1: Executive Summary, Section 2: General Information, etc.)?

**RESPONSE:** Please use the same order - Section 1: Executive Summary, Section 2: General Information, etc.

49) Should the reference to Attachment K under #2 really be referencing Attachment J?

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1.

50) Is Attachment K Veteran Small Business Enterprise Participation also a required form?

**RESPONSE:** Please see Amendment #1.



51) Section 2.6.1.1 Substitution of personnel - The nature of IV&V is such that resources may only be required to perform assessments relating to their expertise intermittently. Can we assume that the staff will only need to be available based on the % of time committed to the TO Agreement?

**RESPONSE:**     **The State cannot answer this question at the Master Contract level.**

52) Section 3.4.2.7 - Since this is an MSA and there is not a defined scope of work or project, should we address general risks and issues with QA and IVV work?

**RESPONSE:**     **Yes. Please see the response to Question #13.**

Thank you,

Michael Meinel  
Procurement Officer

End of Question and Answer # 2