

**Q&A Set #1 to
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Telecommunications Equipment and Services (PBX III)
RFP #060B1400048
December 15, 2010**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The Department of Information Technology received the following questions by e-mail for the above referenced RFP, and they are answered below for all Offerors:

1. Will my registration ensure that we are included on the list of interested vendors and as such, will we be notified of all addendums automatically?

Answer: Yes. Everyone who registered for the Pre-Proposal Web Conference is on my distribution list. Everyone on my distribution list will be notified of all addenda automatically.

2. I noticed we are not one of the 11 manufacturers listed in the RFP. We have been designing, manufacturing and marketing our Key, PBX, Hybrid, IP business telephone systems successfully for 29 years. Is the RFP telling us that we are excluded from consideration should we respond to this RFP for Telecommunications?

Answer: You are not excluded from consideration because you are a manufacturer of equipment that is not on the list of 11 manufacturers. If your company is an authorized sales representative for one of the 11 manufacturers you can become a Master Contractor. Per Section 2.2 of the RFP, "All Offerors must be authorized by the Primary OEM to sell, install, and configure any hardware or software proposed. Offerors shall provide a Letter of Authorization from the Primary OEM for which they have a current license to sell, install and maintain equipment in the State of Maryland (State). If the Offeror is the Primary OEM, it is acceptable to list its own company as the Offeror, but the Letter of Authorization is still required."

3. On some state contracts we have the ability to have authorized dealers listed as selling agents. Does this contract provide that ability or if one of our dealers is interested to they also need to respond to the bid?

Answer: To bid on a PORFP, the Offeror must be a Master Contractor. Each authorized dealer must submit a proposal in order to become a Master Contractor, and receive work on this contract.

4. Can multiple MBE's be utilized to meet the 25% requirement?

Answer: Yes. Multiple MBE's can be utilized to meet the 25% requirement.

5. In requirement 3.14, Travel Reimbursement, is the epicenter of the 50 mile radius from the contractors location or the agencies location?

Answer: Please see Section 3.14.1. Routine travel is defined as travel within a 50-mile radius of the requesting Issuing Agency's base location, as identified in the PORFP, or the Master Contractor's facility, whichever is closer to the work site.

6. What hardware and software are the vendors actually required for vendors to quote for Functional Area 1? Is there any specific information regarding common equipment, servers, phones, etc.?

Answer: Offerors are not required nor desired to quote specific hardware and software to become a Master Contractor for Functional Area 1. Specific hardware and software requirements shall be defined in the PORFP by the Requesting Agency.

7. Is there any flexibility in the due date considering the holidays?

Answer: The State does not expect to extend the due date for this RFP. All proposals are due no later than 2:00 PM on Wednesday, January 05, 2011

8. What is the date of contract award?

Answer: The State will award this contract as soon as it can evaluate all proposals, get contracts signed and get approval for these contracts from Maryland's Board of Public Works.

9. Under "vendor requirements" (19th page of the RFP) I read this to mean that you have to be an authorized reseller of one of the manufacturer's products on the list to be considered as a qualified respondent to the RFP. However, it doesn't seem to specify that you must propose that specific manufacturer's gear / solution. We are an authorized reseller which indicates we are qualified to respond, but it also seems to imply that we could lead with an alternative solution other than one supplied by that particular manufacturer.

It also has a bearing on third party components of a listed Manufacturer's solution such as a system that utilizes AudioCodes Media Gateways and Polycom end point devices as an example.

Am I reading this correctly?

Answer: The State could not find "vendor requirements" on page 19. Notwithstanding that, a Master Contractor is not restricted to only selling equipment from the 11 manufacturers listed in the RFP. A Master Contractor may propose any manufacturer's equipment which the Master Contractor is authorized to sell. Letters of Authorization for all OEMs proposed in a given PO Proposal must have been approved by DoIT in accordance with this procedure prior to the due date stated in the PORFP".

10. QUESTION: Under the existing PBX I and PBX II Master Contracts there are several peripherals (IVR, CTI and Voice Mail systems etc.) that were provided by the Master Contract holders. How would the State continue to receive modification, maintenance and support for these products? Would the State consider adding existing and new peripheral product OEM's (IVR, CTI, Voice Mail, Call Accounting, Video systems etc.) under Functional Area I with the same requirements as the PBX products?

Rational for Making Request:

I represent a MDOT certified MBE that has operated in the State of Maryland for over 15 years. During that period we have designed, installed and continue to maintain several Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and CTI systems for some of the State's largest agencies (MVA, Comptroller's, DLLR, DHR, etc.). We are the OEM for these systems and would like to provide our products and services directly to the State and through authorized resellers.

Our IVR and CTI systems have become an important tool for many State agencies. The systems provide State agencies an effective tool to deal with limited staff, provide information to its constituents and offer better customer service.

If the State added peripherals to this procurement, there are several benefits that would be in the best interest of the State including:

1. Create a competitive environment for peripherals and services throughout the life of the Master Contract
2. Provide access to current and advanced peripheral technology throughout the life of the Master Contract
3. Provide a basis for functional integration of peripheral technology from various manufacturers

Currently, our IVR and CTI systems including maintenance, modification and support are being resold through resellers and as such increases acquisition cost to the State. If the State should choose to add peripherals as unique items under Functional Area 1 companies that OEM these systems and offer the required support would be able to bid direct. State agencies could issue a PORFP for a new peripheral, peripheral modification or maintenance of an existing peripheral. Under the proposed plan State agencies would be restricted in their options and as a result support, maintenance and modification of existing peripherals could be compromised.

We respectfully ask that peripherals be listed as a separate item under Functional Area 1. This request for change not only lowers the State's acquisition costs but also lowers the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) which includes maintenance and modification costs.

Answer: To be considered for an award in Functional Areas 1 or 2, all Offerors, even the 11 manufacturers listed in the RFP, must provide a Letter of Authorization for the respective Functional Areas from at least one of the 11 manufacturers listed in the RFP.

Peripherals are in Functional Area 1. Companies that OEM these systems and peripherals and offer the required support are able to bid directly as long as they first provide a Letter of Authorization for the respective Functional Areas from at least one of the 11 manufacturers listed in the RFP in their proposal.

11. Can we prime the response for the State of Maryland and offer letters of authorization to our six leading VARs to fulfill that contract? Or does each VAR need to respond to the Master RFP contract directly?

Answer: If you are the Master Contractor, the Contract is between you as the Master Contractor and the State. You may choose to utilize a VAR as a subcontractor and all requirements for both Master Contractors and subcontractors, as identified in the RFP and ensuing PORFP's shall apply. Or, each VAR can respond to the RFP directly, and become a separate Master Contractor.

12. Will bids for a Hosted IP / UC offering be accepted?

Answer: Offerors are not required nor desired to quote specific hardware and software requirements/solutions (e.g. hosted IP/UC offerings) to become a Master Contractor. Specific hardware and software requirements/solutions shall be defined in the PORFP by the Requesting Agency.

13. We would like to know if an OEM bids directly; can they designate a list of their Value Added Resellers (VARs) that they authorize to respond to PORFPs after the award?

Answer: See Question #11 above.

14. For Functional Area 2, does a Master Contractor have to offer all levels of support (Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum) or can we bid the manufacturer's support at the levels they provide?

Answer: Offerors are not required to quote specific levels of support to become a Master Contractor for Functional Area 2. Specific PORFPs may require one or a combination of these service levels and they may also request special service levels that deviate from these standards. Specific maintenance levels shall be defined in the PORFP by the Requesting Agency.

15. Would manufacturer's support, such as Cisco SMARTnet, fall under Functional Area 1 or Functional Area 2?

Answer: Manufacturer's hardware support and extended warranty services (such as Cisco SMARTnet), fall under Functional Area 1. Hardware warranty support is only a component of a full system maintenance plan.

16. For Functional Area 1, you reference MSRP or GSA pricing. What pricing reference do you plan to use for Functional Area 2?

Answer: Functional Area 2 pricing is not compared to a reference sheet, either MSRP or GSA, as this functional area provides custom services based on specific requirements identified in individual PORFPs.

17. Due to the extensive nature of the RFP would it be possible for you to grant an extension of the due date?

Answer: See Question #7 above