

Questions and Answers to Solicitation DTFR53-03-R-00003

1. Is the contractor required to operate out of Washington DC?

Yes, The Washington Metropolitan Area District Office must service the contractor.

2. Is it possible to get a list of bidders from the last contract competition?
The companies that bided on the last contract are as follows:

ALTA Systems Inc.
Creative Information Technology Inc.
DMS International Inc.
International Computer Solutions
INDUS
International Technology Inc.
MicroPact Engineering Inc.
Management Support Technology Inc.
Peace Technology Inc.

3. Can you please give me the following about the incumbent contract for DTFR53-03-R-00003?

Contractor: Indus, 1953 Gallows Road, Suite 300 Vienna Va 22182
Contract #: DTFR53-00-C-000015
Contract Type: Cost Plus Award Fee, A Base year and two one-year options
Est. Value: 4,087,218.00
Award Date: 5/18/2000
Exp. Date: 6/30/2003

What is the title of the requirement?

Internet Site Development and Maintenance, Computer Programming, and Data Processing for Railroad Safety.

4. Might the government consider moving the solicitation to Small Disadvantaged Business vs. 8(a)?

No, the government will award to an 8(a) firm.

5. Is there someone we can talk to that can give us some technical information concerning the type of languages or systems used?
Or will we have to wait for the conference?

You will have to wait for the pre-proposal conference.

6. The company is interested in knowing the FOIA officer's POC information for FRA so they may learn more about the ongoing contract that is mentioned in the DTFR53-03-R-00003 announcement.

The website you need to go to www.fra.dot.gov/site/index.htm.

7. In amendment 1 of this solicitation it refers to eligible firms "Eligible firms are those firms serviced by the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office". Can you clarify what this means?

The statement requires all participants to be certified as an 8(a) firm and serviced by the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office.

8. I am currently looking at the tool you have in place at <http://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/Officeof Safety/> I am not sure why the DOT is looking for a new project.

The current contract period of performance ends this year.

9. Any new information on this presolicitation? We are an 8(a) that specializes in data management and development. We are currently working with FEMA on their data integration. Thank you for your help in advance!

All new information will be made available at www.FEDBIZOPPS.gov.

12. I want to verify that we eligible to bid on this RFP (does the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office refers to SBA office, or FRA office?)

The reference refers to SBA office.

13. Is this a performance based or firm fixed price contract?

This is a performance-based contract.

14. Can you please provide the existing contract and any amendments and/or modifications?

This information will be made available through a FOIA request.

15. What are the terms for the existing contract?

This information will be made available through a FOIA request.

16. Can you please provide the bid schedule for this contract showing the labor categories and associated pricing of each labor category and any subsequent modifications to the bid schedule?

This information should be submitted through a FOIA request.

17. Is there a Secure Socket Layer (SSL) component to the secure site?

Yes, there is a SSL component to the secure site.

18. Will all the FOIA responses to questions concerning the solicitation be posted on www.fedbizopps.gov?

Only questions and answers will be posted, not responses to FOIA requests.

19. Are all software-licensed products listed in the RFP and GFE list Government owned? (e.g., Zenus software and Trancad/Maptitude software are not referenced in the GFI. Are these software products also Government owned?)

Yes, all listed products are government owned.

20. What is the square footage of the current facility in Alexandria? This information is not currently available.

The square footage for the Alexandria facility is 6,000 square feet.

What is the price per square foot?

This information must be requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and may be proprietary.

21. Page 18: Are all components, software and source code "Government Owned"?

Yes, all components, software and source codes are owned by the government.

22. Page 20: "Contractor will be subject to standard security clearance or protocol requirements for access to the Washington LAN". Are you referring to a SF 85 background check?

Yes, that is the background check we are referring to.

23. Page 26: Where is the current physical storage facility for all hardcopy documents in storage?

The physical storage facility is located at the FRA project office in Alexandria, VA

24. Page 46/47: Are the replication operations as referenced in the RFP currently implemented? No, it will be available in the next two (2) months. Where is the failover/replication hosting center located?

The web-hosting center is located in Alexandria, VA at the incumbent's facility.

Who maintains the secondary failover "T-1"?

The replication system is located in Vienna, VA at the incumbent's facility.

25. Page 100, b (1): Technical Proposal Format, Oral Presentation: Is the incumbent's team partner allowed to use the existing Government owned software/system in the Oral Presentation?

The contractor may demonstrate any software they have developed and if the software is developed by partner, then the developer must be proposed as a key personnel.

26. Page 108 (vi): Will the laptop to be used at the Oral Presentation be using the LAN connection Internet access (10/100 mbps), rather than the modem?

Both the LAN connection Internet access and modem will be available.

27. Page 108, (vi): What screen resolution is the Windows 98SE portable computer available for the demonstration configured to display? 640x480, 800x600, higher?

The screen resolution is configured to display 800x600.

28. Page 108: Will the Windows 98 SE portable computer available for the demonstration have Microsoft Office installed?

Yes, the Windows 98E portable computer will have Microsoft Office installed.

Will it include Microsoft Access?

Yes, Microsoft Access will be available.

29. Many systems developed for the government has restrictions on use, due to security, sensitivity of data and/or systems. Please confirm that the Client-based software can be a sample, prototype, or subset of a larger application. Would "screen shots" be acceptable, or must it be a working model? Also, can a subcontractor's developed system be used as the system developed? Or one of the two potential solutions?

The client software MUST be a complete working system. A simple prototype will mask the company's potential. A company demonstrating a complex system with all the features will receive higher marks. A subcontractor's system can work if the people that developed will be key personnel.

30. It is unclear how Internet sites will be demonstrated, as many sites are dynamically created from a database. In many cases, it will not be possible to contain a site with database on the CD. Will the government consider a connection to the site directly for the Oral Presentation? If so, what specifically is the government looking for on the CD?

The Internet site demonstration will be live, not a CD. There will be both a high speed and dial up connection available.

31. We do not have any offices in the Washington, DC area and have office only at Paramus, NJ. Are there any restrictions in the solicitation that restrict bidding by us?

The contractor must be 8(a) certified and the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office must service the contractor.

32. The contract is set to expire before an award is anticipated. Will the existing contract be extended?

The current contract has been extended through December 31, 2003.

Can we partner with a non 8(a) company for this solicitation?

Under this solicitation, the prime contractor must be an 8(a) firm serviced by the Washington District Office. If the prime contractor has met these requirements, it is not precluded from subcontracting with a non 8(a) firm as long as the prime contractor performs more than 50% of the work.

33. Does the physical data center that's used to house the servers have to be located in the DC area? Our data center is in Philadelphia. Would Philadelphia work for this, or not? I didn't completely understand what parts of the bid have to be performed in the DC metro area.

The servers can be located in Philadelphia.

34. It looks like the system is working and basically you're soliciting bids for someone to run it, maintain it, and do the data input as is being done today. Is this correct?

The current system exists. The next vendor will maintain it, provide enhancements, and develop new applications to support it.

35. It appears like there is a lot of manual data input. Would you have any interest in using automated methods to get the data into the system (versus having someone type it in) if it could lower the cost?

The Government has multiple systems for automated input. However, the FRA cannot force a railroad to use them.

36. May we continue to submit questions referencing the RFP after today?

The cut off date for excepting questions will be COB May 5, 2003.

37. The incumbent contractor is scheduled to exit the 8(a) program before the proposal due date. Will they be allowed to bid as a Prime contractor?

No, The incumbent will not be allowed to bid as a Prime contractor.

38. What is the expected budget for the award?

The budget for the award is approximately \$7,500,000.00 including options.

39. Is it possible to bid this contract without a DCAA approved accounting system if a company is in the process of acquiring and implementing it in order to comply with the solicitation requirements?

Yes, you can bid on the solicitation. But, you must have a DCAA approved accounting system in place by contract award.

40. Will a list of attendees for today's presentation be provided?

Yes, An amendment to the solicitation will be posted to FEDBIZOPPS that will provide a list of attendees and their company names.

41. Who and how do we contact the FRA for answers to technical and contractual questions later.

You can e-mail all technical and contractual questions to Sharon.flowers@fra.dot.gov up to our cut off date of May 5, 2003.

42. Will the cost of migrating GFE and GFI to the new potential vendor be used as a justification to select the incumbent as the awardee? How will this be factored out?

Contractors should clearly segregate all migration costs in their cost proposal. In order to maintain a level playing field these cost will not be included in the award evaluation.

43. Period of Performance. The overview of the period of performance is not in sync with information on Question & Answer #33 which is now #34. Please clarify.

We anticipate the award date to be July 31, 2003, but The current contract has been extended to December 31, 2003 to give the successful offeror a transition period.

44. Section H what is the relative weighting of each section of the proposal? (specific % of breakdown)

There are no numerical weightings. The proposal will be evaluated in descending order of importance as stated in Section M of the Solicitation.

45. Doesn't answers #26 and #30, along with evaluation criteria give the incumbent contractor an unfair advantage? Basically the evaluation factors can only be successfully met by demonstrating a product already developed under the current contract. This action effectively "pre-elects" the incumbent (or their partner). Furthermore, the requirements for delivery of a complete, functioning system places undo burden on the small business proposing.

This is a competitive procurement and it is up to your company to demonstrate its ability to provide the requirements outlined in the solicitation.

46. Please explain how any company other than the incumbent can meet the evaluation criteria set forth in the oral submission.

The incumbent does have an advantage, but he has graduated from the 8(a) program. The evaluation criteria in the solicitation is considered by the government to be written so any company that submits a proposal in response to the solicitation criteria can be considered a competitive contender for this award.

47. Would FRA consider releasing snapshots of RISPC to the vendor community?

FRA will prepare Adobe (pdf) slides and post them on the EPS web site as an attachment to the amendment.

48. Would FRA provide all software for migration to DOT Net?

Upgrades and new technologies will be paid for by FRA. FRA currently provides SAS and SAS/Internet software to the contractor.

49. Is all software which was presented today owned by the FRA?

The client and client/server software (RISPC, AIRG, PCAPS, GX32) and the web applications are owned by FRA.

50. Of the software that is in the public domain how do potential bidders get copies of the source code?

The Source code is public domain. Requests for the code should be made through the Freedom of Information Act.

51. Page 110 of [the] RFP states "...The great or similarity to FRA's multiple databases the better...." Is the FRA seeking vendors who can provide access to new technologies to advance site and database performance the measurement standards?

FRA is seeking vendors that can access new technologies. More advanced systems are acceptable for demonstration.

52. Why aren't inspectors using PDA's in the field?

PDA's are being used by Track Inspectors. Exclusive use of PDA's with wireless technology is being reviewed. There are a number issues including cost, safety, policy and legal (sufficiency to support fines).

53. If a vendor demonstrates a PDA as new technology can they possibly be ranked higher than the current RISPC system?

Vendors are advised to strictly adhere to the rating factors in Section L and Section M. Each factor will be rated by the FRA. Other technologies can be used, but the FRA will only rate the factors in the referenced sections. If the vendor should show all the features of the software, regardless of the platform (PC, PDA or other device), then the quality of each factor is rated, such as help screens and query facility. Use of the PDA to demonstrate the capabilities will not receive a higher rating.

54. The technical presentation mentioned about “base” issues and “enhancement” issues - can you elaborate on those - itemize those issues?

The “base” issues are those listed in the Section C of the solicitation. FRA will continue to enhance all the processes when the need and technologies dictate. As enhancements are needed a proposal will be requested from the contractor.

Possible enhancements in the next year. The redesign of the public site to conform to the proposed new design of the FRA web site, develop a new query page for Special Notice for Repairs on the private site, and/or interactive data entry for the Grade Crossing Inventory

55. Are we supposed to propose only on “base” issues and show our capability for “enforcement” issues?

Propose only the base issues. The enhancements have not been specified.

56. Can the bidder propose and demonstrate a system which is technically “more advanced” than the “one-tier” application requested?

The bidder can demonstrate a more advanced system. The FRA’s evaluation team will only rate the items in Sections L and M. However, an outstanding approach will receive a higher rating.

57. Given the 5-year P.O.P. for the new contract, wouldn’t it be better to allow bidders to demo more innovative solutions during orals?

Vendors are advised to strictly adhere to the rating factors in Section L and Section M. Each factor will be rated by the FRA. Other technologies can be used, but the FRA will only rate the factors in the referenced sections. If the vendor should show all the features of the software, regardless of the platform (PC, PDA or other device), then the quality of each factor is rated, such as help screens and query facility.

A more advanced solution could receive a higher rating in one or more of the rating factors.

58. Is the contractor responsible for fixing data that comes from the inspectors and railroads?

The contractor will post errors of inspection reports on the Secure Site. This error process is currently automated.

The contractor is responsible for correcting errors and resolving missing data/reports by calling railroad reporting officers and documenting the conversation.

59. Will inspectors be moving towards using web only?

There are no current plans to using that technology. It is possible that this will be considered/implemented during the progress of this contract.

60. What issues do you foresee will prevent (or make it difficult) for inspectors to move from client/server (or paper) system to the web?

There are a number of issues/potential problems in using web data entry for the inspectors: cost, locations (some are very remote and might not provide an adequate bandwidth), and need (serious problems are addressed immediately without waiting for the inspection results to be posted on the database.)

61. How many employees are managing the current contract?

The base project has 18 employees including the project manager.

62. What is the client/server database format?

The client/server database format is SQL Server.

63. Is there a methodology and modeling tool in use for the software development? (Such as Rational Rose, UML, Relational Unified Process, etc.).

The incumbent contractor has been performing all Software Engineering activities on the project under the Level 2 of the SEI's Capability Maturity Model. This is an efficiency that they have elected to bring into the performance of this contract at no additional cost to the government. It is not a requirement.

64. What are the approved development environments for RISPC? (Visual Studio, et cetera)

There is none other than FIPS PUB 106.

The current version of RISPC was developed using Visual Basic 6.0 and a number of third party controls.

65. What is the bandwidth speed at the highest/lowest sites.

The site has been developed for a 56.6 KB dial-up connection.

During the oral presentations, both a dial-up and T-1 connection will be available.

66. Re Q&A #26 re Incumbent software - Given that the incumbent's partner may use existing software during the Oral Presentation, will this software be available to each bidder to be used during their Oral Presentation?

The purpose of the oral presentation is for the bidder to demonstrate their ability to develop client software. Demonstrating software that they did not develop is not acceptable.

67. Page 9&52 - Please elaborate on FIPS P. - Please see attached sheet (1-6)

68. Page 19 & 52 FIPS PUB 106 standards requirement - Please elaborate on this requirement. Per FIP PUB Standard document listing (and page 19), Number 106 has been retired. What FIPS PUB number is now in effect which replaces 106

The FRA has used both FIPS PUBs 39 and 106. Both have been retired. NIST will not replace the standards. NIST is recommending the agencies use industry standards. The FRA considered using the [CMM Level 2](#), but decided against it as it might be considered too restrictive. FRA will attempt to provide copies by mail of FIPS PUB 106 to bidders on request. Requests should be made to the Contract Specialist, copies will be sent by U.S. mail within 5 days of the request.

69. Page 51: What specific data is collected by the Palm Pilot (PDA) and then synchronized with RISPC?

Optimally, the PDA will collect the latitude and longitude of the start and end of the inspection, and each defect. Also, the specific defect details, milepost, type of track, CFR, major rule, subrule, and activity code.

70. Page 99 (demo): What, if any, Microsoft Critical updates have been applied to the Win 98 SE on the demo machine?

All available updates will be applied prior to the oral presentation.

71, Page 99 (demo): What, if any, Microsoft Critical updates have been applied to Internet Explorer on the Win 98 SE?

All available updates will be applied prior to the oral presentation.

72. Page 99 (demo): Will the Window 98 SE machine have Adobe Acrobat Reader installer on it? What Version (4.0,5.0)?

Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 is already on the designated notebook computer.