

First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)
Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN)
Special Notice - D15PS00295

1 Background

This notice builds on previous Requests for Information (RFI) from the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) and incorporates feedback received from prior communications. To date, FirstNet has published thirteen (13) RFIs as well as held multiple vendor meetings and state consultations. Responses to the RFIs and vendor meetings have been used, by FirstNet, in order to better understand industry's capabilities, analyze the recommendations and alternatives approaches, and determine how to best leverage existing capabilities and best practices in order to meet public safety needs. The feedback received included responses to the following:

- May 2013 RFI on devices;
- July 2013 RFIs on network partners, radio access network, the core network, and seven other items;
- November 2013 RFI on applications platforms and;
- A September 2014 RFI on approaches to and objectives for establishing the NPSBN, including a draft Statement of Objectives (SOO).

FirstNet has engaged in extensive efforts to gather information through a significant ongoing outreach and consultation process, which has included a series of regional workshops, state single point of contact (SPOC)¹ calls, in person national SPOC two day meeting, onsite public safety interactions, Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC)² meetings, and notice and comment processes. From the previous RFIs, vendor engagements, ongoing outreach, and specific consultations, FirstNet has and will continue to obtain critical information regarding public safety needs and vendor capabilities in order to better define its strategy.

2 Introduction

This special notice (herein after referred to as notice) is being issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI), Interior Business Center (IBC), Acquisition Services Directorate (AQD) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), FirstNet, as an additional market research tool.

Those interested parties qualified as a small business should demonstrate their qualification under the North American Industry Classification System Code (NAICS) 517919, "All Other Telecommunications," in

¹ 47 U.S.C. 1426(c)(2)(B).

² 47 U.S.C. 1425(a)(1).

their capabilities statement submission. In addition, this notice provides an opportunity to submit comments and/or questions pertaining to the draft RFP documents attached.

Please note this notice is being issued subject to the availability of funds. FirstNet will not accept unsolicited proposals related to this notice. This notice is for information purposes only and shall not be construed as a Request for Proposal (RFP) or as an obligation on the part of FirstNet. FirstNet does not intend to make an award based on this notice nor does FirstNet intend to pay for the preparation of any information submitted in response to this notice.

Interested parties are instructed to contact only the Contracting Officer, as stated herein, for information about any aspect of this notice and any subsequent information in this acquisition process for this project, to include any subsequent RFP. Interested parties and/or prospective offerors are cautioned against contacting any Government personnel, or any other personnel supporting this acquisition process, in regard to the FirstNet NPSBN acquisition, prior to any subsequent award(s) for this project. If such a contact occurs and is found to be prejudicial to competing offerors, the party making such a contact may be excluded from further consideration and/or subsequent award consideration. Accordingly, all communications prior to any subsequent award(s) must be direct to the point of contact identified herein. Where possible, inquires must be submitted in writing and sent via e-mail. Questions should be worded so as to avoid disclosing any proposed and/or considered strategies or proprietary information and/or solutions.

3 Purpose

This notice provides draft sections that may be included in a subsequent RFP used to competitively procure a comprehensive technical and business solutions meeting FirstNet's stated mission and objectives. This notice affords interested parties, including states, tribes, territories, public safety stakeholders, and market participants, an opportunity to understand and provide input regarding FirstNet's proposed acquisition strategy/approaches as identified as Category One and Category Two. The acquisition strategy/approaches and draft RFP documents for the NPSBN are included in this notice and as attachments. Input from interested parties may include written comments and/or questions, capabilities statement(s), and other ongoing consultation interactions in accordance with the statutory authority.

In addition to comments and/or questions, FirstNet is requesting interested parties to submit capabilities statements demonstrating they are capable of performing the work pertaining to either Category One or Two, or a combination thereof. The feedback from interested parties, including states, tribes, territories, public safety stakeholders, and market participants, will assist in making the determination of the approach that is in the best interest of FirstNet's NPSBN mission and objectives as well as ensuring competition. This includes feedback with regard to the pricing model and acquisition strategy/approaches as well as operational architecture principles as it pertains to FirstNet's requirement for financial sustainability and broad subscriber participation. Instructions regarding submission of the capabilities statement are contained herein.

4 Instructions

FirstNet's most recent RFI, released on September 17th, 2014, included a draft statement of objectives (SOO) and questions in order to solicit feedback on the optimum approach that adheres to FirstNet's

authorizing statute, mission, and objectives. After reviewing and analyzing the responses, FirstNet proposes critical tenets of an approach that will provide for either: (1) a single entity responsible for providing all functions on a nationwide level (the nationwide entity), or (2) a regional entity providing radio access network (RAN), and Covered Leasing Agreement (CLA) applicable functions for a state or region. In the case of the latter approach identified in (2), the region size may be no smaller than a single state or territory, but may span more than one such state or territory. FirstNet's approaches above anticipate including equipment and services as part of the resulting comprehensive RFP for the NPSBN. The above approaches will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3 below.

FirstNet is requesting feedback from stakeholders including states, tribes, territories, public safety stakeholders, and market participants that will support additional detail on these options.

4.1 General Instructions

4.1.1 Submission of Comments

FirstNet seeks comments on all aspects of the acquisition strategy/approaches described in this notice, including feedback concerning FirstNet's proposed pricing concepts and operational architecture principles. Comments shall be submitted via email on or before, but no later than 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday July 27, 2015, utilizing the attached form. Please include with your comments your full name, reference number D15PS00295 and title "COMMENTS on the NPSBN Approach," your organization's name, complete address, phone number and email address. Comments marked confidential or proprietary will be protected by FirstNet accordingly. Any comments regarding this notice shall be submitted via email to terrie_callahan@ibc.doi.gov.

4.1.2 Submission of Questions

Any questions regarding this notice shall be submitted via email to terrie_callahan@ibc.doi.gov or before, but no later than 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, May 27, 2015, utilizing the attached form. Please include with your questions your full name, reference number D15PS00295 and title "QUESTIONS regarding the NSPBN Approach," your organization's name, complete address, phone number and email address. FirstNet anticipates conducting an Industry Day after release of this notice. Therefore, FirstNet encourages early submission of questions to allow for potential responses to be addressed early within the process. Should any question(s) be received after the date stated herein, FirstNet reserves the right not to provide an answer. If, however, in FirstNet's opinion, the question(s) cites an issue of significant importance, FirstNet may provide written responses. Please note questions will not be protected by FirstNet as proprietary. All questions and answers will be posted via the Federal Business Opportunity (FedBizOpps) site, www.FBO.gov.

4.1.3 Submission of Capabilities Statements

In addition to comments and/or questions, interested parties may submit a capabilities statement to the Contracting Officer, via email at terrie_callahan@ibc.doi.gov, based on the approaches as noted in Category One or Category Two identified herein. Interested parties should respond noting their capabilities as it pertains to either category. In addition, the capabilities statements should include, but not necessarily be limited to, these items, where appropriate. The capabilities statement should provide information pertaining to coverage, capacity, hardening, as well as potential methods to leverage existing and new third-party roaming, infrastructure and other arrangements.

Additionally, the capabilities statements should demonstrate ability to provide system availability, site and system hardening, cyber security protection, and network redundancies. This should include information pertaining to coverage relating to urban and rural areas including the capability to integrate deployable and/or satellite solutions. The capabilities statement should also include information as it pertains to technology readiness and maturity levels.

4.1.3.1 End-User Packages

As part of the overall solution, FirstNet anticipates that potential offerors will provide public safety subscribers with a broad variety of different mobile broadband price plans including unlimited plans, pooled plans, and metered plans, as well as multiple billing options. Therefore, FirstNet seeks feedback on the types of price plans and billing options being considered by potential offerors that will meet public safety's needs. In addition to any feedback, the capabilities statement should demonstrate the potential offeror's capability to provide a variety of plans.

4.1.3.2 End-User Band 14 Enabled Devices

As part of the overall solution, FirstNet anticipates that potential offerors will have the ability to provide public safety subscribers with a broad variety of Band 14 enabled devices including smart phones, WiFi enabled portable "hot spots," USB devices, embedded modules, and other devices that support public safety's mission. Therefore, FirstNet seeks feedback and information, as well as demonstration of capabilities, on the types of Band 14 enabled devices, pertaining to end-user price points, payment options, and specific device functionality that will meet public safety's requirements.

4.1.4 Capabilities Statements Response Due Date

FirstNet requests the submission of capabilities statements on or before, but no later than 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday July 27, 2015. Please send a signed original and two hard copies, and one CD, to DOI-IBC-AQD, 381 Elden Street, 4th Floor, Herndon, VA 20170-4817, Attn: Terrie L. Callahan, Contracting Officer. The electronic copy shall be sent via email to Terrie_Callahan@ibc.doi.gov.

Your capabilities statement submission shall become the property of FirstNet and will not be returned. If your submission contains information that you do not wish disclosed to the public or used by FirstNet for any purpose other than review of your submission as it relates this notice, you must clearly indicate these restrictions on each sheet containing such information.

The capabilities statement shall not exceed fifty (50) pages (on 8.5 X 11 inch size paper, single sided print in MS Word, with a font of 10 points or higher), any pages in excess of fifty (50) will not be reviewed.

Please note timeliness of receipt of any submission will be determined by the date and time the capabilities statement is received via email submission to the point of contact for AQD identified herein.

4.2 Definition of the High Level Functions

Based on previous RFIs and the review and analyses conducted, FirstNet has identified several high-level functions it has determined necessary to provide a solution that meets FirstNet's stated mission and objectives. Definitions of these high-level functions are contained in Draft RFP Section J, Terms of Reference.

The high level functions are:

- Core
- Applications ecosystem
- RAN
- Covered Leasing Agreement (CLA)
- Deployables
- Satellite
- Devices
- Subscriber adoption
- Customer lifecycle management

Based on market research, FirstNet has identified that significant synergies may exist from a fully or mostly integrated approach that could maximize value to Public Safety Entities and meaningfully contribute to financial sustainability. That approach is described in section 4.3, FirstNet's Proposed Approaches – Prior to State RAN Decision Process. FirstNet seeks feedback on this approach and whether more effective approaches exist that would achieve these synergies, maximize value to Public Safety Entities and reach financial sustainability.

4.3 FirstNet's Proposed Approaches – Prior to State RAN Decision Process

FirstNet's proposed approaches, as reflected in Figure 1 Proposed Acquisition Approach, anticipates allowing for flexibility in a draft acquisition approach in order to promote innovation, flexibility, competition and ultimately best value to the public safety communities.

1. **NATIONWIDE CORE RADIO ACCESS NETWORK AND SUBSCRIBER ADOPTION FOR ALL STATES (Category One):**

Category One encompasses a single nationwide approach whereby an offeror would be responsible for the provision of all necessary high-level functions needed to deploy and operate a nationwide solution in accordance with FirstNet's objectives. This category would allow potential offerors to submit a comprehensive offer for all in-scope functions for all 56 states and territories.

The scope of this single nationwide approach would include all high-level functions as identified in Section 4.2, Definition of the High Level Functions, of the notice. High level functions are:

- Core
- Applications ecosystem
- RAN
- CLA

- Deployables
- Satellite
- Devices
- Subscriber adoption
- Customer lifecycle management

2. REGIONAL RAN AND CLA (Category Two):

This category would allow potential offerors to submit an offer for one or more State RAN(s) and CLA(s), which would be integrated with a nationwide core network and other RAN(s) to create a comprehensive nationwide solution. Offerors may aggregate states to form regions as appropriate and as defined herein. Category Two encompasses the RAN(s) and CLA(s) applicable functions for a State or region, and does not necessarily include all other functions identified in Section 4.2, Definition of High Level Functions, of this notice, Definition of Functions. The high level functions included in Category Two are:

- RAN
- CLA

FirstNet requests feedback as to whether satellites and deployables should also be included as an applicable function in Category Two.

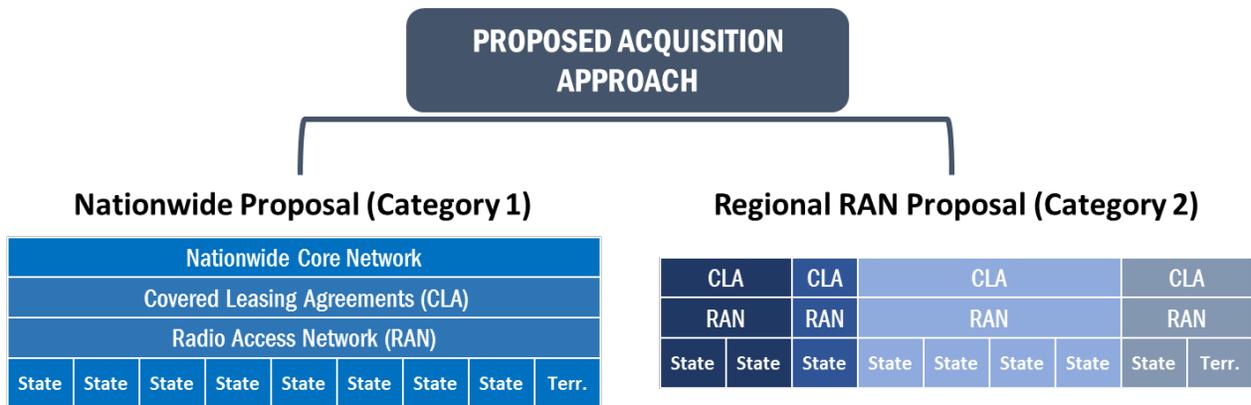


Figure 1 Proposed Acquisition Approach

4.4 Information Pertaining to Potential Integration

For Category Two, those interested parties should ensure familiarity with the information contained in the draft RFP documents, specifically, Section C (SOO), Appendix C-4 System View and Standard Views (SV-1 and StdV-1), and Appendix C-5 Standard View at FOC (StdV-2). These documents provide details of the system and services interfaces that may be required throughout the NPSBN.

Please be advised for those parties interested in Category Two above, potential offerors may be required to provide technical details of particular interfaces to ensure adequate and seamless integration between and among states/regions, and/or between the state/regions and nationwide approach. Respondents to the special notice shall consider overall integration cost and complexity pertaining to this approach in their capabilities statements.

4.5 Proposed Pricing Methodology

FirstNet has proposed an approach to pricing that is based on the aggregation of value resulting from assets available from FirstNet, and which would consist of two main elements:

- 1. Level of Government Funding:** Potential offerors may be required to propose how much of the \$6.5 billion in Government funding that FirstNet will make available is needed to deploy, operate and maintain the NPSBN, based on their proposed solution given the level of value available as described in (2) below. Potential offerors would be required to propose the timing of when the funding is required to achieve the initial operating capability milestones that are detailed in the draft RFP documents.
- 2. Level of Fixed Payments to FirstNet:** Potential offerors may be required to propose the level of fixed payments payable to FirstNet in exchange for use of the band 14 Excess Network Capacity and the value of Public Safety Revenues.

In sum, in addition to the available FirstNet funding, potential offerors may utilize band 14 Excess Network Capacity and revenues derived from Public Safety Entities to support the operations of the NPSBN, in accordance with the structure identified herein and in the attached appendix entitled “Pricing Concepts”.

Under this structure, FirstNet anticipates that potential offerors will be afforded the flexibility to establish reasonable pricing of end-user services, subject to the annual review process by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration that is required by FirstNet’s authorizing statute to ensure FirstNet’s sustainability. It is further anticipated that FirstNet will establish subscriber targets that must be met by a potential offeror, which may help serve as the basis of proposed pricing solutions.

4.5.1 Most Favored Customer Pricing Consideration for Public Safety Subscribers

To help ensure favorable price points for Public Safety subscribers, FirstNet expects potential offerors to agree to a most favored customer pricing arrangement to ensure public safety subscribers to the NPSBN pay no more than the lowest price available for any type of customer receiving broadband LTE services on band 14 or other bands, and request that potential offerors proffer up suggested terms and governance structure to ensure compliance with this objective.

4.6 Proposed Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

FirstNet’s proposed Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) for the NPSBN is shown in Appendix C-6. This document is a proposed plan for monitoring and evaluating performance throughout the life of a subsequent award. The draft QASP provides the anticipated process for a continuous oversight process which includes the following:

- What will be monitored?
- How monitoring will take place?
- Who will conduct the monitoring?
- How monitoring efforts and results will be documented?

Also, the anticipated surveillance metrics identified in the QASP correlates to functions and architectural relationships contained in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. Flexibility in the QASP is essential in order to allow for an increase or decrease in the level of surveillance necessary

based on contractor performance and situational needs. The draft QASP is being included as part of this notice in order to obtain feedback from interested parties, including states, tribes, territories, public safety stakeholders, and market participants, as to the validity of the anticipated quality controls and overall surveillance as it pertains to performance metrics/standards. Therefore, FirstNet requests potential offerors to respond to the metrics with feedback, for those performance metrics/standards identified and any additional ones that should be considered, keeping in mind FirstNet’s identified objectives of (i) maximizing public safety subscribership and utilization; (ii) financial self-sustainability, and (iii) overall performance.

4.7 Proposed Operational Architecture

The operational architecture for the NPSBN is shown in Appendix C-7, Operation Architecture Functional Descriptions. This document identifies required detailed functions and architectural relationships and identifies primary responsibilities for each. These relationships are outlined in a word document, a visio diagram, and in an excel spreadsheet. Additionally, where a specific function is to be validated by testing, or other means, the related performance objective from Appendix C-6 Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan is also noted. FirstNet has categorized each function in the operational architecture into one of the categories noted below in Table 1 Operational Architecture Ownership.

Table 1 Operational Architecture Ownership

FirstNet ownership and responsibility	
Public safety ownership and responsibility	
Functions not categorized for which comments are solicited herein	

FirstNet seeks comment on the overall approach regarding ownership of the functions identified in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. Interested parties should note their recommended approach and should identify which functions should be contractor owned (label as yellow), FirstNet owned (label as green), shared functions (label as orange), as well as those that are to be the responsibility of a public safety entity (label as blue) and out of scope functions (label as gray.).

FirstNet seeks feedback on the overall proposed approach regarding ownership of the functions identified in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Description. Interested parties should note their recommended changes, or alternatives, to the approach and should identify which functions should be contractor owned (label as yellow), FirstNet owned (label as green), shared functions (labeled as orange), as well as those that are to be the responsibility of a public safety entity.

5 Other Critical Tenets

5.1 Proposed Period of Performance

FirstNet has preliminarily determined that the overall period of performance should run up to 2032 (base and all option periods if exercised). FirstNet anticipates a base period of performance of award through 2022, with an option to extend through 2027 and a subsequent option to extend through 2032³.

This longer period of performance would allow for the ability to maximize value to FirstNet and its public safety subscribers. This is based on the determination that a longer period of performance would allow potential offerors to recoup, over a longer period of time, the significant investments needed to deploy and operate the NPSBN. In particular, FirstNet intends to utilize excess network capacity to at least partially offset the costs of the NPSBN, which may require a longer period of time in order to monetize and thus provide value to FirstNet.

5.2 Commerciality Determination Information

FirstNet anticipates conducting this acquisition in accordance with FAR Part 15, Contracting by Negotiation, and potentially FAR Part 12, Acquisition of Commercial Items. The Contracting Officer is responsible for making the commerciality determination. However, in order to assist FirstNet in making this determination regarding commerciality for this acquisition, please provide information in accordance with the definition per the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 2.101.

FAR 2.101 defines an item (to include services) as commercial if it is used by the general public for non-governmental purposes and has been sold or offered to the general public. The following items may also meet the commercial items definition:

- Items that have evolved from commercial or general public use through advances in technology that may not yet be available for commercial use but are necessary to meet a government solicitation in a timely manner;
- Modifications of items that are customarily available to the general public;
- Minor modifications that are necessary to meet government requirements;
- Items combined and sold together to the general public;
- Items that may transfer through subsidiaries and divisions of a company;
- Items developed exclusively at the contractor's private expense and sold in substantial quantities on a competitive basis to multiple state and local governments; and
- Services of a type offered and sold competitively in substantial quantities in the commercial market place based on established catalog or market prices. This includes installation, maintenance, repairs, training, and other services if such services are procured for support of a commercial item and the source of such services provides similar services contemporaneously

³ FirstNet is schedule for reauthorization by February 21, 2027. Subsequent option periods are subject to Congressional reauthorization.

to the general public under terms and conditions similar to those offered to the Federal Government.

Therefore, FirstNet is requesting input with regard to the potential products and/or services that will be included in a proposed solution as it relates to the definition of commerciality as identified above.

5.3 Partnering/Teaming List

As a courtesy, FirstNet will compile a list of those offerors that wish to be incorporated on a list that are interested in subcontracting and partnering opportunities with other potential offerors. Therefore, if interested, please submit the business name and size, point of contact (name, e-mail address, phone number, etc.) to the Contracting Officer via email at Terrie_Callahan@ibc.doi.gov. All e-mail inquiries shall have “Teaming List – Reference # D15PS00295” included in the subject line. This information will be made available to all potential offerors via posting through the FirstNet website at www.firstnet.gov. It is not required to be listed on the source list in order to submit a proposal to any resultant RFP. This is optional and solely intended to be an avenue to facilitate potential subcontracting and partnering opportunities and FirstNet accepts no liability for any resultant outcomes.