



Responses to Questions

283 through 516

*Special Notice D15PS00295 – Nationwide Public
Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN)*

6/26/2015

Overview

This document contains answers to questions submitted to either the Contract Officer or to specialnoticequestions@firstnet.gov. This document does not represent all questions. Subsequent documents may be released to respond to additional questions.

Responses to Questions 283 through 516

283. In Category 1, the Contractor can expect to receive \$6.5 billion that will be paid based on performance-based milestones being met. In a Category 2 scenario, how will the money be allocated to the various states or regions for the Contractor? What prorated calculation will FirstNet use to determine how the money is allocated?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix

Answer:

FirstNet's proposed acquisition approach considers both Nationwide Proposals (Category One) and Regional RAN Proposals (Category Two), the latter of which could be integrated into a nationwide solution. For both categories, the offerors are to propose the quantity and timing of desired allocated government funding as part of their proposed solution; therefore, it is up to each offeror to propose how the amount of the allocated funding and the timing proposed for disbursement.

As noted in Section 1.1, Available Financial Resources, of the Pricing Concepts Appendix to the Special Notice, Category One offerors may request up to \$6.5 billion of government funding from FirstNet's Budget Authority as a contribution to the up-front deployment and on-going operations of the network. For Category Two proposals, offerors would be required to propose the level of fixed quarterly payments and/or Budget Authority drawdowns based on the value of the FirstNet opportunity within the RAN and CLA region(s) they are proposing.

284. Following up the FirstNet presentations at Industry Day, [vendor name removed] would like to request a meeting to discuss possible teaming / partnering with you around the FirstNet acquisition. Please let me know if this is separate from the meeting request form [vendor name removed] filled out and submitted on Friday the 15th.

Document Reference: General

Answer:

The teaming/partnering list is a courtesy and FirstNet is not meeting with vendors with regard to that topic. As set forth in section 5.3 of the Special Notice, if you want to be included on the teaming/partnering list, 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.”

If you are interested in a one-on-one meeting, click on “Information on One-on-One Sessions” in Solicitation Number D15PS00295B on www.FBO.gov.

285. I am inquiring about the process to included [vendor name removed] on the registered vendor list for the FirstNet final RFP. Is there a registration process outside of the Interested Vendors List in FedBizOpps on the current Draft RFP?

Answer:

There is not a registered vendor list for distribution for the FirstNet RFP. Any information regarding the FirstNet RFP, and subsequent release, will be posted on www.FBO.gov.

286. FirstNet has proposed two potential acquisition approaches (Category One and Category Two). The State recognizes that if any Category Two regional RAN/CLA options are considered, a hybrid approach will be required to ensure that a core and overall lifecycle management are also provided. In the case of a Category Two or hybrid approach, how will FirstNet ensure that all states and territories are accounted for?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 5 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.3

Answer:

The proposed approach identified in the Special Notice would require Category One offerors to propose solutions for all states and territories, either as a single entity or in a teamed approach.

Category Two proposals encompass the RAN and CLA (use of excess network capacity) functions of the network. These proposals would be integrated into a Category One solution to create a seamless nationwide solution, if they contribute to the best nationwide solution for FirstNet’s stated objectives.

287. What are the requirements associated with “non-color” gray grid blocks? Satellite and/or deployables are the assumed method. Is it up to the offeror to propose a solution that is acceptable (i.e., SLAs for deployables and the type of coverage, throughputs and latency that is achievable)? Is the offeror required to define “sub-regions” within the gray grid blocks of what solution is provided where?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1 Section / Paragraph: Section 1

Answer:

The purpose of the "gray" blocks is to define the need for temporary on-demand coverage (e.g. deployables). Through our outreach efforts, we are working to define the requirements for the temporary on-demand areas. FirstNet's subsequent RFP may define how we assess coverage and throughput requirements.

288. Who determines how to use existing assets? Does the RAN-build offeror have final say over what is used?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 3 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.1.3

Answer:

Under the concept in the Special Notice, Category One and Two Offerors would be responsible for determining whether use of existing assets is desirable, as part of developing their proposed solutions. Offerors could utilize existing infrastructure, capabilities, and any other assets to propose the best solution to FirstNet's stated objectives.

289. If there is a list of assets available, when will this list be made available to the RAN-build offeror? Since this is a driver in determining cost structure, how will this be made available for an informed RFP response?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 3 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.1.3

Answer:

FirstNet does not anticipate providing information on terms and conditions for use of public and private infrastructure and capabilities prior to release of the Request for Proposals or receipt of proposals.

Under the concept in the Special Notice, FirstNet expects Category One and Two offerors to provide solutions to its stated objectives. Those solutions could incorporate publicly and/or privately owned infrastructure and capabilities. In addition, FirstNet may utilize federal, state, tribal, local and other infrastructure to expand the network over the initial contracted coverage, if resources are available and determined to be in the best interest of the FirstNet network.

290. How will future requirements for evolved service be communicated, negotiated, and implemented? How should the offeror take this uncertainty into account when responding to the RFP?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.4

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates proposals from offeror(s) that will meet FirstNet’s objectives, including 3GPP standards (Lifecycle Innovation, objective 13), user support and customer service (Customer Care and Marketing, objective 15 and Compelling and Competitive Priced Services, objective 3). FirstNet will also maintain consistent communication with Public Safety Users regarding numerous network-related issues. Any feedback received by either party may be used to assess developing new requirements for the network. It is anticipated that any such developments will evolve in a similar manner to the rest of the commercial mobile broadband wireless industry, and should be anticipated and accounted for accordingly. Additionally, FirstNet welcomes feedback with regard to a process and/or proposed structure for handling future requirements for evolved service.

291. Why is MVNO box in Figure 1 “gray – out of scope” while the IOC1 phase states that the RAN partner must provide MVNO services?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Page 2 Section / Paragraph: Figure 1

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on all SOO Appendices, including Appendix C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1. The initial IOC contemplates an MVNO solution using non-Band 14 broadband capabilities to expeditiously provide service to Public Safety Users, while Band 14 is deployed.

292. How are Category 2 bidders integrated with a Category 1 bidder (i.e. how are overlapping states handled from a bidding standpoint)? Or is the expectation that if a category 1 bidder is awarded, the Category 2 bidders would be excluded?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.3

Answer:

It is anticipated that Category Two would be integrated into Category One only if the net value of a Nationwide solution, inclusive of Category One and Category Two proposals, represents better value than a Category One proposal alone.

293. Does a “state opt out” essentially mean that the state will be a “Category 1” provider for that particular state (i.e., end to end services), or is the opt out only for the RAN?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.3

Answer:

A state that does not participate in the FirstNet RAN deployment must undertake responsibility for deploying, operating and maintaining the RAN. It must also connect to the FirstNet Core network and maintain certain other responsibilities. FirstNet's second Public Notice and request for comment, found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/13/2015-05855/further-proposed-interpretations-of-parts-of-the-middle-class-tax-relief-and-job-creation-act-of>, provides further information on these responsibilities and processes.

294. How are opt-out states handled from a Category 1 bidder standpoint? Is there any notion that FirstNet will need to rebid the project once all the opt-out states are known?

Document Reference: Special Notice Section / Paragraph: Section 4.3

Answer:

Initial proposals submitted by Category One offerors would be based on all states choosing for FirstNet to undertake responsibility for deploying, maintaining, and operating the RAN in the state. Information from proposals may be used to complete state plans, as required by FirstNet's enabling legislation. Federal acquisition procedures allow for several mechanisms to re-price or modify Category One solutions, depending on the acquisition “phase”, if any particular state chooses to undertake responsibility for deploying, maintaining, and operating the RAN. FirstNet welcomes feedback on processes that would promote the best possible solution toward FirstNet's stated objectives.

295. Can you define what the key parameters are for deciding who gets the award for a given state (i.e., what tradeoff between price and functionality should the offeror make)?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.3

Answer:

The evaluation criteria will be included in the subsequent RFP in Section M. As required by the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), specifically 15.305, all factors and significant sub factors that will affect contract award, and their relative importance, will be stated clearly in the solicitation. This would include any correlation to price evaluation and the proposed solution, which is considered a best value acquisition approach versus a lowest price technically acceptable solution.

If FirstNet makes the determination the best value acquisition approach is in the best interest of the NPSBN acquisition, this would be considered a tradeoff process. This process permits tradeoffs among cost or price and non-cost factors and allows the Government to accept other than the lowest priced proposal. In this approach, the perceived benefits of the higher priced proposal would merit the additional cost, and the rationale for tradeoffs would be documented appropriately.

296. How does money/value change hands with a Category 2 bidder? We understand that the bidder would propose a quarterly fee/drawdown schedule based on RAN costs, synergies, and secondary usage. Does the Category 2 bidder only have a financial relationship with FirstNet (and not whoever owns the core/public safety billing relationships)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6 Section / Paragraph: Section 2.1.2

Answer:

FirstNet's goal is to achieve a seamless, fully interoperable nationwide network with minimum execution risk. Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice, Category Two offerors would have a financial relationship with FirstNet. These offerors would propose a solution to FirstNet's stated objectives and a fixed fee payable to FirstNet based on the offerors valuation of excess network capacity and any other value it sees in entering a contractual relationship with FirstNet. FirstNet anticipates that certain technical and business procedures may be developed as part of a subsequent RFP to govern the relationship between any Category One and Two awardees and seeks feedback on the structure of the procedures that will most effectively meet FirstNet's overall goal of a seamless, fully interoperable nationwide network.

297. How does money/value change hands within a Category 1 consortium? Or is this not defined and it is only the relationship between the consortium and FirstNet that is detailed with the “quarterly payments”?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6 Section / Paragraph: Section 2.1.1

Answer:

FirstNet does not intend to become involved in the details, and/or process, of transfers of money/ value within a Category One consortium.

298. What is the timing of budgetary authority drawdowns with regards to IOCs? Is this to be proposed by the offeror? Can an offeror request full budgetary authority to drawdown upfront (e.g., to fund long lead time requirements like site builds)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: Section 1.1.1

Answer:

Yes, an offeror can request full budgetary authority to drawdown upfront based on their proposed solution. However, FirstNet's goal is to develop a payment structure that minimizes execution risk and ensures performance of FirstNet's stated objectives. The proposed milestone structure does this by only providing payments after objectives are achieved based on the proposed solutions and the subsequent award.

FirstNet welcomes any feedback or suggestions on mechanisms to meet our objectives, reduce risk and ensure performance. Offerors are welcome to propose an accelerated schedule for achievement of the milestones compared to that included in the Special Notice.

299. Will there be guidance on the percentage of the budgetary authority available to each state?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: Section 1.1.1

Answer:

No, FirstNet has not set guidance on the percentage of the Budget Authority available to each state. Offerors are expected to propose the amount of Budget Authority required in their proposed solutions, either Category One or Category Two.

300. In the “Appendix_Pricing_Concepts” what is meant by 1.2 when it says that “FirstNet’s sustainability requires that a potential offeror’s proposed pricing solution must ensure that FirstNet maintains cash in excess of obligations for every year throughout the life of a subsequent award?” Does this include the \$7B budget authority and does it allow for the notion that cash flows are very likely to be negative during the early IOC phases of the project?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: Section 1.2

Answer:

The financial sustainability of FirstNet is required by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. The Special Notice presented FirstNet’s conceptual model for becoming financially sustainable. In addition to up to \$6.5 billion in cash, offeror(s) could receive revenue from Public Safety User fees as well as any revenue obtained from using excess network capacity to provide service to non-Public Safety Users.

While the contractor's cash flows may be negative during early IOC phases, FirstNet may never have obligations in excess of its available Budget Authority.

301. If the goal is net positive cash flow, what happens with the leftover value? During Industry Day (5/14/2015) it was stated that excess funds would be used to reinvest into the network? But how/when does this happen? Are these reinvestments something that should be assumed when bidding the project or are these reinvestments something where usage would be determined on more of an ad hoc basis?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: Section 1.2

Answer:

Under FirstNet’s authorizing statute, FirstNet must reinvest any funding it receives into eligible costs of supporting the network.

The Special Notice and the Industry Day presentation described the proposed pricing concept, where offeror(s) would propose regular fixed payments to FirstNet. FirstNet would need to invest all of these fixed payments into eligible costs of constructing, maintaining, operating, or improving the network.

In addition, in SOO Section C.5, Objectives, FirstNet has multiple objectives (including numbers 1 and 13) which seek continued investment in the network. Offerors will be expected to account for these objectives as part of their proposed solutions.

302. Is it recognized that FirstNet could be cash flow negative in early IOCs before the ramp-up of both public safety adoption and secondary usage revenues?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Section 1.2; 2.1.1; 2.1.2

Answer:

The financial sustainability of FirstNet is required by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. The Special Notice presented FirstNet’s conceptual model for becoming financially sustainable. In addition to up to \$6.5 billion in cash, offeror(s) could receive revenue from Public Safety User fees as well as any revenue obtained from using excess network capacity to provide service to non-Public Safety Users.

While the contractor's cash flows may be negative during early IOC phases, FirstNet may never have obligations in excess of its available Budget Authority.

303. Please clarify if there any restrictions on the resale or monetization of the excess capacity with a CLA. For example, could a 3rd party in theory sell “B14 only” phones to the public for secondary usage (i.e., like an MVNO)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6 Section / Paragraph: Sections 2.1.1; 2.1.2

Answer:

The Special Notice presented FirstNet’s conceptual model for becoming financially sustainable. In addition to up to \$6.5 billion in Budget Authority, offeror(s) could receive revenue from Public Safety User fees as well as any revenue obtained from using excess network capacity to provide service to non-Public Safety Users, depending on whether the offeror proposed under Category One or Category Two. In exchange, FirstNet requests that offeror(s) propose solutions to meet FirstNet’s stated objectives and regular fixed payments to FirstNet to support ongoing program costs.

Other than the sustainability requirements and the pricing concepts identified within the Special Notice, FirstNet does not currently anticipate any restrictions on the resale or monetization of the excess capacity with a CLA. However, FirstNet is requesting feedback, in accordance with the Special Notice, with regard to this topic. Any additional information will be included in a subsequent RFP.

304. How far in advance is the “quarterly forecast” to FirstNet created? Is the offeror locked into the forecast that is created for the RFP? Given the 5 year timeframe and uncertainty of both public safety and secondary usage adoption, will there be opportunities to reforecast the expected cash flows (e.g., annual reforecasts)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6 Section / Paragraph: Sections 2.1.1; 2.1.2

Answer:

Under the framework proposed in the Special Notice and the related Pricing Concepts Appendix, FirstNet's assumption is that the offeror commits to a fixed level of payments to the Government at the time the contract is fully executed. Any proposed changes to the fixed fee will be handled through the contract modification process.

305. Is the reference to NG911 in IOC-3 (24 months) confined to the deployment of a standards-based interface between the NPSBN and ESInets to enable physical layer integration? If not, what is the scope of this requirement?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Page 0

Answer:

NG911 services will be needed for NPSBN Subscribers (Primary users, not secondary users under a Covered Leasing Agreement) for their voice communications. The NPSBN should connect to and interact with the NG911 systems provided via the respective ESINet established to support the given NG911 system.

306. Section 4.4.6.3 of the Interoperability Board Report states that the NPSBN “must provide location determination capabilities commensurate with those available for consumers” (presumably, in accordance with FCC requirements). Is it FN’s expectation that the NPSBN RAN provides such location services for NPSBN users?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Page 0

Answer:

Yes, the NPSBN RAN should have capabilities to provide location determination services for NPSBN users.

307. If FirstNet plans to reach sustainability through synergies and excess capacity, does that prevent current carriers from teaming due to organizational conflict of interest (OCI)?

Document Reference: General

Answer:

FirstNet has not currently identified, and is not aware of, any OCI that would prohibit carriers from teaming. However, the subsequent RFP will contain terms and conditions as it relates to organizational conflict of interest. Also, it is incumbent upon the Contractor, if it discovers an organizational conflict of interest with respect to this solicitation and/or resultant contract, to make an immediate and full disclosure in writing to the Contracting Officer to include a description of the action the Contractor has taken or proposes to take to avoid, eliminate or neutralize the conflict.

308. Please clarify “secondary users” as referenced here. Reaching break even certainly requires serving a critical mass of second responders and probably a broader market of state, county and municipal staff members. Please enumerate the breadth of users that will be accepted by FirstNet as a result of learning from comments to the recent RFI defining public safety.

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Section / Paragraph: 2.4 and 4.25.2

Answer:

FirstNet has sought comment on its preliminary definition of secondary users in the Third Public Notice, please see [http://www.regulations.gov/#!document Detail; D=NTIA-2014-0001-0001](http://www.regulations.gov/#!document%20Detail%3B%20D%3DNTIA-2014-0001-0001).

309. “(A)Consists of all cell site equipment, antennas, and backhaul equipment, based on commercial standards, that are required to enable wireless communications with devices using the public safety broadband spectrum; and

As public safety and carrier wireless standards for hardening, preemption and priority are very different, please provide guidance on the appropriate reference services bundle that should be used to determine the 'most favored pricing'.

Document Reference: General Page 7

Answer:

One of FirstNet's key goals is Public Safety adoption of broadband, provided through Band 14. The Special Notice proposes "most favored customer" pricing arrangements as a means of ensuring equitable pricing to Public Safety Users for comparable services. FirstNet has not determined what constitutes a comparable service, and whether most favored pricing should apply to specific services provided by a firm or to broader industry averages. FirstNet seeks feedback on this mechanism (as well as other Public Safety adoption mechanisms) in Section 2.1.2.1 of the Appendix to the Special Notice.

310. Will FirstNet share asset details on the inventories of state, tribal and locally owned towers (and rights to private towers), roof space, backhaul, power, conduit and other elements plus terms and conditions under which they might be used by a prime contractor?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Section / Paragraph: 4.1.4

Answer:

FirstNet does not anticipate providing information on terms and conditions for use of public and private infrastructure and capabilities in the subsequent RFP.

Under the concept in the Special Notice, FirstNet expects Category One and Two offerors to provide solutions to its stated objectives. Those proposed solutions could incorporate publicly and/or privately owned infrastructure and capabilities currently available to the offeror for utilization. In addition, FirstNet may utilize federal, state, tribal, local and other infrastructure to expand the network over the initial contracted coverage, if resources are made available by the owner of the resource.

311. What terms and conditions comprise FirstNet's own negotiation goals with carriers for roaming agreements pursuant to the Spectrum Act 6211?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Section / Paragraph: 4.1.5.11

Answer:

FirstNet seeks to deploy, operate and maintain a NPSBN in accordance with the SOO contained within the Special Notice. Additionally, Section 6211 of the Act provides authority for the FCC to adopt rules in order to allow for roaming onto commercial networks and, in certain situations, priority access. Additionally, any terms and conditions pertaining to roaming should be identified in the proposed solution.

312. Would FN consider building a marketplace or allowing the contractor to build a marketplace for maximizing the value of variable excess network capacity?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 7 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.5

Answer:

FirstNet does not intend to build any such marketplace. However, under the concept presented in the Special Notice, FirstNet would not place restrictions on the use of excess network capacity by offerors beyond commitments made by offerors to meet FirstNet's stated objectives as part of the proposed solution.

313. Potential impacts from unforeseen execution risk, especially potential changes or delays by any pertinent government agency, must be mitigated to enable all offerors to meet or exceed program requirements. In the event that Congress, National Telecommunications and Information (NTIA) or the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) makes pre/post-award changes, how will FirstNet address the need to have risk mitigation plans in place to prevent or address any impact to the offeror(s)?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 12

Answer:

Unforeseen execution risks, new or changed laws and regulation, and other risks are the risks faced by mobile network operators today. FirstNet would encourage any potential respondent to the RFP to fully understand all risks, including laws and regulations, such as the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 and more broadly, the Communications Act, and associated rules and regulations, in order to develop an appropriate and robust business case for the construction and operation of the NPSBN. Additionally, prior to award, any changes would be executed as an amendment to the subsequent RFP, after award it would be executed as a modification to the contract, either bi-lateral or unilateral.

314. Having detailed phased coverage and capacity projections in advance of a final Request for Proposal (RFP) is necessary to validate a business model for FirstNet offerors. When does FirstNet anticipate releasing state-defined coverage and capacity projections and priorities?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 1

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates refining its coverage objectives through its ongoing consultation process. Those coverage objectives may be included as a part of the subsequent RFP.

315. Pursuant to FAR 9.5 -- Organizational and Consultant Conflicts of Interest, there may be situations where a prime contractor who serves as both a covered leasing agreement partner and network service provider may have impaired objectivity or unequal access to information regarding system deployment and public safety adopters. Can FirstNet comment on their position regarding any anticipated mitigations from such an occurrence?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 5 Section / Paragraph: C.5 /16

Answer:

This procurement is subject to the FAR's provisions on organizational conflicts of interest. The contracting officer will determine whether a particular conflict of interest may be appropriately mitigated under the circumstances and based on any particular mitigation plans, if presented.

316. There are multiple ways to address phased deployment approaches. There is a phased down-select approach to the procurement process, which allows the government to provide feedback to the offerors during multiple time phases in the procurement process. The goal of this approach is to provide meaningful feedback to offerors early in the procurement process as to whether the offerors have been able to provide a viable solution. This process is an extremely effective and recommended to help potential bidders better decide whether to continue pursuing an opportunity as prime or potentially join a team. On a procurement of this size, this type of down select process has been helpful in eliminating protests from bidders who receive no feedback early on until the award stage of the procurement. If not used the non-successful bidders can spend millions of dollars pursuing an opportunity only to find towards the end of the process that their bid was way off the mark. Companies would much rather know upfront than after the award that they were not in the competitive range from either a solution offering or potentially a price perspective. Will FirstNet implement a down-select process to allow industry feedback after or during industry one-on-one sessions scheduled for the summer?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 9 Section / Paragraph: 5.2 / 1

Answer:

FirstNet is interested in allowing as much feedback as possible from interested parties, including states, tribes, territories, public safety stakeholders, and market participants, throughout the acquisition process. Therefore, FirstNet is in the process of making a determination with regards to acquisition strategy and approach that may include utilizing a multi-phased approach in accordance with laws and regulations. Any details and/or information pertaining to a phased approach will be identified within the subsequent RFP.

317. Spectrum Clearance: The 700 MHz spectrum is likely interfered by many external sources. Will there be a function to mitigate all harming sources prior to network rollout/operation?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Section / Paragraph: A.1.3.2 , A.1.13.3

Answer:

Based on what FirstNet has learned from the early builder projects on Band 14, FirstNet believes that it is unlikely the Band 14 will be subject to interference from a significant number of sources. The contractor will be responsible for constructing and operating the network on a basis under which interference would be identified, resolved and/or mitigated prior to or during construction and initial operation and, as situations arise, such as new instances of interference, throughout the life of the contract.

318. The document specifies a 60 months period between contract award and FOC. What does this mean in regard to availability of \$7b until the end of FY2022? Will the contract be awarded, negotiated and in place latest by the end of 2017?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Page 1

Answer:

Under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (the Act), FirstNet has available up to \$7 billion in Budget Authority, derived from Federal Communications Commission (FCC) spectrum auction proceeds. Offerors may request FirstNet contribute up to \$6.5 billion of this funding as a contribution to the up front development costs of the NPSBN project during the base period of contract award. Under the Act, FirstNet must obligate these funds no later than fiscal year 2022, or the funds will revert to the U.S. Treasury for general deficit reduction. FirstNet anticipates that obligations would commence at the time of contract award, and potentially disbursed in accordance with the proposed solution. Additionally, FirstNet seeks input on whether to include earlier and additional milestones for planning phases. Finally, offerors are welcome to propose an accelerated schedule for achievement of the milestones compared to that included in the Special Notice.

Additionally, the anticipated award date will be reflected in the subsequent RFP, to include any base and option periods. Also, FirstNet is seeking feedback with regard to the proposed period of performance for the NPSBN, see Section 5.1 of the Special Notice.

319. Will FirstNet share your position on Data Rights and other intellectual property issues?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 4.1.2

Answer:

Information on data rights and intellectual property will be included the subsequent RFP.

320. How will the capabilities statements, including a vendor's selection of category 1 and / or 2 be used? Will submission in a particular category limit a vendor's options as the acquisition moves forward?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 4.1.3

Answer:

No, submission of capabilities statements in a particular category does not limit a potential offeror's options or submission of a proposed solution.

The capabilities statement is to provide additional information to inform FirstNet and assist in making the determination of the approach that is in the best interest of FirstNet's NPSBN mission and objectives.

321. Covered Leasing Agreement (CLA): Excess Network Capacity is a key element of the FirstNet sustainability model. Actual terms of the governing CLA will likely have significant implications on the market value of the Excess Network Capacity. Given such, it seems important that FirstNet provide a CLA framework as described in A.1.9 prior to and/or as part of the Final RFP that provides direction and clarity to Offerors as a means of determining excess spectrum capacity value. Does FirstNet intend to do this?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 4.2

Operational Arch - A1.9

Answer:

The CLAs will be executed separately and outside of this contract and therefore, the information may be included in the subsequent RFP for informational and proposal preparation and evaluation purposes, only as it relates to any proposed solution.

FirstNet welcomes feedback on the best methods for promoting value from all of FirstNet’s value blocks in support of developing the best possible solutions for FirstNet’s stated objectives. FirstNet will provide additional direction and/ or a framework, to the extent that it supports better solutions for FirstNet’s stated objectives.

322. What will be the method to determine lowest price available? Will it be exact service for that exact location? How will FirstNet take into account unique arrangements that may not make prices comparable?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 7 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.5.1

Answer:

One of FirstNet's key goals is public safety adoption of broadband, provided through Band 14. Section 4.5 of the Special Notice proposes "most favored customer" pricing arrangements as a means of ensuring equitable pricing to Public Safety Users for comparable services. However, FirstNet has not made the determination with regard to evaluation of proposed pricing submissions. This information would be identified within the subsequent RFP. Also, FirstNet requests feedback from industry on this mechanism (as well as other public safety adoption mechanisms) in Section 2.1.2.1 of the Pricing Concepts Appendix to the Special Notice.

323. C-3 Recommended Minimum Technical Requirements in its recommended considerations (30) states, “The NPSBN SHOULD use a set of pre-defined GoS Tiers to provide clear and uniform description of the services of network performance provided within a Coverage Area.” It further specifies that service probability, data rates, and usage models should be included in a uniform set of GoS Tiers. C-1 ¶ 1 does not appear to fully specify GoS Tiers. For instance, coverage is defined with DL/UL rates and loading, but not with service probability or an applicable usage model. Does FirstNet intend to fully specify a set of GoS Tiers that would allow a uniform interpretation of coverage and capacity across its entire network?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1 Section / Paragraph: 1. Baseline Coverage Requirements

Answer:

As noted in the Interoperability Board Report found in Appendix C-3 Recommended Minimum Technical Requirements to Ensure Nationwide Interoperability for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network, the network should have the capability to support Grade of Service (GoS) tiers. FirstNet is seeking feedback on the GoS tiers. Any information pertaining to GoS Tiers may be included in the subsequent RFP as appropriate.

324. Is Design of in-building coverage and capacity in-scope?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 3.2

Answer:

Yes, design of in-building coverage and capacity are considered within-scope of the NPSBN objectives. Therefore, both in building coverage and capacity should be addressed as a part of the offeror's proposed solution in response to a subsequent RFP.

325. A - Will the usage models Light, Medium, Heavy, or Emergency be further defined to include the anticipated number of subscribers in a given Coverage Area?

B - Will any modeling be required to show the total bandwidth required during peak usage so sizing of the core backhaul traffic can be appropriately engineered?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 72 Section / Paragraph: 4.6.2

Answer:

A - As part of FirstNet's outreach effort, FirstNet is having a dialogue about coverage and demand objectives with the states. Specific coverage requirements will be a part of that discussion and will lead to the coverage and demand objectives and updated maps that may be released as part of the subsequent RFP.

B - It is recommended for offerors to perform modeling studies to appropriately size all portions of the network including core backhaul as it relates to their proposed solution. An offeror's proposed design should include solutions to address FirstNet overall demand needs with supplemental solutions as required and any assumptions made with regard to peak usage.

326. As part of the State consultation, can a baseline number of PSEs by State/territory be identified?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Page 13 Section / Paragraph: 5.2.1

Answer:

FirstNet's data collection effort asks the states/territories to provide an estimated number of qualifying Public Safety Entities (PSE), including entity name, discipline, location, POC, and total personnel. The question also asks the states/territories to provide the same information for those entities that qualifying PSEs wish to designate as PSEs within the state/territory (including Tribal lands) under terms of the Act. To date, FirstNet has leveraged data provided by Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) that is also available within Communications Asset Survey and Mapping (CASM) tool. Additionally, FirstNet has leveraged data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

(www.bls.gov) to gather a baseline number. Any available information may be included in the subsequent RFP as appropriate.

327. At what stage during the acquisition process are final measurement metrics, performance targets and calculation to be agreed?

Document Reference: C-6 QASP Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Table 5, Q-OPS

Answer:

Any and all terms and conditions will be agreed upon prior to executing the award. This would include any measurement metrics, performance targets and calculations.

328. Will SLA – definition and term exclusion and its guiding principles be incorporated in the RFP?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 10 Section / Paragraph: A1.11.1

Answer:

The subsequent RFP may contain information related to the obligations between a state that chooses to undertake building, operating and maintaining the RAN and the FirstNet Core. This information may be included for informational and proposal preparation purposes only.

329. Will FirstNet provide a preference of sites to be used for RAN and Core deployment such as government owned properties or will the site selection for deployment be at total discretion of the responder?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 24 Section / Paragraph: A3.2.3

Answer:

FirstNet does not anticipate providing preference regarding RAN and Core network sites for the initial deployment. Offerors may be required to specify site location as it relates to the proposed implementation and deployment schedule as part of their proposed solution.

330. Is there an estimate of how many machine to machine devices will be connected to the NPSBN? Are machine to machine devices required to be IP enabled?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 77 Section / Paragraph: A7.2.3.4

Answer:

FirstNet intends to develop subscriber forecasts through its consultation efforts, which may include machine to machine forecasts. FirstNet, however, encourages offerors to develop their own internal

business models, which in addition to public safety connections could include machine to machine, Internet of Things, and all other uses for Band 14 network capacity.

Any technical requirements for devices connecting to and using the network may be provided in the subsequent RFP.

331. RF Solutions include satellite services. It does not specify if these are required to be backhaul (BH) or access or both. Please clarify.

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Page 2 Section / Paragraph: Section 2 Table

Answer:

FirstNet is looking for offerors' proposed solutions on how to best meet the objectives laid out in the SOO. FirstNet does not intend to limit possible solutions including on how satellite services are utilized.

332. Is “secondary responder” the same as “secondary user?” The Use Case Definitions document use both terms, and suggests secondary users/secondary responders are those that are provided service via FirstNet but at a lower priority than first responders. A.1.15.2 suggests that a secondary user is a user that is serviced via a CLA (e.g. not on FirstNet’s core). Request clarification of these terms.

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Section 4.7, 4.15 (also C-7, A1.15.2 p9)

Answer:

Secondary users and secondary responders are not the same. A secondary user has been preliminarily defined as an entity that enters into a CLA with FirstNet and has access to network capacity on Band 14 spectrum on a secondary basis for the provision of non-public safety services only. Secondary responders are a type of PSE that provide Public Safety services in response to incidents or planned events. Examples of secondary responders might include utility workers, transportation personnel, and tow truck drivers supporting Public Safety activities. Secondary responders may be assigned higher or lower priorities at the discretion of a PSE with access rights to this function.

333. This section mentions opt-in states and territories. Will states be able to opt-in or opt-out periodically, or if they opt-in will they be required to stay in?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 1 Section / Paragraph: C.3

Answer:

When a FirstNet state plan is delivered to a Governor, the 90 day window to make a decision begins. The Governor can choose to accept and proceed with the FirstNet plan or decide to assume the

responsibility of deploying and maintaining the RAN within the state. This decision is not one that can be changed periodically. However, as a reminder, no PSE will be committed to use FirstNet service regardless of the opt in/opt out decision. Also, the state plan decision process was a significant focus in FirstNet's second public notice. Should additional information be sought regarding FirstNet's preliminary interpretations regarding the state plan decisions process, see FirstNet's second public notice at federalregister.gov: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/04/07/2015-07691/further-proposed-interpretations-of-parts-of-the-middle-class-tax-relief-and-job-creation-act-of>.

334. FN states it will “make available” Band 14 spectrum. What will a CLA allow a contractor to do with the spectrum; sub-lease, deploy and resell capacity, allow others to deploy and use spectrum separately, other, all of the above?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 2 Section / Paragraph: C.3 para 5

Answer:

Under the concept presented in the Special Notice, FirstNet would not restrict the use of excess network capacity by offerors beyond commitments made by offerors, as part of their proposed solutions and as executed in any subsequent award(s), to meet FirstNet's stated objectives and any other legal obligations.

335. In FirstNet's equation for financial sustainability, it is stated that the combination of the various elements are anticipated to deliver a financially sustaining business model. Does FirstNet have studies or other information on anticipated costs or the valuation of excess network capacity to make available to potential offers as another data point in validating the model beyond what was discussed at Industry Day?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1

Answer:

Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice, offerors could have access to value derived from PSEs, excess network capacity, government funding and any other value offerors anticipate in entering a contractual relationship with FirstNet. FirstNet anticipates that the valuation of excess network capacity will vary based upon the contractor's specific proposed solution, business model and other factors, and as such, any valuation information would be unlikely to prove useful as a benchmark.

336. Can we submit qualifications for a subset of the requirements?

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking capability statements from entities capable of meeting FirstNet's objectives and functions identified in Category One and Category Two. While FirstNet is not interested in receiving

capabilities statements for only a subset of the requirements, FirstNet is publishing a teaming/partnering list on its website as a courtesy. As set forth in section 5.3 of the Special Notice, if you want to be included on the teaming/partnering list, “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.”

337. Would FirstNet consider monthly payments to the prime contractor/s to help ease the financial risk the contractor would have to absorb in capital outlay between IOC milestones and FOC? This would be in lieu of the defined milestone payments as stated in the DRFP. Providing monthly payments would greatly reduce the prime contractors risk and capital outlay of billions of dollars to drive toward IOC-2 milestone

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1.1 Budget Authority

Answer:

Yes, offerors may include “monthly payments” identified within their proposed solution. In the Special Notice Section 4.5, Proposed Pricing Methodology, stated “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.” In response to a subsequent RFP, offerors may propose the timing and amount of payments, to the contractor, based on the completion of milestones. FirstNet's goal is to develop a payment structure that minimizes execution risk and ensures performance of FirstNet's stated objectives. The proposed milestone structure does this by providing payments only after objectives and milestones are successfully achieved.

FirstNet seeks feedback on mechanisms to meet the objectives, reduce risk and ensure performance of the contract(s).

338. Is FirstNet developing draft CLA leasing terms and conditions that would act as the baseline for a contractual leasing arrangement with a MNO? Specifically, the lease terms and conditions under which pre-emption and priority would be exercised.

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1.3 Excess Network Capacity

Answer:

The CLAs will be executed separately and outside of the contract, and therefore, the information may be included in the subsequent RFP for informational and proposal preparation and evaluation purposes

only, as it relates to any proposed solution. Note that pre-emption and priority obligations may potentially be located in other documents, such as network policies.

339. In this section you show Cat. 1 as all inclusive including National Core and all State and Territory RANS to include all other equipment, services, subscribers and CLA's to build FirstNet's Nationwide Network. In Cat. 2 you show RAN and CLA's. Is your intent to allow Cat. 2 bidders to compete with Cat. 1 prime contractor's regional State RAN plans bids (States, Territories or groups thereof)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 4 Section / Paragraph: 2.1.1, 2.1.2

Answer:

Offerors submitting proposals under Category Two would propose RAN and CLA solutions at a state level. It is anticipated that a Category Two subsequent award(s) would be integrated into a nationwide network established by a Category One provider. If the net value of a Nationwide solution, inclusive of Category One and Category Two proposals, represents a better value than a Category One proposal alone.

340. On page 7 your state, potential offers are expected to include favored customer pricing. This introduces risk for the contractor in that it introduces an unnecessary variable in a key element of the business case. Recommend that you consider removing this constraint and let the market set the pricing.

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 0 Section / Paragraph: 2.1.2.1

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback as part of the Special Notice within this area. Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs is a key programmatic objective for FirstNet. FirstNet is open to potential solutions as to what mechanisms are available to FirstNet to achieve strong adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs at an economically feasible fee to public safety subscribers throughout the life of the subsequent contract(s).

341. Do we have to take design consideration for Local Breakout for traffic from Opt-out states to include Deployables when there is no backhaul/limited backhaul available?

Answer:

States who do not participate in the FirstNet-led RAN deployment would undertake the responsibility to build, operate and maintain the RAN within their state, including backhaul connectivity from eNodeBs and deployables.

342. Does FirstNet envision a process, either pre- or post-award for joint resolution of technical issues and associated questions?

Answer:

Please refer to the Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions for functions related to resolving technical issues post-award. FirstNet is seeking feedback on all functions and ownership of those functions. For pre-award technical issues and associated questions, FirstNet will allow for questions once the RFP is released for a time period to be determined and stated therein.

343. “The NPSBN SHALL be capable of providing public safety subscribers with access to the global Internet”. Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify, is packet capture required and what minimum security sets are required for Internet traffic?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 8 Section / Paragraph: 1.3.1.11

Answer:

Public Safety subscribers will use the Internet both as a way to access home network systems and to access other systems and services available over the public Internet. Appendix C-10 FirstNet Cyber Hardness Requirements may include additional information in the subsequent RFP.

344. “The expected minimum uplink (mobile to network) and downlink (network to mobile) rates of data transmission SHOULD be specified for each GoS Tier. The specifications must also include the protocol layer at which the data rates are to be measured.” The GoS section contains general guidelines for Grade of Service components. Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify that all protocols used will need to have overhead values depicted?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 13 Section / Paragraph: 1.4.6.35

Answer:

The offerors should identify the most appropriate methods to demonstrate their proposed solution, including measurements of data rates and inclusion of overhead values specified in the subsequent RFP.

345. “Recommended requirements are explicitly noted in the document and use the exclusive verb forms SHALL and SHALL NOT. These are referred to as Normative clauses. Recommended requirements are very short, usually single sentences per requirement. Many recommended requirements require a contextual framework to ensure that the requirement is interpreted in an unambiguous way. Therefore the document contains Informative language that frames the recommended requirements in their proper context, and therefore Informative clauses should accompany the requirements in RFPs.” If “Should” elements move to “Shall” category, will these elements be retroactively framed? If so, will the Government amend the RFP to clarify who is responsible for the reframing effort?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 23 Section / Paragraph: 3.3.3

Answer:

It is possible that some of the requirements prefaced by “should” or “should not” will become mandatory, all or some of which would be applicable retroactively which would be stated in the RFP and any subsequent amendments.

346. “All Over the Top Applications can be further enhanced through the use of priority services, services that require the exchange of signaling messages between the LTE network and application to allow the application to request a specific priority treatment. The use of Over the Top applications will have an impact on network capacity requirements and perhaps other aspects of the LTE network as it evolves. LTE is further anticipated to greatly increase mobile video usage within the public safety workflow. Enhanced support for this and other applications through the introduction of QoS, priority services or other supplemental security services that are required by public safety must be considered as part of the network evolution plan.” OtTA generally as cited above refers to applications that assume best effort transport. In this case, OtTA may require prioritization. Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify, if these will be placed at the lower end of the prioritization spectrum since they are optional services?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 38 Section / Paragraph: 4.1.10.1

Answer:

In the context of this RFP, being an Over-the-Top (OTT) application does not preclude the application from using QoS, Priority or Pre-emption provided the application is compliant with FirstNet's security, testing and certification model. Some OTT applications may be mission critical and receive the priority and QoS they require. It is envisioned that determining which applications are at the top of the prioritization range and which are at the bottom will be a local decision.

347. “The NPSTC Broadband Task Force report recommends that support of internet access be required on all LTE networks deployed. This access can come directly or via access to a home network with internet connectivity. Many of the home network services are only available on the agency private network and would better be served with private connectivity to the agency. Private connectivity allows for priority/QoS to be applied. Connectivity through the internet normally implies best effort only.” It is assumed that both Public and Private sourced connectivity to Internet will need to be supported? Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify this assumption?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 38 Section / Paragraph: 4.1.10.1.1

Answer:

Public Safety agency networks are normally private and secured. The draft RFP documents reflect that both public and private connectivity to the agency network will need to be supported. The hardening objective, set forth in the SOO Section C.5 objective 9, further refines the connectivity by ensuring it is secure and redundant, thus protected from failures and intrusion. Appendix C-10 FirstNet Cyber Hardness Requirements may include additional information on this topic in the subsequent RFP.

348. “The NPSBN SHALL provide the ability for national, regional, and local applications to dynamically change a UE’s prioritization and QoS using the 3GPP ‘Rx’ interface.” Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify if the NPSBN will have a preferred mechanism for inter-Vendor/Segment support for dynamic re-allocation of access classes?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 69 Section / Paragraph: 4.7.2

Answer:

The information referenced (in Appendix C-3 Recommended Minimum Technical Requirements to Ensure Nationwide Interoperability for the NPSBN, Section 4.7.2. Profiles: Dynamic Modification (30)) is critical to provide user-based QPP in the NPSBN. The offerors proposed solutions should identify the mechanism to support dynamic re-allocation of access classes in response to a subsequent RFP.

349. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 outlined several imperatives to ensure that wireless and wireline service plans are subject to tierless competition. A key goal for this legislation was to avoid either intentional or unintentional marketplace monopolies. How does FirstNet intend to address this objective during the acquisition process and throughout the program lifecycle for their Band 14 spectrum? Will public safety have the opportunity to benefit from a variety of end-user packages and the potential of positive market forces that can be created from competition of similar end-user packages from a large pool of interested small, medium and large-scale service providers?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 4.3

Answer:

One of FirstNet's underlying goals is to provide capabilities that will prove attractive for Public Safety Users and motivate them to adopt FirstNet's service to enhance the country's safety. Competition will support that goal by enhancing the quality of proposed solutions submitted through the acquisition process and after award, through potential in-scope enhancements, by providing Public Safety Users with capabilities that are currently unavailable. In addition, FirstNet's product offering to Public Safety Users will itself continue to be subject to market forces and competition and evolving technology.

In addition, objectives 3, 4, 5 and 13 in the SOO directly solicit solutions for providing compelling Public Safety User packages and maintaining innovation throughout the contract(s) lifecycle.

350. One large award to a single offeror may not encourage competition. Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify the procurement approach as either wireless carrier led or systems integrator led?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 4.3

Answer:

FirstNet has not made the determination with regard to the most appropriate acquisition strategy that will result in the best overall value for a nationwide solution and the Public Safety Users. The information received as a result of the Special notice will provide feedback in order to assist with FirstNet's determination. This includes encouraging competition among potential offerors. FirstNet remains open to a variety of approaches that may be provided.

351. With respect to Budget Authority, the Government states the offeror may request FirstNet contributions of up to \$6.5 billion for the up front development of the NPSBN project during the base period. Payments would be based on meeting the IOC/FOC milestones. This creates significant financial risk for the offeror to recoup costs incurred in meeting the IOC/FOC milestones. Will the Government amend the RFP to provide the offeror an option for a significant up-front payment with performance incentives/stipulations until the excess network capacity can be monetized?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1

Answer:

FirstNet is developing attainable IOC/FOC milestones prior to execution of a subsequent award(s). Payments based on meeting those milestones are intended to mitigate execution risks in the timely deployment of the NPSBN. The structure of the RFP is still in development and FirstNet will consider any feedback received in the interest of achieving FirstNet's mission and objectives. Also, the offerors are to propose the quantity and timing of desired allocated government funding as part of their proposed

solution; therefore, it is up to each offeror to propose how the amount of the allocated funding and the timing proposed for disbursement.

352. What valuation models has the Government used to determine the dollar amount of a core connection fee to the opt-out states?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1

Answer:

FirstNet has not developed rates of core fees for states that undertake the responsibility to build, operate and maintain their own RAN. These fees will be dependent on various factors including the nationwide solution(s) selected by FirstNet as well as potential RAN solutions.

353. Opt-in vs. Opt-out options impact offerors financial models. When Will the Government provide offerors with an assumed baseline of opt-out states and what data will be included in this baseline?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1

Answer:

FirstNet understands the extent to which states undertake the responsibility to build, operate and maintain their own RAN will change the financial assumption for offerors for the NPSBN. The Pricing Concepts Appendix to the Special Notice contemplates an "all opt-in solution" with associated proposals and pricing.

354. Valuation of FirstNet's excess capacity is directly dependent upon FirstNet's ability to demonstrate the existence of an operational network. What is FirstNet's expectation of an offerors ability to accurately value excess capacity in advance of the design, build and operation of the NSPBN?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 1.1

Answer:

FirstNet expects that offerors will develop network architectures to meet FirstNet's coverage objectives, as identified in the Special Notice and to be updated through FirstNet's ongoing consultation processes. FirstNet also anticipates that offerors will design network architectures that produce coverage and capacity consistent with their business cases, thereby incorporating estimates regarding value for excess network capacity.

355. The estimated market size of 4 million to 13 million end users is too broad and will greatly affect pricing and cost models provided to the Government. Will the government amend the RFP to reflect the precise number that offerors should use for the addressable market size of end-users?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

FirstNet has undertaken high level analysis of the potential addressable market and continues to assess it through consultation with states. However, FirstNet expects offerors responding to any subsequent RFP to develop and rely on their own analyses of addressable market in developing proposed solutions, including the value of excess network capacity. FirstNet does not intend to provide more precise information regarding addressable market size at this time.

356. A. With respect to the Government’s desire to leverage existing infrastructure to create synergies, how will the government procure various services?

B. Will the government amend the RFP to indicate if the Government is procuring a commercial service or a public safety solution or a combination of both?

C. If a combination of both, please describe FirstNet’s desired outcome for each.

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

A. Under the concept in the Special Notice, FirstNet expects Category One and Category Two offerors to propose solutions to its stated objectives. The proposed solutions could incorporate publicly and/or privately owned infrastructure and capabilities currently available to the offeror for utilization. In addition, FirstNet may utilize federal, state, tribal, local and other infrastructure to expand the network over the initial contracted coverage, if resources are made available by the owner of the resource. The offeror’s proposed solution should make use of existing infrastructure “synergies”.

B & C. As stated herein, FirstNet desires the best overall solution that achieves FirstNet’s objectives. The subsequent RFP may contain information regarding whether the government will be obtaining a commercial service or a public safety solution or a combination of both.

357. The Government acknowledges the importance of Public Safety adoption of the NSPBN. The Government also discusses applications and services that will be deployed on the NSPBN that are specific to Public Safety needs and requirements. Such applications and services will require significant investment when compared to the services provided on today's existing commercial networks. Will the Government amend the RFP to clarify if the Government expects offerors to offer these services by pricing them at parity with today's existing commercial offerings that do not meet Public Safety needs to requirements?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6 Section / Paragraph: 2.1.2.1

Answer:

One of FirstNet's key objectives is PSE adoption, provided through Band 14. The Special Notice proposes "most favored customer" pricing arrangements as a means of ensuring equitable pricing to Public Safety Users for comparable services. FirstNet has not determined what constitutes a comparable service, and whether most favored pricing should apply to specific services provided by a firm or to broader industry averages. FirstNet requests feedback from industry on this mechanism (as well as other PSE adoption mechanisms) in 2.1.2.1 of the Pricing Concepts Appendix to the Special Notice.

358. In an effort to support FirstNet in addressing their statutory obligation to provide rural coverage milestones for each phase of the deployment, when will the Government amend the RFP to provide the coverage and capacity requirements of each State, territory and tribal nation to prospective offerors?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 4

Answer:

Coverage and capacity requirements of each state and territory may be updated in the subsequent RFP as this information is still being gathered during consultation.

359. With respect to an emergency that requires, the preemption of secondary users, will the Government amend the RFP to clarify what level of authority a local entity, such as a municipality or county have to self-initiate preemption?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 22 Section / Paragraph: A.3.3.2

Answer:

The Operational Architecture (SOO Appendix C-7) that was included in the draft RFP documents defines functions that must be accomplished in order to make the NPSBN operational, and it defines who has ownership of each individual function. FirstNet has defined responsibility for a small number of these but is soliciting feedback as to the most efficient way to allocate responsibility and accountability, while ensuring an operating network. The governance structure associated with certain functions, including

who has permission to preempt secondary users, may vary from PSE to PSE or state to state. In addition, FirstNet anticipates that preemption actions will also have network congestion or blocking criteria that must be met before any secondary users are preempted.

360. When will FirstNet release the two omitted appendices, C-2, Service Level Agreement for Radio Access Network and C-10, FirstNet Cyber Hardness Requirements?

Answer:

SOO Appendices C-2, Service Level Agreement for Radio Access Network (RAN) Integration, and C-10, FirstNet Cyber Hardness Requirements, are still being developed and may be provided at a later date or in the subsequent RFP. Depending on when these documents are ready, FirstNet will make the determination to release as drafts or as part of the subsequent RFP.

361. What is the RFP scoring methodology as well as weighting for the various scoring criteria?

Answer:

The evaluation criteria will be included in the subsequent RFP in Section M. As required by the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), specifically 15.305, all factors and significant sub factors that will affect contract award, and their relative importance, will be stated clearly in the solicitation.

362. The State was requested by FirstNet to provide five network coverage implementation phases as well as other requirements and information by September 30, 2015. Can FirstNet explain where and how this information will be used in conjunction with the RFP?

Answer:

FirstNet intends to use the deployment phases provided by the states and territories to help inform the phased deployment as well as help with prioritizing coverage. Additionally, the information may be used to in determining evaluation factors and subfactors.

363. The state minimum coverage maps do not reflect the actual State's input, and may or may not meet the actually minimum requirements. Is the intention to update these coverage maps based on individual state input derived from the phased coverage implementation plan requested by FirstNet and due by September 30, 2015?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps

Answer:

In FirstNet’s data collection efforts with the states, FirstNet is seeking, among other information, individual state input regarding the phased coverage implementation plan in such state, by the initial data collection due date of September 30, 2015. FirstNet released baseline coverage objective maps to identify potential coverage needs for Public Safety Users, with the intent of states using these maps as a starting point to validate and identify gaps as they submit refined coverage objectives back to FirstNet to be included in the subsequent RFP release. Due to the timing of the Special Notice release concurrent with FirstNet’s consultation and data collection activities, FirstNet released the coverage objective baseline as part of the Special Notice. FirstNet also identified its intent of collecting and incorporating state inputs in its revised SOO Appendix C-1 posted May 13, 2015, which included the following sentence “Note: FirstNet anticipates that these maps will be adjusted based on inputs gathered through consultation.”

364. The use of the term secondary users in this context (Public Safety support personnel) is no longer consistent with the re-use of the term in the Second Public notice to define CLA users. Please define the terms and apply a consistent usage policy.

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 15 Section / Paragraph: 1.4.7

Answer:

FirstNet has sought comment on its preliminary definition of secondary users in its first Public Notice, dated September 24, 2014 and posted on www.federalregister.gov.

365. Where did the LEITSC_Law_Enforcement_CAD_Systems document come from and why is it in the RFP – not sure all would agree with the requirement for agencies to provide data to FirstNet. Also, the document is not dated nor does it have any references.

Document Reference: C-5 StdV-2 Page 14

Answer:

FirstNet will update this section in the subsequent RFP to provide updated references and sources.

366. With regard to software updates, does this requirement pertain only to the basic functions provided, or does it extend to the applications made available through the Applications Ecosystem?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 41 Section / Paragraph: A.3.8.2.2.1

Answer:

Any subsequent award may include a quality control plan that will include a regression test policy to include end user applications and services. System upgrades to the network could trigger necessary regression testing throughout the network based on these plans prior to rollout of these upgrades.

367. A. Does FirstNet intend that “Demonstrate and showcase FirstNet-specific features and functionality” occur virtually?

B. If yes, to what extent should such events allow participants to interact with these features and functions?

C. Would such sessions be regularly scheduled, or on-demand as needed?

D. How many participants need to be supported per session?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 41 Section / Paragraph: A.3.8.2.1.2

Answer:

A. FirstNet may reserve the right to have demonstrations of the proposed solution “occur virtually,” which would be stated in the subsequent RFP.

B, C & D. Any parameters pertaining to demonstrations would be either provided in the subsequent RFP or during the acquisition process.

368. A. Does this requirement seek to establish a “Facebook-like” peer environment?

B. Would this “update provisioning” be used for mutual aid circumstances to bring roaming responders into an incident? C. Would these services require that location services be activated in order to establish presence? D. Is the expectation that the applications enforce location services being switched on regardless of user preferences/controls?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 74 Section / Paragraph: A.7.1.8.1

Answer:

A) No, this information as stated is not to establish a “Facebook-like” peer environment. See Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, section A.7.2.3.5.3, Manage Agency Information Homepage for a description of the PSE home page.

B) No. FirstNet foresees that provisioning changes for mutual aid circumstances could be accomplished via local control capabilities. The wording of this function will be updated in the subsequent RFP for further clarification.

C) Yes. Consistent with all mobile phones and mobile networks as well as individual privacy rights, the ability to use GPS to locate a device and thus the user of that device, is under the control of that user. If the user turns location services off, the presence information associated with his/her device will not include GPS based location.

D) No. FirstNet does not currently foresee overriding user location control. Location control should be governed by PSE policy and individual control.

369. Will a consolidated RFP document be provided for stakeholder review prior to final release? The current disassociated document set makes review and appendix reference difficult.

Answer:

The current schedule for release of the subsequent RFP is December 2015. The complete RFP will be posted on www.fbo.gov. There will be sufficient time for review and questions. If FirstNet makes a determination it is in the best interest of the NPSBN program to release subsequent draft RFP documents they will also be posted on www.fbo.gov.

370. How were costs and user count assumptions derived?

Answer:

The Special Notice's estimate of the potential size of the Public Safety User market drew predominantly on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and also sources including the Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Census Bureau, State Government Websites, and a number of private databases.

Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice, subscriber adoption targets may be developed for inclusion in the subsequent RFP.

FirstNet has preliminary internal estimates of network costs from market research, responses to RFIs and input from technical experts.

FirstNet encourages offerors to develop their internal business models, including costs and user count information, when competing to provide the best proposed solution for Public Safety Users.

371. Will cost and user count models be included in the final RFP?

Answer:

As noted in the Pricing Concepts Appendix to the Special Notice, as part of any subsequent RFP, FirstNet anticipates creating Public Safety User targets for each state or region that offerors may be required to meet for the entirety of the contract term, and may be enforced with disincentive fees. These targets may include cumulative number of billable connections by PSEs and/or targets for use of the network by

PSEs. FirstNet encourages offerors to develop their internal business models, including costs and user count information, when competing to provide the best proposed solution for Public Safety Users.

372. How will FirstNet subscribers receive service and support? From FirstNet? From contracted service providers?

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in the Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, to include customer service and support.

373. Who will be responsible for billing services? FirstNet? A contracted service provider?

Answer:

FirstNet seeks feedback on the overall approach regarding ownership of all the functions identified in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. Interested parties should provide information pertaining to 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 PSE (label as blue) and out of scope functions (label as gray).

374. Will FirstNet establish regional service centers within each state or will FirstNet subscribers be dealing with the proposed FirstNet service provider directly?

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, to include customer service and support. Feedback may include location of functions and services to be provided post-award in the description of the functions addressed, in accordance with the Special Notice.

375. Can the State SPOC organizations use the FirstNet GIS mapping software to transmit their critical coverage requirements to FirstNet?

Answer:

FirstNet provided each state and territory with baseline coverage objective maps in the form of GIS layer packages. FirstNet does not have a preferred GIS mapping software to use when updating these maps. The intent is to use these maps as a starting point for states to validate and identify gaps and then submit refined coverage objectives back to FirstNet. GIS layer packages are the preferred method to submit the refined coverage objectives; however, it can be provided in any standard GIS format.

376. Where does customer care reside? FirstNet? Bidder?

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, to include customer service and support, in accordance with the Special Notice.

377. How will FirstNet manage customer/user direct support?

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, to include customer service and support, in accordance with the Special Notice.

378. How are Band 14 devices authenticated, activated and deactivated?

Answer:

FirstNet expects the offeror's proposed solution will identify support procedures and equipment to activate and deactivate subscribers on the network. FirstNet expects agencies will be able to manage provisioning of their own users.

379. What is the projected turnaround time to authenticate and activate a device on the NPSBN?

Answer:

FirstNet expects the offeror's proposed solution will identify support procedures and equipment to activate and deactivate subscribers on the network. FirstNet expects agencies will be able to manage provisioning of their own users.

380. Please share a thumb nail sketch of the specific cellular network experience, product development experience, requirements development experience and incident command experience for each member of the FirstNet RFP team?

Answer:

The Government will not disclose any information pertaining to the RFP team. Per FAR 15.303, the evaluation team will be tailored for the NPSBN acquisition which includes the appropriate contracting, legal, logistics, technical, and other expertise to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of offers. This may include both federal employees as well as contractor support staff.

381. Who owns the master file of devices authorized on the network? The bidder? FirstNet? How will changes to this file be made?

Answer:

These functions are outlined in Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. FirstNet seeks feedback on ownership of roles set forth in the Operational Architecture in accordance with the Special Notice.

382. What is the contracting officer’s plan to reduce the risk of a contract award protest brought by the losers of RFP bids? An award protest could delay the FirstNet rollout for years.

Answer:

To mitigate protest risk, the Contracting Officer is following all appropriate laws and regulations pertaining to procurement integrity and the acquisition process. The Contracting Officer will also ensure that proposals are evaluated in accordance with the criteria as stated in the subsequent RFP.

383. Does the FirstNet Contracting Officer plan a bidder’s conference after the release of the final RFP to answer bidder and consortium questions?

Answer:

The current acquisition schedule anticipates hosting an industry day/pre-solicitation conference in November 2015, prior to release of the RFP. If a determination is made that it is in the best interest of FirstNet to host a pre-proposal conference, it will be posted on FBO and allow sufficient time for potential offerors to review the subsequent RFP.

384. Will a pre-bid conference – if convened, be mandatory for any responding entities?

Answer:

Attendance at any FirstNet-hosted event about the NPSBN acquisition is not mandatory for submission of a proposed solution in response to the RFP.

385. The FirstNet RFP issued on 24 APR is stated to be a framework document. Does FirstNet plan to issue a comprehensive requirements document for the bidders and consortiums to bid? Will the final RFP include use-cases?

Answer:

For clarification, FirstNet issued a Special Notice with draft RFP documents including a SOO. FirstNet intends to keep this objectives-based framework. The current schedule for release of an objectives-

based RFP is December 2015. However, once the RFP has been released, FirstNet will ensure sufficient time for potential offerors to review and/or submit questions. The subsequent RFP may include applicable use cases.

386. What are the criteria to disengage Band 14 commercial users? Who makes the decision? Governor? SPOC? State Level Emergency Commander?

Answer:

FirstNet envisions that preemption of secondary users under a covered lease agreement may occur either automatically or manually. In the automatic scenario, network policies based on usage, throughput, or congestion levels may trigger preemption. The precise details and conditions of the manual and automated policies have not yet been determined. FirstNet is seeking feedback from interested stakeholders on which policies best promote PSE communications and value to Public Safety Users.

387. Does FirstNet intend to prepare process flow charts to define operating procedure as part of the final release of the RFP?

Answer:

FirstNet welcomes feedback on operational procedures on the Operational Architecture set forth in Appendix C-7. The results of the questions, comments, and capabilities statements received may inform the subsequent RFP documents. It is currently unclear if flow charts will be part of that release.

388. What are the assumptions and methodology used to determine the number of devices projected on the network? Does FirstNet imply a guaranteed minimum number to offerors?

Answer:

As noted in the Appendix to the Special Notice - Pricing Concepts, as part of any subsequent RFP, FirstNet anticipates creating Public Safety User targets for each state or region that offerors would be required to meet. These targets may include cumulative number of billable connections by PSEs and/or targets for use of the network by PSEs. FirstNet, in conjunction with outreach and consultation with the states, is still developing the appropriate target levels. FirstNet encourages offerors to develop their internal business models, including costs and user count information in order to propose the best overall solution for Public Safety Users. The Special Notice concept does not imply a guaranteed number of Public Safety Users or non-Public Safety Users.

389. What are the assumptions and methodology used to determine the value and availability of excess spectrum? How will these assumptions change with adoption levels and/or bandwidth demands by public safety?

Answer:

FirstNet encourages offerors to develop their own internal business models when developing proposals to respond to the subsequent RFP, this would include any assumptions made as it relates to development of the proposed solution.

Since the fixed payment to FirstNet, proposed by the offeror will be set at award, any subsequent changes in assumptions regarding adoption or bandwidth demand will not change the level of these fixed payments, unless mutually agreed upon and a formal modification to the contract(s) is executed.

390. Does FirstNet anticipate sharing revenues with agencies to offset agency staff involvement in network operations and user support?

Answer:

FirstNet envisions a scenario where the contractor(s) are entitled to the use of public safety revenues and excess network capacity. Under the concept presented in the Special Notice, a contractor would compensate FirstNet for use of network capacity, public safety revenues, up to \$6.5 billion in Budget Authority and any other value it sees in entering a contractual relationship with FirstNet in the form of a fixed payment. Arrangements concerning network operations and user support would need to be negotiated and agreed to with the offeror(s). In addition, any service or products that FirstNet procures that are outside the scope of comprehensive NPSBN solicitation would be acquired through FirstNet's standard acquisition processes.

391. Please describe the use of “disincentive fees” to promote adoption. In the event of a state seeking to opt-out of FirstNet, how would such fees apply? For example, could a vendor potentially suggest that a low-interest state opt out (perhaps completely - not building a RAN) in order to avoid disincentive fees that would result from low adoption?

Answer:

Part of FirstNet's mission is Band 14 broadband adoption by Public Safety Users in every state and territory. The disincentive fee is a mechanism to enforce Public Safety User adoption targets that intend to prevent solutions that potentially result in low use of Band 14 by Public Safety Users or excessively favor excess capacity use by non-Public Safety Users. In the Special Notice, FirstNet requests feedback on the structure of Public Safety Users adoption targets and other mechanisms for supporting its goal of Public Safety Users adoption of Band 14 broadband, to include feedback with regard to disincentive fees.

States that decide to undertake responsibility for deploying, operating and maintaining the RAN must develop an alternative plan that meets certain conditions outlined in FirstNet's enabling legislation and subsequent Public Notices. FirstNet has not determined whether such states must also incorporate adoption targets as part of their alternative plans.

392. How will agency-level applications hosted on local servers not owned by FirstNet be treated compared to applications hosted on the FirstNet core? What conditions does FirstNet anticipate for software upgrades in the applications ecosystem to ensure interoperability?

Answer:

PSE applications hosted on the PSE's infrastructure will be managed by that agency, not FirstNet. Standard interfaces, published APIs, testing, certification criteria, and ongoing version control are all tools for enabling interoperability of applications and access to data.

393. Will there be a future RFP with more specific requirements regarding the Applications Ecosystem?

Answer:

As indicated in section C.2 of the SOO; "This SOO lists high level objectives, with minimum requirements, allowing latitude for contractors to define implementation details" in their proposed solutions. As such, FirstNet welcomes feedback on this approach.

394. How will you score each high level objective as it relates to contract award?

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C.2.3

Answer:

The evaluation criteria will be included in the subsequent RFP in Section M. As required by the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), specifically 15.305, all factors and significant sub factors that will affect contract award, and their relative importance, will be stated clearly in the solicitation.

395. Why are States, and/or Public Safety at a minimum, not involved with the determination of the features required for the NPSBN?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 6 Section / Paragraph: C.9

Answer:

Public safety stakeholders have been heavily involved in FirstNet's consultation process and the development of the Interoperability Board Report found in Appendix C-3, Recommended Minimum

Technical Requirements to Ensure Nationwide Interoperability for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network, and are invited to provide feedback on the draft RFP documents. This input is being considered when drafting the RFP and subsequent documents.

In addition, the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) has been very active and engaged providing input on a number of topics. The PSAC also includes representatives of state interests.

FirstNet has also received many responses from Public Safety Users and groups on the previously released RFIs, and FirstNet expects additional feedback, comments and responses on the Special Notice and draft RFP documents.

396. How did you determine these figures and are they negotiable?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1

Answer:

The initial coverage objectives were set as a starting point to aid in determining desired coverage objectives within each state and territory. Also, FirstNet anticipates refining its coverage objectives through its ongoing consultation process. Those coverage objectives may be included as a part of the subsequent RFP. Through the Special Notice, FirstNet seeks feedback on how coverage objectives are defined.

397. How does this value compare to current 3GPP standards?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1

Answer:

FirstNet is adhering to 3GPP standards. Through the Special Notice, FirstNet seeks feedback and comments on how coverage and demand objectives are defined.

398. How does this value compare to current commercially available 4G LTE and why were these parameters chosen?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1

Answer:

The initial coverage objectives are intended for radio frequency link design purposes only. These have been determined via market research and state consultation. Through the Special Notice, FirstNet seeks feedback and comments on how coverage and demand objectives are defined.

399. What if a Public Safety Entity needs to operate in the 49% area of no coverage?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1

Answer:

The maps that FirstNet released show the Band 14 coverage objectives and serve as a tool to create dialogue on what is important for Public Safety for a given state or territory. The maps will be updated through the consultation process. In addition, FirstNet anticipates use of deployables and other temporary on-demand coverage as outlined in the SOO.

400. How will FirstNet incentivize a contractor/offeror to provide greater throughput per Grid Color?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1

Answer:

FirstNet is considering implementing several strategies to incentivize the offeror(s) to maximize network capacity and function. FirstNet anticipates setting subscriber targets that must be met by the offeror(s). In return the offeror(s) would be allowed to derive revenue from Public Safety Users, excess network capacity, and any other value it sees in a contractual relationship. Also, FirstNet seeks feedback on the best way to promote meeting its stated objectives, in accordance with the Special Notice.

401. What happens if the contractor fails to meet performance standards?

Document Reference: C-5 StdV-2 Page 1

Answer:

Post-award performance standards and remedies will be governed by the subsequent contract terms and conditions as well as all applicable laws and regulations afforded the Federal Government.

402. How will these throughput values increase without renegotiating the contract and is FirstNet seeking to increase it?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1 Section / Paragraph: Table 1

Answer:

Offeror(s) should propose a solution that can grow with FirstNet throughput and Public Safety Users as noted in SOO objective 8 Service Capacity. Offeror(s) should identify any assumptions utilized in creating their proposed solution while incorporating the demand maps.

403. What is the definition of “local control as a service”?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 14

Answer:

Local control is the capability for a PSE to self-administer its users, devices, services, and applications. Local control as a service is a potential service that could be provided, by a contractor, to PSEs that may not have the staff, resources, or expertise to self-administer their users, devices, services, and applications.

404. What is the difference between local control and “local control as a service”?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 14

Answer:

Local control is the capability for a PSE to self-administer its users, devices, services, and applications. Local control as a service is a potential service that could be provided, by a contractor, to PSEs that may not have the staff, resources, or expertise to self-administer their users, devices, services, and applications.

405. Can you extend the Q&A period for two weeks?

Document Reference: Special Notice Section / Paragraph: 4.1.2

Answer:

The deadline for questions expired on May 27, 2015; respondents will have the opportunity to provide capability statements and comments through July 27, 2015.

406. If the answers to our question prompt additional question, may we contact the Contracting Officer for further clarification?

Document Reference: Special Notice Section / Paragraph: 4.1.2

Answer:

Yes, if the responses to questions prompt additional questions, you may contact the Contracting Officer for further clarification via the process identified within the Special Notice for submission of questions.

However, the Government reserves the right not to provide an answer. If, in the Government’s opinion, the request for clarification cites an issue of significant importance, the Government may provide a written response that would be posted on FBO. Please note, questions and comments will not be protected as proprietary by the Government.

407. If part of FirstNet’s \$6.5B may be used for operations and maintenance of the NPSBN, does this imply that the goal of financial self-sustainability may be deferred on the timeline?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 7 Section / Paragraph: 4.5

Answer:

FirstNet's sustainability is not deferrable. FirstNet must be financially sustainable at all times, as outlined in Section 1.2 of the Pricing Concepts Appendix to the Special Notice. This means that a potential offeror’s proposed pricing solution must ensure that FirstNet maintains cash in excess of obligations for every year throughout the life of a subsequent award(s).

408. How does the 4M to 12M addressable market break down in terms of user type (Public Safety vs. other)? What factors will impact this range?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

The Special Notice's estimate of the potential size of the Public Safety Users market is represented predominantly on market research, responses to RFIs, contracted technical expertise, and data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Census Bureau, state government websites, and a number of private databases. In addition, the definition of what constitutes a PSE is currently subject to FirstNet’s First Notice requesting public comment, published on September 24, 2014 on www.federalregister.gov, and FirstNet’s Third Notice requesting public comment, published on May 5, 2015 on www.federalregister.gov.

Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice, subscriber adoption targets may be developed for inclusion in the subsequent RFP.

409. How are offerors to comment on the financial sustainability of the NPSBN if the level of FirstNet costs to be covered in the pricing solution are not estimated?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6 Section / Paragraph: 2.1.1

Answer:

The financial sustainability of FirstNet is required by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. The Special Notice presents FirstNet’s conceptual model for becoming financially sustainable, that FirstNet seeks feedback on as part of the Special Notice. In addition to up to \$6.5 billion in cash, offeror(s) could receive revenue from Public Safety User fees as well as any revenue obtained from using excess network capacity to provide service to non-Public Safety Users.

FirstNet must be financially sustainable at all times, as outlined in Section 1.2 of the Appendix to the Special Notice - Pricing Concepts. This means that a potential offeror's proposed pricing solution must allow FirstNet to maintain cash in excess of obligations for every year throughout the life of a subsequent award.

Also, FirstNet requests that, in response to a subsequent RFP, offeror(s) propose regular fixed payments to FirstNet to support ongoing program costs, such as costs associated with maintaining, operating, or improving the network. Those fixed payments would be negotiated prior to contract award(s) and would allow FirstNet to become financially sustainable by providing resources to support activities not initially funded in the contract(s) discussed in the Special Notice.

410. Should offeror assume that the current document labels of “shall” vs. “should” requirements define which are mandatory for the NPSBN or not?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab

Answer:

It is possible that some of the requirements prefaced by “should” or “should not” will become mandatory in the subsequent RFP.

411. Is there any functional content in the green FirstNet cloud above and beyond the yellow partner/offeror content? Does this imply that FirstNet directly handles these interfaces rather than the partner/offeror?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Page 2 Section / Paragraph: Figure 1

Answer:

The green FirstNet cloud is inclusive of those functions where FirstNet is the functional owner as detailed in Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. The cloud does not imply that FirstNet directly handles the interfaces that are to be provided by the offeror'(s) proposed solution.

412. Is it realistic to set goals for adoption per type of device or user? Wouldn't user demand drive the results?

Document Reference: C-6 QASP Page 8 Section / Paragraph: Table 2

Answer:

Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs is a key programmatic goal for FirstNet. That is why the Pricing Concepts Appendix includes the concept of subscriber targets. FirstNet is looking for feedback, as part of the Special Notice, on mechanisms to effectively promote its Public Safety User adoption goal.

413. Is it the intent of the Government to apply FAR 12 to the acquisition of new goods associated with the buildout of service in Band Class 14?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 9 Section / Paragraph: 5.2

Answer:

As part of market research and the acquisition process, the Contracting Officer (CO) is responsible for making a determination regarding commerciality, products and/or services. In order to assist the CO in making this determination additional information is being requested, in response to the Special Notice, with regards to commerciality as defined with FAR 2.101. If the determination is made regarding commerciality, the RFP would reflect those requirements in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations Part 12, Acquisition of Commercial Items.

414. Will the Government share any of the information gained during FirstNet state consultations pertaining to current commercial subscriber models, current pricing for commercial service, current service levels, etc., in order for the offeror to develop competitive pricing and service models.

Document Reference: C - SOO

Answer:

FirstNet may share non-proprietary data gained during the state consultations and data collection. The determination has not been made as to what information will be shared and in what format. However, information that is applicable may be included in the subsequent RFP.

415. Cloud Services Interconnection Testing – This paragraph outlines requirements for cloud services interconnection and interoperability. For end users of FirstNet, data portability/interoperability may be as important as access to different applications. Please clarify that offerors must also provide and test data portability between appropriate cloud services.

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 50 Section / Paragraph: A.3.8.2.4.3.7

Answer:

FirstNet foresees cloud services and platforms that provide NPSBN users (PSEs, application developers, application hosting providers, etc.) with secure cloud services comparable to what are provided by commercial cloud providers (Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)). As such, FirstNet expects, in response to a subsequent RFP, offeror(s) will provide necessary APIs and interoperability testing so that customers of those cloud services have the ability to fully utilize the capabilities of their services. FirstNet seeks feedback with regard to what interoperability standards and testing may be of value, together with best practices regarding creation, operations, and management of a hosted cloud for Public Safety applications.

416. Third Party Sand Box Certification – DevOps and Sand Box environments are effective use cases for cloud services. Please clarify if Sand Box capabilities can leverage cloud services as long as Offerors appropriately secure FirstNet data and can move applications and data easily between Devt/Test/QA environments and Production Environments.

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 52 Section / Paragraph: A.3.8.2.4.4.1

Answer:

Components of the sandbox environment should be able to leverage cloud services. FirstNet anticipates offeror's proposed solutions will identify cost-effective, scalable, and secure technologies for the sandbox environment(s).

417. Who does FN define as public safety (up to 13m users)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

The Special Notice's estimate of the potential size of the Public Safety market is represented predominantly on market research, responses to RFIs, contracted technical expertise, and data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Census Bureau, state government websites, and a number of private databases. In addition, the definition of what constitutes a PSE is currently subject to FirstNet's First Notice requesting public comment, published on September 24, 2014 on www.federalregister.gov, and FirstNet's Third Notice requesting public comment, published on May 5, 2015 on www.federalregister.gov.

Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice subscriber adoption targets may be developed for inclusion in the subsequent RFP.

418. Please provide a breakdown of public safety users?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3

Answer:

The Special Notice's estimate of the potential size of the Public Safety User market drew predominantly on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Census Bureau, state government websites, and a number of private databases. In addition, the definition of what constitutes a PSE is currently subject to FirstNet's First Notice requesting public comment, published on September 24, 2014 on www.federalregister.gov, and FirstNet's Third Notice requesting public comment, published on May 5, 2015 on www.federalregister.gov.

Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice subscriber adoption targets would be developed for inclusion in the subsequent RFP.

419. How much usage does FN envisage on the network (and therefore excess capacity)?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 63 Section / Paragraph: 4.4.6.5

Answer:

As noted in the Appendix - Pricing Concepts, as part of the subsequent RFP, FirstNet anticipates creating Public Safety User targets for each state or region that will be informed through the consultation process.

420. How many RFPs will there be and for what scope (do you intend to breakup the requirements into multiple RFPs)? And if so can you provide a breakout?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 4.2

Answer:

The purpose of the Special Notice is to obtain feedback in order to better understand industry's capabilities, analyze the recommendations and alternative approaches, and determine how to best leverage existing capabilities and best practices in order to meet Public Safety User needs. This would include a determination with regard to number of potential RFPs as well as the "requirements" and/or objectives to be included within the subsequent RFP(s). Therefore, FirstNet is still in the process of determining the best acquisition approach and strategy. FirstNet is seeking feedback and information, to include capability statements, in order to make a determination regarding the best acquisition approach.

421. What is the policy for bearer traffic usage by first responder group?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 63 Section / Paragraph: 4.4.6.5

Answer:

FirstNet is currently developing a QPP framework in conjunction with the FirstNet PSAC to address allocation of network capacity to users. This QPP framework will be used to define the network policies and priorities which will eventually be implemented within the network to control the bearer traffic as part of the local control process. The final configuration of the QPP framework and the roles and responsibilities for implementing this framework within the FirstNet service may be further defined as part of the acquisition process. FirstNet seeks feedback regarding the development of the QPP framework and the implementation options of this framework within the FirstNet services.

422. Do you envision any bearer traffic policy differences for Police, Fire/EMS and if any differences will be implemented if it is a paid department or volunteer?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 63 Section / Paragraph: 4.4.6.5

Answer:

The local bearer traffic policies are expected to be part of the local control aspect of a Public Safety agency using guidelines provided by FirstNet. FirstNet is currently developing a QPP framework in conjunction with the FirstNet PSAC to address allocation of network capacity to users. This QPP framework will be used to define the network policies and priorities which will eventually be implemented within the network to control the bearer traffic as part of the local control process. If there are bearer traffic policy issues between local agencies, this framework can provide guidance to address the recommended allocation of resources for different scenarios. The final configuration of the QPP framework and the roles and responsibilities for implementing this framework within the FirstNet service may be further defined as part of the acquisition process. FirstNet seeks feedback regarding the development of the QPP framework and the implementation options of this framework within the FirstNet services.

423. How do you envision local control for communication resources taking place for both intra jurisdiction and inter-jurisdiction incident responses?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 4 Section / Paragraph: 4.4

Answer:

The execution of incident command and control, whether within a jurisdiction or across multiple jurisdictions, needs to be governed by policies put in place by the local agencies. FirstNet foresees a QoS, priority, and preemption framework that enables the incident commander, Communications Leader (COML), emergency operations center, or other authority, to exercise local control over the resources assigned to an incident.

424. What are the core applications envisioned to be used on the FirstNet network by each first responder group?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 72 Section / Paragraph: 4.6.3.3

Answer:

FirstNet is in the midst of consultation and data gathering with states, territories and stakeholders. A component of the data gathering includes specific applications and their usage by the agencies in that state or territory. This data will inform the coverage and capacity objectives in the subsequent RFP. FirstNet foresees applications that leverage the full set of NPSBN services. See Appendix C-8 IOC/FOC Target Timeline for the anticipated roll-out of these applications and services.

425. What additional applications will be secondary to the core applications which will be used on the FirstNet network within 3 years?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 72 Section / Paragraph: 4.6.3.3

Answer:

FirstNet is in the midst of consultation and data gathering with states, territories, and stakeholders. A component of the data gathering includes specific applications and their usage by the agencies in that state or territory. This data will inform the coverage and capacity objectives in the subsequent RFP. FirstNet foresees applications that leverage the full set of NPSBN services. See Appendix C-8 IOC/FOC Target Timeline for the anticipated roll-out of these applications and services.

426. For the network applications envisioned do you have any expected use cases?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 3 Section / Paragraph: Table 1

Answer:

The use cases in Appendix C-9 NPSBN Use Case Definitions, are intended to illustrate the types of functions, systems, applications, services, and processes that are expected to be supported by the NPSBN. In the draft of Appendix C-9 NPSBN Use Case Definitions, only a portion of the cases are detailed. The rest are in development and may be provided in the subsequent RFP.

427. What is the expected adoption level for those applications by each first responder group for the first, second and third year (who will be responsible for training and configuring those applications for PS)?

Document Reference: C-5 StdV-2

Answer:

The mix of applications to achieve or exceed those targets is to be proposed by the offeror(s) based upon their projected sales and marketing plans. FirstNet expects that offeror(s) and app developers will develop and roll-out applications which include training materials, job aids, and configuration guidelines. Configuration will depend upon the delivery method of each application. End user training would be at the discretion of the purchasing PSE or Public Safety User.

428. What services will not be allowed on the FirstNet network, besides illegal activity. For example will HD streaming video from fixed camera be part of the FirstNet network?

Document Reference: C-5 StdV-2

Answer:

As with all high bandwidth use services such as HD streaming video from a fixed camera, operational policies may be required to strike a proper balance between the usefulness of the application, the cost to the user, and the impact on Public Safety Users and secondary users under a Covered Leasing Agreement. FirstNet welcomes feedback as part of the response to the Special Notice that addresses these issues.

429. How is dispatching from local PSAPs envisioned?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates the existing Public Safety land mobile radio network will be operated in parallel with the FirstNet network and will remain the primary dispatch method for contacting local Public Safety personnel to respond. The local agencies will decide themselves when and whether to transition to FirstNet-provided services for dispatching Public Safety personnel, and they will need to update their local CAD platform, if applicable, to support this transition. FirstNet seeks feedback regarding the schedule for the rollout of MCPTT services and the allocation of responsibilities for the transition of the primary dispatch to be supported by FirstNet, in accordance with the Special Notice.

430. Regarding the 13m users; what is the amount of users expected on the FirstNet network in year 1,2,3,4, and 5? What rate are they anticipated to be loaded at?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

This information is not available for distribution at this point in time. FirstNet anticipates developing subscriber forecasts through its consultation efforts, which may be released as a part of the subsequent RFP. FirstNet, however, encourages offerors to develop their own internal business models in developing their proposed solutions.

431. How will voice communication between devices or dispatch communication be recorded and stored under the current network architecture proposed?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 44 Section / Paragraph: 4.1.10.1.6

Answer:

The NPSBN will provide the appropriate connectivity to the PSEs, and the PSEs will provide their own recording and logging services.

**432. Will FN be placing an equipment order before awarding the contract?
Equipment orders are typically placed well in advance of deployment**

Document Reference: C-6 QASP Page 20

Answer:

The acquisition approach outlined in the Special Notice does not anticipate FirstNet making any equipment purchases prior to the award of contract(s). It is anticipated that the contractor(s) will obtain the any equipment necessary to implement their proposed solution which should be identified within the proposal.

433. Hardening requirements are not ready as discussed in industry day. Does FN have an idea on the size of the LTE antennas? This impacts the Real Estate and zoning portions of Deployment.

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C-5

Answer:

FirstNet is looking to the offeror(s) to propose their best solution to this issue.

434. Hardening requirements are not ready as discussed in Industry day. Does FN have an idea on whether the RRU (Remote Radio Units) will be placed on the tower or the ground?

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C_5

Answer:

FirstNet is looking to the offeror(s) to propose the best solution to this issue.

435. Opportunities for contractors to profit from excess network capacity are explicitly mentioned. What opportunities does FirstNet envision for contractors relative to application and application services on the NPSBN and interfacing to the NPSBN? Are there specific opportunities to profit that have been ruled out for contractors?

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C-3

Answer:

Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by Public Safety is a key programmatic goal for FirstNet. This includes a robust Application Ecosystem as further detailed in the SOO. FirstNet currently anticipates that revenues from Applications and Application services will also be available to offerors. FirstNet

seeks feedback on additional opportunities that offerors could realize value from and that will contribute to FirstNet's financial sustainability, in accordance with the Special Notice.

436. Does 5g imply a requirement for the contractor to ensure that all applications in the application ecosystem are inter-operable? If so - what data standards will be applied, or is that for the contractor to specify? More generally, we find no reference to data standards at all - is that because none have yet been specified or because the NPSBN is intended to be agnostic as to data standards? If FirstNet does not enforce data standards, what other accommodations are envisioned to enable information exchange? Are there any data formats or industry data interchange practices that are currently in use that FirstNet would discourage solution providers from using?

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C-5

Answer:

SOO Section C.5 objective 5, Application Ecosystem, stimulates a vibrant developer community with creative apps that are not bound by potentially restrictive data formats. Appendix C-3 Recommended Minimum Technical Requirements to Ensure Nationwide Interoperability for the NPSBN defines interoperability at the network and RAN layers, not the application layer. FirstNet cannot ensure, and does not expect, that all applications will be interoperable. However, the need for application and data interoperability will be key elements of Public Safety User satisfaction going forward.

As such, FirstNet foresees numerous steps should be taken toward application interoperability. Areas to be considered in order to maximize interoperability include: the use of middleware software and access clients capable of mapping data from one application to another; local control of access based upon federated Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM); mutual aid agreements between PSEs on shared application sets; cross training first responders on applications from multiple vendors; consortia of third party developers working independently on interoperability of similar applications; standard APIs and applications/clients for access to key Public Safety repositories and ultimately, universal standards adoption for common data formats. FirstNet seeks feedback, in accordance with the Special Notice, within these areas.

437. Will local entities be able to use their own apps as well as those in the app store? If so, what requirements exist in respect of these? In general, will there be requirements or assessment standards for applications before they are allowed to operate on the NPSBN network (see also #5 for data standards)?

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C-5

Answer:

FirstNet foresees that Public Safety Users should be able to use the apps they use today. FirstNet anticipates an offeror to propose a solution addressing an Application Ecosystem that allows existing

apps to coexist with FirstNet certified apps. Please see SOO Section C.5 objective 5 Application Ecosystem.

438. Is there a list of existing infrastructure that FirstNet will consider leveraging? If not, please consider a future request for ideas once a list is compiled for those contractors that do not own those assets but may leverage them once known.

Document Reference: C - SOO Section / Paragraph: C-5

Answer:

FirstNet does not anticipate providing information on terms and conditions for use of existing public and private infrastructure and capabilities in the subsequent RFP. As described in the Special Notice, FirstNet expects Category One and Category Two offerors to propose solutions to its stated objectives, including the use of existing infrastructure to the maximum extent economically desirable. Those proposed solutions could incorporate publicly and/or privately owned infrastructure and capabilities, currently or potentially available to the offeror for utilization. In addition, FirstNet may utilize state, local and other infrastructure to expand the network over the initial contracted coverage, if resources are available.

439. These use cases are described as illustrative, but what does that mean? What is the process for fixing them? Will they be specified or will they be looking for contractors to make proposals on each one?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Section / Paragraph: 1

Answer:

The use cases in Appendix C-9 NPSBN Use Case Definitions are intended to illustrate the types of functions, systems, applications, services, and processes that are expected to be supported by the NPSBN. In the draft of Appendix C-9 NPSBN Use Case Definitions, only a portion of the cases are currently detailed. The rest are in development and may be provided in the subsequent RFP. Offerors will not be required to propose a solution for each individual use case, but will be expected to submit a proposal that provides the capability to address the types of situations noted in the use cases - any instructions will be stated in the subsequent RFP. FirstNet welcomes feedback as part of the response to the Special Notice that addresses any issues in the use cases.

440. Is there guidance for what pricing and billing models that would be acceptable and unacceptable? (Item 14 of paragraph 4.8.3 in C-9 Use Cases)

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Section / Paragraph: 4.8.3

Answer:

Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs is a key programmatic objective for FirstNet. FirstNet requests feedback from interested parties as to what mechanisms are available in order to achieve strong adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs, including different end user pricing and billing models.

441. Given the delay inherent in satellite communications and special equipment required, what use cases are envisioned for the satellite network?

Document Reference: Special Notice Section / Paragraph: 4.3

Answer:

Offeror(s) should reference FirstNet use cases included in the subsequent RFP that are suitable for satellite solutions. Also, FirstNet seeks feedback as part of the response to the Special Notice that addresses this topic.

442. What latitude will offerors have with pricing models? For instance, could we (as an example) make it free for first responders and cover costs by charging ancillary users? Or (as another example) could we charge everyone a flat rate and simply provide an enhanced service to first responders?

Document Reference: Special Notice Section / Paragraph: 4.5.1

Answer:

Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs is a key programmatic objective for FirstNet. FirstNet seeks feedback from interested parties as to what mechanisms are available to FirstNet to achieve strong adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs, including the types of pricing and promotion plans available specifically to Public Safety Users. FirstNet does not anticipate directly influencing Public Safety User pricing or promotions targeting adoption and usage of the NPSBN, it will be up to the offeror to propose as part of their solution. However, 47 U.S.C. 1428(c) requires that NTIA "... review the fees assessed ... on an annual basis, and such fees may only be assessed if approved by the NTIA." The fees "under this section" include network user fees (i.e. the fees charged to public safety entities). Also, see 47 U.S.C. 1428(a)(1).

443. Since the business model is not to be solely government funded and for contractors to profit, e.g. from excess capacity, would FirstNet consider a KPI to track whether there are enough revenue sources and potential to keep FirstNet in business?

Document Reference: C-6 QASP

Answer:

The financial sustainability of FirstNet is required by the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. The Special Notice presents FirstNet’s conceptual model for becoming financially sustainable, that FirstNet seeks feedback on as part of the Special Notice. In addition to up to \$6.5 billion in cash, offeror(s) could receive revenue from Public Safety User fees as well as any revenue obtained from using excess network capacity to provide service to non-Public Safety Users.

FirstNet must be financially sustainable at all times, as outlined in Section 1.2 of the Appendix to the Special Notice - Pricing Concepts. This means that a potential offeror’s proposed pricing solution must allow FirstNet to maintain cash in excess of obligations for every year throughout the life of a subsequent award.

FirstNet is considering numerous measures by which it can monitor and guarantee that this goal is achieved, including the use of KPIs. However, FirstNet seeks feedback in response to the Special Notice, including this topic.

444. Will FirstNet impose restrictions on how excess network capacity may be used, to whom it may be made available, or under what terms? For instance, must there be public safety/law enforcement relevance or can excess capacity be used for secondary users.

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

Under the concept presented in the Special Notice, FirstNet would not restrict the use of excess network capacity by offerors beyond commitments made by offerors, as part of their proposed solutions, to meet FirstNet’s stated objectives and any other legal obligations.

445. Setting usage targets with disincentive fees in case the targets are not met may encourage higher baseline pricing to deal with the excess risk of the fees. Would FirstNet be open to the inverse approach, used by some of our cloud clients, for example, of setting incentives payable as target user numbers increase?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Section / Paragraph: 2.1.2.1

Answer:

FirstNet is looking for this type of feedback as part of the Special Notice, and comments on this topic are welcome. Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs is a key programmatic objective for FirstNet. FirstNet seeks feedback from interested parties as to what mechanisms are available to FirstNet to achieve strong adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs.

446. The illustration Fig.2 seems to indicate that Opt-Out States have responsibility (or ownership) of RAN-only Deployables. Is this correct? In the same Fig. 2 please define Prime Partners.

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Section / Paragraph: 2.1

Answer:

Opt-Out States will be responsible for the deployment and operation of their RAN layer including RAN-only Deployables. FirstNet intended to say “prime contractor” rather than “prime partner.” A prime contractor is defined as the entity receiving contract award. FirstNet will correct Appendix C-4 System and Standard Views (SV-1 and StdV-1) to reflect the proper term prior to releasing the subsequent RFP.

447. “The MBMS service shall be supported when the user roams into another network and falls back to 3G”. If the 3G network does not support MBMS we ’t see how this is going to work

Document Reference: C-5 StdV-2 Section / Paragraph: 6

Answer:

The offeror(s) should propose how equivalent functionality could be leveraged on legacy networks, if possible.

448. Will FirstNet be providing Tier 1 support staff or will the function be outsourced and be a requirement that the responding vendors need to satisfy?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Section / Paragraph: A.2.1.2.3

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, to include customer service and support, in accordance with the Special Notice.

449. Is FirstNet requesting the implementation of an email system in their network? If so, for which users?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Section / Paragraph: A.7.2.3.3.1

Answer:

FirstNet desires the most cost effective, best value solution in order to achieve its stated objectives and best practices in order to meet PSE needs. Potential offerors should propose solutions to meet FirstNet’s objectives which may include the development or offering of value-added applications.

450. Is FirstNet requesting the implementation of an IM system in their network? If so, for which users?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Section / Paragraph: A.7.2.3.3.2

Answer:

FirstNet desires the most cost effective, best value solution in order to achieve its stated objectives and best practices in order to meet PSE needs. Potential offerors should propose solutions to meet FirstNet’s objectives which may include the development or offering of value-added applications.

451. Who can sign up for FirstNet services in phase 1? Only those who are planned to have B14 service in IOC-2?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Section / Paragraph: 4.1

Answer:

FirstNet's deployment of the NPSBN will be dependent upon the successful offeror's proposed solution. FirstNet's current proposed IOC/FOC timeline set forth in Appendix C-8 IOC / FOC Target Timeline envisions immediate access for all subscribers who wish to participate.

452. What is meant with “where FirstNet coverage not available”? There is no B14 coverage in IOC-1, and everyone is on commercial network all the time (so no roaming either). Is that correct?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Section / Paragraph: 4.1.2, Item 7e

Answer:

Yes, in Appendix C-8 IOC / FOC Target Timeline, in IOC-1, FirstNet foresees the NPSBN consisting of commercial wireless networks and deployable services until Band 14 is operational.

453. Will offeror have access to, and manage billing and collection of Public Safety Revenue for subscribers in their operating CLA under a category 2 proposal?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Section / Paragraph: 1.1

Answer:

Potential offerors interested in Category Two for one or more states would be required to propose a pricing solution identifying information in relation to the proposed capital and operational costs associated with the RAN deployment and operation in that state(s), and offsetting those costs with the offeror’s valuation of excess network capacity. The Category One offeror(s) would retain the role of Public Safety User adoption, which would include the management and collection of PSE revenues. In

addition, FirstNet seeks feedback on Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, included in the Special Notice.

454. Will the available network resources that can be used as backhaul and other kinds of transport for the NPSBN from the Opt-In states be available to the bidders before having to finalize bid submissions to FirstNet?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 4

Answer:

FirstNet does not anticipate providing information on terms and conditions for use of existing public and private infrastructure and capabilities, or a list of existing infrastructure that could be used by offerors, in the subsequent RFP. Under the concept in the Special Notice, FirstNet expects Category One and Category Two offerors to provide solutions to its stated objectives. Those solutions could incorporate publicly and/or privately owned infrastructure and capabilities, currently or potentially available to the offeror for utilization. FirstNet encourages states, potential Category One and Category Two offerors, and other interested parties to begin teaming discussions as soon as possible to identify the potential for using existing infrastructure and capabilities in developing proposed solutions for meeting FirstNet's stated objectives.

455. Will the NPSBN operator be able to derive revenue from the procurement, sale and support of devices in addition to the NPSBN usage revenue?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 6

Answer:

The collection and use of all revenues related to the use of the NPSBN will be determined and agreed upon with the offeror(s) prior to contract(s) award. As currently envisioned, the prime contractor(s) will propose a fixed payment for the use of the NPSBN and excess network capacity, and the prime contractor(s) will retain the direct revenues derived from users of the network, including revenues derived from devices.

456. How will these assumptions change with adoption levels and/or bandwidth demands by public safety?

Answer:

As noted in the Appendix to the Special Notice - Pricing Concepts, as part of any subsequent RFP, FirstNet anticipates creating public safety usage targets for each state or region that offerors will be required to meet for the entirety of the contract term, and will be enforced with disincentive fees. These targets may include cumulative number of billable connections by Public Safety Users and/or targets for use of the network by Public Safety Users. Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice,

offerors could have access to value derived from Public Safety Users, excess network capacity, government funding, and any other value offerors anticipate in entering a contractual relationship with FirstNet. In the event that actual public safety usage is above public safety usage targets, reducing the amount of available network excess capacity, offerors will still have access to public safety revenues and all revenues from the remaining excess network capacity.

457. Offerors are told they may assume revenue from public safety fees and “excess capacity.” How does FirstNet anticipate managing any such revenues to ensure they are used solely for re-investment in the NPSBN?

Answer:

FirstNet requests that offeror(s) propose regular fixed payments to FirstNet to support ongoing program costs, such as costs associated with maintaining, operating, or improving the network. Those fixed payments would be negotiated prior to contract award(s) and would allow FirstNet to become financially sustainable by providing resources to support activities not initially funded in the contract(s) discussed in the Special Notice. Actual revenue collections from Public Safety User fees or from use of excess network capacity, whether higher or lower than initial expectations, would not change the fixed payment to FirstNet or the contractor’s obligations under the contract. After meeting the requirements in the contract, the contractor’s profits from excess revenues received need not be re-invested in the network.

458. Please clarify how 75% adoption by “agencies” within 3 years (Q-APP-27) is attainable, given that user definitions have not yet been promulgated?

Answer:

Subscriber adoption and use of the NPSBN by PSEs is a key programmatic goal for FirstNet. The definition of what constitutes a PSE is currently subject to FirstNet’s first Notice requesting public comment, published on September 24, 2014 on www.federalregister.gov, and FirstNet’s Third Notice requesting public comment, published on May 5, 2015 on www.federalregister.gov. FirstNet anticipates a clearly defined list of PSEs eligible to use the network will be available by the time the subsequent RFP is issued. Ongoing consultation with the states is one mechanism FirstNet has to set Public Safety User targets. FirstNet is looking for feedback, as part of the Special Notice, on whether the mechanisms proposed will effectively promote this goal.

459. What are the projected network core capabilities and cloud storage availability at launch?

Answer:

A description of the content for each phase of deployment is included in Appendix C-8 IOC/FOC Target Timelines which includes any information pertaining to projected network core capabilities and cloud storage availability objectives.

460. Please discuss the agency “on-boarding” and on-going training processes. What expenses and responsibilities will be borne by FirstNet, selected partners, and agencies?

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, to include training. Ownership of this function will determine who bears the cost and overall responsibility.

461. Are there limitations to the types of data that can be collected from the user’s device?

It is requested that access to the Home Page and its various apps can be governed by the device’s location. To enhance security, the solution could govern access based on a host of criteria that enable a more contextual approach. For example, the device’s location, type of connection (secure Wi-Fi vs. public Wi-Fi), whether the device has any potentially malicious apps etc. Access to some data could then be dynamic such that, in some cases, no authentication is required, whereas in others, a passcode, biometric or some other quick authentication may be needed.

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Page 11 Section / Paragraph: 1.4.1. 5.

Answer:

The specific details related to types of data which would be available from Public Safety User devices falls within the overall security architecture of the NPSBN. Appendix C-10 FirstNet Cyber Hardness Requirements may include additional information in the subsequent RFP.

462. Although the five categories are important, incident information, a key geo-based data element, is missing and can that be added?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 3

Answer:

The five data layers used by FirstNet were only used to establish a baseline with data that was available nationwide. Through consultation, FirstNet encourages states and territories to use any and all data elements they feel will provide the most complete and accurate coverage objective map. 911 call data, incident information, evacuation routes, mass transit routes, etc., are all examples of additional data sets that can be used to update the coverage objective baselines.

463. ...“each individual dataset was normalized across the county” – can description be provided on how this was done and why?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 3

Answer:

Each dataset was normalized so it contributes equally to the final layer weighting. Reference SOO Appendix C-1 Baseline Coverage Objective Maps for a methodology description.

464. Will the information provided by states during initial data collection, such as calls for service information, be captured on the maps to be provided in the RFP?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 3

Answer:

Information provided by states during consultation that would assist offerors in creating proposals may be made available to potential offerors, in the subsequent RFP, as appropriate.

465. Rural is defined in the RFP as “a city, town, or incorporated area...”. Based on the April SPOC meetings, doesn’t FirstNet want to extend the rural definition to unincorporated areas as well?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC Page 0 Section / Paragraph: Definitions, bullet 2

Answer:

FirstNet has sought comment on its preliminary definition of “rural”. Please see FirstNet’s Notice requesting public comments that was published on September 24, 2014 on www.federalregister.gov.

466. The C-8 timeline includes phases for:

- a. Local control
- b. ICAM
- c. App store/ecosystem
- d. RAN and core hardening

Is there anywhere in the RFP that defines what is delivered in each phase for the above?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC

Answer:

A description of the content for each phase for these items in the timeline is included in Appendix C-8 IOC / FOC Target Timelines Section 4, Timeline Details (Phases). Additional information on deliverables may be provided in the subsequent RFP.

467. Regarding the addressable market of “4 million to 13 million users” – please provide the composition of this estimate; e.g., how many are traditional law enforcement/fire/EMS users, how many are full time vs. part time; does this include secondary users operating under a CLA – if so, how many; etc.

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 0 Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

FirstNet has undertaken high level analysis of the potential addressable market and continues to assess it through consultation with states. However, FirstNet expects offerors responding to any subsequent RFP to develop and rely on their own analyses of addressable market in developing proposed solutions, including the value of excess network capacity. FirstNet does not intend to provide more precise information regarding addressable market size at this time.

468. Although the Category 1 and 2 offer scopes make sense architecturally, by asking bidders to respond to two options, one that is essentially a subset of the other, how can FirstNet inform bidders about how revenue will be split between the nationwide and regional contractors?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 0 Section / Paragraph: 2.1

Answer:

As further detailed in Section 2.1 of the Appendix to the Special Notice - Pricing Concepts, under the current approach being considered by FirstNet, Category One offerors could receive PSE revenue and commercial revenue derived from use of excess network capacity, while Category Two offerors could

receive commercial revenue derived from use of excess network capacity. FirstNet is looking for feedback, as part of the Special Notice, on this topic.

469. The CLA fees included in a National Network (Category 1) can be exponentially reduced depending on states or regions that will be served by Category 2 bides or by states that “opt out”. In those cases, please clarify how the CLA for the National Network will be determined?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 0 Section / Paragraph: 2.1

Answer:

It is anticipated that the Covered Leasing Agreement for the winning Category One offeror would be comprised of all states and Territories (U.S.) except those served by Category Two offerors or states that choose to undertake the responsibility to deploy, maintain, and operate the RAN.

470. What type of contract is being contemplated by FirstNet (e.g. CP, FP, FPI)?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Page 0 Section / Paragraph: 1

Answer:

No decision and/or determination regarding contract type(s) has been made yet; the determination will be reflected in the subsequent RFP.

471. We would like to submit our capabilities statement to FirstNet. Do you have a format for how you want this statement structured?

Document Reference: General

Answer:

No, FirstNet is not specifying a format for submission of capabilities statements. Any information and/or parameters specific to the submission of capabilities statements is contained within the Special Notice.

472. Coverage Maps - Are source files available?

Answer:

The source files that were used to create the baseline coverage objective maps can be made available upon request. Please submit any requests to datacollection@firstnet.gov.

473. Devices - What was the method used to determine number of devices projected on the network?

Answer:

FirstNet has not made any assumptions and or determinations with regard to devices; the information pertains to the potential size of the Public Safety Users. The Special Notice's estimate of the potential size of the Public Safety User market drew predominantly on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Census Bureau, state government websites, and a number of private databases.

Under the concept proposed in the Special Notice subscriber adoption targets may be developed for inclusion in the subsequent RFP.

474. Devices - Will users be able to use their own device or only a FirstNet approved device?

Answer:

FirstNet is planning to support a “bring your own device” (BYOD) option to support users and agencies that want to use their own devices on the network. Only those devices that are approved will be allowed on the network as part of the BYOD process. FirstNet is seeking feedback for details related to the support of this BYOD process and any associated security requirements.

475. Devices - Will users be able to use apps they use today or only FirstNet approved apps?

Answer:

FirstNet envisions that Public Safety Users should be able to use the apps they use today. FirstNet is expecting an offeror(s) to propose an Application Ecosystem that allows existing apps to coexist with FirstNet certified apps as part of their solutions.

476. Devices - Who owns the master list of devices on the network, how will this information be updated?

Answer:

These functions are outlined in Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. FirstNet seeks feedback on ownership of roles as set forth in Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions.

477. Bandwidth/Spectrum - How is the available bandwidth being determined?

Answer:

The radio spectrum bandwidth allocated to FirstNet is 10MHz uplink and 10MHz downlink. Offerors will be required to submit a proposed solution for a radio network that provides data bandwidth that meets or exceeds the FirstNet objectives that will be set forth in the SOO of the subsequent RFP.

478. Costs - How are anticipated staff costs being accounted for in regards to network administration and client support?

Answer:

Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, defines tasks that must be accomplished in order to make the NPSBN operational, and it defines who has ownership of each individual task. FirstNet is soliciting feedback as to the most efficient way to allocate responsibility and accountability, and ensure an operational network.

479. Costs - How will billing of services and the invoicing be handled?

Answer:

The billing system is to be proposed as part of a complete B/OSS solution.

480. Costs - How were the anticipated costs for users and devices assumptions derived?

Answer:

FirstNet encourages offerors to develop their internal business models, including cost information, in their proposed solutions for the best solution for Public Safety Users.

481. Final RFP - Will there be a complete comprehensive document, unlike the draft RFP documents that are hard to follow?

Answer:

The current schedule for release of the complete NPSBN RFP is December 2015. It will be posted on the Federal Business Opportunity site, www.fbo.gov.

482. Will Eminent Domain be granted to the private entity that successfully wins FirstNet?

Answer:

FirstNet currently has no plans to exercise eminent domain, or authorize a contractor to do so, in connection with the creation of the NPSBN. However, if the determination that some form of eminent domain is in the best interest of the NPSBN, any terms and conditions would be included in the subsequent RFP.

483. What will be the final evaluation/selection criteria for FirstNet (low price/technically compliant, best value, etc.)?

Document Reference: Special Notice

Answer:

The evaluation criteria will be included in the subsequent RFP in Section M. As required by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), specifically section 15.305, all factors and significant sub factors that will affect contract award, and their relative importance, will be stated clearly in the solicitation.

If FirstNet makes the determination that the best value acquisition approach is in the best interest of the NPSBN acquisition, this would be considered a tradeoff process. This process permits tradeoffs among cost or price and non-cost factors and allows the Government to accept other than the lowest priced proposal. In this approach, the perceived benefits of the higher priced proposal must merit the additional cost, and the rationale for tradeoffs would be documented appropriately.

484. If a Category 1 bid is offered, will the successful contractor have discretionary nationwide use of the Block 14 spectrum or will its use be limited to NPSBN build-out and CLA licensing of spare capacity on the new infrastructure?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 4.3.1

Answer:

Under the concept presented in the Special Notice, FirstNet would not restrict the use of excess network capacity by offerors beyond commitments made by offerors, as part of their proposed solutions, to meet FirstNet's stated objectives and any other legal obligations. FirstNet anticipates, however, that successful offerors would utilize Band 14 to provide service to both Public Safety Users and non-Public Safety Users in areas where Band 14 infrastructure is deployed.

485. Will the successful NPSBN contractor be responsible for funding the on-going support of FirstNet staff and operations? If so, what is the projected funding requirement for that support?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 7 Section / Paragraph: 4.5

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates offeror(s) propose fixed payments to FirstNet to support ongoing program costs, such as costs associated with maintaining, operating, or improving the network. Those fixed payments would be determined as part of the offeror(s)' proposed solutions with regard to FirstNet's requirement to become financially sustainable.

486. Will the final RFP requirements be segregated/prioritized (mandatory/minimal acceptable technical standards, desirable requirements, etc.)

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 7 Section / Paragraph: C.7

Answer:

Yes, the subsequent RFP will identify any requirements that are considered mandatory with regard to the proposed solution. This would include any technical standards.

487. If a State opts out of FirstNet, does Federal/Tribal land within that State remain a FirstNet responsibility or does coverage transfer to the opt-out State?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps

Answer:

If a state decides to undertake responsibility to build, operate and maintain the RAN, it must take federal and tribal coverage requirements within the state into consideration when developing their alternative state plan. Therefore, FirstNet would not be responsible for providing RAN coverage to any federal or tribal land within a state that obtains approval to opt out.

488. Coverage testing and verification is key to audit control of the suppliers service level agreement. Is this function going to be an outsourced approach for RF monitoring, coverage prediction calculations, interference prediction, and interference resolution?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 42 Section / Paragraph: A.6.3.5

Answer:

FirstNet will define testing procedures which may include services to be tested and the related methodology as a part of the subsequent RFP.

489. What is the schedule for FirstNet to release the selection criteria for the RFP?

Answer:

The current schedule for release of an RFP is December 2015. The RFP would include the evaluation criteria in Section M.

490. Once the selection criteria are released will the selected bidders have to meet every single criterion provided by FirstNet?

Answer:

The proposed solutions will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria included in the subsequent RFP in Section M.

An offeror's proposed solution should be prepared in accordance with and comply with the objectives, requirements, and instructions contained within the subsequent RFP. Yes, each proposal will be evaluated against the evaluation factors and subfactors identified within Section M of the subsequent RFP.

491. What is FirstNet's expectation regarding the amount of video to and from an incident (how much uplink capacity vs. how much downlink capacity)?

Document Reference: C-1 Coverage Objective Maps Page 1

Answer:

FirstNet uplink and downlink incident throughput requirements will depend on the type of incident and relevant applications used by first responders. FirstNet expects this demand to increase as the FirstNet user base and available applications grow. FirstNet is seeking feedback with regard to specific metrics on use cases/traffic profiles through data collection as part of its consultation process.

492. Is the cost for an opt-out state to upgrade the sole responsibility of the opt-out state?

Document Reference: C - SOO Page 5

Answer:

Yes. When a state chooses to take responsibility for deploying, maintaining and operating the RAN, it is also responsible for upgrading that RAN to ensure that its connection to the FirstNet Core remains operational and compliant with FirstNet interface requirements.

493. Will it be the responsibility of the contractor or the local agencies to define, maintain, and execute access rights in both day-to-day and emergency situations?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Page 9 Section / Paragraph: 4.4.2

Answer:

FirstNet assumes this question refers to Appendix C-4 Systems and Standard Views (SV-1 and StdV-1) Section 4.2.2 versus Section 4.4.2. Therefore, user identities, credentials, and access rights will be the responsibility of the local PSEs in all situations.

494. What is the standard for connectivity to these cloud services? Public Internet and secure (?) connections? Non-public broadband connections?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Page 10 Section / Paragraph: 4.2.8

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates a mix of private, public, secure private, and dedicated non-public connections between a PSE and cloud services. The choice could be based on many factors including security needs, operational cost, solution architecture, and PSE funding. FirstNet seeks feedback on ways to achieve the objectives, in accordance with the Special Notice.

495. Is the customer support service required to be vendor supplied or could the venter engage with an outsourced solution provider?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 11 Section / Paragraph: A.2.1.2.1

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in the Operational Architecture, to include customer service and support. FirstNet expects prime offerors to perform all functions in Category One, either directly or through a subcontractor.

496. Is FirstNet aware of the added cost of having the network partner handling devices will add to the cost of each device? Might this therefore discourage public safety agencies from joining the network?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 13 Section / Paragraph: A.2.1.1.1.3

Answer:

FirstNet maintains the goal of delivering a NPSBN to Public Safety Users at a financially attractive price. FirstNet is also required to remain financially sustainable, while providing the Public Safety User community with the highest quality services and devices.

FirstNet welcomes feedback on the optimal approach to meeting these goals.

497. Is it FirstNet's intent that this 3+ year product plan be developed solely by the successful bidder(s) or in conjunction with FirstNet, Public Safety, and other vendors (for devices and services for example)?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 23 Section / Paragraph: 3.4.1.2

Answer:

FirstNet is seeking feedback on functions listed in Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. FirstNet expects prime offerors to perform all functions in Category One, either directly or through a subcontractor.

498. Is location to be provided only with the NPSBN coverage or it is a requirement to provide it outside the network coverage area, for instance within a building?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 26 Section / Paragraph: A.3.4.2.2.4

Answer:

Outdoor and indoor location services should be provided throughout the entire NPSBN coverage area. FirstNet recognizes that, as with all mobile networks, the service level expected indoors is different than the service level expected outdoors and that there are evolving technologies for providing indoor location. FirstNet seeks feedback on this topic in accordance with the Special Notice.

499. Is FirstNet prepared to assist the vendor(s) with site acquisition for non-commercial sites?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 30 Section / Paragraph: A.3.4.2.6

Answer:

It is FirstNet's expectation that an offeror must have the resources and expertise to identify and obtain permission to utilize commercial and non-commercial sites and be able to comply with all regulations, including environmental, without reliance on FirstNet for assistance.

500. Is FirstNet referring to FCC site licenses in this section? It is my understanding that site licenses are no longer required since the FirstNet license is nationwide. Please explain.

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 30 Section / Paragraph: A.3.4.2.6.1

Answer:

Appendix C-7, Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions Section A.3.4.2.6.1 does not refer to traditional site-by-site licensing, but rather the aspects of complying with all regulatory and other requirements of the nationwide license. Note that although the nationwide license does not require site-by-site licensing, each RAN site must comply with applicable regulations, including but not limited to environmental regulations.

501. Is it the intent of FirstNet that the network vendor/partner(s) for FirstNet will also have to develop a multitude of sales channels for the different local, state, and federal network customers?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 0 Section / Paragraph: A.6.1

Answer:

Yes. Category One includes development of sales channels to drive user adoption. The Special Notice provides detail on the scope of Category One, which encompass a nationwide approach whereby a contractor would be responsible for the provision of all necessary functions to deploy and operate a nationwide solution in accordance with FirstNet's objectives. This category would allow potential offerors to submit a comprehensive solution for all in-scope functions for 56 states and territories, as set forth in Section 2.1 of the Appendix to the Special Notice - Pricing Concepts. The scope of a Category One approach would include all functions as identified in Special Notice Section 4.2, Definition of the High Level Functions. High level functions are: Core, Applications ecosystem, RAN, CLA, Deployables, Satellite, Devices, Subscriber adoption and Customer lifecycle management.

502. Has FirstNet completed a cost comparison between a data and video-only capable network and a full up, full service network to include multiple types of voice?

Document Reference: C-7 Operational Architecture Page 0 Section / Paragraph: A.7.2.5

Answer:

FirstNet continues to consider the financial and technical implications of multiple operational scenarios. This includes a wide variety of services that may be offered upon completion of the NPSBN.

FirstNet welcomes feedback on the most cost effective network architecture to meet FirstNet's objectives.

503. Will the willing vendor(s)' contract be with FirstNet as an Independent Authority or with NTIA/DOC with FirstNet supervision?

Document Reference: C-8 IOC / FOC

Answer:

This requirement is being issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI)/Interior Business Center (IBC), Acquisition Services Directorate (AQD) on behalf of the on behalf of the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). Therefore, the award will be issued and administered by the DOI, IBC, AQD Contracting Officer.

504. May a small, regional wireless operator submit a narrowly targeted "Capabilities Statement" on or before July 27, 2015 even though both Categories 1 and 2 appear geared toward a much larger entity?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 3 Section / Paragraph: 4.1.3

Answer:

The purpose of the Special Notice is to obtain feedback in order to better understand industry's capabilities, analyze the recommendations and alternative approaches, and determine how to best leverage existing capabilities and best practices in order to meet Public Safety User needs.

FirstNet does not have any predetermined notion as to the "size" of an entity that may have the capabilities for meeting the objectives for the NPSBN. However, the capabilities statement needs demonstrate the ability of performing the work pertaining to either Category One or Category Two, or a combination thereof. FirstNet also welcomes all feedback pertaining to the acquisition approach and strategy as stated in the Special Notice.

505. Can FirstNet please elaborate on the entities which it considers to be public safety users in its estimate of the market size being between 4 and 13 million users?

Document Reference: Pricing Appendix Section / Paragraph: 1.3

Answer:

FirstNet has undertaken high level analysis of the potential addressable market and continues to assess it through consultation with states. However, FirstNet expects offerors responding to any subsequent RFP to develop and rely on their own analyses of addressable market in developing proposed solutions, including the value of excess network capacity. FirstNet does not intend to provide more precise information regarding addressable market size at this time.

506. Is PTCRB certification required for user equipment? If so, what are the plans/timing for B14 aspects to be included, currently PTCRB does not cover the B14?

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Section / Paragraph: 1.3.3

Answer:

PCS Type Certification Review Board (PTCRB) currently includes Band 14 specifications. PTCRB or equivalent certification may be required. FirstNet expects that industry standard and specialized Public Safety focused testing and certification will be required for the allowance of devices on the NPSBN. These functions are outlined in Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions. FirstNet seeks feedback on Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, in accordance with the Special Notice.

507. Considering that VoLTE is becoming more and more mainstream in commercial LTE networks and it will be matured even further over the next 12-18 months, would FirstNet consider including VoLTE within its initial scope since both network gear and user equipment will support this feature on a fairly wide scale by the time FirstNet launches service. This would allow FirstNet to offer a more comprehensive and competitive solution for First Responder organizations.

Document Reference: C-3 FCC Tab Section / Paragraph: 4.1.5.13

Answer:

Yes. Appendix C-8 - IOC / FOC Target Timeline includes information about the expected features and functions to be supported by the FirstNet network and the rollout schedule for them.

508. The Special Notice is focused on obtaining information and proposals by “offerers”, which seem to be primarily entities that will be providing all or part of the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) to FirstNet in exchange for access to excess spectrum and/or revenues from Covered Leasing Agreements (CLAs). Do entities that wish to provide specific capabilities to whatever form of network is ultimately deployed, such as an ability to access video and data that may be useful to public safety responses, need to submit a proposal in response to the RFP? For example, as noted in AICC’s October 27, 2014 Comments in response to FirstNet’s RFI regarding partnering opportunities, alarm company participation in the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) may facilitate the more efficient transmission of alarm signals, emergency data and video to central stations which can then be relayed to the relevant public safety agencies, while at the same time providing a revenue source for the operational expenses of the NPSBN. Alarm company participation may also allow real time public safety access to, e.g., security camera video. Is the current RFP process the appropriate venue for such proposals, or is that a matter to be handled through another process?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 3

Answer:

For clarification, the Special Notice is not requesting proposals. The purpose of the Special Notice is to obtain feedback in order to better understand industry’s capabilities, analyze the recommendations and alternative approaches, and determine how to best leverage existing capabilities and best practices in order to meet Public Safety needs. Another objective for the FirstNet acquisition is to promote competition and ensure a fair opportunity for all potential offerors. That being said, due to the complexity and all the objectives identified for the NPSBN, in order to achieve the “nationwide” objective it is going to be imperative that potential offerors consider embarking on partnering/teaming opportunities. It is very important to engage in activities for potential partnering/teaming opportunities as soon as possible. This may assist those who may not have the capabilities in meeting all of the objectives on their own in being a teaming partner in a NPSBN solution.

509. Certain potential FirstNet partners are members of an industry that includes numerous members of various sizes. While FirstNet may benefit from participation in the RFP process by individual industry members (especially larger companies), there are certain benefits that may be augmented if there is an avenue for participation by small to mid-size industry members as well. For example, alarm company participation in the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) may facilitate the more efficient transmission of alarm signals and emergency data and video, as well as real time access to security camera footage and other data that may allow public safety officials to more effectively manage their response to crime, fires, abductions, civil unrest and other emergencies. The more companies that participate in this access arrangement, the greater the capability made available to public safety. This effort does not seem to fit neatly into the traditional RFP categories discussed in the special notice, but instead would seem to call for the creation of an industry-wide clearinghouse that could administer an access arrangement that would allow participation in the NPSBN by smaller entities that may not otherwise be able to justify direct submission of a “bid” in the RFP process, and that would not otherwise be likely to “win” the bidding process. It is very possible that other industries could benefit from similar widespread, mutually beneficial participation arrangements with FirstNet if a clearinghouse mechanism could be utilized. Will FirstNet’s RFP allow for the submission of clearinghouse proposals, over and above the submission of direct partnership proposals by larger industry members? If so, can FirstNet provide guidance on information it would expect to see in such clearinghouse proposals?

Document Reference: Special Notice Page 2 Section / Paragraph: 3

Answer:

FirstNet desires the most cost effective, best value solution in order to achieve its stated objectives and best practices in order to meet PSE needs. Potential offerors should propose solutions to meet FirstNet’s objectives. This may include a potential offeror’s decision regarding the “type” of proposal submission and possible teaming arrangements. Moreover, any instructions pertaining to proposal submission will be included in a subsequent RFP within Section L, Instructions, Conditions, and Notices to offerors.

510. Under the Proposed Acquisition Approach [Nationwide Proposal (Category 1), and Regional RAN Proposal (Category 2)], how would the core network be acquired in the event that a Regional RAN Proposal (or multiple Regional RAN Proposals) was accepted?

Document Reference: General

Answer:

As noted in the Special Notice, the responsibility for the core network would be provided by a Category One awardee.

511. Can FirstNet give a minimum set of connectivity requirements or guideline for this connectivity? For example is this a dedicated connection or VPN Connection, and what should a typical agency connection look like? Should there be a Firewall, IPS, DMZ, SIP gateway, Agency Web server for guest access, etc.?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 5 Section / Paragraph: 4.7.3

Answer:

Functional detail on the FirstNet app store can be found in Appendix C-4 System and Standard Views (SV-1 and StdV-1), Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions, Appendix C-8 IOC/FOC Target Timeline, and Appendix C-9 NPSBN Use Case Definitions. Many public sources exist that list providers of app store solutions.

512. Can you define what you mean by “uber” dispatch operator?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 23 Section / Paragraph: 4.8.10.2

Answer:

In this use case, the term "uber" dispatcher is used to indicate a user with elevated permissions at the regional command center. This term may be revised in the subsequent RFP for clarity.

513. Is this a new private Internet Protocol WAN link to each PSEN?

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 34 Section / Paragraph: 4.17.1

Answer:

The private IP network referenced in the use case is the internal network of the PSE. FirstNet foresees that offeror(s) will propose a solution identifying the mechanisms they support for connecting the NPSBN and the PSEN.

514. Will FirstNet manage all, or some BYOD users such as volunteer firemen and Red Cross workers

Document Reference: C-9 Use Cases Page 39 Section / Paragraph: 4.21

Answer:

As indicated in Appendix C-7 Operational Architecture Functional Descriptions and Appendix C-9 NPSBN Use Case Definitions, FirstNet anticipates that administration of BYOD users, along with many other user support functions, will be managed by the PSE, not FirstNet.

515. Can FirstNet provide a detailed data flow for the expected operations.

Document Reference: C-5 StdV-2 Page 11 Section / Paragraph: 8.1

Answer:

The draft RFP follows a SOO-based approach that encourages creative solutions from offeror(s). FirstNet seeks feedback regarding the type of detailed solution architecture for transmission security, in accordance with the Special Notice.

516. Can FirstNet give more details on the APIs for Cloud services and Application Hosting Services?

Document Reference: C-4 SV-1 and StdV-1 Page 13 Section / Paragraph: Table 9

Answer:

FirstNet foresees cloud services and platforms that provide NPSBN users (PSEs, application developers, application hosting providers, etc.) with secure cloud services comparable to what are provided by commercial cloud providers (IaaS, PaaS, SaaS). As such, FirstNet expects, in response to a subsequent RFP, that the offeror(s) will provide necessary APIs so that customers of those cloud services have the ability to fully utilize the capabilities of their services. FirstNet seeks feedback with regard to what APIs may be of value to developers wishing to access the Public Safety marketplace, together with best practices regarding creation, operation, and management of a hosted cloud for Public Safety Applications.