

May 9th, 2024

MARYLAND STATE TREASURER'S OFFICE

**Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street, Room 109
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
FOR
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) FOR
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS**

IFB #ITOA-04242024

Number	Question	Response
1	In regards to the minimum qualifications on page 1 "Required Documentation", are we being asked to provide references to validate the consultant's years of experience or our company?	This is to validate the company's collective years of experience.
2	Understanding that this is a six (6) month contract, are there specific hours that are expected for the consultant to perform on-site?	There are no specific hours that are defined as yet. This will be discussed with the contract awardee.
3	How often does the consultant need to report onsite? 8 hours M-F?	See the answer to Question #2.
4	Can the consultant perform work on a hybrid schedule where the technical writing portion would be off-site and the gathering of information through analyzing be on-site?	A hybrid schedule is envisioned and will be discussed further in detail with the contract awardee.

5	Understanding that this is a six (6) month contract and cannot exceed \$100,000, does that include the initial contract and renewal option together or are they separate?	Yes, the \$100K contract limit includes both the initial 6-month period and the renewal option period.
6	What is the expected or estimated start date to provide services?	Services are expected to start in July 2024.
7	Is it correct that this solicitation is only open to Small Businesses certified in the State of Maryland?	<p>Yes, it is currently restricted to firms certified, or have registered to be certified, in the State of Maryland’s Small Business Reserve (SBR) program.</p> <p>If a registered firm is the apparent awardee, that firm must be certified and show proof of certification within ten (10) business days of award notification. Failure to achieve this will result in the notification being rescinded and the Office will proceed to the next apparent awardee.</p>
8	Our company is MBE certified in a few states, but not in Maryland. If we applied by the deadline, could this count as being eligible for this procurement?	See answer to Question #7. This is restricted to SBR firms only, but MBE firms who are considering SBR certification are highly encouraged to apply.
9	Can you clarify if the cost is not to exceed \$100 K for the entire duration (6 months base + 6 months option)	See answer to Question #5.
10	Our application is pending for the Small Business Reserve Program. Are we still eligible to apply?	See answer to Question #7.
11	Could you provide insight into the origin of the requirements outlined in the IFB? It appears that some of these requirements might be better suited for larger contractors or projects involving multiple contractor resource people. Was this solicitation tailored specifically	<p>Please review Section 2 of the IFB – pages 2 to 4 for the origin of the requirements.</p> <p>This solicitation was adapted specifically for qualified small businesses involved with work in this field, hence the restriction to firms in the State’s SBR program.</p>

	for this project, or was it adapted from a template used for larger-scale endeavors?	
12	Regarding the insurance requirements, particularly the thresholds for general liability and cyber insurance, there seems to be concern among smaller businesses about the feasibility of meeting these standards. Given the scale and nature of the proposed engagement, could you consider adjusting these requirements to align more closely with the resources typically available to small businesses? Additionally, could you clarify the necessity of theft insurance in relation to general liability coverage?	Please refer to Section 5.4.8 on page 20 of the IFB. Any reasonable changes to insurance limits will be taken into consideration with the contract awardee.
13	Is there flexibility in the location of service provision? For example, would it be possible to propose a hybrid approach where some work is conducted onsite in Annapolis while the remainder is completed remotely? This could potentially enhance efficiency and reduce costs without compromising the quality of deliverables.	See answer to Question #4.
14	The requirement for 5 years of government experience may pose a challenge for many small businesses, especially sole proprietorships. Is there room for flexibility in this criterion to accommodate the diverse backgrounds and expertise of qualified small businesses, particularly those with extensive experience in IT projects within the private sector? Aligning the	The Office considers the minimum 5-year requirement as a fair standard for the type of work involved. While government experience is preferred, private sector experience will also be considered.

	<p>experience criteria more closely with the nature of the work could broaden the pool of eligible bidders while still ensuring high-quality outcomes.</p>	
15	<p>Could you provide clarification on the significance of the COMAR requirements? Understanding their role in the procurement process would help us ensure compliance while also addressing any concerns small businesses may have regarding their impact on accessibility to this opportunity.</p>	<p>COMAR, in brief, is the State’s Regulations (including those on Procurement) and the Treasurer’s Office as a State Agency is required to abide by those Regulations. A detailed discussion on COMAR will be more appropriate in another forum.</p>
16	<p>Given the size and structure of our proposed team (1 resource person who is the business owner, and 1 SME who will advise on cybersecurity offsite), the requirement for worker's compensation insurance may seem excessive. Would it be possible to provide alternative solutions or adjustments to this requirement that better reflect the typical composition of small business teams while still ensuring adequate coverage?</p>	<p>See answer to Question #12.</p>
17	<p>Regarding the anti-theft requirement, there's curiosity about its necessity, especially considering the hands-on involvement of the business owner in the project. Could you provide insights into the rationale behind this requirement and its applicability to engagements of this scale and nature? Additionally, clarification on whether H1B contractors will be considered for this contract would</p>	<p>See answer to Question #12.</p>

	help address concerns regarding responsibilities and coverage.	
18	Are there incumbent or preferred vendors currently involved in this project? Understanding the context of the procurement process could provide valuable insights into potential challenges or biases that may impact the selection criteria.	This is a new project so there is no incumbent vendor.
19	Is there a possibility that certain requirements have been included to favor an incumbent or preferred vendor? Ensuring fairness and transparency in the procurement process is essential for fostering a competitive and inclusive environment for all potential bidders.	See answer to Question #18. The requirements have been developed internally from scratch and there is no specific vendor in mind.
20	Regarding the pricing and scope of work, we're committed to delivering quality outcomes over the proposed 12-month period. However, we'd appreciate clarity on how potential fluctuations in staffing or unforeseen challenges will be addressed without penalizing the contractor. Including provisions that prioritize fair compensation for work completed, regardless of external factors, would help mitigate risks and ensure a mutually beneficial partnership.	The Office cannot materially alter the contract terms, but those events as described can be addressed at the time with the contract awardee.
21	Are there any incumbents?	See answer to Question #18.
22	Statement given in section 1.1.1 (Required Documentation) – Is it refers to offeror reference or proposed candidate reference? Can you please confirm on this?	See answer to Question #1.

23	As per Section 2.1.4, we understood that subcontracting is allowed. Can a subcontractor's experience be counted towards prime's experience?	Yes.
24	Are there average weekly hours projected for this project?	See answer to Question #2. This will be discussed with the contract awardee.
25	Can the work be performed in a hybrid setting? Both onsite and remotely?	See answer to Question #4.
26	What's the estimated time of the contract award once the bid proposal is submitted?	See answer to Question #6. The contract is expected to be awarded in July 2024.
27	Based on the scope of work does the state have any expectations on the number of hours the contractor will expend.	See answer to Question #24.
28	Wanted to confirm the not to exceed if for the first six-month base period.	See answer to Question #5.
29	Approximately how many business units will the contractor be expected to meet with on this effort?	The Contractor will be expected to meet with STO Leadership, our onsite IT division and our IT Project Development team.
30	Do you have a repository of existing processes and practices?	This will be discussed with the awarded contractor.
31	Is there an IT Organization chart you could share?	This will be shared with the awarded contractor. There are currently 11 positions allocated to our IT division.
32	Do you have any existing Service Level Agreements in place with other organizations?	Not sure what SLAs are being questioned. We do not have SLAs in effect for these services.

33	Do you have diagrams of existing IT Infrastructure and applications that you can share?	See answer to question #11
34	Do you have a listing of the tools currently in use to monitor and track operations?	This information will be shared in detail with the awarded contractor. We currently use dashboards through Power BI.
35	Do you have an outline of any existing IT strategies for STO?	This information will be shared in detail with the awarded contractor.
36	Can the offeror submit past performance references for work done under previous employers where the proposed was the key personnel?	Yes
37	Please advise if, in addition to the three references, the offeror is required to provide a resume to demonstrate meeting the Minimum Qualifications in section 1.1.2.	It will be useful but not required.
38	Please advise on the project timeline.	Work is expected to start in July 2024 and last for 6 months. If not complete within the first 6 months, there is a renewal option for another 6 months. Specific project timelines will be discussed with the contract awardee.
39	Please advise on the total work hours specified in Attachment C - Bid Form.	An estimate of hours to complete the requirements of this project is required on the Bid Form. This is what the contractor is being asked to report.
40	Please advise whether the contract duration is 6 months or one year.	See answer to Question #38.
41	Would the State of Maryland allow for hybrid work arrangements?	See answer to Question #4.
42	How should Bidders respond to this requirement if they do not have a	We have addressed this in Amendment #1 to this solicitation.

	current or past State of Maryland Contract?	
43	<p>I reviewed the IFB document but the requested bid submission documents do not contain a section for the Technical response?</p> <p>How would you like us to submit that information?</p>	<p>There is no section for the technical response in the bid submission documents. Interested firms are required to submit their responses in their own format and it can be any length they deem fit once they respond to the IFB requirements in an organized fashion.</p>

END OF FORM