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Item No.	Supplies/Services	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Amount

1. Section B, paragraph B.2.,

a. regarding note: "...30% is reserved for software development by Government Laboratories." The total of all funds in the table is \$327.38M. Please reconcile the funds in the table in light of the note and the previous statement that the estimated contract value is \$330M.

ANSWER: Reconciliation is not in order as the estimated \$330M is just that, an estimate.

b. It is unclear who (NWS or successful offeror) pays for the Government laboratories?

ANSWER: The AWIPS program currently provides about \$5.8 million to Government labs. This money is used for Government FTE salaries and small software support contracts. The Government will consider proposals for alternate contracting arrangements for this software support.

c. It is intended that the Government laboratories be a subcontractor to the successful offer?

ANSWER: The Government will consider proposals for alternate contracting arrangements for this software support.

d. Are the Operations and Maintenance dollars considered part of the minimum and maximum task order amount?

ANSWER: Yes

e. Is the O&M effort a task order?

ANSWER: Since this is an IDIQ contract, our plan is to issue Task Order 1 to the contract for the first increment of O&M.

f. Can offeror's assume that 1) Product Improvement and 2) Software Maintenance and Support options are the IDIQ requirements?

ANSWER: Yes.

g. Anticipating a three year life cycle replace, is that part of O&M or is that a separately funded task order?

ANSWER: The Government is not specifying a period for technology refresh. In accordance with performance-based contracting we are looking to offerors for solutions in continuous technology refresh. Technology refresh will not be part of the O&M Task Order; it may be funded under separate task orders.

2. Section B, paragraph B.4: States that the amount of all orders shall not exceed \$330,000,000.

a. Should this read that the amount of all Task orders and the Operations and Maintenance effort shall not exceed \$330,000,000?

ANSWER: No, see answer to 1(e).

b. Please explain the \$13.3M minimum order in relation to the annual budgets shown in the table in B.2.?

ANSWER: The 13.3M minimum order is 70% of Task Order 1. See answer to 2(c) below for additional explanation.

c. Can we anticipate that, as an example, in FY 06 the successful offeror will receive award for the O&M plus a minimum of \$13.3K in Task Orders?

ANSWER: No, the minimum of \$13.3 Million includes the O&M. This minimum is a total contract minimum, not individual task order minimum.

3. Section B, page 5 appears to be missing Award term 5.

ANSWER: The RFP will be amended to include Award Term 5.

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4. Section C Introduction: This section states that the successful offeror SOW will be incorporated into Section C of the contract; however, no instructions were provided regarding the submission of a SOW.

a. Can the Government confirm that the SOW shall be submitted by the contractors?

ANSWER: As stated in section C, Introduction, the Government is requiring offerors to submit a Statement of Work. No further instructions are needed.

b. If it is, please clarify in which volume of the Phase two submission should be included, and any additional details required for the submission

ANSWER: See Section L for detailed instructions.

5. Section H.12 Section 508 Accessibility.

a. Is there an expectation that GFS will be made 508 compliant by the contractor under the basic O&M CLIN?

ANSWER: No, not under the O&M Task Order.

b. If a waiver for 508 compliance is required, what is the process? Is it the Government's responsibility or Contractor (to get a waiver)?

ANSWER: The Section 508 compliance process is a Government responsibility.

6. Section L, paragraph L.8.1, subfactor a:

a. Are offeror's allowed to submit capabilities and relevant experience on their teammates?

ANSWER: Yes. Offerors are allowed to submit capabilities and relevant experience on their teammates.

b. If not, how do offeror's present their subcontractor's relevant experience?

ANSWER: This is not applicable due to the answer in 6(a).

7. Section L, paragraph L.9.1, page 84; the titles for volume 1 and 2 are inverted. Vol I should be Price/Cost Proposal and Vol 2 Technical Proposal. Please reconcile the table with the following text as to Volume number, title, and page count.

ANSWER: The table in Section L.9.1 will remain unchanged. However, the Section L.9.3 has been amended to show the Technical Proposal as Volume 1 and the Price/Cost Proposal as Volume II as reflected in Section L.9.3.1 and Section L.9.3.2

8. Section L, paragraph L.9.3.2 Volume I, appears to be in error

ANSWER: Section L, Paragraph L.9.3.2 (now L.9.3.2.1) has been reviewed and is not in error.

9. Section L, paragraph L.9.3.3 Volume II - Factor 1 - Does Continuous Technology Refresh Option refers to row 2 in the table in Section B.2, entitled Product Improvement?

ANSWER: Yes. We consider Continuous Technology Refresh as part of the Product Improvement Option.

10. Section L, paragraph L.9.3.3 Volume II - Factor 3 and 4, :It appears that there has been a shuffling of the cost and technical sections. Should Factors 3 & 4 in Section 9.3.3, be moved to factors 1 & 2, respectively, in L.9.3.1?

ANSWER: Section L.9.3 has been amended to show the Technical Proposal as Volume 1 and the Price/Cost Proposal as Volume II as reflected in Section L.9.3.1 and Section L.9.3.2

11. Section L.9.3.3 Technical Reference Material, page 88: Are the technical reference materials included or excluded from the page count?

ANSWER: These reference materials are included in the page limitations.

12. Section L, paragraph 9.3.3 subfactor a and M 2.2 (page 99) Does Earned Value Management reporting only applicable to the CP portion of the contract and if the contract is all FFP, does EVM apply?

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ANSWER: EVM applies to all contract types. Although Earned Value cannot, by definition, apply to O&M, OMB still requires “earned value like” reporting for O&M.

13. Section L, paragraph L.9.3.3, factor 4, Subcontracting/Socioeconomic Goals: Are offeror's allowed to submit their Comprehensive Small Business subcontracting plan (CSBSP)? As part of the DoD Test Program authorized by Section 7103 of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994, the Defense Contract Management Agency in partnership with offeror's have negotiated a CSBSP. We understand that DoD is not part of the DOC; however, this Comprehensive Plan is applicable to all Department of Defense (DoD) prime contracts. We suggest NWS/NOA should allow the resultant contractor to submit their DoD CSBSP.

ANSWER: After consulting with Department of Commerce Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, our requirement is for offerors to submit a Small Business Subcontracting Plan that is tailored to the AWIPS effort.

14. Section H, paragraph H.8b: We believe the referenced FAR should be 52.228-70. Please confirm.

ANSWER: No, the paragraph is not FAR 52.228-70; it is a special provision of the Commerce Acquisition Regulations (CAR) applicable to this contract.

15. The RFP included a copy of the SF 1447; however, Section L, paragraph L.9.3.2 requires the Price/Cost Proposal to include a completed SF 33. Does the Government require both forms to be submitted?

ANSWER: No. The SF 33 should be submitted. It is not required that the SF 1447 be submitted.

16. Section M, paragraph M.1.2, factor 2, Subfactor b: Does this subfactor include staffing resources for support of transition, or are those resources only included in Subfactor d?

ANSWER: It includes all staffing necessary to support the AWIPS program.

17. Section M.2.1, Order of Importance; Can the Government clarify the order of importance in percentages?

ANSWER: Percentages will not be used in the evaluations for order of importance.

18. Section L.8.1, Subfactor c - The Government has clearly stated its desire to use competition and technology to produce the best solution for the AWIPS program. However, the “proposing unit” language contained in the RFP may suppress AWIPS competition. In the interest of promoting competition and given that many large corporations segregate their business operations functionally and may require support from more than one of its operations to technically and cost effectively meet AWIPS RFP requirements, will the Government consider the “proposing business unit” to include other business units within the corporation that will provide substantial complementary support under the contract?

ANSWER: Yes, the Government will allow organizations to include business units that will be substantially involved in the AWIPS program should the organization be awarded the contract.

19. Contract Award -Section M speaks to evaluation criteria for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 and the relative importance of various factors in each phase, however section M does not specify the relationship between Phase 1 and Phase 2 to contract award. Are Phase 1 scores independent of Phase 2 scores and, if so, what are the relative weights of Phase 1 and Phase 2 scores to contract award?

ANSWER: No, Phase 1 scores are not independent of Phase 2 scores. Section M.2.1 of the RFP is being amended to the following:

“In Phase 2 of the solicitation, Factor 1 (Technical Solution) is more important than Factor 2 (Performance Measurements Factor). Factor 3 (Price/Cost) is less important than Factors 1 and 2, however, when Factors 1 and 2 are combined and approach being equal, price becomes significantly more important. Factor 4 (Socioeconomic/Subcontracting Goals) and Factor 5 (Past Performance Rating from Phase 1 Evaluations) are of equal importance to each other and less important than all other factors. All subfactors are considered equal within a factor.”

20. Will the evaluated scores from Phase 1 be given to all offerors, those who are notified that they are viable and those who are not?

ANSWER: No scores will be provided, however, all offerors will be given an opportunity to schedule a debriefing meeting after the contract is awarded.

21. The AWIPS On-line Library contains a table of contents for a Performance and Availability Report for January 2004. The report appears to contain a significant amount of useful information that would assist contractors in the formulation of their technical solutions. Will the Government post the full Performance and Availability report onto the On-line library?

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ANSWER: This was an oversight. A redacted version of the Performance and Availability report from July 2004 will be posted to the Online Library.

22. The telecommunications infrastructure is a critical element to the success of the AWIPS program. The quality of the underlying telecommunications will directly affect the vendor's performance, and thus is a critical, but missing, vendor responsibility with respect to this performance-based contract. Why is NOAA retaining control, instead of allowing the AWIPS vendor to specify and control the quality of its supporting system, especially within a performance-based contract?

ANSWER: AWIPS is a small part of the NWS terrestrial telecommunications network. This is a Government-provided service.

23. Which performance-based criteria will be relaxed due to the vendor not being in control of the AWIPS telecommunications infrastructure?

ANSWER: Offerors who participate in Phase 2 of the solicitation are required to submit a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP). As this is a performance-based acquisition, we are looking to offerors to propose performance measures/metrics/Acceptable Quality Levels.

24. What is the current telecommunications infrastructure that will support the ultimate AWIPS vendor, including technologies employed, circuit types, speeds, SLAs, etc.?

ANSWER: This information is contained in a high-level in the Industry Day Presentations which are posted in the AWIPS Online Library as well as other areas in the library. Further detailed information will be given to offerors during the due diligence process if requested.

25. In what ways does NOAA anticipate modernizing its telecommunications infrastructure during the life cycle of this AWIPS contract? What performance-based criteria will not apply during transition phases?

ANSWER: Please see Mr. Larry Curran's presentation from Industry Day posted on the AWIPS Online Library. Again, as this is a performance-based acquisition, we are looking to offerors to propose performance measures/metrics/Acceptable Quality Levels.

26. To what extent will the AWIPS vendor be able to specify and control the telecommunications systems' technology and quality that support this program?

ANSWER: The AWIPS contractor will be responsible for managing and maintaining the routers that interconnect all AWIPS offices to the Government furnished terrestrial frame relay WAN. The current point of demarcation between Government and Contractor responsibility is between the routers and the CSU/DSUs. In addition, the AWIPS contractor will be fully responsible for proposing, managing, and maintaining the Point to Multipoint (PTM) component of the AWIPS network, which is currently being provided by the AWIPS Satellite Broadcast Network (SBN), also called "NOAAPort." Cost effective, high quality and open access alternatives to the current satellite broadcast capability to meet our PTM needs will be considered.

27. By what procedures does NOAA expect the vendor to interface with the government and/or its telecommunications vendors regarding requirements needed to support AWIPS?

ANSWER: As mentioned in the answer to question #26 above, the AWIPS contractor, and/or his subcontractor(s), will be fully responsible for proposing and managing the Point to Multipoint (PTM) component of the AWIPS network. Interface to the existing FTS2001 frame relay vendor (and any future telecommunications vendor) is through the NWS Office of the CIO, Telecommunication Infrastructure Branch, which will be engaged in interviews with prospective offerors during Due Diligence.

28. Reference: Sec. H.27, Award Term

Question: Will the Government provide an Award Term Plan, which would be applicable to all offerors, or is the offeror to include the Award Term feature as part of their positive/negative incentives?

ANSWER: Award terms will be part of the contract; therefore Offerors should propose an Award Term feature as part of their positive/negative incentives.

29. Reference: Sec. L.9.1, Phase 2 Page Limitations; Sec. L.9.3.1, Volume 1: Price/Cost Proposal

Question: The table in Sec. L.9.1 indicates that Volume 1 is the Technical Proposal, and Sec. L.9.3.1 indicates that Volume 1 is the Price/Cost Proposal. Please clarify.

ANSWER: The table in Section L.9.1 will remain unchanged. However, Section L.9.3 has been amended to show the Technical Proposal as Volume 1 and the Price/Cost Proposal as Volume II and is also reflected in Section L.9.3.1 and Section L.9.3.2.

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30. Reference: Sec. L.9.3, Phase 2 Proposal Organization; Sec. L.9.3.3, Volume 2, Technical Proposal
Question: Sec. L.9.3.1 identifies Socioeconomic/Subcontracting Goals as part of the Price/Cost Proposal. Sec. L.9.3.3, Volume II, Technical Proposal identifies the Socioeconomic/Subcontracting Goals as Factor 4 of that volume. Please clarify.

ANSWER: Section L.9.3 has been amended to show the Technical Proposal as Volume 1 and the Price/Cost Proposal as Volume II. In accordance with this change, Section L.9.3.1 and Section L.9.3.2 have also been amended. The revised Section L.9.3.1 has been corrected and no longer identifies the Socioeconomic/Subcontracting Goals as Factor 4 of the Technical Volume. The Socioeconomic/Subcontracting Goals should be included in Volume II, Price/Cost Proposal.

31. Reference: Sec. L.9.3.1, Volume 1: Price/Cost Proposal; Sec. L.9.3.3, Volume 2, Technical Proposal
Question: The instructions in Sec. L.9.3.1 are that "Offerors must ensure that no prices or costs are included in the Technical Volume." However, Sec. L.9.3.3, Factor 3, Price/Cost, requires price/cost data. Please clarify.

ANSWER: The price/cost data referred to in Section L.9.3.3 has been moved to its correct place under new RFP Section L.9.3.2.1. Please see the amended RFP.

32. Reference: Sec. Sec. L.9.3.3, Volume 2, Technical Proposal, Factor 1, Management Solution, Subfactor b: Transition Plan
Question: The reference calls for offerors to "reflect a transition period of realistic length and requirements." Is our assumption correct that the Government will evaluate the length of time offerors propose for transition, as opposed to a predetermined transition period (as indicated in the Industry Briefing of July 29, 2004)?

ANSWER: Although the Government identified a nominal transition period during Industry Day, the Government is requesting performance-based solutions; therefore, Offerors are free to propose a transition plan that is most suitable for their solution.

33. Reference: Sec. L.9.3.3, Factor 3, Price/Cost
Question: Referenced section contains a cross-reference to "Section L.9.2.2" for submission instructions regarding Price/Cost Sec. L.9.2.2 is not included. Please clarify.
Note: if the reference is a typographical error, and was intended to read: L.9.3.2, clarification is still required. Sec. L.9.3.2 only addresses Explanations and Exceptions.

ANSWER: The reference to Section L.9.2.2 was an error and is deleted. Revised Section L.9.3.2 and new RFP Section L.9.3.2.1 provide submission instructions regarding price/cost. Please see the amended RFP.

34. Reference: Sec. M.2.1, Order of Importance
Question: Referenced section states, "...when Factors 1 and 2 are combined and approach being equal, price becomes significantly more important." The intent is unclear; please clarify which approach and to what the approach may be equal; between factors, between one or more offerors?

ANSWER: The intent is that Factor 1 (Technical Solution) is more important than Factor 2 (Performance Measurements Factor). Factor 3 (Price/Cost) is less important than Factors 1 and 2, however, when Factors 1 and 2 are combined and approach being equal, price becomes significantly more important. Factor 4 (Socioeconomic/Subcontracting Goals) and Factor 5 (Past Performance) are of equal importance to each other and less important than all other factors. All subfactors are considered equal within a factor.

35. Reference: None
Question: Please furnish the incumbent funding level for O&M over the past five 5 years (GFY 1999-GFY 2004).

ANSWER: The budget numbers given in the RFP are reflective of GFY 2004. This budget has been relatively stable and indexed for inflation over the last five fiscal years.

36. Reference: Industry Day
Question: NWS said the SLAs were in the library. Please clarify where the SLAs are located.

ANSWER: The Service Level Agreement is Item# 16 in the AWIPS On-Line Library.

37. Reference: Industry Day, RFP Page 102, Factor 4: Subcontracting/Socioeconomic Goals.
Question: Would small business credits from second tier subs be allowable for use in the prime contractor's goals?

ANSWER: Yes, second tier subs will be allowable in the prime contractor's goals.

38. Reference: The AWIPS RFP indicates that offerors should assume that terrestrial WAN services will be provided by the Government.

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As in the case of the terrestrial WAN, NWS has described ongoing initiatives to update satellite communications under the DVB-S activity, but neither the RFP nor the SOO specify Government intent regarding provision of satellite communications services in support of point-to-multi-point communications and data delivery.

Question: Is it the Government's intent that offerors proposals include satellite communications provision and cost data or will NWS be contracting for new SATCOM support services under DVB-S or other initiative?

ANSWER: Yes, it is the Government's intent that offerors' proposals include satellite communications provision and cost data.

39. Reference: The on-line library provides source code for AWIPS OB1 and Hydro applications. OB4 is currently being fielded, and to allow for complexity assessment and technical review.

Question: We request that NWS provide the source code for OB4. Even if the OB4 source code may not be fully documented, this action will still provide higher value to the Government from any technical reviews conducted by offerors and will help ensure full, fair and open competition.

ANSWER: OB3 is available on the AWIPS online library. We do not believe that OB4 is mature enough to share with potential offerors at this time. It will be made available on the AWIPS online library after completion of system acceptance tests.

40. Reference: Sec M.1.2 Factor 1: Past Performance
Subfactor a: Relevant Experience, 4th Paragraph

Sec L.8.1 Factor 1: Past Performance
Subfactor a: Relevant Experience

Question: The referenced paragraph implies that the Government evaluation could include a review of past performance on projects other than the 3 or more contract efforts provided in the proposal. Is this a correct assumption?

ANSWER: Additional information obtained by the Government is not limited to the efforts submitted, but can be obtained through sources, such as the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting, Program Managers, etc.

41. Reference: Sec L.8.1 Factor 1: Past Performance
Subfactor b: References/Customer Satisfaction

Question: The second sentence in the referenced paragraph refers to Section J, Attachment J-2. Should this be Section J, Attachment J-3?

ANSWER: Yes. Please see the amended RFP.

42. Reference: Section L.9.3.3 Volume II, Technical Proposal
Factor 1 Technical Solution
Subfactor d: Software Integration and Test

Section M.2.2 Evaluation Criteria
Factor 1 Technical Solution
Subfactor d: Software Integration and Test

Question: Both referenced paragraphs mention "Government-developed software." For purposes of this procurement, is there a difference between "Government-developed" and "Government-furnished"?

ANSWER: No.

43. Question: Is the incumbent contractor the only contractor developing software for the AWIPS program? If the answer is "No", please identify the other contractors developing software for the AWIPS program.

ANSWER: No, the incumbent is not the only contractor developing software. The Government labs have contracts with several vendors that develop AWIPS software. To the best of our knowledge, only the following contractors are currently working under contract to develop AWIPS software: RSIS, Raytheon, QSS, and SAIC.

44. Reference: Industry Day and teaming discussions with potential subcontractors.

Question: The NWS stated in the Industry Day briefing that a contractor would be awarded a contract to document the AWIPS baseline software between September 2004 and September 2005. This software documentation contractor would have an advantage and special insights into the AWIPS software. In the interest of fair and open competition, and to avoid an actual or perceived conflict of interest, would it be

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appropriate and valuable to the NWS to bar the software documentation contractor from being part of any team competing for the AWIPS Program?

This action would enable the software documentation contractor to be available during the due diligence process, and to be a resource to the successful prime contract bidder, increasing the probability of success of the prime contractor and the NWS. This action would further remove any organizational conflicts of interest and ensure fair and open competition.

ANSWER: We do not have, not do we intend to award, a separate and distinct software documentation contract.

45. Section L.8 specifies that the Phase 1 Capabilities Statement be submitted in 12 point font, Double Spaced. Section L.9 specifies that Phase 2 proposal be submitted in 12 point font Single Spaced. Is this correct or should the Phase 1 Capability Statement also be submitted in Single Space format?

ANSWER: Capabilities Statements can be submitted in Single Space format. Section L.8 of the RFP has been amended to indicate this change.

46. Customer Satisfaction Evaluation (J-3). Is there a problem with Contractors providing customers with a Word version of this document to make it easier for them to provide on-line text, rather than using the PDF form in the RFP?

ANSWER: Offerors may use a Word version of the document that is available on the AWIPS recompete library under the RFP Section.

47. Attachment J-1: Are Contractors required to re-apply for access using the new request form J-1 in the RFP? The new form allows for five Users, is this correct?

ANSWER: Offerors are not required to re-apply for access. The form is intended for new users. The form allows for up to five users.

48. Page 81, paragraph L.8: Can you please reconfirm the requirement for double-spaced text?

ANSWER: ANSWER: Capabilities Statements can be submitted in Single Space format. Section L.8 of the RFP has been amended to indicate this change.
