

Youth Science Industry Day: Business Questions

1. Is it appropriate that one member may manage one, two, or three separate programs?

Answer: Yes, it is acceptable for one Member to manage multiple programs within a proposed Consortium. However, each proposal submitted must address all programs identified in the Program Announcement. This proposal is to be submitted by the Lead Member on behalf of all of the Members of the proposed Consortium.

2. Will each expected consortium member need to develop a proposal for each program of interest?

Answer: Proposals submitted in response to this Program Announcement must address all programs of interest. The proposal is to be submitted by the Lead Organization on behalf of the proposed Consortium.

3. Will ARO give a preference to Small Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses? Possibility of a SDVOB set-aside?

Answer: The Government is encouraging all Small Businesses to participate. However, ARO will not give preferences to Small Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses. There will not be any set asides for this Program Announcement.

4. What is the difference between what is due in the first round of proposals and what is due in the final proposal? What is needed for each?

Answer: The first round of proposals will include what the Program Announcement is requesting for submission. This will include a technical component (not to exceed 70 pages) and the cost component and the additional forms required that are noted in the Program Announcement. A final proposal will only be required should the Government enter into negotiation discussions. The format of any final proposal will be specified as part of the negotiation process.

5. Is there a detailed outline of questions to follow that must be included in Volume One or can the 70 pages be in our own format?

Answer: There is not a detailed outline of questions to follow that must be included in Volume One. The offeror is able to submit the proposal in their own format. However, the offeror is encouraged to address the evaluation factors identified in the Program Announcement.

6. Will each consortium member need to submit a technical volume and a cost volume to each Lead Organization to be considered?

Answer: The Lead Organization will submit one proposal that is expected to include participation by multiple consortium members. All proposals received from the Lead Organization shall include a technical and cost volume.

7. If the LO plans to submit the cost proposal for the entire team, do the consortium team members supply their own unique budget through grants.gov? Are all consortium members allowed to charge overhead? If so, is it required for the members to submit a breakdown of their indirect costs to the LO?

Answer: The Lead Organization will submit one proposal in grants.gov that is expected to include participation by multiple consortium members. All consortium members are allowed to charge overhead as proposed in their accounting systems. If the consortium member is not comfortable with submitting specifics about their indirect costs to the Lead Organization that information can be submitted directly to the Government. Instructions for direct submission of cost proposals by Consortium Members will be included in an amendment to the Program Announcement. However, a budget will still need to be submitted to the Lead Organization that has a summary of the costs proposed.

8. Is there a desire for this opportunity to be captured by academia and non-profit?

Answer: The Army envisions the YS COA will bring together government and a consortium of organizations working collaboratively to further STEM education and outreach efforts nationwide. This could include academia, non-profit, small businesses, large businesses, etc.

9. Why is the COA not fee-bearing? Will that be reconsidered?

Answer: The COA is not fee bearing in accordance with Section 22.205 of the Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations, which prohibits the use of fee on grants or cooperative agreements.

10. No profit or fee is allowed, but what about indirect costs? Is there a cap on the amount of overhead allowed?

Answer: The offeror can propose indirect costs that are in accordance with their accounting system. The Government anticipates that a portion of the YS COA may be funded with 6.1 (Basic Research Funds). Should any portion of the effort be funded with 6.1, the Lead Organization would have to comply with the limitation on the payment of indirect costs as included in the Defense Appropriations Act, FY 2010. Since the type of funding is not certain at this time, offerors need not address the limitation on the payment of indirect costs as part of the proposal submission process for the YS COA. ,

11. Will the amount of funds available for the programs be subject to change over time?

Answer: Proposals submitted in response to the YS COA should reflect the amounts listed in the Program Announcement for each year. However, the amount of funds available for the programs may be adjusted during the performance of this effort. Any adjustments are expected to be within the overall scope of the cooperative agreement.

12. When evaluating credentials, expertise, past performance, etc. of the consortium, are all of the members taken into account or just the LO?

Answer: Yes, all members are taken into account not just the Lead Organization. The Program Announcement states, evaluation will focus on the offeror's credentials, as an organization as well as the credentials of the specific individuals proposed, including, but not limited to, the Program Director.

13. What type of accountability will the LO have for problems with the consortium such as underperforming members? Will the LO have any type of leverage over the other members so as to handle complications with individual member organizations?

Answer: The Cooperative Management Committee (CMC) includes a representative from each member of the Consortium, with a representative from the Lead Organization chairing the CMC. The CMC will be responsible for the management and integration of the Consortium's efforts under the YS COA to include programmatic matters. If there are problems with a member not performing in a satisfactory manner, the Lead Organization should ensure the CMC is working to resolve the issue along with the Cooperative Agreement Manager (CAM). The CAM participates as ex officio member and will assist the CMC with performance issues.

14. With such an aggressive submission timeline, is there a potential Lead Organization already identified?

Answer: No, there is not a potential Lead Organization identified.

15. Can you describe the evaluation and negotiations process that will occur 11 March – 24 March?

Answer: A Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) will review the proposals. The SSEB, consisting of qualified groups of scientists, managers, and cost specialists, will evaluate each proposal and provide the results of that evaluation to the Source Selection Authority (SSA). The SSA will make decisions concerning the competitive range and award selection. If negotiation discussions are held, the Grants Officer will coordinate with the offerors at that time with negotiations resulting in an opportunity for offerors to submit a revised proposal.

16. The proposal timetable is too aggressive for the degree of coordination required to build a consortium (which will involve attorneys since a formal signed agreement is required) and to thoughtfully prepare a bid. What is the likelihood of an extension, and what is driving the timetable?

Answer: The Government will extend the submission date of proposals and is currently reviewing a reasonably aggressive date in April 2010.

17. Given a spending cap on the multi-year contract, how do we build in staff cost of living and wage increases, inflation in services and products, and etc., particularly given our actual dollars allotments have decreased for the programs?

Answer: Cost proposals should be proposed using the funding in the YS COA Program Announcement. The Lead Organization should look at ways to be efficient and cost effective, taking into account that there are no planned increases in funding in the outyears of performance.