

**AMENDMENT OF NIAID SOLICITATION**  
**“Management of Information Resources on Therapeutic Agents**  
**for HIV and Opportunistic Infections”**

**Solicitation Number:** RFP-NIH-NIAID-DAIDS-07-27

**Amendment Number:** Six (6)

**Amendment Issue Date:** Thursday, August 2, 2007

**Proposal Due Date:** **Unchanged** **Thursday, August 9, 2007 at 4:00 PM, Local Time**

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**This amendment provides answers to additional questions regarding the RFP.**

**Offerors who submitted proposals previously should review the amendment and determine if revisions to their proposals are needed. If revisions are to be submitted, they must be received by the due date and time specified above. If no revisions to a previously submitted proposal will be made, Offerors must indicate this in writing to the Contracting Officer by the due date and time specified above.**

**Offerors must acknowledge receipt of this Amendment No. 6 by identifying this amendment number and date of the amendment on each copy of the offer submitted. Failure to receive your acknowledgement may result in the rejection of your offer. Except as provided herein, all terms and conditions of the solicitation remain unchanged and in full force and effect.**

**PLEASE NOTE that Amendment 5 incorrectly stated that the due date for submission of proposals was revised. It has not changed since Amendment 4. It remains August 9, 2007 at 4:00 p.m., local time.**

**Questions and Answers (numbering continued from Amendment No. 3)**

- 80. Amendment 3 (issued July 10, 2007), in a response to question 76 (page 10), lists specific hardware and software that will be transferred to the successful offeror upon contract award. The specified versions are not the most current versions available from the indicated vendor (for example, Oracle 9i is specified but the current standard is Oracle 10g; MDL Direct 5.0 is indicated while the current version is 6.0).**

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- a. Does the government have a software maintenance contract(s) that will permit the designated contractor to update government-furnished software to the most current version?

**Response:** Oracle and MDL software licenses include the cost of maintenance contracts. The cost of these licenses is funded through the contract and will permit the designated contractor to update government-furnished software to the most current versions. Amendment No. 3, response to question 76, provides costs for licenses for this software which includes maintenance contracts.

- b. If the most recent software versions cannot be provided as government-furnished material, should firms propose costs to cover upgrades or purchase of current licenses?

**Response:** Offerors should propose costs for licenses which cover upgrades for the software. See RFP Amendment No. 3, response to question 76 which provides the yearly cost of the software currently being used under the contract.

- c. If the response to the two questions above is negative, and given that responses to other questions indicate a preference for using the existing software, should the offeror assume that the software and hardware listed in the above referenced response in Amendment 3 will be used to initiate and carry out the contract activity?

**Response:** Offerors may assume that the software and hardware listed in Amendment No. 3, response to question 76, will be used to initiate contract activity. Offerors should develop and propose technical approach to carry out the contract activity using whatever software the offeror deems appropriate.

- d. Is there a government plan in place to update on a regular schedule government-furnished software and hardware used in this activity and, if so, what is it?

**Response:** There is no Government plan in place to update on a regular schedule the government-furnished software and hardware. Under the current contract, the software licenses are renewed on an annual basis and are upgraded as needed. Hardware is purchased by the Government at Government expense and replaced when needed. Offerors should propose software and hardware updates consistent with their technical approach.

81. Technical Evaluation Criterion 1 (Scientific and Professional Personnel, 40 points) indicates 3 subfactors (a. Principal Investigator, b. key scientific and professional staff, and c. data entry and IT personnel). Are these subfactors to be weighted equally (given equal point value) or are they listed in order of decreasing importance?

**Response:** As stated in Section M, Evaluation Factors for Award, Paragraph 3, Technical Evaluation Criteria, subcriteria are listed in order of descending importance.

82. Technical Evaluation Criterion 2 (Technical Approach, 40 points) indicates 3 subfactors. Are these subfactors to be weighted equally (given equal point value) or are they listed in order of decreasing importance?

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**Response:** As stated in Section M, Evaluation Factors for Award, Paragraph 3, Technical Evaluation Criteria, subcriteria are listed in order of descending importance.

83. Technical Evaluation Criterion 3 (Project Management, 10 points) indicates 4 subfactors. Are these subfactors to be weighted equally (given equal point value) or are they listed in order of decreasing importance?

**Response:** As stated in Section M, Evaluation Factors for Award, Paragraph 3, Technical Evaluation Criteria, subcriteria are listed in order of descending importance.

84. With respect to Evaluation Factors for Award, is Criterion 2 subfactor c to be evaluated only on the sample structural search task described in the Technical Proposal Instructions “Assembly of Preclinical Information Search Requests (SOW Task 7) (Attachment 6 page 3)?

**Response:** As indicated in SECTION M, Evaluation Factors for Award, Criterion 2, subfactor c, offerors proposals will be evaluated for adequacy and feasibility of the technical approach for performing substructure and full structure preclinical information searches *in addition to* the adequacy and soundness of the approach and rationale for selecting the most promising chemical structures for the four sample search requests provided. Attachment 6, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, for SOW Task 7, states that the offeror should describe the technical approach for performing preclinical information search requests requiring substructure or full structure chemical searches *in addition to* providing the search strategy for specific search requests listed in the RFP including the literature sources, the rationale for selecting the most promising chemical structure, the chemical structure, and mode of action if any, and a reference citation.

85. Evaluation Factors for Award Criterion 2 subfactor b in relevant part refers to the “adequacy and appropriateness of the proposed data management procedures for ...software development and maintenance, ..” Emphasis added. As the responses to questions indicate that there is no software developed for this activity, this factor does not appear to be related to the work. Will you consider deleting this text? Additionally, Appendix A, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions dated 7/25/07, Attachment 6, page 3 of 4, includes in SOW Task 6 a reference to “.. development and maintenance of software.” Should this also be deleted?

**Response:** Section M, Evaluation Factors for Award, Criterion 2, subfactor b, revised to delete the reference to software development (see below for Revision to Section M). Attachment 6, Appendix A, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, Software/Hardware Maintenance, Development and Provision of Security (SOW Task 6) is revised to take out the reference to software development. In addition, the title of this paragraph is revised to read: Software/Hardware Maintenance and Provision of Security.

86. Amendment 3 (issued July 10, 2007), in a response to question 73 (page 9), indicates that historically 6,000-7,000 lines of confidential data are received for entering into data tables per year. Does this total include reports received in all formats (hard copy, Word, and Excel spreadsheets) or only Excel data?

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**Response:** The total number of lines of confidential data indicated in response to question 73 (Amendment No. 3) includes reports received in all formats (hard copy, Word and Excel spreadsheets).

**87. To permit firms to respond to the RFP on the same basis, please provide adequate information to determine the breakdown with respect to the mix of labor (scientific, data processing, data entry) required to process data from confidential reports to be provided to the contractor in hard copy format, Word documents, and Excel spreadsheets. An agency-designated respective level of effort would provide all bidders the ability to respond to the requirement on the same basis.**

**Response:** It is very difficult to provide an agency-designated level of effort for this task as it depends on the quality and complexity of the data to be processed. The data in the confidential reports is the same kind of data as that in the literature, only confidential due to investigator agreements with NIAID. The mix of labor would be expected to be similar to that which the offeror proposes for abstraction of the public literature data and would vary both by the quality and complexity of the data provided and the skill sets/combinations of staff proposed by the offeror. The NIAID does not require any specific mix of labor; rather offerors are expected to propose their particular effort for data abstraction consistent with their staffing and technical approach.

**88. Please confirm that the cost/price considered in the Evaluation Factors for Award is the total over the full seven-year period of the contract.**

**Response:** The total cost of the proposal for the seven year period is the cost/price that is considered in the Evaluation Factors for Award.

**89. The agency's response to Question 72 in Amendment 3 presented the incumbent contractor's transition plan. As the current contract expires on September 20, 2007 and the new contract is not expected to start until approximately April 1, 2008, can firms responding to RFP NIH-NIAID-DAIDS-07-27 rely on the information represented by the current contractor that was presented by NIAID?**

**Response:** Yes, you can rely on the information provided in Amendment 3, Question 72, regarding transition. However, if the current contract expires without having a new contract in place, all data, materials, etc., will be delivered by the incumbent contractor to the Government. The Government will in turn provide these items to the new contractor once a contract is awarded.

**90. Additionally, please clarify why the current contractor will be in possession of materials that are specified in the transition plan 6 months or more after contract termination.**

**Response:** If the current contract expires, the incumbent contractor will deliver these items to the Government and the Government will provide these items to the successor contractor.

**91. Should a bridging contract for the current contractor fail to materialize, does the government have an alternative transition plan?**

**Response:** Yes, please see response to question 89 above.

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**For purposes of our submission, how should we address initial transition in our technical proposal management plan?**

**Response:** As prescribed in the RFP. Per Attachment 6, Appendix A, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, Section 3 - Technical Approach, “Technical proposals shall describe specifically how the offeror shall fulfill each of the items in the SOW.” Please describe in your technical proposal how you will fulfill the SOW requirement for initial transition.

**92. SECTION M, EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD, paragraph 3, TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA, CRITERION 3, PROJECT MANAGEMENT, appears to include ambiguous criteria regarding organizational experience with computerized chemical databases management, maintenance and quality control. Can this criterion be deleted?**

**Response:** Yes. However, since we are looking for organizational experience in managing projects of similar size and scope, we will provide substitute language. Therefore, the criterion will be revised to state this. In addition, Attachment 6, Appendix A, Additional Technical Proposal Instructions, Section 4 – Project Management, paragraph 3, will be revised to reflect that offerors should discuss organizational experience in managing projects of similar size and scope.

**The RFP is hereby revised as follows:**

**PART IV, REPRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS, SECTION M, EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD, is revised as follows:**

Paragraph 3, Technical Evaluation Criteria, Criterion 2, Technical Approach, subfactor b, is revised to delete the reference to software development, and to read as follows:

- b. Adequacy and appropriateness of the proposed data management procedures for updating and maintenance of the databases, quality control, disaster recovery, software maintenance, and security and confidentiality of the data; adequacy of the approaches for overcoming potential problems in the administration of a reliable, efficient, fully operational and responsive data management system.

Paragraph 4, Technical Evaluation Criteria, Criterion 3, Project Management, subfactor c, is deleted and replaced with the following:

- c. Demonstrated organizational experience managing projects of comparable size and scope.

**ATTACHMENT 6, APPENDIX A, ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS, is hereby revised as follows:**

The paragraph entitled “Software/Hardware Maintenance, Development and Provision of Security (SOW Task 6)” is revised to change the title to “Software/Hardware Maintenance and Provision of Security (SOW Task 6)” and to delete the reference to software development and to read as follows:

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**Software/Hardware Maintenance and Provision of Security (SOW Task 6)**

Describe the software/hardware maintenance procedures to be used for updating and for maintenance of the databases, quality control, disaster recovery, security and confidentiality of the data. Describe procedures to ensure industry best practices are followed in the maintenance of software. Discuss potential problems/obstacles and solutions/approaches to be used to ensure a reliable, efficient, fully operational and responsive data management system.

The paragraph entitled “Section 4, Project Management,” paragraph 3, is hereby revised to delete the sentence “Discuss organizational experience in computerized chemical databases management, maintenance, and quality control.” Paragraph 3 is revised to read as follows:

3. Describe the organization’s ability to provide appropriate trained personnel, and timely, flexible resources for the project to meet contract requirements. Discuss organizational experience managing projects of comparable size and scope. Discuss how projects are prioritized within the Offeror’s organization, the level of priority this contract would receive, and procedures for initiation of contract requirements in a timely manner. Provide documentation of prior success in the timely completion of comparable tasks.

**END OF AMENDMENT #6 to RFP-NIH-NIAID-DAIDS-07-27**