

Request for Proposal TIB-2006-R-002 (Mail Management, Data Entry, and Associated Processes)  
As of March 10, 2006

### **Questions and Answers**

The following questions have been compiled from those submitted by potential bidders on this RFP. Where multiple bidders asked basically the same question, a generic question has been provided. Please note that the questions have been categorized: Mail Management, Data Entry, General Management, Disaster Recovery, Technical and Security, Administrative, and Miscellaneous.

#### MAIL MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

Q1. In order to better estimate surge capacity requirements, can the Government provide volume data for daily and/or peak or maximum number of Mail and Fax document pages received per day over the past 12 months.

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (the Agency) does not have daily volume data available. Over the past six (6) months, approximately 50,000 pieces of mail were received each month; approximately 43,000 faxes were received monthly. (Note that these numbers are slightly different from those in the RFP because they are more current.) Also, these volumes are still in a state of flux due to the disruption of mail service caused by Hurricane Katrina and the relocation of the mail processing activity (particularly during September and October).

Attachment 1 includes graphs that reflect the volumes of scanned mail (and faxes) for 2004, 2005 and the first two months of 2006. As indicated above, the mail volumes for the last quarter of 2005 were affected by the movement of the mail facility from New Orleans as part of our disaster recovery effort (which included establishing new post office boxes and having mail forwarded from our pre-existing post office boxes). These numbers do not include returned mail or junk mail.

Q2. What is the average number of outgoing mail and faxes per day and/or month?

The processing of outgoing mail will be handled under a separate contract as is the provision of the fax capability. These numbers are provided in RFP TIB-2006-001 (printing and mailing services). Under this contract, the vendor will be required to send by overnight delivery (generally on a daily basis) documents that are not imaged (e.g., death certificates). Currently, there are three sites (New Orleans, Washington DC, and Reston, VA) that may receive these daily "pouches." The overnight mail expense is a pass-through direct cost to the Agency.

In addition, there may be some original documentation that will need to be returned to the participant (e.g., original birth certificates). Because this is not a current

requirement, we do not have a volume count. However, we anticipate that it will be minimal, i.e., less than 100 pieces per month. Consequently, this mail will be sent First Class domestic, and foreign mail will be sent through the USPS as well – that is, there are no special requirements for foreign mail.

Q3. Are more specific details available regarding how the mail should be sorted, e.g., by type of form or by destination.

In addition to work queues for the various TSP forms (most of which are available from the TSP Web site at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)), there are other queues for items associated with legal process (e.g., court orders), death benefits processing, various types of correspondence, rollovers to the TSP, and withholding forms, as well as queues for forms to be reviewed for proper routing, reprocessed, etc. The Agency will provide the successful bidder with descriptions of the various queues, what should be placed in each, and the priorities for working the queues. The Agency will also provide guidance on what original documents should be forwarded via overnight delivery to the other business units (generally these are related to court orders, legal process, rollovers of funds to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and death benefits processing).

Attachment 2 is a list of the current work queues, the downstream business units or activities affected by the queues, their priorities, and a general description of the daily volumes. These queues may be changed as a result of workflow realignments, and volumes are variable. The document is provided as a reference only.

Q4. What happens to “other” mail, e.g., junk mail, magazines, personal mail? Will the contractor be required to sort this mail, deliver the mail to the Agency general mail room, return the mail to sender, or dispose of the mail? What is the volume of the “other” mail per day/month?

Junk mail is disposed of in the trash. Personal mail is handled as correspondence and scanned/indexed into its related work queue. The Agency does not have a volume for “junk” mail. Currently the Agency receives about 15,000 pieces of returned mail per month. The majority of this mail is shredded without opening. Procedures for handling the remainder will be provided by the Agency (essentially it requires identifying the participant and annotating the account using the Agency’s Participant Services Representative application (Section C.4.6.b.1)).

Q5. Does the Agency have automated equipment to handle incoming mail, opening of mail, and extraction of the contents of the envelopes received?

The Agency does not have automated extraction equipment. Section c.4.2.c.1.i. requires the contractor to procure, maintain, and replace all automated/manual equipment used for processing mail; therefore the offeror is expected to propose how it would accomplish these tasks within its environment. See the related questions in Attachment A of the RFP.

Q6. Does the Agency currently image facsimiles? What improvements is the agency looking for...i.e., in storage, resolution, speed of imaging? Will the Agency still use the PowerImage system?

Facsimiles are imaged automatically by the PowerImage System using RightFax. That is, the electronic image is placed directly into the fax work queue for indexing. A paper printout of the fax is not produced.

Because the Agency's workflow uses the PowerImage application, the offeror should suggest improvements within that context.

Q7. What method does the Agency want outgoing mail to go by? First Class for domestic? How would foreign addresses be mailed? What is the historical percentage breakdown between domestic and foreign addresses?

As indicated in Q2, bulk outgoing mail will be handled under a separate contract.

Q8. Because the RFP does not have a specific requirement for "BULK" mailings, for what purpose does the Agency require a postal permit, as it generally applies to bulk mailings?

The RFP states that "at the Agency's discretion," the contractor would arrange for postal permits if necessary. This is not a requirement at this time, but the Agency does want to have the flexibility just in case a permit is needed.

Q9. If there are "BULK" mailings, how many pieces are mailed at each instance; does the mail require a ZIP+4 sort; and can the outgoing mail be delayed until the Post Office's required quantity is achieved for a mailing? If the outgoing mail cannot be delayed, then how can original legal documents be mailed back within three (3) business days if the minimum "BULK" mailings have not yet been met? (Section C.4.3.a).

As explained above, the bulk mailings will be handled under a separate contract; the return of original documentation is expected to be via First Class mail. At this time, the Agency does not foresee a reason for bulk mailings under this RFP, but wishes to maintain this flexibility (e.g., as an option for mailing reject notices generated by the PowerImage system under a disaster recovery scenario).

Q10. For outgoing mail being sent to foreign addresses, are there any declarations to be made or tariffs we should be aware of?

No. As indicated in Q2, bulk outgoing mail will be handled under a separate contract.

Q11. After successful extraction is confirmed, are envelopes retained to be shredded or discarded? If they are discarded, can they simply be thrown away or does the Agency require any special handling?

Section C.4.4.a.iv requires the contractor to securely store paper documents (including envelopes) for a period of 60 days after receipt. All documents with identifying personal information must be shredded. The disposition of documents (including envelopes) should be described by the offeror based on experience and best practices.

Q12. The RFP Section C.4.11.b states that in instances where money (checks, money orders, drafts, or cash) is received in the general mail, the contractor shall establish specific procedures for handling it. Does the Agency have current procedures for the disposition of such items and if so, what is that procedure? Also, will the Agency come to collect it or will the contractor be required to deliver the “funds”? If the contractor is required to deliver, where will that location be and who is authorized to receive the “funds.”

The offeror should describe the procedures it will follow when funds are received in the mail room and how those funds will be protected and accounted for until they are forwarded for processing. Funds received in the vendor’s mail room will be sent either to the Agency’s lockbox contractor or, if they are identified as a rollover into the Thrift Savings Plan, to the Rollover Processing Unit in New Orleans. They are required to be sent by overnight delivery.

Q13. What is the current Agency procedure for content reunite (ensuring accurate processing by reuniting the contents of the envelope should there be an unsuccessful extraction)? (Section C.4.2.c.i.4)

The offeror should propose its own procedure for this process.

Q14. The RFP Section C.4.5.iv states that “reject” notices are automatically generated by the PowerImage software, but are mailed by another contractor. Will this still be the case when the facility moves from the Washington DC metro area? Where are these “reject” notices physically printed? Who is responsible for stuffing the envelopes? Who is responsible for delivering them to the other contractor? Would the Agency consider including this task under this contract?

See RFP 2006-R-002. The Agency will not consider including these tasks under this RFP.

Q15. Will the new contract require courier/messenger services between the contractor’s facility and Agency offices or elsewhere?

No

Q16. Please provide a breakdown of incoming mail volume by category (First Class, certified, registered, etc.).

Over 95% of the mail received is First Class. The remainder is a mixture of overnight delivery and registered or certified mail.

Q17. What is the percentage of incoming faxes from overseas participants?

The toll-free fax number is for domestic calls only.

Q18. In addition to the incoming mail activities described in the SOW, are any other tasks required in processing the incoming mail (e.g., manual logging, barcode scanning, etc.)?

Manual logging is not required. At this time, scanning barcoded incoming mail is also not required.

Q19. Are the incoming mail and facsimiles from TSP participants only? Is any other mail received?

As explained in Section C.4.2.a, mail and faxes are received from participants, their beneficiaries, and other third parties (financial institutions, attorneys, agencies and components of the uniformed services). That section also describes the types of mail received.

Q20. How many post office boxes are required and what is their purpose. What post offices are used?

This RFP anticipates that the contractor will be responsible for only one general post office box unless it is determined that others may be necessary. See the TSP Web site, [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov), Contacts, for a complete list of the post office boxes used by the Agency and their purposes. The contractor under this RFP will not be responsible for the special use boxes (e.g., death and legal processing, rollovers). The Agency is prepared to change the general post office box number to accommodate the award of this contract.

Q21. Has the incoming mail been irradiated?

No.

Q22. On average, how many documents per envelope are associated with incoming mail and for faxes?

This information is not tracked.

Q23. On average, how many pages per document are associated with incoming mail?

This information is not tracked.

Q24. What is the percentage of duplex pages?

Although this information is not tracked, all of the TSP forms are simplex. Correspondence, legal process, and death correspondence may be duplex.

Q25. What are the peak hours for faxes? What is the peak hour for the greatest volume and what is the actual fax volume at that time?

The Agency is not tracking peak and hourly volumes.

Q26. What is the percentage of mail (envelopes) received via third party? Are there special handling procedures for third party mail?

This information is not tracked since all mail is handled the same whether it is received from a participant or a third party.

Q27. Are the forms standard or are there different variations of each of the forms?

There are two versions of most forms – civilian and uniformed services. Almost all of the forms are available for review on the TSP Web site, [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov).

Q28. How are the documents identified for indexing: By title? By barcode? By code? Also, is there any sorting of the documents prior to imaging? If so how many sorts?

Documents are sorted prior to scanning based on the form type, document type (legal process, death correspondence, general correspondence), and other classifications as appropriate. Barcoding on the forms is not currently used. See Attachment 2 for the work queues.

Q29. Are the work queues defined by the document type? If not, how are they defined?

They are defined by document type.

Q30. How many types of forms are there?

There are currently 39 forms; most have two versions, civilian and uniformed services. See the TSP Web site, [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov), for samples.

Q31. How is correspondence handled through the PowerImage system?

The correspondence is scanned and indexed into the correspondence work queues. Other business units are then responsible for the tasks.

Q32. Will checks and money orders require imaging?

No. If received, these items are immediately forwarded to other business units for processing. See Question 12 above.

Q33. What are the indexing fields and the average characters per field?

The indexing process consists of entering a participant's Social Security number (SSN) so that it can be easily retrieved in future. Once the operator adds the participant's SSN and verifies that the participant's name on the form matches the name in *OMNIPlus* (the Agency's record keeping system), a duplicate transaction search is conducted, using the participant's SSN, to reject multiple forms submitted by the participant. The forms that trigger a duplicate transaction search are: TSP-20/U-20, TSP-21/U-21's, TSP-70/U-70, TSP-75/U-75, TSP-76/U-76, and TSP-77/U77. The form then advances to the identification queue for OCR/ICR. If the SSN on the form is invalid or the names do not match, the task will be rerouted for further research.

The Social Security number field is 9 characters in length.

Q34. What is the historical percentage breakdown by types of incoming mail represented by the 55,000 number? What is the historical breakdown by types of the incoming faxes represented by the 40,000 number? (Reference Section C.2)

The Agency does not track the breakdown by type of the incoming mail vs. faxes. The majority of mail and faxes are the various forms. See Question 1 and Attachment 1 for additional information.

Q35. What is the historical percentage of partial or incomplete faxes?

This information is not tracked. Partial or incomplete faxes are generally routed to the participant correspondence queue for handling by the correspondence unit located in one of the call centers.

Q36. What is the historical percentage of faxes that are required to be split into multiple queues?

This information is not currently tracked. The ability to split most faxes (without printing and rescanning the forms) is available within the PowerImage system.

Q37. What is the historical percentage of faxes not entered into the workflow system?

All faxes received on the toll-free line are automatically placed into the workflow system.

Q38. Please define how the Agency is using the term "documents." Are these multi-page, single page, single side?

All of the above.

Q39. What is the percentage of faxes included in the 98,000 documents per month?

See Question 1 and Attachment 1.

**DATA ENTRY:**

Q40. From our understanding, the workflow process for data entry involves taking sorted and appropriately queued documents and entering them by queue into AnyDoc. Is this correct? If not, can you provide more specific information?

This is correct. Also see Sections C.4.5 and 6 regarding review steps and associated services.

Attachment 3 provides three documents explaining the processing of three forms (easy, moderately hard, and hard). Similar documentation will be provided for all of the work queues covered by this RFP. In addition, training aids (e.g., how to data enter foreign addresses) will be provided.

Q41. Is there an approximate number of documents for data entry on a monthly basis, or are all electronically scanned documents subject to the data entry process?

Although almost all of the mail (and all of the faxes) are imaged, not all are data entered. For example, participant correspondence is scanned and indexed under this contract, but the processing of the correspondence is handled by another business unit. For the past five months, on average, 3,000 forms per day were data entered.

Q42. The synopsis references the following volume figures: 55,000 pieces of incoming mail per month; 40,000 incoming fax images. (Section C.2) Of the 98,000 documents that require imaging, is this 98,000 a combination of the incoming mail and faxes plus an additional 3,000 or is this 98,000 documents completely separate? (Section C.4.4.a)

See Question 1 and Attachment 1.

Q43. Can the Agency provide specific circumstances where there would be a need for the second step for the review of documentation? (Section C.4.5.a)

Examples are provided in the subsection. These include review of residential loan documentation to ensure the loan is being used to purchase a primary residence, confirmation of a joint annuitant's birth date (reconciliation between form and birth certificate), forms that the data entry operator cannot process, etc. The Agency will provide procedures for those forms requiring documentation reviews. However, the contractor may also include second step reviews as part of its QC/QA process.

Q44. What accuracy of ICR will be required?

At this time, the data entry is not dependent upon the ICR functionality.



Q45. Please provide samples of all e-forms being used.

The data entry function only has one e-form associated with it. (See Attachment 4.) The remaining e-forms are associated with other business units.

Q46. What is the percentage of documents that require a second review?

The two forms (residential loan agreements and joint annuity requests) requiring a document review were less than 5% of the total forms processed over the past six (6) months. The percentage of other forms requiring review will vary depending upon the data entry personnel's level of experience, QC/QA procedures, etc.

Q47. Are the form templates already developed or is the vendor required to develop them?

The templates are already developed.

Q48. If a document fails to pass edits, the document is rejected and a letter is sent to participant by another vendor as part of the out-going mail process. What is the percentage of these documents? Can the vendor awarded this contract perform this function as well?

Approximately 23% of the forms do not pass edits. The mailing of the reject notices will not be performed under this contract.

Q49. When a form is referred for reprocessing, does this document need to be rescanned? If not, what is the process?

See Attachment 4 for a sample e-form and an explanation of the basic process. A form would only have to be rescanned if it was illegible.

Q50. If a fax were received where the document needs to be reprocessed, how would this situation be handled? Should the sender be contacted?

If a fax is received and cannot be processed, it is generally routed to the participant correspondence unit to be handled. Contacting the participant is not the responsibility of the contractor under this RFP.

Q51. What is the average amount of time spent researching a single document?

This element is not tracked for all forms. It varies depending upon the reason why the document is being researched and the experience of the researcher. For reference, the review of loan documentation generally takes less than 5 minutes per form (approximately 13,000 residential loan agreements were processed within the last six months). Reprocessing a form may take longer depending upon the problem to be researched.

Q52. What are the business rules and how often are they amended?

The Agency will provide data entry and review documentation to the contractor after contract award. The business rules are stable unless a new benefit is introduced or a process is revised. This does not happen often. See Attachment 3 for a sample of the data entry procedures.

Q53. Are there documents that need to be completed in less than 2 business days? If so, what is the percentage?

See Attachment 2.

Q54. What is meant by “how will documents be reunited after extraction”?

The offeror should describe how documents will be extracted from the envelopes and then kept together (or reunited if they become disassociated).

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT:**

Q55. Approximately how many full time equivalents (FTEs) are performing the work identified in this RFP today? (By task, if possible) Is there any person-hour use data available for the requested positions?

The Agency expects the vendors to determine their estimates of full time equivalents (FTEs) based upon the volume of work.

Q56. In Section C.4.6.i, to determine manpower needed, how often are image edits performed? How often do special action queues occur? State as a percent of total mail pieces.

All forms are edited as they are data entered.

The Agency has not quantified the special action queues because most have been in existence for less than six (6) months. However, the experience to date is that approximately 1,000 forms per month require manual review because the Social Security number of the participant cannot be located by the system (e.g., the account has not yet been established or the participant used the wrong form type) and less than 50 forms per day require reprocessing.

Q57. Will all employees on the contract require a National Agency Check with Law and Credit (NALCL) prior to working in the facility? Will U.S. citizenship also be required to work on the contract?

All employees must pass a financial and criminal background check. If the prospective employee is not a U.S. citizen, he or she must have a “green” card. Personnel

working on this contract will be required to sign a confidentiality statement. (The Agency has a standard confidentiality statement available for its contractors).

Q58. Are there any collective bargaining agreements currently in effect? If so, will the new contractor be required to honor them?

No.

Q59. Will the employees of the current contractor have the right of first refusal to positions on the new contract?

No.

Q60. Can you provide any existing plans under which you are currently operating? For example, QA/QC Plan, Disaster Recovery Plan, Metrics, any plans and procedures currently in place to protect Identify Theft, etc?

No. As indicated in Sections C.4.8, 9, and 10, we require that the successful offeror develop these plans. No special guidance has been given as to how these plans should be formulated, and the Agency expects that companies experienced in this type of work would and should be knowledgeable enough to proposed business solutions that meet Agency Time Objectives and reflect commercial best practices.

Q61. With regard to the QA/QC plans, FP Section C.4 Scope, 10, who will conduct the independent reviews and audits? Will the Government, or will the contractor be required to hire an independent entity to do them?

The plans should incorporate reviews and audits by internal company personnel to ensure that the business unit is in compliance with the stated procedures, metrics, etc. The contractor can also expect audits by Agency personnel as well as the Agency's independent audit firm and the U.S. Department of Labor in its Thrift Savings Plan oversight capacity.

Q62. Are there any limitations on the transition period (period between contract award and the time the contractor takes responsibility for the delivery of the SOW services) or is it completely up to the bidder to propose.

The Agency expects the offeror to include a reasonable and realistic transition plan in its proposal. The Agency does not anticipate that the transition should take more than 120 days (including the hiring and training of staff).

Q63. The RFP Section F.2 Optional Period of Performance states that the contractor will receive written notice to exercise an option 30 calendar days prior to the expiration date of the current period of performance. According to the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN), contractors are required to provide written notice of a potential layoff to their workers 60 days in advance. Will the Agency consider

extending the notice to exercise an option to 90 calendar days prior to expiration so that the contractor will not have to send out potentially premature layoff notices before knowing whether the option was exercised? The potential layoff notices could lead to instability in the workforce if the workforce believes it has lost its job a month before a decision is made.

WARN covers plant closings and mass layoffs. An employer does not need to give notice if a plant closing is the closing of a temporary facility, or if the closing or mass layoff is the result of the completion of a particular project or undertaking. This exemption applies only if the workers are hired with the understanding that their employment was limited to the duration of the facility, project, or undertaking. However, the Agency is willing to consider extending the notice period.

Section F.2 states that if an option is to be exercised, the Contracting Officer will provide written notice at least 30 calendar days prior to the expiration date of the contract or the previous option period as appropriate. The offeror should indicate in its proposal whether additional time is required to meet its workforce obligations.

Q64. During what days/hours must the facility be staffed?

The offeror's proposal should identify its planned operating hours and days of operation. (See question 6 of Attachment A.) Note, however, that the contractor must be available to Agency staff as necessary for communications. The Agency's workweek is Monday through Friday; it is open normal business hours.

Q65. Regarding faxes, the RFP states that faxes will be received 24/7; however, is there a start and stop time for these faxes? If so, what are the times?

Faxes are received 24/7. There are no start and stop times. They are date and time stamped when they are electronically placed in the fax work queue.

Q66. Are there any restrictions on the locations of the contractor's facility and back up facility (e.g., within one-day drive of Washington, DC, within the continental U.S.)?

Section MA.1 states that "Any and all sites used to perform the elements of Section C of this Request for Proposals are within the continental United States" and that services must be restored within 24 hours. Site planning should reflect and recognize the impact a regional outage might have on compliance with these requirements.

Q67. There are no positions listed under "Key Personnel," yet offerors must submit resumes for Key Personnel with proposals. What positions are considered Key Personnel?

Key personnel are those persons who will have a significant role in a contract arising from this solicitation. Key Personnel are essential for the successful completion

of all work assigned under this contract. At a minimum, this would include the project manager. The offeror must identify additional personnel.

Q68. Please define the scope of work and current staffing levels of the “Customer Service Unit.” (Reference M.A.2.)

This is the dedicated unit (or units) that would accomplish the functions of the RFP.

Q69. Can the Agency provide current performance metrics for operators performing scanning, indexing and data entry using the software applications described in the RFP?

No.

#### **DISASTER RECOVERY:**

Q70. What are the specifics of the backup site requirement in the RFP? Are you looking for a backup site? Are you envisioning this as a “hot” site? If not, what is the vision. Does a current business continuity plan exist? Will the contractor have access to that plan or will it be required to originate the plan from scratch and conduct all required fact finding.

The Agency expects the offeror to describe its backup and disaster recovery practices in the RFP. A specific plan for the services under this contract is due within 60 calendar days of award of the contract. At a minimum, the plan must ensure minimal disruption (less than 24 hours) to Agency services in the event of a disaster or power outage and the contractor must have access to at least one geographically distinct backup facility that is capable of supporting the Agency’s work in the event that the primary site is disabled. See Section C.4.12 and C.4.1.

No special guidance has been given as to how this plan should be formulated, and the Agency expects that companies experienced in this type of work would and should be knowledgeable enough to propose business continuity solutions that meet Agency Time Objectives and reflect commercial best practices.

Q71. What geographical distance is required between the contractor’s primary facility and BCDR?

The Agency has not specified a distance between the two sites. The offeror must propose the sites it will use. For reference, the Agency’s current sites are more than 250 miles from their related counterparts. The only restrictions are that the facilities must be within the continental United States, and that services must be restored within 24 hours. Site planning should reflect and recognize the impact a regional outage might have on compliance with these requirements.

Q72. Will the contractor also be required to prepare a Disaster Preparedness plan and test that plan on an annual basis? Will the testing be hands-on actual or simulated testing?

Section C.4.12.a.iii indicates that the contractor will be expected to provide testing guidelines; the Agency expects that testing will be conducted. The contractor should include a proposed testing schedule in its BCP (which would include disaster preparedness) which demonstrates the efficacy of the plan.

Q73. Under RFP Section C4.12. it is stated that the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) must be submitted no later than 60 calendar days after contract award. Under RFP Section M Evaluation Factors, B.d.3, it is stated that the BCP will be reviewed during the evaluation process. Will the Agency provide clarification?

In its proposal, the offeror should describe its BCP(s) and how they would be applied to the services under this RFP. The intent is for the Agency to access the offeror's experience with BCPs and its existing level of disaster preparedness and recovery. The BCP referenced in Section C412 would be tailored specifically to the services to the Agency under this contract.

#### **TECHNICAL ISSUES AND SECURITY:**

Q74. How many telecom lines are currently in use by the Agency to handles these 40,000/month faxes?

One PRI line with 23 channels.

Q75. Is the contractor required to provide toll-free (800) lines to the facility for facsimile? If so, how many lines are required? Does that include provisions for toll-free overseas calls? Do they reside on a Digi card type of device or singular modems?

Section C.4.2.c.i.3. provides that the contractor will be responsible for procuring, installing, and maintaining the facsimile telecommunications lines (toll-free). Currently, the toll-free fax number is for domestic call only. The Agency uses the PI-FAX capability within PowerImage.

Q76. Are there federal or local regulations that we can refer to for guidance on securing data, etc?

The Agency ensures that its systems are properly certified and accredited according to OMB Circular A-130, Management of Information Resources, the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2004, and National Institute of Technology guidance contained in NIST 800.

FAR clauses incorporated in the RFP by reference deal with data security and should be reviewed. The full text may be found at [www.acqnet.gov](http://www.acqnet.gov).

Q77. Is there a requirement for the Agency network to be FIPS 140-2 compliant to meet all the security requirements of the Federal Government?

Yes, see Question 78.

Q78. The RFP states that “Reports should be accessible via a secure Internet connection...” What standards will apply to determining the security of a connection? For example, will FIPS 140-2 or PKI architecture be required?

The Agency currently uses a variety of secure internet connections, including FIPS 140-2 compliant Cisco VPN encryption. The offeror is expected to propose the method to be used based on its current or best practices.

Q79. Do the requested security plans exist today? If so, will the contractor have access to them in order to update them or determine if an entirely new set of plans would be advisable? (Section C.4.8.a).

The Agency expects that the security plans developed by the contractor would be incorporated into its existing comprehensive plan. Agency security personnel will be available to the contractor to discuss systemic issues, but the contractor is expected to develop a security plan tailored to its facilities, system technology, and operations.

Q80. What are the requirements to connect to the live Agency database? (Section C.4.4.a)

It will be the responsibility of the selected vendor to ensure the capture and documentation of specific processes/requirements during the transition period.

Q80. Does the data get updated directly into the Agency database or does the contractor have to have a staging area where, after QA, data is then pushed to the Agency database.

Once the data has been entered, edited, and any review steps completed, the PowerImage application immediately sends the formatted transactions to the Agency’s record keeping system (OMNIPlus). The contractor does not have to “stage” these transactions. See the CD entitled “PI CBT” Version 1 for an overview of this process.

Q81. From RFP Section C.4.c.i.3, will the Agency provide a specific definition of “reasonable workload increases”?

No. However, for reference, the toll-free fax number has only been available since September 2005. Currently, the average usage is between 1,500 and 2,000 faxes per day and this volume has been stable. The Agency’s requirement for accommodation of “reasonable workload increases” can be estimated within that context.

Q82. Because there are multiple products and vendors on the market named “AnyDoc”, can the Agency provide the name of the vendor providing this software and the version of the software in use?

See <http://www.anydocsoftware.com>

Q83. With regard to the Participant Service Representative (PSR) application mentioned in RFP Section C.4.6.b, what is the nature of the additional information provided by this application? What specific function(s) will the contractor be performing that requires his access to this application?

The PSR application is primarily used by the Agency’s call centers to respond to participant and other inquiries. The application is used as a research tool by reviewers who may be researching why the system failed to recognize a Social Security number, whether the participant submitted the wrong form type (i.e., civilian vs. uniformed services), confirmation of questionable addresses (e.g., if a data entry operator forwards a form because he or she cannot read the address), etc. Access would be restricted to selected reviewers; the application is not generally used by mail processors or data entry operators. Training in the use of the application would be provided by the Agency.

Q84. Will the Agency more fully describe the contractor’s total responsibility for supporting the PowerImage software product?

The Agency will provide funding for and hold software licensing and maintenance agreements to support PowerImage.

Q85. Will the contractor be required to make modifications and/or enhancements to the PowerImage dashboard?

No.

Q86. What is the name of the Agency currently paying for software licensing and maintenance costs to support PowerImage?

See Section C.4.5.ii. The Agency is currently paying for software licensing and maintenance costs to support the PowerImage system. That arrangement will continue for the successful offeror.

Q87. What scanning hardware is currently being used?

Kodak 3520 and Adreneline SCSI adaptors.

Q88. Does the PowerImage CD provide information on the software (e.g., capabilities, hardware requirements, sample PI reports). If not, will the Agency provide this information to offerors?



It will be the responsibility of the selected vendor to ensure the capture and documentation of specific processes/requirements during the transition period. See the SungardEXP web site ([www.sungardexp.com](http://www.sungardexp.com)) for information about PowerImage.

Q89. What is the preferred server platform?

All Agency hardware acquisitions are by full and open competition.

Q90. What is the preferred server hardware manufacturer?

All Agency hardware acquisitions are by full and open competition.

Q91. Please provide the quantity, versions, levels of licenses, and module levels for the Sungard, PowerImage, RightFax, and AnyDoc tools.

It will be the responsibility of the selected to ensure the capture and documentation of specific processes/requirements during the transition period.

Q92. What network topology is currently running with respect to line speed from client to switch and to Network Operations Center (NOC)?

Client to Switch 100Mbit  
Network to NOC 384k PVC (1.1KBPS)

Q93. How many concurrent licenses will be needed for access to the ERMS files and associated data?

The Agency handles the software licensing. It will be the responsibility of the selected vendor to ensure the capture and documentation of specific processes/requirements during the transition period.

Q94. Are there any specific network server requirements with respect to set-ups, security, and/or service packs? If so, will the Agency provide them to Offerors?

It will be the responsibility of the selected vendor to ensure the capture and documentation of specific processes/requirements during the transition period.

Q95. Will the contractor be responsible for the data line connection from the contractor's facility and (BCDR) to the NOC? If so, who is the current and/or preferred service provider?

The selected vendor will be responsible for recommending and implementing a solution that reflects commercial best practices.

Q96. Can the contractor's facility and BCDR be managed by their own respective network containers, or do these services need to reside as member servers to the trusted domain?

The selected vendor will be responsible for recommending and implementing a solution that reflects commercial best practices.

Q97. Will the contractor be providing tier one support for their respective document management products listed in the RFP or will this fall upon the selected vendor?

The selected vendor will provide Tier 1 support.

Q98. Is all the digital processing to be performed as processed (i.e., live streaming), or at specific times during the required two-day turnaround period?

The processing is live streaming.

Q99. Please identify the Agency's record keeping system, including version number, level of software, platform and screen shots.

The Agency is currently using Sungard's OMNIPlus record keeping system, and is in the process of upgrading to version 5.4.5. Screen shots are not needed for this solicitation and will not be provided.

Q100. Is there any system degradation associated with PowerImage Workflow and AnyDoc?

None that we are aware of.

Q101. What is the percentage of ICR/OCR verify versus Key From Image? Can the data be repaired? How is the re-verified data processed with OCR 2<sup>nd</sup> pass?

The ICR/OCR percentage is very low. At this time, most forms are keyed from the image rather than repaired.

Q102. Is the vendor required to use any or all components of the PowerImage Workflow? Can the vendor propose alternative solutions?

The Agency's workflow process uses the PowerImage application. It does not anticipate moving to another application at this time. In addition, the vendor will use RightFax and AnyDoc. There are provisions in the Statement of Work which encourage the successful offeror to recommend improvements.

Q103. Does the Agency intend to provide the software and maintenance agreements for RightFax and AnyDoc?

See Section C.4.4.a.ii. This includes RightFax and AnyDoc.

Q104. Will the contractor be responsible for administration of the PowerImage system only at its location?

Yes.

Q105. Will the contractor be responsible for administration of a PowerImage system at the Agency?

No.

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

Q106. Typical Government proposal instructions allow resumes and similar reference documents to be included in an Appendix, and front matter such as cover pages, table of contents, etc. to be included with a contractor response, but which would not be subject to the RFP defined page limitations, as long as the relevant sections are clearly marked and labeled. Should the contractor assume that this is also true for this solicitation?

The FRP instructions limit the Cost proposal to 20 pages. However, the 20 pages will be needed for the explanation of pricing, CPFF buildup for 6 years, monthly pricing charts for 2 years, and support for labor/indirect/travel/subcontractor pricing. Will the Agency permit a table of contents (1 pg), SF33 (1 page) RFP Section B 91pg), Section K Representations and Certifications (4 pgs per company), and Financial Statements (over 50 pgs per company) to be excluded from the page count?

No. Section L.1.a. states that the Technical Proposal must be limited to 30 pages; Section L.1.b states that the Cost/price Proposal must be limited to 20 pages. Resumes, tables, and reference documents would be included in the count.

Q107. What is the NAICS code for this solicitation?

NAICS Code :561990 – All Other Support Services

Q108. Based on government procurement standards, the technical proposal is not supposed to have cost information included. Therefore, should the contractor assume that questions 37-41 in Attachment A are to be answered in the cost proposal?

Yes.

Q109. Section H.7, Submission of Financial Statements, requires a quarterly submission of financial statements reviewed and/or audited by an independent public accountant licensed by the state of incorporation.

- (a) Public corporations are required to have the financial statements audited annually, not quarterly. Would FRTIB consider revising its requirement from submitting quarterly audited financial statements to submitting financial statements annually?

No. As explained in Section H.7.1, the contractor has the option of submitting reviewed (as opposed to audited) financial statements. The Agency requirement that quarterly financial statements (either audited or reviewed) will not be revised.

- (b) Independent certified public accountants are licensed in the states where they work, not necessarily in the state where the corporation is incorporated. Would it be acceptable for the independent public accountant to be licensed in the state where the corporation operates vs. the state where incorporated? Will the Government please clarify this requirement?

We will allow auditors licensed by the state where the corporation operates if that is the company's situation. This should be noted in the proposal.

- (c) My company does not have a state or federal audited financial statement. Will the Agency allow a grace period or transition period for obtaining this accounting certificate?

The basic requirement is that the company must submit financial statements reviewed by an independent certified public accountant licensed by the state of incorporation or state in which the company operates. State or federal audited financial statements are only required if the contractor is required by federal or state law to submit audited financial statements (to the Federal Government or state). In this case, these statements must also be submitted to the Agency.

There will be no grace or transition period for the submission of the required financial statements.

Q110. Is a Certificate of Current Cost of Pricing Data required to be submitted if the RFP was competitively bid?

Yes, certified data may be required for any modifications.

Q111. In general, Government proposal instructions recognize the need for allowing different font standards for tables, charts, and graphics. May the contractor assume that judicious use of tables, charts, and graphics which enhance readability and clarity of the contractor's proposal may vary from the RFP defined minimum font size defined for proposal text as long as the utilized font, e.g., 9-point, is easily readable?

Yes, the 10-point requirement is for text.

Q112. The following statements appear to conflict with each other. Will the Government please clarify these requirements? Which is correct?

- (a) Ref: L.1.b.2. “Provide the costs for years one through six of the project...” (Note: aligned with Section B)
- (b) Pricing Question 37. “Provide the costs for years one through five of the project....”
  
- (a) Ref: L.1.b.3. “Include a table listing your best estimate of overall costs by month for the first two years of this contract.” (Note: aligned with Section B)
- (b) Pricing Question 38. “Include a table listing your best estimate of overall costs by month for the first year of this contract.”

This contract is for a two (2) year initial period with two 2-year options. The cost/price proposal should include all six (6) years of costs as stated in Section L.1.b.2. as described in that section. The answer to question 37 should provide cost data to the level required in that question for five (5) years. Similarly, the cost proposal should include the table required by Section L.1.b.3. with monthly estimates for two years. The answer to question 38 should only include one year by month of data to the level required by the question.

Q113. Will you provide us with a format for the requested resumes?

No. The offeror should determine the best format for its proposal.

Q114. Is this RFP a full and open competition or is there any particular acquisition strategy (e.g., small business, 8(a), GSA)?

This is a full and open competition.

Q115. Will the new contract be governed by SCA requirements?

The Agency operates from nonappropriated funds and it has been determined that the Service Contract Act is not applicable to our procurements.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Q116. Is this work currently being done by the Agency or is there an incumbent on this project.

This work is being performed by SungardEXP of Birmingham, AL, under a contract with SI-International. (The contract number is TIB-2005-0767.) This contract

began October 1, 2005, and is for an initial period of 6 months with two additional 6-month option periods. The value of the initial period is \$1,042,320. This is a time and materials contract; it is not available for review. (NOTE: SungardEXP was the Agency's backup and recovery site for these services and was activated during Hurricane Katrina. This contract is for emergency business continuation services.) Both of these companies are eligible to compete for this solicitation.

Q117. What group within FRTIB is leading this effort? When can we meet with them to discuss the requirements? Will there be a bidder's conference?

The Offices of Automated Systems and Participant Services are leading this effort. Because there will not be a bidder's conference, potential offerors may not meet with Agency personnel to discuss requirements.

Q118. If the services are being provided by an incumbent, what is the drive to bid this requirement?

The Agency is issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for all of its Thrift Savings Plan record keeping and software support services. Through these solicitations, it is seeking contractors that can improve services to the Agency and the Thrift Savings Plan participants while lowering costs. In addition, the current contract is for emergency business continuation services related to Hurricane Katrina and is, therefore, not a long-term arrangement.

Q119. Are site visits of the incumbent's facility allowed?

No.

Q120. How long should data be maintained/archived?

See Section C.4.5.iv for the storage and disposition of paper documents after they have been imaged. The maintenance and archiving of the electronic images are not covered by this RFP.

Q121. How are online requested handled?

Online requests are handled by the record keeping system. They are not covered by this RFP.

Q122. Is the vendor responsible for call center services?

No.

Q123. Can the Agency provide clarification as to what would constitute a "loss to the client"? Can the Agency quantify the maximum potential financial claim that would be associated with errors or omissions? (Reference Section M, Question 14.)

A loss to the client means that the Agency would be responsible for the costs associated with correcting participant accounts due to data entry or other errors or omissions by the contractor. Erroneous disbursements of funds due to data entry errors are an example. The Agency cannot quantify the maximum potential claim because it would depend upon the circumstances, the extent of the error, and, in some cases, the ability of the Agency to retrieve the funds or make the account whole.