

RFP 325-06-10-002 IV & V
IV & V - Independent Verification and Validation
Final Questions and Answers

Section: 0.0

Topic: Validation Activities

Question #: 382

Question: Reference Attachment C: Reference is made to "start-up phase of all Project contracts" yet the term start-up phase is not defined in the RFP. Please clarify the definition of the term "start-up phase." When does it start? How long does it last? What activities occur during the start-up phase? Are the "start-up phases" of the DDI and IVV projects simultaneous?

Answer: The start-up phase is for the overall Project, and is defined in detail in the DDI RFP. Essentially, it is the period at the beginning of the Project during which the direction and processes for the Project are defined and implemented with all teams' assistance. The start-up phase is currently planned to begin in early April 2006, and will last approximately 2-3 months. It is also our plan that essential Project activities, such as a MITA pre-assessment, may be started during the start-up phase as practicable to accelerate the Project's schedule and activities.

Section: 2.1

Topic: Schedule of Events

Question #: 366

Question: The scheduled date for Written Responses to Bidder's Questions (January 31) is precariously close to the Closing Date for Receipt of Bid Proposals (February 10). Would the state consider extending the submittal due date to give bidders an opportunity to incorporate any significant changes or explanations that may arise from these questions?

Answer: As noted in the cover letter to this RFP, the State is endeavoring to procure these services on a "fast track" procurement effort, due to the overall Project's timeline. If there are specific issues with the time frame for preparing the proposals, the vendor may contact the Procurement Officer to discuss those issues.

Topic: General

Question #: 390

Question: What is the term of the contract?

Answer: The overall Project schedule is for a 25-month effort, beginning on April 3, 2006; and culminating in a currently planned "go live" date of April 24, 2008. We expect the IV&V vendors' proposals to define their efforts within the overall Project schedule.

Section: 2.2.2

Topic: Deadline for proposal submission

Question #: 375

Question: Please confirm the deadline for proposal submission. The February 6, 2006 date conflicts with the schedule table which says February 10, 2006

Answer: The correct date is February 10, 2006.

Section: 2.3.3

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Topic: Bidder Qualifications

Question #: 367

Question: Reference is made to "Key Personnel," yet nowhere else in the RFP are Key Personnel defined. What are the state's intentions & expectations regarding designating any personnel as 'key?'

Answer: "Key personnel" is intended to be those senior vendor staff, e.g. team leaders, lead analysts, test tool specialists, etc., who are responsible for delivering the vendor's services on this Project.

Section: 2.3.4

Topic: Proposed Solution

Question #: 368

Question: Reference is made to "...distributed nature of the Medicaid Systems Project's efforts..." Please elaborate on what the distributed nature is.

Answer: The current plans, as requested in the DDI RFP (#325-05-10-016) call for a new system replacing MMIS, POS and DSS/DW, using modern technology, supporting CMS' MITA model with service oriented architecture, with involvement of multiple vendors to fill specific roles. This reference addresses the need for the State to implement and use management and control processes to ensure a successful conclusion to this Project across the planned multiple vendors.

Topic: Proposed Solution

Question #: 369

Question: Bidders are instructed to complete a deliverables-based Work Breakdown Structure which, among other things, is required to identify time & cost at the task level, dependency at the task level, and decomposition to the task level. Presumably, the IV&V contractor's work plan must align with the system integrator's work plan provided as Attachment I. However, that workplan does not identify the level of detail in terms of phases; releases; integrator tasks (for example, requirements capture/validation, design development, testing, et al); necessary to align the IV&V tasks with those of the integrator. Is a more detailed plan available and can it be made available in MS Project electronic form?

Answer: We agree that the IV&V schedule must be integrated into the overall Project's schedule, especially in conjunction with the DDI vendors' efforts. The Project's work breakdown structure, and attendant schedule, will be finalized during the start-up activities of this Project. Our request here is for a preliminary schedule to help the State better understand the scope of effort being proposed by the IV&V vendor, and a better understanding of what services go into the costs associated with that effort. We do not expect the IV&V to implement the schedule as defined in the proposal, but to further detail it during the start-up phase to reach a final, manageable schedule.

Topic: Including costs at the task level of the schedule

Question #: 376

Question: 1st paragraph 2.2.2 "Bidders must ensure that no reference to cost is made in part (a) bidder and proposed solution". Conflicts with 2.3.4 "Work Breakdown Structure which includes...Identification of time and cost at the task level"
Please resolve the contradiction.

Answer: As a follow-up to question #369, as well as this vendor question, specific costs should not be included in the technical proposal.

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Topic: Clarification on "each service" proposal submissio

Question #: 380

Question: Section 2.3.4 states "submit bids for part or all of the services requested. For each service for which the bidder is submitting a proposal, the proposed solution will have the following sections: Executive Summary - Project Approach and Management - Project Schedule - Required Services."

"Will it be acceptable to submit a single, comprehensive IV&V technical response that addresses each service (Verification and Validation) Service Requirements separately?"

"Will it be acceptable to submit a single cost proposal that includes separate staffing descriptions and pricing for Attachment B (Verification) and Attachment C (Validation)?"

Answer: The State's intent in releasing this RFP is to procure a single IV&V vendor to provide ALL of the services as defined in the IV&V RFP. Therefore, the vendor is to submit a single technical proposal, with service descriptions divided between the verification effort and the validation effort. Costs should be equivalently broken out to follow the service offerings, again in a single cost proposal.

Topic: Proposed Solution

Question #: 385

Question: We are somewhat confused by what we view as an apparent conflict in this section. Early on, you state that proposals must address all RFP requirements. Subsequently, there is an acknowledgement that companies may wish to submit bids for only a portion of the requested services. If a bidder elects to submit a proposal covering the entire scope of work, may that bidder provide one Executive Summary to the entire proposal? Similarly, might that bidder offer one Project Approach and Management Section covering the full complement of services?

Answer: As described in responses to other questions, the State intends for the successful bidder to provide ALL IV&V services as described in the RFP. An Amendment is being issued to correct the misleading statements regarding portions of services.

Topic: Proposed Solution

Question #: 386

Question: Could the State provide more information as to its intention and the implications for bidders with respect to the following RFP quote: "...DHS will implement cross-team processes and procedures that address and coordinate all vendor's activities."

Answer: Please review the response to question #368.

Topic: Scope of services

Question #: 391

Question: Please clarify whether or not vendors must bid to provide all services required for the project. In Section 2.3.4 of the RFP, the second paragraph states that "due to the scope of services being requested in this RFP, DHS anticipates that bidders may wish to submit bids for part or all of the services requested. For each service for which the bidder is submitting a proposal, the proposed solution will have the following sections..." Section 1.6.10 states that DHS may "award part or all of the RFP services to one or more vendors." However, these assertions are contradicted by the RFP Cover Letter that accompanied publication of the RFP, which states that "DHS will select one contractor to provide verification and validation services for this Project. Bidders must offer a Bid Proposal for the entire IV&V effort as described in the RFP." In addition, Section 2.2 of the RFP states that "the bidder's proposal must address all IV&V services described in this RFP as a consolidated set of services."

Answer: In response to question #380, the State clarified the intent to procure ALL IV&V services from a single vendor, i.e., the successful bidder will be providing both verification and validation services as described in the RFP. An Amendment will be issued to correct the specification in section 1.6.10 and 2.3.4.

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Topic: Scope of services

Question #: 392

Question: Section 2.3.4 of the RFP provides instructions for addressing Section 3, Services to be Provided. Does the state expect separate proposals for each service, i.e. a verification services proposal that includes all sections described in Section 2.3 and a validation services proposal that includes all sections described in Section 2.3?

Answer: The State intends for each vendor responding to this RFP to provide a single technical proposal, with description of efforts divided between verification and validation, as well as any cross-over services, such as management, reporting, etc. The cost proposals should equally identify separate costs for verification and for validation, as well as the total for the entire IV&V effort.

Section: 2.3.5

Topic: Hardware and software for IV&V team

Question #: 377

Question: "including...:....Hardware and licensed software test tools, VPN and software maintenance"
Will IV&V contractor access to Medicaid systems be limited to VPN technology?
What is the test application used for this project?
Are there any specifications on the anti-virus and anti-spyware software?

Answer: The State is very aggressive in controlling access to the State's network. Onsite vendor staff will be included in our security system (active directory) and will not need to use VPN unless using the State's wireless network (which is outside the State's firewall). Note that VPN access is a charge-back service at \$5 per month per machine regardless of use.

The currently planned test application is Segue for client testing, defect tracking and test management; and Mercury Interactive for load/stress/performance testing.

As for the anti-virus/anti-spyware, any machine connected to the State's network must comply with current State and Departmental standards, which will be provided during the start-up phase. In general, these standards require active licenses to anti-virus and anti-spyware software for each machine, as well as current updates to the operating system, browsers, etc.

Topic: Cost Proposal

Question #: 387

Question: Does DHS anticipate also providing access to a photocopy machine for the bidder's use in preparing work products and deliverables or should the bid anticipate the cost of production?

Answer: The DDI RFP (#325-05-10-016) addresses State-provided facilities in greater detail than does this RFP. In response to this specific question, no, photocopy services will not be provided free to vendors. The State MAY provide photocopy services at cost; that request will need to be evaluated relative to the lease for the machines leased for the State's use. Local copy services are also available in the community and through the central State government duplicating services.

Section: 2.4

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Topic: Rating scale and evaluation points details

Question #: 379

Question: "% of the total evaluation points"
What is the rating scale for elements in each proposal?

Answer: The specific evaluation criteria, including a breakdown of points for each element in the proposal will be disclosed once a letter of intent to award is issued, per State procurement laws. The intent of this specification in the RFP is to let vendors know that the nature of the proposed services are weighted significantly higher than are the associated costs for those services.

Section: 3.1

Topic: Project Goals

Question #: 381

Question: In 3.1, reference is made to "start-up activity phase of the Project" yet this period is not defined anywhere in the RFP. Further, in Attachment B several activities are due "after the beginning of the start-up phase of the IV&V contract." The "start-up phase" of the IVV project is not defined anywhere in the RFP. Can the State please clarify the definition of these terms and distinguish the difference between "start-up phase" of the IVV project from the "start-up phase" of "the Project" as used in Section 3.1? Will the DDI project(s), i.e., DSS/DE, MMIS and POS, along with the IVV project all be starting simultaneously?

Answer: Please refer to the response provided for question #382.

Topic: Project Goals

Question #: 388

Question: The RFP logically states that the selected IV&V bidder cannot have any other involvement in the project, obviously in order to maintain both independence and objectivity. However, the Audit Services component from the prior procurement remains under consideration by DHS for final selection. This poses a quandary for potential bidders to the subject RFP as many of these same bidders have also proposed to provide Audit Services. Will the announcement of the selected Audit Services bidder be made timely by DHS, so as to avoid any unnecessary expenditure of effort and cost on the present IV&V Services bid?

Answer: The Letter of Intent to Award for the Audit services will not be made until after the February 10, 2006 due date for IV&V proposals.

Section: 3.2.1

Topic: Changes to Medicaid Systems Project RFP

Question #: 374

Question: Has the contract negotiation process resulted in any changes to the requirements presented in Medicaid Systems RFP 325-05-10-016?

Answer: The requirements for this Project have not changed, i.e., there has been no change to the Project's scope. However, current plans are that the State's IT Department will play a larger role in staffing specific areas of the Project.

Section: 3.4

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Topic: Required Services

Question #: 370

Question: The successful bidder is required to perform its responsibilities throughout the term of the contract yet the contract term is not specified. Please specify the contract term, including any option periods. Also, the IV&V contractor is expected to actively participate in all meetings and to contribute IV&V expertise to all remaining phases of the Medicaid Systems project. Does this imply that all IV&V personnel are expected to be on-site full-time throughout the contract term or some other period? Please elaborate on the term 'remaining phases.' What are they, how long do they last, what level of IV&V expertise is expected to be available, and how are services to be compensated?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question #390 for contract term.

In order to be effectively engaged in the overall Project, we do expect key personnel from all vendors to be onsite during the Project for project meetings, as well as meetings of the Incident Management Review Board, Software Configuration Review Board, and other meetings as required. The vendor's proposal needs to address the vendor's planned staffing model, and what staff will be co-located with the Project team, so we can plan the appropriate facilities.

"Remaining phases" refers to all of the anticipated Project phases from start-up through implementation. Please refer to the DDI RFP #325-05-10-016 for a description of the anticipated project phasing, which followed an IEEE standard. Although we plan to follow this IEEE structure on this Project, in fact we have described in the DDI RFP an incremental approach that will follow IEEE within each increment once the Project progresses past the high-level design phase.

Services will be compensated according to the guidelines defined in the IV&V RFP Section 3.7, and as further defined in contract negotiations.

Section: 3.5

Topic: Staffing Requirements

Question #: 371

Question: Bidder is required to take into account the build strategy. We understand the concept of the build strategy approach; however, can the State provide any additional detail on the number of 'builds,' and the duration of the build cycles. How much time is allotted in each build cycle to requirements capture/validation, design, development, testing? Is there expected to be an incremental deployment approach as well, or will the entire system be deployed in one deployment effort?

Answer: The detailed "build" or incremental approach will be defined during the start-up phase, and finalized at the conclusion of the requirements verification and validation phase.

Due to the nature of the Medicaid claims processing business, as well as significant conversion issues, a phased approach to deployment would be extremely difficult to conduct. Therefore, the deployment effort is planned to be a one-time cut-over from the current system to the new system.

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Topic: Staffing Requirements

Question #: 383

Question: What number of state resources will be assigned to the project and in what roles? Will they be assigned full-time? Are these staff assigned/available to both the DDI and IVV contractors?

Answer: The State has defined two business-related groups to be a part of this effort. The first is an advisory group, comprised of non-DHS personnel, mostly from outside organizations, such as provider associations, who can be included in limited Project efforts. The second is a business team internal to DHS who will serve as subject matter experts for the entire Project, as well as being the key resources to conduct the validation effort.

The specific composition of the business team has not been finalized.

Topic: Staffing Requirements

Question #: 384

Question: What is the governance structure of the overall project? What is the relationship between the IVV project manager and the state's PM? With the DDI contractor(s) PM(s)?

Answer: The preliminary governance structure is provided in the DDI RFP.

The IV&V PM will report directly to the State's Project Manager, as will the DDI PMs.

Section: 3.5.2

Topic: Resources

Question #: 372

Question: The bidder's key staff are expected to be full-time on-site. The RFP does not identify which staff are key. Please elaborate on which staff are considered key, or is the designation of key staff left to the bidder?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question #367.

Topic: Resources

Question #: 389

Question: The RFP contains the following statement: "The bidder's proposed key staff must be available and located with the North Dakota Project staff during the Project on a full-time basis." Is the expectation here that all staff designated as "Key Persons" must be assigned to the project for its duration on a full-time basis and be on-site for all of that time or, rather, is the expectation that for the time a "Key Person" is assigned to work on the project he or she must be on-site full time? May a "Key Person" be assigned to the project on less than a full-time basis as the scope of work permits, and may that person conduct some work off-site, again as the scope of work allows?

Answer: Due to the incremental nature of the overall Project's development effort, as well as the new technologies and architecture, the IV&V efforts are expected to be on-going for a significant portion of this Project. As such, the State expects "key persons" from all vendors to be on site for the duration of the vendor's planned efforts.

Planned off site work effort by any vendor must be specified in the proposal for the State's evaluation.

Section: 3.6.1

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Topic: Standards

Question #: 373

Question: The bidder is expected to provide an initial detailed work breakdown structure (WBS) yet the project schedule provided as Attachment I provides no detail as to the discrete tasks, durations, and dependencies of the system integrator's work plan and schedule to use as a reference. Can the state provide a more detailed project work plan, preferably in MS Project electronic form, which the bidder can use to construct its work plan?

Answer: Please refer to the response to question #369.

Section: 3.6.3

Topic: Deliverables standards

Question #: 378

Question: "...bidder must obtain DHS written approval for any deviations from specified deliverable formats, tools, standards..." Have these standards been established? If so, may we get a copy of them or samples?

Answer: The specific standards for this Project will be defined by the Project's Program Office during the start-up phase of this Project, and will be reviewed and accepted by all vendors. Vendors may request changes to the proposed, or finalized, standards through the Project's change management procedures.