

QUESTION AND ANSWER #5
MHBE IT Consulting and Technology IDIQ

BPM031490
11/10/2022

Question: During the current Pre-bid conference, someone asked the question if the forms can be filled out directly on the PDF. There is pdf software that lets you fill in the blanks without changing the form. Is it okay to do that rather than printing the form off and filling them out by hand, as was suggested during the conference?

Response: The responses can be entered with any software as long as the forms and the agency's contents on the forms are not altered in any way.

Question: We hope all is well with you; we wanted to reach out and see if there was a recording available for the preproposal conference held today at 11am for solicitation number BPM031490? Can you please let us know? We would be most grateful if it could be shared. Unfortunately, we were not able to ask for the invite timely but wanted to have all available info so we can prepare a good proposal for our service offering. Thank you for your time and have a great week!

Response: We don't have a recording; however, the pre-proposal conference was transcribed; the entire conference minutes will be posted on eMMA and MHBE's website.

Question: In Joint Ventures (JV's) respond? This would mean that the past performance of the JV members could be submitted as the JV – which would give the State added advantage of having access to additional resources (i.e., each member of the JV).

Response: A legally formed Joint Venture organization (JV) as an Offeror can respond to the RFP. It should be noted that the proposals must clearly outline how the JV Offeror qualifies for all the RFP requirements as would any other Offeror submitting a bid proposal as an independent legal entity.

Question: As per Clause 2.4.4 Subcontractors - we need to provide a complete list of potential subcontractor. In case, we identified any new subcontractor post contract award, will we be able to add those subcontracts at a later stage?

Response: Section 2.4.4 Subcontractors has been removed from the RFP.

Question: Is there any font limit to the proposal format?

Response: Even though this RFP does not restrict the usage to specific fonts and font sizes, the Offerors should use their best judgment to ensure better readability of their proposals.

Question: Could we submit the sample copy of the COI at the time of proposal submission?

Response: The proposal to this RFP should include proof of insurance, such as the Certificate of Insurance (COI). If the Offeror is selected for an award as a Master Vendor of this contract, the Offeror will be required to submit a COI naming the State/MHBE as an additional insured on the policy at that time.

Question: In the pre-proposal conference, we heard that this contract will only be used to solicit resumes for staff augmentation purposes and not for project work. Will MHBE be using the CATS+ contract for project work?

Response: MHBE is not intending to use CATS+ contract for project work at this time.

Question: Section 2.4.4 requests to provide a complete list of subcontractors with a full description of job duties. At this time, offerors will not know the task areas being awarded and might not intend to use any subcontractors. Can we reconsider this requirement?

Response: The language under Section 2.4.4 Subcontractor has been removed from this RFP.

Question: Do you have an existing vendor/s supporting MHBE related to IT Consulting and Technical Support Services

Response: There are 98 master vendors that are currently approved to provide resources under various functional areas. The current contract expires on June 30, 2023.

Question: Please share names of the existing vendors and their role

Response: There are 98 master vendors that are currently approved to provide resources under various functional areas. The list is provided in a separate file to be posted to eMMA and MHBE's websites as Appendix V

Question: Why are you looking for changing the existing technology vendors?

Response: MHBE's current IDIQ contract expires on June 30, 2023. This solicitation is issued to establish an IDIQ contract vehicle for procuring contract resources to support MHBE's IT functions. Please refer to Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of this RFP for more details.

Question: How many vendors are you looking to empanel using RFP # BPM031490 Via IDIQ contract?

Response: There is no cap set for the number of Master Vendors to be awarded.

Question: Do you have secured funding for the IDIQ contract?

Response: MHBE's IT funding requests are made on an annual basis. It is anticipated that MHBE will have a budget allocation of approximately \$30 million in FY24 for the IDIQ contract. It should be noted that several factors not limited to budget, market conditions, State's needs, and other circumstances may impact MHBE's budget allocation and spending under this contract.

Question: Would non-American entities (offshore IT Consulting companies) be allowed to bid for this opportunity?

Response: No. Please refer RFP Section 4.25 Verification of Registration and Tax Payment for more details.

Question: For Managed Services related to App Support, Database Support and Middleware support, are you expecting 24x7x365 support or what?

Response: This RFP intends to award qualified Offerors as Master Vendors to provide consultant resources to support MHBE IT functions. This is not a managed services contract procurement. Please refer to Section 2, Scope of Work, for more details.

Question: Do you expect us to bring to bear 1-800-MHBE call center support too to provide Members Support, Providers Support, Technical Support, Operations support (Enrollment, Claims) etc.?

Response: No. This RFP intends to award qualified Offerors as Master Vendors to provide consultant resources to support MHBE IT functions. This is not a call center support services contract procurement. Please refer to Section 2, Scope of Work, for more details.

Question: Is there a preference for local vendor (based out of Maryland)?

Response: All Offerors are required to be registered to do business in Maryland. Please refer to RFP Section 4.25 Verification of Registration and Tax Payment for more details.

Question: We are small business based out of Utah. Is there a preference for SBE?

Response: There is no specific allocation for small business entities in this RFP. All Offerors are required to be registered to do business in Maryland. Please refer to RFP Section 4.25 Verification of Registration and Tax Payment for more details.

Question: Specific Questions related to SOW (Functional Areas from 1-10)

- 2.5.1 Functional Area One – Enterprise Service Provider (ESP)
 - Please provide details of the agency architectures and State IT standards,
 - Please provide details and status of interoperability ASKs (FHIR, HL7) with other systems, networks, payers, and providers
 - Please provide details of your existing COTS products related to a) Enrollment b) Claims c) CRM and d) Finance
 - How many FTEs or 3rd party IT consultants are currently helping with roles and responsibilities pertaining to Enterprise Service Provider (ESP – Section 2.5.1) in the as-is present state vis-à-vis future state owing to RFP?

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.2 Functional Area Two – Web and Internet Systems

- Please share the scope of work related to solutions and support required related to a) web and Internet; b) design, develop, test, implement
- Please provide details of support required to maintain web sites, portals, web applications and web services
- Please provide details of associated hardware, software, network, and security components that comprise these solutions
- How many FTEs or 3rd party IT consultants are currently helping with roles and responsibilities pertaining to Web and Internet Systems – Section 2.5.2) in the as-is present state vis-à-vis future state owing to RFP?

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: Section 2.5.3 Functional Area Three – Electronic Document Management (EDM)

- Please provide the as-is status of electronic document imaging, document management & document workflows deployed at MHBE

- Please provide details of associated technologies (or COTS) currently deployed at MHBE for electronic document imaging, document management & document workflows
- Do you prefer EDM COTS like SharePoint, MS Team, or you wish to focus on Open Source EDM platform like WordPress etc.?
- How many FTEs or 3rd party IT consultants are currently helping with roles and responsibilities pertaining to Electronic Document Management – Section 2.5.3 in the as-is present state vis-à-vis future state owing to RFP?

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.4 Functional Area Four – Software Engineering (SE) or Project to Product Engineering (PPE)

- Please provide methodology used or preferred at MHBE related to SDLC?
- Please provide the COTS / Technology Platform used at MHBE related to a software development, Process definition; requirements management (project planning, quality assurance, project tracking and oversight)?
- Please provide details related to MHBE as-is (present state) organizational process focus; software metrics; software process assessments; software capability evaluations; software project management & software certification?
- Please provide details of MHBE as-is (present state) Open Source related to software architecture; software reengineering; software reuse; software security; configuration management; and CASE tools. This will help us to understand baseline and present future state best practice

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.5 Functional Area Five – Systems Management and Maintenance (SMM)

- Please provide current (as-is) details of Systems Management and Maintenance services
- Please provide necessary details related to your existing Data Center (on-prem or AWS cloud or Hybrid)
- Please provide what all Applications, Database Systems, Middleware is on AWS cloud today (as-is) and plan for future assessment and migration
- Please provide your existing SLAs and list of vendors providing current System Operations, Technical Support and Help Desk Services

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.6 Functional Area Six – Information System Security (ISS)

- Please share who currently manages your network security?
- Please share if MHBE follows 2FA and Data Security – Data Masking (DM) / Data Encryption (DE)? If yes, who provides these services (Google, Symantec, MS, IBM, Protegrity, Darktrace, SolarWinds, AWS etc. or In-house)?
- Please share if MHBE subscribe to a real-time treat auditor and alert services? If yes, who provides these services (Google, Symantec, MS, IBM, Protegrity, Darktrace, SolarWinds, AWS etc. or In-house)?
- Please share if MHBE has multiple Data Centers and has written DR policies. If yes, pls. share the as-is Data & Disaster Recovery (DR) policy for us to build or propose global benchmarked Future-State focused on compute, storage, network, data security as well as disaster recovery planning and risk assessment

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.7 Functional Area Seven – Application Service Provider

- Please share details of Present State (as-is) software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and API services or Desktop Applications employed by MBHE related to Cloud
- Please share details of Present State (as-is) software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and API services or Desktop Applications employed by MBHE related to Finance & Financial Integrity?
- Please share details of Present State (as-is) software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and API services or Desktop Applications employed by MBHE related to Human resources (HRM) – Workday etc.
- Please share details of Present State (as-is) software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and API services or Desktop Applications employed by MBHE related to Portal / E-commerce (Employee Portal, Member Portal, Health Exchange – Compare & Buy etc.
- Please share details of Present State (as-is) software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and API services or Desktop Applications employed by MBHE related to Production, Order management, Collaboration and Automation tools, Webhosting and Knowledge management

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.8 Functional Area Eight – IT Auditing, Testing and Quality Assurance Services –

- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE IT Audits and Quality Assurance (QA) including the frequency of audit and summary reporting

- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE IT Audits and Quality Assurance (QA) on data security and data accuracy
- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE IT Audits and Quality Assurance (QA) on customer privacy, business processes, and customer satisfaction
- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE IT Audits and Quality Assurance (QA) on mainframe, client/server, WAN/LAN, Cloud, Databases, App testing, Pre-production testing, post-production testing (UAT), regression testing, test automation etc.

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.9 Functional Area Nine – IT Management Consulting Services –

- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE policies on IT Service Management (ITSM). Any preferred COTS (ServiceNow) or Methodology
- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE policies on IT Service Management (ITSM). Any preferred Methodology related to System Engineering or IT enterprise architecture
- Please share the existing documentation and policies (As-is) related to MHBE policies on App Dev and Maintenance, project management services etc. Any preferred COTS (ServiceNow) or Methodology (CICD Pipelines, LowCode etc.)
- Please share total strength of IT Team at MHBE today including Management Team, CIO and CISO. If possible, please share the ORG Structure.

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: 2.5.10 Functional Area Ten – Documentation/Technical Writing

- Please share and paint the current (As-Is) picture on how far MHBE has graduated to Digital Transformation (DT)?
- Please share the current (As-is) standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to maintain and manage MHBE IT Systems
- Please share the current strength of Business Analyst (BA / BSA) related to documenting business workflows, IT System, Network and Architectural diagram, Training, Presentation, Proposal writing etc.
- Please share the current strength of Testers and Automated Script Test Writers to support MHBE current stacks, current projects and current implementation?

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: As we prepare our response, we have the following questions:

1. Section 2.5.5 Functional Area Five sub-section 2.5.5.1 Data Center and System Operations Technical Support on page 15: While we can support functions related to IT equipment (server, storage...) we also have a group within Kyndryl with tremendous experience related to Data Center Physical Infrastructure. Can you please clarify if this section of the RFP is referencing any data center related services such as:
 - a. Data Center design, build, or renovation?
 - b. Data Center work related to physical space, power, cooling, or lighting?
 - c. Data Center monitoring systems?
 - d. Data Center physical security?
 - e. Data Center command center?
 - f. Data Center connectivity (fiber/copper)?

Response: We cannot provide such details. Please refer to Section 2.2, Background and Purpose, for more details relevant to this RFP.

Question: Can resources be remote? Are there requirement for on-site? Can offshore/nearshore (remote) resources be utilized?

Response: At this time, MHBE is operating on a hybrid work schedule requiring all positions to be on-site at the MHBE office location two (2) days a week. All the work performed remotely (off-site) must be performed located within the United States.

Question: Are there citizen requirements; US, H1B, Green Card etc.?

Response: The Master Vendors selected for Award under this contract must ensure that the candidates submitted for any Request for Resumes (RFR) are legally eligible to work in the US.

Question: Is it ok to give onsite and remote rates?

Response: The Offeror must ensure that all the rates quoted are fully loaded, including any and all anticipated expenses to support this contract.

Question: If there are no exceptions taken, the Offeror is to state that they have no exceptions to the requirements of this RFP, the Contract (Attachment I), or any other attachments. Exceptions to terms and conditions may result in

having the proposal deemed unacceptable or classified as not reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

Response: As noted in Section 4.2.1, Mandatory Contractual Terms of the RFP, a proposal that takes exceptions to the terms of the RFP may be rejected. It is in the best interests of the Offeror to explicitly state that they have no exceptions to any of the requirements of this RFP.

Question: Is the pricing in the pricing sheet the ceiling price or is it the price on which the evaluation is done. Meaning, as long as we have provided pricing for all functional categories, will the proposal be evaluated, and award made on technical merits alone or Technical and Financial combined?

Response: The pricing sheet of the Offeror should reflect the maximum price (or ceiling price) for that particular Labor Category and contract year. Please refer to Section 6.4 Financial Criteria and Section 6.2 Evaluation Criteria of the RFP for more details.

Question: RFP Section 2.1.1 states “The Master Contracts awarded as a result of this solicitation will provide MHBE with a flexible means of obtaining IT resources quickly and efficiently through the issuance of Task Order Requests for Resumes (RFR) specific to its needs.” Will the task orders for this contract result only in Task Order Requests for Resumes for individuals to support MBHE, or will there also be Task Order Requests for Proposals for full projects?

Response: This IDIQ contract is utilized to hire contract resources (individuals) through the IDIQ Request for Resumes (RFR) process only.

Question: RFP Section 2.1.2 states “Offerors may propose to one, several or all functional areas.” Section 5.5 Financial Proposal states “Offerors must propose pricing for all labor categories to be considered for Award.” Please clarify whether Offerors must propose pricing for labor categories in functional areas on which they are not proposing.

Response: As labor categories may overlap across functional areas, it is important that Offerors propose pricing for all labor categories.

Question: Will this be a multiple-award IDIQ contract? How are subcontractors identified?

Response: Yes, this is a multiple-award IDIQ contract. Regarding section 2.4.4, it has been removed from the RFP.

Question: Section 3.1.9, the insurance needs to be provided after the award within five business days. However, on page 43, section 5.4.1.7, it says to submit the proof of insurance with the response. Could you please clarify if we need to submit the insurance certificate with the response or after the award notice?

Response:

The proposal to this RFP should include proof of insurance, such as the Certificate of Insurance (COI). If the Offeror is selected for an award as a Master Vendor of this contract, the Offeror will be required to submit a COI naming the State/MHBE as an additional insured on the policy at that time.

Question: Are responses to the RFP only to be submitted via e-maryland marketplace or should it be emailed to the procurement officer as well?

Response: Responses should only be submitted via eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (EMMA).

Question: Do you require only Attachment B-2 in excel and in pdf format as part of the financial proposal.

Response: The Financial Proposal should be saved as a PDF document in the format that was provided

Question: 5.4.1.6 Past Performance - What specific evidence is required in bullet A. Is it sufficient to provide details in bullet B and C to cover the evidence asked in bullet A.

Response: Section 5.4.1.6(A) relates to the Offeror's evidence of its capabilities to provide services, while 5.4.1.6(B) and 5.4.1.6(C) relate to examples of the Offeror providing such services.

Question: 5.4.1.5 Offeror General Information, 5.4.1.6 Past Performance - What different information is required in 5.4.1.5 Bullet B. Will it be same information that we will be covering in 5.4.1.6 A, B, C.

Response: Section 5.4.1.5 requires the Offeror to provide general information related to its business, its ability to provide the services, and its fiscal integrity. Section 5.4.1.6 focuses more on the specific examples of providing such services.

Question: Page 2 of the RFP is a State of Maryland Notice to Offerors/Contractors – please clarify where in the response this form should be included as it is not listed in the forms section.

Response: The non-response form can be copied and pasted as a separate document for your submission.

Question: Please provide information on the number and dollar amounts of the Task Orders issued under the previous IDIQ.

Response: On average, various Task Orders were awarded for a total of \$23-33 million annually to hire 100-150 contract resources from 20-35 Master Vendors since 2018.

Question: Is the government able to confirm when they will return answers after the Q+A period ends on November 14th? If not, the turnaround time between submitting questions and submitting a bid is very small and may deter vendors from submission.

Response: Our turnaround time for addressing Q&A will be no later than five calendar days before the closing date

Question: Does the government have an estimate of their projected spend on this effort, and how many Master Contracts will be awarded?

Response: There is no cap set for the number of Master Vendors to be awarded. As noted earlier, on average, various Task Orders were awarded for a total of \$23-33 million annually to hire 100-150 contract resources from 20-35 Master Vendors since 2018. However, it should be noted that several factors not limited to budget, market conditions, State's needs, and other circumstances may impact MHBE's budget allocation and spending under this contract.

Question: Our organization is protective of our financial information and would like to keep it secure as much as possible. Would the government accept a statement of fiscal integrity with the offer of financial paperwork at a later date upon consideration of the bid?

Response: A mere statement of financial integrity by the Offeror cannot be accepted as sufficient proof under the commonly accepted method to prove fiscal integrity. Please refer to Section 5.4.1.5(C) of the RFP for more details.

Question: Will the government consider State of Maryland Experience as an evaluation criteria with other past performance, or is past performance only evaluated through experience in the functional areas?

Response: Past performance in all the functional areas is not required if the Offeror is not bidding for all the functional areas. The Offeror may bid for specific functional areas that their experience warrants and submit evidence of expertise and past performance relevant to these functional areas.

Question: Does the government require all positions to be in-person or remote? If remote, does the government have any geographical restrictions on where virtual workers can be based?

Response: At this time, MHBE is operating on a hybrid work schedule requiring all positions to be on-site at the MHBE office location two (2) days a week. All the work performed remotely (off-site) must be performed located within the United States.

Question: Our organization noted significant overlap between this and the CATS+ solicitation. Is the government able to clarify the reason for offering a new solicitation on this effort?

Response: MHBE's current IDIQ contract expires on June 30, 2023. This solicitation is issued to establish an IDIQ contract vehicle for procuring contract resources to support MHBE's IT functions. Please refer to Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of this RFP for more details.

Question: Section 3.1.4 states that all Master Contractor's must have insurance necessary under "the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act, and the Federal Employers Liability Act." Is the government able to remove this language, as it does not apply to any aspect of this contract?

Response: The language cannot be removed. Note that Section 3.1.4 states, "...maintain such insurance as necessary and/or as required.

Question: From section 3.1.5, is the government able to clarify the required Cyber Insurance limits?

Response: This statement only refers to specific Task Order RFRs to be issued to contract resources who may handle PII (Personally Identifiable Information) and FTI (Federal Tax Information). The details of cyber insurance limits will be provided in such RFRs as relevant.

Question: From section 3.1.2, can the government verify the reason contractors would need commercial truck insurance?

Response: The Offeror should note that the statement under Section 3.1.2, "...maintain Automobile and/or Commercial Truck Insurance as appropriate..." refers to the relevancy and appropriateness.

Question: Can we use Sub-Contractors Past Performance as a Sub?

Response: MHBE has removed Section 2.4.4 from the RFP.

Question: My question relates to the requirement stated in Section 2.4.4. In writing a proposal response to this IDIQ, it is not known, at this time, who our subcontractors, if any at all, will be for the duration of this IDIQ contract. In situations where there are MBE and/or VOSB requirements, we would seek partnerships at the onset and determine who will be our MBE and VOSB partners and disclose such subcontractors. In all our other IDIQ contracts, we will only seek subcontractors who we feel will contribute or help with a particular Task Order. It is a fluid situation, because we don't have a fixed set of subcontractors that we use. Since we can't determine future Task Orders of this IDIQ, we are asking if we can forgo or not list any Subcontractors in our response or ask that you remove this requirement (para. 2.4.4) from this IDIQ. Subsequent to an Award and in response to a Task Order, under this IDIQ, we would be happy to and able to comply with this requirement. Thank you for your consideration and I hope this question is clear.

Response: MHBE have removed section 2.4.4 from the RFP.

Question: Do we need to provide evidence of prime/subcontractor relationships such as teaming agreements?

Response: No.

Question: Will past performance from prime versus sub be given different weightage during the evaluation?

Response: No.

Question: Please confirm that Attachments B through G is excluded from the page limit.

Response:

This section has been removed from the RFP

Question: Are the required attachments for the technical proposal a part of the page count (25) limit?

Response:

This section has been removed from the RFP

Question: We are a reasonably new IT Service company. We do not possess a full 2 years of financial reporting. Can we present the financials we currently have to show our financial standing(s)?

Response: Yes

Question: Is there an actual start date?

Response: The services to be provided under this contract are anticipated to start on July 1, 2023.

Question: Do you accept Global delivery Model / work outside united states

Response: The services under this contract cannot be provided outside the United States.

Question: Since we got in late, Can you please provide an extension on the submission date.

Response: No.

Question: Can the clients/projects for the past performances be older than five years?

Response: There are no limitations on the number of years from the RFP response deadline the past performance should have occurred. Offerors should use their best judgment when responding with verifiable relevant experience(s) of demonstrable past performance(s).

