

Request for Information 89233222RNA000004 for the Management and Operation of the Pantex Plant

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is currently in the planning stages for the Pantex Plant Management and Operating (M&O) Contract competition. NNSA is interested in selecting and partnering with an Offeror who will: improve production and exceed mission objectives in an environment where there are several high priority concurrent programs and projects within a highly interdependent enterprise; modernize aging infrastructure and equipment; maintain effective and robust cyber and physical security and safety standards; recruit, develop, and retain talent at the Pantex Plant outside Amarillo, Texas; and potentially implement separation activities (e.g., information technology and cyber security operations) from the Y-12 National Security Complex during the contract transition period.

For the upcoming Pantex M&O contract competition, NNSA is contemplating changes to the structure and focus of the contract and to the evaluation criteria. NNSA is interested in encouraging competition and streamlining proposal submission requirements. NNSA is seeking ideas, comments, and insights from industry on the optimal fee structure, contract length, and contract structure that will best incentivize mission execution and performance at the executive, management, and workforce levels, throughout the contract term. We are also seeking ideas, comments, and insights regarding the practical factors that most significantly enhance or impede sustained mission and project performance at Pantex. In addition to this document, the following are available for public review at the SAM.gov and FedConnect:

- Section J Appendix A – Abbreviated Draft Statement of Work (SOW)—full SOW will be provided with the Draft Request for Proposal at a future date
- Notional Competition Schedule

NNSA is particularly interested in seeking comments from prospective Offerors on the following:

- **Fundamental Challenges and Opportunities Impacting Sustained Mission Success:**
 - What are the fundamental challenges and opportunities that are most likely to enable or impede sustained mission and project performance at Pantex?
 - What measures best define mission (e.g., weapons programs), project (e.g., infrastructure modernization), and functional (e.g., safety, security, and cyber security) success at Pantex?
 - How could a contract best account for the interdependence of the Nuclear Security Enterprise to optimize sustained mission and project performance at Pantex?
- **Contract Structure:**
 - What is the optimal contract term length and structure (e.g., option periods or award terms) to sustain high performance and why?
 - As a prospective offeror what are the pros and cons of award term contracts? Would this type of contract structure incentivize mission execution and performance? Why or why not?
 - Within the confines of the DOE Acquisition Regulation (DEAR) fee policy 970.1504-1-2, what is the optimal fee structure (e.g., fixed, award, incentive, hybrid) to sustain high performance and why? Please provide input on how such suggested fee structure would lend itself to evaluation in the contract competition. Please also identify any benefits or challenges with such proposed fee structure during contract administration.
 - As a prospective offeror what are the pros and cons of having a separate contract line-item number for construction projects?

- **Parent Company Involvement:**

- NNSA is interested in parent company(ies) contributing to contract performance without interfering with day-to-day activities. NNSA is seeking feedback on how we can best achieve this objective.
 - What would be the best approach to facilitate parent company contributions to sustained success?
 - What are the mission or project areas to which best-in-class experience (e.g., private sector, educational, and non-profit institutions) could be leveraged at Pantex to enhance mission success?
 - What are the impediments to applying commercial standards and experience at Pantex?

- **Challenges staffing and maintaining a Key Personnel team:**

- What challenges do offerors have in staffing a Key Personnel team at Pantex?
- What challenges do offerors have in developing a proposed management structure for a highly complex facility?
- What is the optimal timeframe commitment for Key Personnel and why?
- How can NNSA incentivize prospective offerors to attract and retain high-caliber Key Personnel for the duration of an M&O contract?
- What challenges do offerors experience in growing the pool of available leaders for key personnel positions?
- Of these two options, 1) Government determining positions that comprise the Key Personnel team or 2) Offeror determining positions that comprise the Key Personnel team, which option would lead to the best performance outcome?
- What challenges/opportunities do offerors see with the Government encouraging offerors to refrain from entering into exclusive agreements with proposed Key Personnel, so that an individual could be identified as a Key Person on multiple offers?
- As a follow on from the previous question, are there any challenges associated with the Government requiring that individuals proposed to fill certain Key Personnel positions may be proposed on only one offer? How many and what Key Personnel positions should require that an individual is proposed only on one offer? Why?

- **Evaluation Criteria:**

- What criteria are best for NNSA to determine the offeror that presents the best value to the government? What criteria offer the least benefit?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of using NNSA's previous evaluation criteria (i.e., Past Performance, Organization Structure and Key Personnel, Small Business Participation, and Cost) in evaluating Offerors' ability to perform the Statement of Work?
- Are there any other areas NNSA should evaluate for the Pantex competition? Why would this area or areas be beneficial?

- **Proposal submission requirements and barriers to competition:**

- What do prospective offerors like about NNSA's previous proposal submission requirements from the past five years?
- Please offer any suggestions on how to streamline proposals submission.
- As a prospective offeror, what are barriers to submitting a proposal?
- What assumptions or risks most significantly affect a) potential offeror's decision to bid and b) proposed fee rate?
- As a prospective offeror what challenges do the current planned schedule for this solicitation present?

- **Other comments:**

- Prospective offerors are welcome to provide any other comments.

Respondents may answer/respond to some or all questions. The draft documents and all information herein are subject to change at NNSA's sole discretion. Responses to these notices are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract.

All comments, suggestions, and feedback on the questions and documents listed above shall be submitted to SEB9@nnsa.doe.gov by **4 pm Eastern Time, February 13, 2023**. Responses shall be no longer than 10 pages.