

10 October 2001

ITC-RFQ-01-0008

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES:

Questions 1. “Does the 99.5 percent standard apply to source materials that are less than optimal source documents?”

How can the 99.5 percent standard be achieved without some cleanup?”

Responses 1. This question refers to information in Section 2.2.7 of the SOW, Attachment 1. The issue of optimal source documents for backfile is conversion is not relevant. The 99.5% standard is not intended to be applied to OCR Text. Backfile documents will be provided as Tagged Image Format File (TIFF) images plus an ASCII text file for control fields for each document. The 99.5% standard is intended to be applied in the following fashion. Each document is fully converted (i.e. all pages and parts), its images are in the correct order, and the content of the control fields is correct. While no specific standard is provided for the OCR of text in backfile conversion, the USITC does expect that a tool with at least 98% accuracy will be used for this purpose. No editing of the OCR text is expected. Note: The 98% standard for the tool is the same specification provided for the manufacturers rating for a tool for OCR of new documents (see SOW Attachment A, Tab 1, Requirement 2.03).

Question 2. “General Instructions to Offerors, Article 8 – GSA Pricing

Warranty is generally defined as a protection against defects in the product delivered – not an assurance of upgrades, updates and telephone support. As such, the Government should acquire maintenance services during the warranty period for upgrades and telephone support. It is requested that the Government delete the phrase “ From end of Warranty Period” in CLIN 0009 and revise Articles 9.2 and 9.3 of the SOW accordingly.”

Response 2. It is the USITC intent that during the 90 day warranty period and as part of the firm fixed price for CLIN 0001, the vendor shall provide upgrades and telephone support. Offeror should provide pricing accordingly.

Question 3. “General Instructions to Offerors, Article 11 – Best Value to the Commission

Will optional CLIN’s be included in the price evaluation? If so, will the proposed pricing for the optional CLIN’s be weighed equally with the mandatory CLIN’s?”

Response 3. Optional CLINs will be considered in assessing best value to the commission. Further weighting detail will not be provided.

Question 4. “Reference SOW Article 6 – Acquisition Strategy

This provision states that warranty for COTS products shall be the normal warranty that is offered by the COTS vendor. However, Article 10.1 states that a one-year warranty shall be provided for COTS products. It is requested that Article 10.1 be revised to state that the warranty for COTS products shall be the normal warranty that is offered by the COTS vendor.”

Response 4. Suggested change is accepted. However, in order to take into account the difference in value for different lengths of warranty, per section 10.1, offerors are reminded that if the standard warranty for COTS products is not one year, the length of the warranty period should be identified.

Question 5. “Reference SOW Article 6.0 – Acquisition Strategy

In the next to last paragraph of this provision, the Government states “Software Integration shall occur without the need to write special programs for this to take place.” If the Government is acquiring the hardware with only assistance from the Contractor, the Contractor cannot assure compliance with this provision.”

Response 5. Per the paragraph referenced in the question, “One of the tasks of the awarded integrator contractor shall be to work and coordinate with USITC so that the acquisition of hardware shall be that which shall meet the requirements of the overall EDIS-II.” The Government will not purchase hardware that the vendor states will not be compatible with the contractor’s solution.

Question 6. “Reference SOW Article 10.3 – Warranty, Maintenance and Support

In this provision, the Government states that the Contractor shall be the primary point of contact for telephone support and software updates (reference 1st bullet). Article 6. of the SOW states that the USITC, not the integrator, will purchase the hardware. Since operating system software is included with the hardware, the Contractor will have no privity of contract with the hardware vendor upon which to acquire software subscription service in order to provide the upgrades required by the Government.”

Response 6. It is anticipated that the vendor selected for integration will work at the operational level – not at the contract level – as USITC’s interface with the hardware providers. The USITC will provide the awarded contractor the information needed for executing this role.

Question 7. “Reference Article 10.3 – Warranty, Maintenance and Support

This provision requires the Contractor to serve as the single point of contact for support services – both hardware and software. Again, without privity of contract to the hardware delivery order, the Contractor cannot be responsible for the performance of the hardware provider.

For the reasons stated above, it is requested that the solicitation be revised to have the Contractor determine the hardware to be acquired and acquire the hardware under the Contractor's delivery order."

Response 7. See responses questions 5 and 6, above. Note: Based on market research, the USITC determined that it would be advantageous to the USITC to acquire hardware separately, via GSA contract.

Question 8. "Reference SOW Article 6 – Acquisition Strategy

This provision states that the integrator (i.e., Contractor) shall be responsible for installation and integration of the hardware as components of EDIS – II. Additionally, this provision requires that hardware integration shall occur without the need to write special programs. It is assumed that this effort will be provided under CLIN 0001 which is FFP. With the hardware yet to be identified, it is extremely difficult for any offeror to propose this effort on an FFP basis. It is requested that a CLIN for installation and integration of the hardware basis be incorporated in General Instructions to Offerors, Article 8."

Response 8. USITC does not intend to offer a separate CLIN for installation and integration of hardware. Any pricing uncertainty that an offeror might have given the existent pricing structure would not be eliminated. It is suggested that vendors assume the appropriate levels of effort based on their experience and the potential hardware they are apt to recommend for the USITC to purchase. As noted in the response to Question 5, USITC intends to purchase hardware from among the options specified by the contractor.

Question 9. "Reference SOW Article 15 – Testing

This provision states that "Beta" functional testing of the EDIS – II system shall be accomplished to ensure smoothness of operation in the "real" work setting. The test plan cited in the same provision specifies that the test plan developed by the Contractor shall include defined criteria for each item tested. It is requested that the provision for Beta functional testing be deleted from the SOW since acceptance of the EDIS – II system should be based on successful completion of the requirements of the test plan developed by the Contractor and approved by the Government."

Response 9. USITC requires a test plan to include Beta Testing.

Question 10. "Reference SOW Article 15 - Testing

This provision states that backfile conversion must meet an accuracy rate of 99%. However, Article 2.2.7 of SOW Attachment A states that the accuracy standard for the quality of the backfile conversion shall be 99.5%. Please clarify."

Response 10. See response to question #1, above. The 99% specified in SOW Section 15 should read 99.5% as specified in Section 2.2.7 of the SOW, Attachment 1.