

Q&A's received during the RSPA/OPS's April 23 BAA Briefing

Co-Funding of Projects

Q: It is difficult to arrange co-funding in time to submit the white papers. What if the co-funding is in progress but not finalized?

A: Co-funding needs to be finalized when the full proposal is submitted for review. In other words, white papers need not include finalized co-funding, though such expected co-funding should be explained. Full proposals will require finalized co-funding arrangements (letters of commitment, etc).

Q: We understand that past projects should not be counted toward the 50% contribution. Can an ongoing project be applied toward this 50%, even if some of the funding has already been spent?

A: Yes, assuming the potential project with RSPA is a continuation of the ongoing project. This must be clarified in your proposal. Also, the proposal should clarify how the additional funding from RSPA/OPS would accelerate the project timeline (e.g., time to market) or enhance the work that is currently being conducted.

Q: Can state funding be included as part of the co-funding?

A: Yes.

Q: If several organizations are collaborating on an R&D project, does it matter how the cost-sharing is allocated among the team, so long as the team intends to co-fund 50% or more of the R&D proposal cost?

A: No.

Collaboration with Other Submitters

Q: I would like to collaborate with other potential submitters? How can I get the names and contact information of people possibly interested in collaborating?

A: RSPA/OPS fully supports collaborative efforts among potential bidders. To facilitate collaboration, we are making available the list of people that have requested that we share their contact information. If you would like to add your name to this list, please send your contact information to warren.osterberg@rspa.dot.gov.

Q: Will you be posting questions received during the April 25 briefing in Denver?

A: Yes, they will be added to the web site shortly after that meeting.

Multi-Phase Projects

Q: For a multi-phase project, would this round of BAAs consider only the first/current phase?

A: Yes, but please clearly state in your white paper that the proposed project is multi-phased and briefly describe the anticipated timeline. Also, state clearly what milestones would be expected to be completed in this first phase.

Q: If I am asked to submit a full proposal for a multi-phase project, do I need to explain all phases of the project or only the first phase?

A: RSPA/OPS would like to see all phases of the project to understand the steps involved to get the product to market. We recognize that details of subsequent phases may be less than “firm” because they may depend on results of phase one activities.

Q: If I am submitting a multi-phase project, can I anticipate that future phases will be eligible through similar BAAs?

A: If your organization is selected for an award to complete the first phase of a multi-phased project, and the first phase is completed successfully and is accepted by the Government, we would not expect that your project would be subject to going through the competitive BAA process a second time. Normal procedures would call for the Government to make a “go/no go” decision for phase 2 at the end of successful completion of phase 1. Again, any “go decision” would be dependent upon funding availability and continued need for the product(s) to be provided as a result of your project.

Q: If we are awarded funding under one of the BAAs, and the project is a multi-phase project, will we have to compete in similar BAAs for future project phases?

A: No. See answer directly above.

Allocation of Current \$2.5 Million in BAA R&D Funds

Q: Is this \$2.5 million the total amount available for all three rounds of BAAs? If so, how will that amount be allocated among the three rounds?

A: \$2.5 million is the total funding we expect to spend for all three BAAs. RSPA/OPS has an internal estimate on how much we expect to allocate toward each BAA, but that may change depending on the quality and focus of the submitted white papers and subsequent full proposals.

Q: What is the expected number of projects you will fund and the expected amount of money you will spend on those projects?

A: It is entirely dependent on the submissions received, although we do not expect to allocate more than \$500,000 of Federal funding to any single project.

Fiscal 2002 Funding vs. Future Funding

Q: Are the three BAAs being funded with fiscal year 2002 funding or 2003 funding? If the BAAs are funded with fiscal year 2002 funding, will we have to complete the R&D in 2002?

A: Awards will be made with fiscal year 2002 funding. The research will not have to be finished in 2002.

Q: What is the expected future R&D funding?

A: The President has requested \$8.7 million in fiscal year 2003 for pipeline safety R&D.

Award Announcements

Q: Will you announce the awards after each BAA round or hold off until all proposals for all three BAAs are received?

A: After each round. This first round of awards are expected to be announced by

August/September 2002.

Project Milestones

Q: For those who are selected for an award, how will project milestones be agreed upon?

A: The Government (RSPA OPS and Contracting Office) and the awardee will mutually agree upon the milestones and deliverables during discussions prior to any award being made. During these discussions, funding amounts (both Federal contribution and cost share) will be finalized for each milestone/deliverable. These agreed to milestones and deliverables will become part of the Other Transaction Agreement (OTs).

Q: When is payment received?

A: Payments will be made based on completion and Government approval of the mutually agreed upon milestones/deliverables. Normal procedures with OTs include submission of quarterly status reports that describe progress made to date on each task under the project. The status reports will highlight all milestones completed and/or deliverables provided during the reporting period. Invoices/vouchers requesting payment for work accomplished during the quarter will accompany the status reports. Payments will be made no more frequently than quarterly.

Q: Once an award is made, who will the awardees be working with at RSPA/OPS?

A: A representative from the RSPA Office of Contracts and Procurement will be assigned to oversee the procurement, administrative, and legal aspects of the agreement and an Agreement Officer's Technical Representative will be assigned from the OPS to provide technical oversight. The technical oversight person may be from OPS headquarters or one of our regional offices.

Rejected Proposals

Q: Will you notify submitters of rejected white papers? Will you state why such papers were rejected?

A: Yes. We will notify submitters of accepted white papers first to request full proposals. Shortly thereafter, we will be notifying the submitters of rejected white papers and will explain why such white papers were not accepted.

Q: Can rejected proposals be resubmitted under a later BAA if applicable?

A: Yes.

Intellectual Property and Proprietary Issues

Q: If co-funding is 50/50, who will the intellectual property rights of the research belong to?

A: With infrequent exception, the intellectual property rights will reside with the awardee. This is one of the benefits of an Other Transaction Agreement. More information on this issue is available on our websites at: www.dot.gov/ost/m60/transactions/advehprg.htm and <http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/transactions/otsweb3.htm>

Q: If an entity submits a full proposal, how will proprietary information be protected?

A: Reviewers will be required to sign a non-disclosure certificate/agreement. If there is a direct conflict, a reviewer will not participate in the review of that particular proposal. If you are

concerned about the release of proprietary information, ensure that you mark applicable documents as “Proprietary.”

Miscellaneous

Q: Do all eight BAA factors outlined in the announcement have an equal weight?

A: Yes.

Q: Can an entity submit multiple projects together?

A: No. You must submit a separate white paper for each project. You may submit more than one white paper.

Q: Does RSPA/OPS have a preference for onshore pipeline projects vs. offshore pipeline projects?

A: No

Q: You stated that anyone could respond to these BAAs. Does that mean we can team with foreign partners?

A: Yes.

Q: You seemed to suggest in the presentation that RSPA/OPS is looking for “applied” rather than theoretical solutions to pipeline safety and would only consider “hardware-type” projects? Is this the case?

A: No. We are simply seeking good solutions that can contribute towards the integrity and safety of the nation’s pipeline network.

Q: The response date for the first BAA is quite soon. Does RSPA/OPS have any plans to extend this response date?

A: No. RSPA/OPS would like to finalize contracts on the Damage Prevention and Leak Detection R&D BAA by the end of September. Any extension in the response date would not allow us to do that.

Q: Do you plan to provide information on who is reviewing the white papers and project proposals?

A: No, other than to restate that it represents a collaboration between various parts of the federal government, the state government, and trade associations.

Q: Can you discuss the terms and conditions of any award?

A: As stated earlier, we will use Other Transaction Agreements(OTs) as the mechanism for award. A sample of an OT, which includes the typical articles (provisions), previously used by RSPA can be found at the following website: www.dot.gov/ost/m60/transactions/advehprg.htm

Q: On what website will today’s presentation be posted?

A: The presentation is posted on this web site:
<http://primis.rspa.dot.gov/rd/docs/4232502/0401briefings1.ppt>.