Questions and Answers

Solicitation: VA741-16-R-0153

Q. Can companies from Outside the USA apply for this?

A. *No, this requirement is strictly for companies within the United States.*

Q. Will the vendor need to come to the Governments location for meetings?

A. *No, all communications can be performed via the telephone or email.*

Q. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?

A. *No, all services will need to be completed within the United States.*

Q. Can proposals be submitted via email?

A. *Yes, submit proposals to Pedro.Arritola2@va.gov*

Q. Can only Veteran Owned Small Businesses respond to the RFP?

A. *Yes, this is a VOSB Set-aside.*

Q. Has a contractor performed similar work to this for the government in the past?

A. *Yes. Cetra Inc.*

Q. If available, please provide the incumbent contract number?

A. *VA741-16-F-0049*

Q. Why is this contract being re-competed?

A. *The current contract will be ending; this effort is to get a new long term contract put in place.*

Q. Under a joint venture proposal, where one member is a certified VOSB and the other is a small business concern, are you requiring that the joint venture be a verified VOSB or will the verified status of one member of the joint venture be sufficient so long as all other requirements are met as well?

A. *The prime vendor needs to be a certified VOSB. The prime vendor will need to do at least 50 percent of the work and shall maintain at least 50 percent of the revenue.*

Q. Does your organization have a standard proposal template recommended? If so, can you please provide?

A. Please refer to the Instructions to Offerors in Section E of the solicitation for specifics on proposal submission.

Q. What are the most frequently requested exotic languages? Which were requested in the last 12-month period?

A. What we've seen in the past for the most frequently requested exotic languages are: Korean, Thai, Dutch, Polish and Hebrew. All of these exotic languages were requested in the last twelve month period. However, things are subject to change based on volume.

Q. For standard languages, what is the average breakdown for Spanish vs German work?

A. Within the last fiscal year we sent 2021 German documents to be translated, and 1935 Spanish documents to be translated

Q. What is the average breakdown in terms of percentage for work into English vs out of English?

A. 95% for work into English; 5% for work out of English

Q. Are you planning to make one or multiple awards?

A. Only one award will be made for this effort.

Q. Are you looking for one rate per language group (Standard and Exotic) or can it be per language?

A. The rates will be for Standard and Exotic only.

Q. Are the tables in B2 part of response, i.e. total fixed price per contract year?

A. Yes the pricing sections will be filled out as part of the RFP response.

Q. The PWS indicates that there is no work on holidays or weekends. Does this mean that translators would not be able to access the system on these days?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a cost to get VA security clearance to access the CITRIX Access Gateway System (CAG)?

A. Yes, it costs $392 per person to have a background check completed.

Q. From the PWS it seems that source files will be static PDFs. Will translators be expected to recreate the source format or are you just looking for the translation of the content?

A. We are just looking for the translation of the content.

Q. What is the average word count per document and how many documents are typically uploaded for translation for the same language at once?

A. At this time we can't provide an average word count per document. Number of documents to be uploaded for translation can range from day to day.

Q. Will we be notified of documents to be picked up in the system for translation or will we just need to check the system regularly?

A. Need to have POC for vendor check system regularly and work with contract COR for number of documents to be translated.

Q. Section 11A indicates that ninety eight percent (98%) monthly accuracy is required. Is this based on on-time delivery or is linguistic accuracy measured as well and, if so, how?

A. It is based on on-time delivery.

Q. Are there penalties for late delivery of technical translation work?

A. Constant late delivery of translations could result in poor past performance ratings in CPARS.

Q. What are the contract payments terms? How is accelerated payment established?

A. Tis will be a Firm Fixed Price IDIQ contract; invoiced monthly; The awardee will be required to submit invoices electronically to receive accelerated payments.

Q. What is the total obligated budget for the current contract and the total contract value over the full contract term?

A. This will be a Firm Fixed Price IDIQ contract with a Ceiling of $4,914,920.00.

Q. Has the contract criteria changed since the original contract award and if so, please provide us with some of the more significant changes and requirements?

A. The contract criteria have not changed since the original contract award.

Q. Can you provide us with any minimum/maximum staffing ranges to assist in projecting resources, broken down into English translators/Exotic translators/Proofreaders?

A. No, at this time we cannot provide minimum/maximum staffing ranges. VA receives many documents in varying quantities from all over the world that need to be translated.

Q. Do all listed exotics need to be on-call?

A. Yes.

Q. Can use of other translation software platforms be incorporated into the workflow?

A. *At this time no, due to VA security policies.*

Q. What is linguist minimum criteria to obtain clearance thru VA Security Process to get access to VA network via CITRIX Access Gateway (CAG)?

A. *All contractors will need a PIV card to access the CITRIX Access Gateway (CAG). In order to get a PIV car:*

- ***Each contractor will needs two forms of ID***
- ***Needs Special Agreement Check (SAC)***
- ***Risk Assessment must be conducted to establish investigation type***
- ***Investigation must be in schedule at OPM with a favorably screened SAC***

Q. In reference to finger printing and background checks performed outside of the Denver,CO area, can we use a third party to complete these requirements? If so, will the VA recommend the vendor(s) approved for this tasking?

A. *Fingerprints will be taken at the nearest VA Medical Center; the VHA Service Center Personnel Security will be the point of contact for the locations of where fingerprints need to be taken.*

Q. What specific hardware specs meet CAG standards to view documents and perform translations?

A. *Any normal computer should meet the specific requirements to view documents and perform translations.*

Q. The projected 1 million exotic words per year are distributed over a large list of exotic languages. Can further definition be provided, as each of the language pairs will need a dedicated team or individuals qualified and backgrounds verified?

A. *At this time we cannot provide further definition.*

Q. Can use of other translation platforms be used to access and view PDF version of documents to be translated on VA network Pending Translations shared drive?

A. *No.*

Q. Can use of other translation platforms be used to perform all translations in Notepad or Microsoft Word 2010 while logged into CAG?

A. *No. Only Notepad or Word can be used to perform all translation in CAG.*

Q. "Can workload history be provided for the following:

Translation INTO Exotic languages from English*?*

A. For previous fiscal year total of 4855 documents were translated from Exotic languages to English.

Translation INTO English from Exotic languages?

A. For previous fiscal year zero documents were translated from English to Exotic languages

Q. Can clarification be provided as there are languages on "exotic" list that are unfamiliar, like "Mina" or "Ga")?

A. No further clarification can be provided. The VA can receive documents in any language at any time that will require translation.

Q. Is there the expectation that qualified exotic list translators have medical/legal competence?

A. No.

Q. Some of the languages on the list are in fact only dialects, not languages. Is there the expectation to find and validate competent translators for dialects?

A. Our requirement is all inclusive because the VA can receive documents in any language at any time that will require translation.

Q. The RFP indicates that the translation provider would have to perform the actual translation work on the VA network shared drive. How would this work with hundreds of linguists who work in different countries and US locations?

A. All linguists need to reside in CONUS. Vendor uses VA network to view the document in CAG and translated in notepad or word in CAG.

Q. What quality assurance tools does VA network offer?

A. No translation software is provided by the VA. The VA network allows for access to view the document and word/notepad to type up the translation.

Q. Can VA network handle dual-bite languages?

A. No translation software is provided by the VA. The VA network allows for access to view the document and word/notepad to type up the translation.

Q. Can VA network handle R2L script?

A. No translation software is provided by the VA. The VA network allows for access to view the document and word/notepad to type up the translation.

Q. Can VA network handle very exotic alphabets?

A. *No translation software is provided by the VA. The VA network allows for access to view the document and word/notepad to type up the translation.*

Q. What proofreading tools would VA network provide for different linguistic environments that can e.g. detect and correct grammar, spelling and syntax errors in all of these exotic languages?

A. *Any proof reading is limited to word/notepad.*

Q. "Currently, what is weekly or monthly word translation quantity? Or frequency based on the estimated 10,210,200 words per year."

A. *The quantity of word translation varies dramatically from month to month.*

Q. Historically, how many words per year required for English translation? Exotic translation?

A. *We do not track this information.*

Q. Can you provide us a sample of the monthly report for English translation? Exotic translation?

A. *No.*

Q. Can you provide us a sample of the daily report for English translation? Exotic translation?

A. *No.*

Q. Can translators be a non US citizen or non-legal residence of the United States? If yes, what are the minimum security requirements for them?

A. *No, all translators are required to be US citizens and reside in CONUS.*

Q. Is the $392 back ground investigation per person?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Do we need to submit the resumes of the key personnel with the RFP response? Or can it be submitted after award of the contract?

A. *Resumes will need to be submitted as part of the RFP response.*

Q. Do we need to submit point of contacts for our performances references with the RFP response? Or during the discussion period?

A. *Past Performance point of contacts need to be submitted as part of the RFP response.*