VA API Development and Operations
Request for Quote (RFQ) - 36C10B18Q3124
Question and Answers
August 30, 2018

Note: The answers provided below are for informational purposes, to assist potential bidders in preparing quotes, and such answers do not themselves constitute an amendment to the RFQ. Where questions and answers necessitated such an amendment, such changes have been or will be incorporated into a formal amendment to the RFQ. To the extent that any answers provided below conflict in any way with the RFQ and any Amendments, the final RFQ takes precedence.

Number	Reference	Questions	Answers
1	Section E.10 Quote Submission Instructions	To comply with the instructions on page #91 of the RFQ, It's unclear whether the API that you want us to demonstrate experience with either has to be one that the company itself has delivered, or can be an API that one of our proposed key personnel, who is a current member of our company, has personally delivered? Assuming that the latter is acceptable, which of the following scenarios are acceptable? (A) The proposed key personnel delivered the API during their prior experience, and is no longer actively working on it. (B) The proposed key personnel delivered the API during their prior experience, and is actively working on it now as member of the prime or sub company submitting a response.	Quoters are shall submit an API that the company has developed or that individuals have developed while working for the company and as a company-sponsored project, either internal or external facing.
2	Standard Form 1449 cover Page and Section E.5 PWS Paragraph 4.1	The solicitation states that the period of performance is one year. Does the government intend to award only a one-year contract without option years?	Yes, the period of performance shall be for 12-months. No option periods are contemplated.
3	PWS, paragraphs 5.1.1 - 5.1.3	Does the government expect our technical response to include statements of qualifications for project management (PWS 5.1.1) and key personnel (PWS 5.1.3)? If yes,	The Government does not expect the technical responses to include statement of qualification for key personnel. See Amendment 0001.

		what section of the proposal should this information be included and what is the page limit?	
4.	PWS, Paragraphs 5.1.3	The PWS states, "The Contractor shall identify statements of qualifications for individuals that will fulfill the key personnel positions identified below." Does the government expect submission of key personnel resumes? If yes, what is the page limit per resume?	See Q&A #3.
5.	PWS, Paragraphs 5.2.1	Does the government expect that API development includes creating front end web applications for developers to apply and be authorized to access APIs? Or will all APIs be public access?	Some APIs will require authentication and/or authorization. The Developer Portal defined in 5.4.1 is where developers will be able to apply for and be authorized access to the APIs.
6.	PWS, Paragraphs 5.2.1	Does the government expect analytics or an analytics platform around API usage?	Yes, the government expects to be able to view and understand analytics around the API usage. See PWS paragraph 5.2.1(j) for specifics.
7.	PWS, Paragraphs 5.4	Is there a page allocation in the technical response for the optional API support tasks (PWS 5.4)?	No technical response is required for Section 5.4. Quoters are required to address the technical elements at RFQ Section E.10(1).
8.	N/A	Is there an incumbent currently performing the work on this contract? If yes, who is the incumbent?	This is not a follow-on contract; however, there are many contractors building APIs and web services across VA.
9.	n/a	Due to the Labor Day Holiday, our team respectfully requests a one-week extension for the proposal response. Will VA please consider extending the solicitation due date by one week?	VA will extend the deadline to Monday September 10, 2018 at 12PM EST. See Amendment 0001.
10.	Section E.10 Quote Submission Instructions	What is the maximum total pages that can be contained in this response?	The page limitations for the technical factor response is stipulated in Section E.10 Quote Submission Instructions. Specifically, written response describing the how the API was built and operated is limited to 7 pages;

			written response describing the approach to E.10(i)(3)(a) and (b) is limited to 10 pages. There is no page limitation for the Price factor or Solicitation, Quote, and Award Documents and Certifications/Representations.
11.	Section E.10 Quote Submission Instructions	Can this response be submitted as one document with all parts included, or does it have to be split out into certain sections?	It is preferred that the proposals be submitted in three volumes (i) Technical, (ii) Price, and (iii) Solicitation, Quote, and Award Documents and Certifications/Representations but not required.
12.		If payments are only made for sprint deliverables, how will operations support be billed?	API Operations in accordance with paragraph 5.2.2 of the PWS are priced in separately at CLIN 0003.
13.		Since the VA already has Mule Anypoint Platform in the cloud installed with an ATO, is this an acceptable platform to propose? (vs. Kong)	The Quoter may propose the use of any API Gateway products if they can demonstrate how the product and platform will provide equal to or superior performance than Kong and adequately present to the Government the value of utilizing the alternative products. See also Q&A #21
14.		Since we are required to estimate software costs, are there existing CI/CD tools or should we include pricing for those? (Source Code Mgmt., GitHub, Automated Testing, Agile Management, etc.)	GitHub license have already been procured by VA and do not need to be paid for under this contract. All other CI/CD tools currently used are the open source versions.
15.		Are team members names/resumes required for proposal submission?	No.
16.		What version/Edition of Kong is being used? (Kong Community Edition or Kong Enterprise Edition and version numbers.)	Kong Community Edition version 0.13.0 is being used today.
17.		What VA business line with the API Gateway will be supporting?	This PWS is not aligned with a specific business line but will work across VA.
18.		Regarding the Labor Categories in Attachment 002 and the Key Personnel listed in the PWS, there is a difference in titles (categories) for the Chief Engineer and Chief Operations	The Key Personnel identified in PWS paragraph 5.1.3 is associated with the FFP tasks at 5.2 and not tied to the labor categories identified for the Labor-Hour tasks under PWS

		Manager. Could you please clarify if the PWS categories map into the labor categories of Attachment 002?	paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4. In response to PWS Task 5.2 and its subtasks, Quoters may propose labor categories commensurate with their approach.
19.	E.10 Quote Submission Instructions; (I) Technical	Would the Government please clarify if the Technical Volume should be submitted as 3 separate documents, Technical1, Technical2 and Technical3 or if the Government would prefer one large Technical Volume submission?	Either will suffice as long as the page count for E.10(i)(2) and (3) can easily be distinguished.
20.	E.10 Quote Submission Instructions	Would the Government please confirm that the PWS is correct in that there is no Section (iii).	See Amendment 0001.
21.	PWS 5.3	PWS Section 5.3, paragraph one states, "An API Gateway using open-source Kong has been stood up, but the Contractor may propose the use of other API Gateway products if they can demonstrate how the product and platform will provide equal to or superior performance than Kong at equal to or lower cost to the Government, including transition costs."

The open-source version of Kong, Kong Community Edition, has no license fee. Can it be assumed that no other API Gateway could be proposed since commercial products have license fees, and implementing any open source alternative would have associated transition costs (e.g. labor)? | Quoters may propose the use of other API Gateway products if they can demonstrate how the product and platform will provide equal to or superior performance than Kong and adequately present to the Government the value of utilizing the alternative products. For example, an alternative API Gateway product may result in a Gateway that is faster; easier to build and maintain APIs in; more efficient use of labor, etc. presenting a better overall value to the Government. The Quoter shall present the value of the alternative product. See Amendment 0001 |
| 22. | E.10 Quote Submission Instructions | Would VA please confirm the font size limits within tables and graphics as part of the technical volume? | All documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins. This applies to tables as well. No font size restriction on graphics. |
| 23. | | Will VA be awarding multiple task order awards as a result of the VA API Development and Operations task order solicitation? | The Government reserves the right to award to multiple Quoters. |

24.	General	The PWS does not specify the minimum acceptance criteria that needs to be met. Please clarify the criteria the VA plans to use to determine whether the code development is complete and accepted?	In accordance with PWS paragraph 5.2.1, the VA product team and the Contractor Sprint Team shall determine the acceptance criteria for the sprint and populate the Sprint Backlog in the sprint planning meeting. See Amendment 0001.
25.	3.0 Scope of Work	Does the VA have a current backlog of APIs to be developed? If so, please provide the total number of backlog items for purposes of estimating the initial LOE.	This contract is not for creating a specific number of APIs, or APIs in a single domain, but rather for agile, cross-functional teams that can work alongside a VA product team to prioritize, build, operate, and iterate on APIs across many parts of VA. It will include creating new APIs, refactoring or replatforming existing APIs, building on top of existing APIs, and/or working with other teams to improve their APIs and/or expose their data in a modern way.
26.	5.2.1 API Development	Does the Government expect all API development to be performed strictly by a Contractor Sprint Team? If not, does the Government anticipate situations where a Contractor Sprint Team will take ownership of APIs developed by some non-Contractor team – how does the Government expect transition of API ownership to occur?	In cases where API ownership needs to be transitioned, the work will be estimated and prioritized in Sprint Planning to be executed on within sprints.
27.	5.2.1 API Development	Please clarify the entire technical stack currently in use for the MVP Platform (e.g., containerization platform, container orchestration, IaaS, logging, monitoring, dashboarding, etc.)	The MVP platform uses Kong as the API Gateway talking to a Ruby on Rails API that is running on EC2 instances in AWS GovCloud. Monitoring is done via Prometheus and visualized with Grafana. Source code is hosted in GitHub, with Jenkins running an automated CI/CD pipeline. Automated alerting happens via PagerDuty and errors are sent to Sentry.
28.	5.2.1 API Development	Please clarify if CI/CD processes are in place on the current MVP Platform. Additionally, please clarify the tools that are in use.	See Q&A #27.

29.	5.2.1 API Development	Please identify any tools that are in place on the current MVP Platform for capturing and reporting on metrics.	See Q&A #27.
30.	5.2.2 API Operations	Does the Government anticipate any refactoring or redevelopment of existing APIs that the contractor would inherit as part of this work effort? If so, please provide an approximate number of APIs needing this work.	Q&A #25.
31.	5.2.2 API Operations	Can the Government please confirm anticipated VA business hours as 8am – 8pm EST?	Confirmed.
32.	5.2.2.2 Monitoring and Alerting	What role does the Government expect the API Gateway to play in monitoring and/or providing Dashboards, per the VA's requirements for monitoring VA APIs? And, how does the Government expect the contractor to leverage/utilize the API Gateway to fulfill its role?	The API Gateway is expected to perform monitoring on the APIs that use the Gateway. This would include metrics such as availability, latency, and number of requests.
33.		Does the customer have a preference for the API documentation format? Will they be ok with an equal alternative such as "API Blueprint" or do they prefer "OpenAPI"?	As specified in E.10(i)(1), API documentation should be machine readable. Quoter may submit up to 1 page of instructions as a README file for how it suggests the Government should review the documentation to receive maximum value from it. No further preference is identified.
34.		Can you clarify the set-aside requirement(s) for this solicitation?	This acquisition is 100% set aside for service-disabled Veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) concerns as set forth in VAAR 852.219-10. Offers are solicited only from VIP verified SDVOSB concerns. Offers received from concerns that are not VIP verified SDVOSB concerns shall not be considered.