

BAA 13-03 Questions and Answers

23 April 2014

1. Q: I represent a foreign company with next generation ETD technology and we are interested in participating in this solicitation. Is there any prohibition of foreign companies participating that is not an inverted domestic corporation?

A: There is no prohibition for companies that are not inverted domestic corporations.

2. Q: Is there interest in detection of fissile material (neutrons) in addition to explosives as part of this BAA?

A: No, interest is limited to explosives and potentially narcotics only.

3. Q: pg 42 of the BAA released 8 Apr 2014, the BAA states a completed DHS S&T Explosives Division Project Proposal Form (MS Word document) constitutes a White Paper. Table 1 on pg 42 provides the White Paper Sections and Page Count Allocation. Page 43 states the White Paper must be accompanied by two quad chart pages and submission shall not exceed 9 total pages. Should the Offeror prepare/submit a completed Proposal Form, 7-page white paper and 2 quad charts? Is the completed Proposal Form counted within the page count? Please provide clarification of these instructions.

A: All references to the Project Proposal Form and Appendix C have been removed from the updated BAA as referenced in Amendment 1, which has been posted to FedBizOpps.

As stated on page 43 under Format and size limitations, "White papers may include narrative, pictures, figures, tables, and charts in a legible size and may consist of not more than 7 (seven) pages (8.5" x 11"), excluding references and curriculum vitas, and must be accompanied by two quad chart pages (each 8.5" x 11"). Therefore, the entire White Paper submission shall not exceed 9 (nine) pages, excluding references and curriculum vitas."

4. Q: Per Pre-solicitation Q&A #8, a "list of requirements for precursors and narcotics will be established in the final BAA". Could DHS point to where in the BAA released 8 April 2014 where this can be found?

A: A list of requirements for precursors and narcotics is not established in the final BAA. Instead, offerors are required to provide such a list in the full proposal technical proposal (see pages 16 and 20), but such a list is not required in the white paper phase.

5. Q: On pg 29 of the BAA released 8 Apr 2014, reference is made to sampling of 20 threat related compounds. On page 15 of the draft BAA released on 30 Sept 2013 stated "The chemical list is classified and will not be made available until release of the finalized version of BAA 13-03". Will a list of compounds be made available?

A: No list of compounds will be made available. Instead, offerors are required to provide such a list in the full proposal technical proposal (see pages 29 and 32), but such a list is not required in the white paper phase.

6. Q: On pg 29-30 of the BAA released 8 Apr 2014, reference is made to sampling capability being demonstrated in a “distributed and representative fashion”. Could DHS clarify this requirement?

A: At least one of each class, i.e., aliphatic organic nitrates, aromatic organic nitrates, organic peroxides, inorganic salts, inorganic salt/fuel mixtures, plastic explosives, and precursors, must be selected and identified in the full proposal technical proposal to meet the distributed and representative fashion requirement, but such a list is not required in the white paper phase.

7. Q: On pg 33 of the BAA released 8 Apr 2014, the reliability for the Non-Contact Sampling technical area states “minimal maintenance/downtime required, meeting reliability specifications required of ETDs”. Where are these ETD reliability specifications documented?

A: On page 22 of the BAA, inherent availability for an ETD is defined as ≥ 0.98 .

8. Q: Please define the use of the term “simultaneously” as used in Section 1.8.8.1 on page 20 of the BAA solicitation.

A: A system must be able to detect all threats in its threat library without an operator requirement for changing settings. For example, switching between positive and negative modes.

9. Q: Please define what is meant by “field environment” as used in the Task 1 descriptions on page 23 and page 26 and on page 60. If possible, please provide examples.

A: A field environment will be indicative of the environment in which the final system may be used. A field environment may include areas associated with aviation security screening, border and building security checkpoints, and first responder operating conditions.

10. Q: In Section 1.8.8.1 on page 21 under “Sampling methodology” it states that “Swabs or other mechanism compliant with current TSA CONOPS to sample particulate and/or vapor threats” and “Non-contact sampling of particulate and/or vapor threats” – does this imply that the sampling methodology and detection methodology must address **both** particulate and vapor or is it sufficient to do either particulate or vapor? If the latter, is there a penalty in the evaluation process if only one method is used?

A: It is sufficient to do either particulate or vapor and there is no penalty if only one method is used.

11. Q: If the portable ETD system has the same performance requirements as the desktop ETD, what is the reason for the DHS to require the development of the desktop system?

A: The DHS client base is diverse and this BAA is meeting the needs of many customers.

12. Q: Is the \$10.5M figure for base period of performance the funding for each contract awarded or the sum of all awards made for the base period of performance?
A: The \$10.5M figure is the anticipated sum of all awards made for the base period of performance.
13. Q: In Section 1.8.8.1 on page 21 how is Percent Detection (Pd) calculated?
A: Percent detection (Pd) is calculated as the number of correct alarms recorded per number of samples run times 100.
14. Q: In Section 1.8.8.1 on page 21 how is Percent False Alarm (Pfa) calculated?
A: Percent False Alarm (Pfa) is calculated as the number of incorrect alarms (e.g., alarming when no threat is present or alarming for the wrong threat when a threat is present) recorded per number of samples run times 100.
15. Q: Please define or elaborate on the meaning of “modular” as applied to the desktop ETD system.
A: Modular is defined on page 8, “modular in order to enable spiral upgrades as improvements in explosives detection are realized in the future”.
16. Q: In the White Papers for the desktop and portable ETD systems, do we need to provide lists of threat-related compounds and benign substances and confusants we’re proposing to measure as part of the development?
A: Offerors are required to provide such a list in the full proposal technical proposal, see page 20, but such a list is not required in the white paper phase.
17. Q: For a portable ETD system, if our solution requires optical detection, is it acceptable to have a fiber optic “wand” as an extension to the shoebox sized instrument enclosure?
A: A fiber optic extension to the portable ETD may be allowed but must still meet the prescribed portable weight requirement and be eye safe.
18. Q: Will DHS provide a recommended list of analytes for testing?
A: No list of analytes will be made available. Instead, offerors are required to provide such a list in the full proposal technical proposal (see pages 16, 20, 29 and 32), but such a list is not required in the white paper phase.
19. Q: Does the prototype/breadboard portable ETD system that we use for PDR testing in task 1 have to be battery operated?
A: No, but a clear path to meeting the battery operated requirement would need to be demonstrated at PDR.
20. Q: If our TA-2 and TA-3 solutions employ a laser, are the systems required to be eye-safe or is it sufficient to require that the operator be properly trained in laser safety procedures

commensurate with the class of laser used in the solution?

A: All systems must be eye safe.

21. Q: Does it strengthen a TA-2 or TA-3 concept if we show alignment with a proposed concept for sampling in TA-4 if the proposed new sampling technology is an improvement over existing sampling technology and the new sampling technology enhances the TA-2 and/or TA-3 detection technology more than current sampling technology?

A: Yes.

22. Q: Section 1.8.10.4 (Technical Area 4) Project Timeline Question: On Page 35, under Major Sub-Tasks in the Project Timeline is stated that the offeror "build 3 Prototype Advanced ETDs". If the offeror is proposing work on sampling subsystems as is requested under section 1.8.10.4 (Technical Area 4) would the offeror still need to provide the prototype advanced ETDs or should this read "prototype sampling subsystem "for example?

A: It should read "build 3 prototype systems".

23. Q: Section 4.3 of the BAA contains specific instructions for the formatting and content of White Papers, including a 7-page limit (excluding CVs), and two additional Quad Charts. In contrast to these guidelines, Appendix C of the BAA, consisting of a "Sample White Paper in the DHS S&T EXD Project Proposal Form", provides a different format and content for White Papers. Which of these is the appropriate formatting and content guideline for this BAA submission?

A: All references to the Project Proposal Form and Appendix C have been removed from the updated BAA as referenced in Amendment 1, which has been posted to FedBizOpps.

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24. Q: The project timeline dates in the figures (1.8.7.4, 1.8.8.4, 1.8.9.4, 1.8.10.4) have kickoff dates of Aug 2014 which do not match the anticipated schedule kickoff date of post Oct 2014. Should the dates in these figures be considered to be offset from the actual kickoff date?

A: Yes, the dates in the project timelines should be considered to be representative of the anticipated schedule of events once an offset from the actual kickoff date is taken into account.

25. Q: The newly added quality assurance (QA) metric to test for threats. (tables 1.8.7.1, 1.8.8.1)
- Is this quality assurance metric expected to be applied on delivery of equipment, during daily operation or at certain times during the year?
 - Some of these explosives are inherently unstable so would have very short lifetime, require constrained storage requirements and most likely be fairly expensive. Can compounds that mimic expected sensitivity of explosive threats be used for QA testing?

A: The quality assurance (QA) metric is expected to be applied during scheduled maintenance intervals and through random QA testing. If a compound is shown to effectively mimic the sensitivity of an explosive threat and provides longer lifetimes without drastic storage requirements, then such a representative material may be of interest.