



County of El Paso Purchasing Department
800 E. Overland Room 300
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 546-2048 / Fax: (915) 546-8180

ADDENDUM 3

To: All Interested Proposers

From: Linda Mena, Inventory Bid Technician

Date: April 8, 2010

Subject: RFQ # 10-021(RFQ) Secure Border Trade Demonstration Project

WEBINAR QUESTIONS – MARCH 30, 2010 EL PASO COUNTY

Following are responses to the questions received at the webinar for RFQ # 10-021 Secure Border Demonstration Project conducted on March 30, 2010. During the meeting questions were received orally and in writing through the webinar page. Written questions are included as received. Some minor adjustments were made to oral questions for clarity. Answers to the questions may vary somewhat from the answers provided during the meeting. This was done for clarity and completeness.

Question 1: In slide #11 on the left side it indicates an “evaluation committee” and the voting members of that committee. It indicates that one of the voting members is from the “private sector.” What body will represent the private sector? (Oral Question)

Answer: The private sector will be represented on the evaluation committee by Hector Mendoza who is the owner of STIL, a trucking company involved in cross-border commerce. Names of the other individuals serving on the evaluation committee are listed on Page 45 of the RFQ.

Question 2: Have there been any changes in the project stakeholders since the issuance of the RFQ? (Oral Question)

Answer: There have been no changes to the stakeholders since the issuance of the RFQ. However, prior to the issuance of the RFQ there was a change in the stakeholders with the addition of the New Mexico Border Authority. This region is referred to as the “Paso del Norte Trade Corridor.” The Trade Corridor includes El Paso County and adjacent areas of Dona Ana County, New Mexico. New Mexico has an increasingly important regional port of entry, Santa Teresa, which is only 13 miles from downtown El Paso.

Question 3: I believe slide #6 (Project Components) has a box that refers to technical components of the SBT including a GPS-based electronic locking system, 30 tractor-trailers and HAZMAT. Is this technology that has been selected or technology you are looking at being selected? (Oral Question)

Answer: The County has general ideas about the technologies that are probably going to be needed to achieve the functional goals of the SBT system. However, we have not decided on any specific technologies and are open to looking at different technologies. In the Technical Specification that we will be issuing, we will identify the functional system needs. It will be the responsibility of the proposers (respondents) to define and ultimately integrate the technologies that will create the SBT system and, through that integration, achieve the systems functional requirements.

Question 4: Since we are on the subject of technologies, in some of the documentation leading up to this RFQ, I saw reference to a “control center.” Do we know where this facility is going to be located? Are we going to be expected to link within the existing database already located at TTI? (Oral Question)

Answer: The SBT control center should be at a location selected by the vendor in consultation with the County. As part of the SBT project the County desires to also have a terminal located at the TTI office to permit the monitoring of the project. There are, however, no databases or data sources at TTI that need to be connected with the SBT system.

Question 5: Are you going to post minutes from this “webinar”? (Oral Question)

Answer: The El Paso County Purchasing Department will be distributing the final answers to the questions raised in the webinar. These answers will not be provided as “verbatim” minutes but represent the answers to the questions. We will also provide copies of the power point slides used in the session.

Question 6: Are you saying that the control center needs to be in the TTI office? (Oral Question)

Answer: The control center will not be in the TTI offices. The SBT control center should be at a location selected by the vendor in consultation with the County. The initial plan is to have a SBT system terminal at the TTI office in order to facilitate monitoring of the project by TTI.

Question 7: Is the timeline restricted as defined? (Written Question)

Answer: As part of the technical proposals the County will be seeking from respondents, we will be asking that a schedule be proposed for completion of the work and that that schedule include milestones. If that proposed schedule varies significantly from what we have provided in this

presentation as schedule guidance, we ask you to justify your approach. We will remain flexible on this issue but ask that you make a good case for your approach. Keep in mind that the overall 36 months indicated in slide #12 is the upper limit for the length of the project. We want to complete the project within that time period.

Question 8: If the other participants do not mind, can you send a list of all attendees/companies to this conference? (Written Question)

Answer: We do not have any restrictions that would preclude the County from providing that information. If anyone participating today would not want their information provided please indicate that.

Question 9: I would assume that you would provide the list to everybody? (Oral Question)

Answer: Yes. We will provide the list to all attendees unless an attendee asks to be excluded from the list.

Question 10: On slide 6 you mention "electronic locking system" do you want a physical locking mechanism? (Written Question)

Answer: We attempted to answer this question previously and hope that answer is sufficient. We want to provide flexibility relative to the technology (ies) that will become components of the SBT system. We will attempt to provide functional definitions of our perceived needs in the Technical Specifications that will be issued. We hope that respondents to this solicitation will provide and justify the technologies they propose to satisfy those functional needs.

Question 11: What is your long-term vision for a system? If this demonstration is successful, how would the permanent system be funded and implemented? Do you see it being a government funded program, or would the private sector be given incentives to implement it at their expense, or perhaps a government mandate? (Written Question)

Answer: The questions raised are important questions for the demonstration. Long-term, the County would like to see a successful system be adopted and implemented in this region and across the US-Mexico border. The success of the system and the evaluation of the system will in part answer the questions raised.

The US federal government to date in its cargo security programs (e.g. CT-PAT) has left much of the responsibility and costs for security programs in the hands of the private sector. Research among maquilas clearly indicates that they are willing to fund a certain level of the costs associated with securing cross-border shipments. This is why many maquilas have already installed security technologies in their plants and in particular in cargo loading areas. However, the private sector has clearly indicated that they want a return from their security investment. The return they desire is generally defined as expedited crossing of cargos. The Department of Homeland Security-Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has the goal of assuring contraband and potential terrorism materials do not cross the border. For that reason, assuring that shipments are not compromised with the insertion of contraband is critical to CBP.

When the demonstration is completed, we hope to have a clear understanding of the technology and technology system(s) that can best function to secure cross-border commerce. With that established, we can identify the costs associated with creating and operating such systems. We should also be able to identify the organizational issues associated with the operation of such a system. The information resulting from this operational demonstration should clearly point to the answers for the questions raised. We should also have a supportable position as to who should have responsibility for the costs and how the various organizations should be partnered in such a system deployment. We anticipate having the answer to these questions emerging during the course of the demonstration and not have to wait until the demonstration has ended.

Question 12: Can you discuss metrics that you will use to measure the success of the project?
(Written Question)

Answer: As yet we have not established standard measures for the technical performance of the SBT system. We hope specific parameters will be established during the project through discussions with the stakeholders, the County, and the technology monitoring committee. That exercise we anticipate will emerge as part of system design acceptance and approval and negotiated with the vendor. Critical non-technical performance measures, however, will need to include acceptance by stakeholder agencies. This underscores the importance of stakeholder involvement in the development and operational testing of the SBT system. We want to work closely with the selected SBT vendor to assure stakeholders feel a partnership in the success of the system and that the system will have value to them. Of particular importance is working with CBP to have them be a participating partner in the project.

Question 13: Chiming in with Mr. Vezzi, what would you consider a successful test/outcome of the system? (Written Question)

Answer: This will not be purely an evaluation of technical performance. Though we may and will establish technical measures for the performance of system components, it is the overall acceptance of the system by stakeholders that will be the ultimate test of the system's success. A particularly important player in this process will be CBP and private sector stakeholders involved in the movement of commerce across the border.

Question 14: Can you clarify the current funding plan under 2.3? Where is the match of \$660,000 expected to come from? (Written Question)

Answer: The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) Program does require a local match. The CBI web site discusses that requirement in further detail. There are a number of potential sources that could satisfy the DOT requirement, including; truck usage, maquila sites, and the control center facility. Further possible sources are identified on the DOT web site. We do not anticipate significant difficulty in identifying the match required.

Question 15: Who is the primary POC (Point of Contact) for the County Purchasing Department? (Written Question)

Answer: The POC for this contract, as indicated in the RFQ, is Piti Vasquez, Director of Purchasing for El Paso County.

Question 16: Is there preference given to vendors with Texas addresses? (Written Question)

Answer: There is no preference given to vendors with Texas addresses. As a part of the technical proposal that will be requested, respondents will be asked to indicate how they plan to manage the local operation of the system. Potential respondents should be prepared to answer that question.

Question 17: How will you send the conference attendees list? When? (Written Question)

Answer: The webinar attendance list will be sent as an Addendum by e-mail. This information can also be sent by fax if requested.

Question 18: Can you please include the slides as part of the minutes (Written Question)

Answer: Yes. The power point slides will be sent as an Addendum.

Question 19: Can questions be sent via email, or do they need to be hard copy via mail? (Written Question)

Answer: Questions can be sent either by e-mail or fax to the following:

Fax: (915) 546-8180

E-mail: pvasquez@epcounty.com and limena@epcounty.com

Question 20: This regards the timeline you had extended for 36 months. The timeline seems long for this size of a project. Would you believe us if we said it could be accomplished in less time? We see the possibility of a vastly different timeline for the project. It shouldn't take that much time to implement the system. (Oral Question)

Answer: If the County can get SBT implemented and operational faster than the timeline guidance provided in the presentation we would be very pleased. We suggest, however, that this be considered very carefully. There are a number of stakeholders with which system design will be coordinated. This process can take time. The County, however, does not want to shorten the operational time suggested for the demonstration. Shortening the system planning and design phases of the project could result in multiple benefits for the project. Please consider proposals of this nature very carefully and provide your reasoning.

Question 21: What is the email address we should use for questions? (Written Question)

Answer: Send e-mail questions on this solicitation to Piti Vasquez, Director of Purchasing for El Paso County at pvasquez@epcounty.com and limena@epcounty.com

Question 22: For those who are interested in partnering, it would be appreciated if the contact list could be sent out in advance of the full meeting minutes. Thank you. (Written Question) Separate oral comment, “Yes, I agree. Please send contact information.”

Answer: The County Purchasing Department will send out the webinar participation list as an Addendum.

Question 23: Are pilot Maquiladora plants going to be designated or random? (Written Question)

Answer: Participating maquiladora plants have not yet been identified. We have concluded that it would be best to approach the maquilas about participation when we have an agreed upon system design and can explain in detail the requirements associated with participation in the demonstration. Though the primary responsibility for selection of maquiladoras to participate in the project falls with the vendor, the County and project stakeholders are prepared to assist. We do not anticipate that there will be problems in finding maquila partners. We have a number of contacts with maquilas, trucking companies, and the local maquila association.

Question 24: Can you release the names of the people who will review the presentations? (Written Question)

Answer: This information is included on page 45 of the RFQ. One correction should be noted. Hector “Owner” is a typo. His name is Hector Mendoza and he is the owner of STIL, a trucking company involved in cross-border commerce. Also, please do not attempt to contact members of the El Paso County Commissioners Court about this contract. If such an attempt is made it could result in disqualification from this solicitation.

Question 25: Your RFQ indicates possible multiple vendors will receive an award? Is this based upon your review of various technologies? Will only one vendor be chosen to implement? (Written Question)

Answer: There will only be one vendor selected to perform this work. The County is seeking a prime contractor to be responsible for this project and partner with the County to achieve the goals established for the SBT.

Question 26: What type of contract? Firm fixed price, T&M, cost plus fixed fee? (Written Question)

Answer: This will be a fixed price contract.

Question 27: It has been indicated that we should not contact any of the people mentioned on page 45 of the RFQ. There is the chance of encountering these people in the community. How do we avoid contacting these people?

Answer: By contacting the individuals listed we mean contacting them relative to this contract procurement. You can talk with these individuals about any other topic but this contract procurement.

Question 28: In light of the violence on the border, is it advisable to showcase or spotlight these security efforts?

Answer: This is a valid issue. Public awareness of this project, however, is already wide-spread. We want to assure potential proposers that we will not take any steps in this direction without consultation with stakeholders and the vendor performing this work.