
Question #: 49 – *Please note, the answer to this question hereby supersedes the one issued in Amendment 004*

RFP Section Reference: Section K.3, FAR Clauses in Full Text

Question:

Is there a preference or requirement for equipment manufactured in the US or its territories, and what steps will be taken to ascertain and enforce the accuracy of Origin of Manufacture representations?

Answer:

Section K.3.2, Place of Manufacture (MAR 2015), has been deleted. Section K, Representations and Certifications, references the specific requirements, representations, and certifications related to equipment that Offerors must include as part of their proposed solution and that will be used to evaluate responsive proposals. The Government anticipates that Offerors will consider network equipment security concerns when selecting equipment for the NPSBN, no matter where the equipment is manufactured, supplied from, or, if applicable, refurbished.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

Section K was reissued in its entirety in Amendment 004, which resulted in the removal of Section K.3.2, Place of Manufacture (MAR 2015).

Question #: 60

RFP Section Reference: Section H.14, Most Favored Customer Pricing Consideration

Question:

In determining “most favored nation pricing,” it appears that you will take into account prices charged by the Contractor to non-public safety customers on other frequency bands unrelated to the NPSBN. Is this correct, and if so how will different volumes, service grades, band characteristics, cost elements, and bundled packages be compared with the NPSBN offering to determine whether the prices under comparison are being offered for the same service?

Answer:

Yes, under Section H.14, Most Favored Customer Pricing Consideration, Public Safety Entities would pay the lowest price offered by the Contractor to any user for broadband LTE services on Band 14 or other bands. The comparison between prices for services offered to Public Safety Entities and other customers will depend on the Contractor's proposal and other service offerings.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 80**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, Section 1, Cybersecurity Objectives, Last Paragraph**Question:**

The RFP states, “The solution will be a joint effort of FirstNet and stakeholders involved with the NPSBN.”

How will the contractor adjust scope based on this joint effort?

At what points in the program will cybersecurity scope and potential changes in priority, functionality, or performance take place?

Will the Authority define the key cybersecurity stakeholders?

Answer:

Cybersecurity solutions will evolve over time as threats and risks evolve and/or there are technology enhancements that may improve upon cybersecurity. Any cybersecurity elements that require a change post-award, during the life of the contract and/or subsequent task orders, will follow a change management process, ensuring that all stakeholders are involved. A formal modification will be negotiated and executed. The Contractor is responsible for any proposed cybersecurity solution, which should encompass a change management process related to potential changes in priority, functionality, or performance as required throughout the life of the contract, as stated in Section L, Instructions, Conditions, and Notices to Offerors or Respondents. Key cybersecurity stakeholders include Public Safety Entities and FirstNet.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 82**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, Section 2.1, Public Safety Needs, 2nd Bullet, Mission Primacy**Question:**

The RFP states, “The mission of public safety—to protect lives and property from clear and present danger—should take primacy over protection of the network.”

Will the Authority please clarify the priority of security and the public safety mission (perhaps via a few use cases) to help Offerors better understand how to implement the security solution to meet FirstNet requirements?

Answer:

FirstNet’s objectives are to have a secure network, consistent with those items outlined in Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, and a network that supports public safety’s mission as noted in Section C, Statement of Objectives. Therefore, the Contractor is responsible for any proposed cybersecurity solution, including implementation.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 99 – *Please note, the answer to this question hereby supersedes the answer as issued in prior Amendments*

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.1, Volume I – Business Management, and L.3.1.2, Section Two, Leadership and Program Management

Question:

The RFP states attachments required to be completed are not part of the page limitation. Are the required plans and other elements (program management and staffing, PWS, WBS from L.3.1.2), and Day 1 solutions considered attachments and therefore not part of the page count?

Answer:

Yes, attachments and templates are excluded from the page limitation identified in Section L.3.1, Volume I – Business Management. Specifically, this exclusion includes the Day 1 task order tabs as well as those items identified in Section L.3.1.1, Section One – General; the Solicitation Conformance Traceability Matrix (Section J, Attachment J-22), the small business subcontracting plan; past performance reference forms; resumes, Integrated Master Schedule, and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) (referenced in Section L.3.1.2, Section Two – Leadership and Program Management); the Public Safety Device Connections Template and Section J, Attachment J-23, End User Pricing Tables, referenced in Section L.3.1.3, Section Three – Public Safety Customer Acquisition; Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) reference in Section L.3.1.4, Section Four – Customer Care and Life-Cycle Sustainment; and all items identified in Section L.3.1.5, Section Five – Financial Standing. All other items not stated in the exclusion shall be considered in the page limitation as stated. However, the RFP will be amended to provide clarification as well as to identify any applicable page limitations.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section L.3.1, Volume I – Business Management, was revised in Amendment 005 to read, “The business management proposal shall not exceed 200 pages in length (100 sheets of paper, double-sided print). This page count excludes those items identified in Section L.3.1.1, Section One – General; the Solicitation Conformance Traceability Matrix; the Small Business Subcontracting Plan; Past Performance reference forms; the resumes, Integrated Master Schedule, and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) referenced in L.3.1.2, Section Two – Leadership and Program Management; the Public Safety Device Connections Template and Section J, Attachment J-23, End User Pricing Tables, referenced in L.3.1.3, Section Three – Public Safety Customer Acquisition; Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) reference in Section L.3.1.4, Section Four – Customer Care and Life-Cycle Sustainment; and all items identified in Section L.3.1.5, Section Five – Offeror Financial Sustainability. The business management proposal shall contain the following information and be broken down in the following sections.”

Question #: 132**RFP Section Reference:** Section H.8, Title to Materials**Question:**

Section H-8 and FAR 52.227-14 conflict in the data rights provided to the Government. Can the Government please clarify which requirement takes precedence?

Answer:

In accordance with FAR 52.215-8, Order of Precedence—uniform Contract Format (Oct 1997), “Other documents” take precedence over “Contract clauses,” which are contained in Section I, Contract Clauses. Therefore, Section H.8, Title to Materials, takes precedence over FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data – General (applicable to other than Special Works) (DEC 2007), Alternate II – DEC 2007.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 183**RFP Section Reference:** Section L.3.2.2.5.2: Business and Operational Support Systems**Question:**

Are there any CDR retention requirements to consider including time they need to be stored?

Answer:

In addition to complying with applicable federal and state data retention requirements, including applicable FCC rules and policies, regarding the NPSBN, for purposes of ensuring FirstNet’s audit rights as detailed in Section J, Attachment J-6, Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan, Section 5.3.2, Disincentive



Payment Calculation and Timing, among other sections of the RFP, the Contractor is required to retain all applicable data required to perform the audit for a period of four (4) years calculated in accordance with FAR Part 4.7, Contractor Records Retention.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section J, Attachment J-6, Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan, Section 5.3.2, Disincentive Payment Calculation and Timing, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to include the following sentence, “In addition to complying with all applicable federal and state data retention requirements—including applicable Federal Communications Commission rules and policies—regarding the NPSBN, for purposes of ensuring FirstNet’s audit rights, the Contractor is required to retain all applicable data required to perform the audit for a period of four (4) years.”

Question #: 186

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.5.2, Business and Operational Support Systems

Question:

What user validation process is required in NPSBN as part of new subscriber/user creation?

Answer:

At this time, FirstNet anticipates that Offerors will propose a validation process for access to the NPSBN as part of their solution. In addition, Sections L.3.2.2.1.3, Identity, Credential, and Access Management, and M.4.3.1.3, Identity, Credential and Access Management, include identity proofing and onboarding. Collectively, these sections provide the Offeror guidance in responding to the RFP pertaining to subscriber/user creation. Table 6 of Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, contains Applications Ecosystem Interface Specifications that cover Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) standards and source documents.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 191

RFP Section Reference:

Section B.2.1, Day 1 Task Orders

Section F.2.1, Day 1 Task Order Period of Performance

Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Table 1

Question:

Section B.2.1 includes three Task Orders under the IDIQ:

- Task Order 1 - Delivery Mechanism for State Plans
- Task Order 2 - State Plan Development and Refinement
- Task Order 3 - NPSBN Functions

Section F.2.1.1 lists the period of performance of Task Order 1 as three years post award, and the period of performance of Task Order 2 as one year post award.

J-8 Table 1 (B.) lists Task Order 1 and Task Order 2 as due by IOC-1 (6 months from award).

Can the Government please clarify the exact data post award when Task Orders 1 and 2 are required to be complete?

Answer:

Task Order 1, Delivery Mechanism for State Plans, and Task Order 2, State Plan Development and Refinement will commence at award, anticipated on November 1, 2016.

As stated in Section F.2.1.1, Delivery Mechanism for State Plans, the entire period of performance stated for Task Order 1, Delivery Mechanism for State Plans, is from the date of award through three years post award. This is based on commencement of performance on November 1, 2016; anticipated delivery date of the delivery mechanism on or before February 1, 2017, allowing the remaining period of performance for use and/or enhancements of the mechanism, if needed, (February 2, 2017 through November 1, 2019).

As stated in Section F.2.1.2, Task Order 2, State Plan Development and Refinement, the entire period of performance stated for Task Order 2, State Plan Development and Refinement, is from the date of award one year post award. This is based on commencement of performance on November 1, 2016; anticipated delivery date of the delivery mechanism on or before February 1, 2017, allowing the remaining period of performance for support, coordination and refinement of state plans, as needed, (February 2, 2017 through November 1, 2017).

However, Section L.3.1.2, Section Two – Leadership and Program Management, states, “The Offeror shall propose a milestone timeline detailing its solution in accordance with the IOC/FOC milestones contained in Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline.” Although FirstNet anticipates the timelines as stated herein, and in Section F, the Offerors may propose a schedule as it correlates to their solution regarding IOC/FOC, Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section F.2.1.1, Delivery Mechanism for State Plans, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to the state, “The delivery mechanism for state plans task order period of performance is from the date of award through three years post award. This is based on commencement of performance on November 1, 2016; anticipated delivery date of the delivery mechanism on or before February 1, 2017, allowing the

remaining period of performance for use and/or enhancements of the mechanism, if needed, (February 2, 2017 through November 1, 2019).”

Section F.2.1.2, Task Order 2, State Plan Development and Refinement, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to the state, “The state plan development and refinement task order period of performance is from the date of award through one year post award. This is based on commencement of performance on November 1, 2016; anticipated delivery date of the delivery mechanism on or before February 1, 2017, allowing the remaining period of performance for support, coordination and refinement of state plans, as needed, (February 2, 2017 through November 1, 2017).

Question #: 193

RFP Section Reference: Section M.2, Evaluation Process

Question:

Are any “technical demonstrations” anticipated for the Delivery Mechanism for State Plans or Offeror-Provided Applications? If so, what is the timeline for the “technical demonstrations” (i.e. by what date should offerors have working versions of the Delivery Mechanism for State Plans or Offeror-Provided Applications)?

Answer:

It is not known at this time. As stated in Section L.3.1.6, Section Six – Delivery Mechanism for State Plans, “If the Government determines a demonstration of the online tool is required, additional details will be provided at a later date.” The Government will provide notification as soon as possible in order to afford sufficient time to prepare and conduct any demonstration regarding the delivery mechanism.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 194

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services

Question:

Can the Government please confirm if NG911, location, and CALEA capabilities are required for both primary and secondary users?

Answer:

The provisioning of wireless services to any primary user (Public Safety Entity) or secondary user should comply with any and all regulatory requirements for the operation of the NPSBN, including Next

Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) as well as the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (CALEA) requirement.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 197

RFP Section Reference:

Section L.3.2.1.1, Coverage and Capacity Maps and Statistics

Section L.3.2.1.3.1, IOC Coverage Maps and Network Statistics

Question:

Can the Government please provide more information on acceptable methods of Secure File Transfer (SFT) for the Esri shapefiles (.shp) and MapInfo (.grd/.tab) files requested in Section L Tables 2 and 4?

Answer:

The Offeror should provide access to a secure location where the map files are stored and can be downloaded and that is accessible through a Web browser. This location may be accessed via Secure File Transfer (SFT) or a secure form of Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol (HTTPS). Credentials to access the secure location should be identified within the proposed solution.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 221

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.5, Operations

Question:

Does the Government have any unique personnel requirements (e.g. citizenship, permanent residence, & security clearance)?

Answer:

All personnel security requirements are identified in the RFP. Offerors should refer to Section H, Special Contract and Task Order Requirements, Section H.6.2, Personnel Security Requirements, as well as Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR.



RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 231

RFP Section Reference: Section C.3, Program Description, 6th Paragraph

Question:

Please clarify whether the Contract resulting from this solicitation will constitute a Covered Leasing Agreement (CLA) or whether FirstNet will execute a separate CLA with the Contractor.

Answer:

The contract resulting from this solicitation will constitute a Covered Leasing Agreement as described in Section 1428(a)(2) of the Act.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 232

RFP Section Reference: Section C.3, Program Description, 3rd Paragraph

Question:

In order to charge fees to public safety users for using the NPSBN the Contractor will be required to enter into contractual agreements with public safety entities governed by procurement rules. Please confirm if FirstNet will provide the Contractor with assistance to secure those agreements in an efficient and timely manner?

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates that the Contractor would have the appropriate contract vehicles and knowledge of sales to Public Safety Entities to ensure that local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal Public Safety Entities can easily purchase FirstNet devices and service within Public Safety Entities' procurement policies.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 233**RFP Section Reference:** Section H.12, Indemnity**Question:**

Offeror respectfully submits the indemnity provision contained in Section H.12 is overbroad as it obligates the awardee to indemnify the Government claims arising “in whole or in part” from awardee’s actions or omissions. The Offeror requests amending the indemnity to cover claims to the extent they arise or result from the acts or omissions of the awardee.

Answer:

The Government declines to implement the requested change and notes that the management of the NPSBN will be undertaken by the Contractor. FirstNet anticipates that each Offeror will develop a business case that appropriately manages its risk in a manner that is consistent with today’s commercial mobile radio services (CMRS) networks, including the use of end-user terms and conditions that contain appropriate liability protections and disclaimers.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 234**RFP Section Reference:** Section I.1, 52.252-2 Clauses Incorporated by Reference (Feb 1988), FAR Clauses 52.215-10 to 52.215-12**Question:**

Implementation of Services will require a significant amount of coordinated input from FirstNet, the States, and the awardee. Given the interdependency, the Offeror respectfully requests removing FAR 52.211-11, Liquidated Damages – Supplies, Services, or Research and Development from the contract.

Answer:

The Government declines to remove the reference to FAR 52.211-11, Liquidated Damages – Supplies, Services, or Research and Development (SEP 2000) from Section I, Contract Clauses, of the RFP at this time.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section I, Contract Clauses, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to include the language required in the fill-in in the FAR 52.211-11, Liquidated Damages – Supplies, Services, or Research and Development (SEP 2000).

Question #: 235

RFP Section Reference: Section I.1, 52.252-2 Clauses Incorporated by Reference (Feb 1988), FAR Clauses 52.215-10 to 52.215-12

Question:

Section L, page L-57, Paragraph L.3.3 states, “Certified cost or pricing data are not required for this procurement. The Contractor agrees to hold the price in its proposal firm until award or as requested in any subsequent amendment”. Given the likelihood of adequate price competition from the resulting responses to the RFP, do the FAR clauses referenced in Section I.1, FAR 52.215-10 through 52.215-12, apply to this procurement?

Answer:

Correct, certified cost or pricing data are not required for this procurement. Therefore, the RFP will be amended to remove reference to these clauses.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section I.1, 52.252-2 Clauses Incorporated by Reference (FEB 1988), will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to delete the reference to FAR 52.215-10, Price Reduction for Defective Certified Cost or Pricing Data (AUG 2011), and FAR 52.215-11, Price Reduction for Defective Certified Cost or Pricing Data—Modifications (AUG 2011)

Question #: 241

RFP Section Reference:

Section K.3.5, 52.234-2 Notice of Earned Value Management System – Pre-Award IBR (Jul 2006)

Section K.3.6, 52.234-3 Notice of Earned Value Management System – Post Award IBR (Jul 2006)

Question:

FirstNet references two FAR clauses for “Notice of Earned Value Management System” – both pre and post award. The Offeror respectfully requests removing these two FAR clauses as EVM is not designated as a requirement in the RFP.

Answer:

Correct, FAR Earned Value Management clauses do not apply to this acquisition. Section K, Representations and Certifications, was replaced in its entirety in Amendment 004. The amended version of Section K does not include FAR clauses related to Earned Value Management.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 244**RFP Section Reference:** Section L.2.6, Assumptions, Conditions, and/or Exceptions, 1st Paragraph**Question:**

The Offeror is required to submit, in a separate tab for each volume, any assumptions, conditions, or exceptions with any of the terms and conditions of the RFP. Please clarify if the tab containing assumptions, conditions, or exceptions is excluded in the total page count for the respective volume?

Answer:

No, the tab containing assumptions, conditions, or exceptions is not excluded from the total page count for the respective volume.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 254**RFP Section Reference:** Section C.4, Scope, 1st Paragraph**Question:**

Understanding that the development and successful operation of this interoperable broadband network will require a number of services, the Contractor will likely have to partner with other entities to ensure the delivery of reliable public safety communications services.

What is the selection process for partners once the award has been granted? Are there any specific partner requirements from FirstNet or will the Contractor create their own set of requirements and select partners based on those?

Answer:

Offerors shall propose a nationwide solution that meets all of the objectives and terms and conditions stated within the RFP. Therefore, it is up to the Offeror to “create” their own agreements, including any specific requirements, with their partners and/or subcontractors consistent with the terms and conditions of the contract resulting from this RFP.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 265**RFP Section Reference:**

Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline

Section J, Attachment J-17, Coverage and Capacity Template

Question:

How does the timing of build-out task orders at the state level and build-out milestones national level align? How is the network rollout plan finalized and negotiated? If a RAN build partner has a preferred build schedule and priority, what happens if this no longer aligns with build-out task orders?

Answer:

The NPBSN Functions is a Day 1 task order (Task Order #3) and must be deployed in order to align the buildout task orders at the state RAN level. The network rollout plan will be finalized and negotiated prior to award. However, there may be some minor revisions as a result of the Day 1 task order for State Plan Development and Refinement (Task Order #2). With regard to “a RAN build partner” and the partner’s schedule, this will be decided through subsequent task orders (Initial FirstNet-Deployed RAN States and Delayed FirstNet-Deployed RANs).

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 271**RFP Section Reference:** Section G.9, Invoice**Question:**

Under the RFP’s invoice and payment requirements, how much detail is needed for reimbursement? Must the Contractor provide bills of materials (“BOMs”)? What does the invoice look like? Why wouldn't this simply be bid to provide coverage, and measured on the existence of that coverage (e.g., FCC mobility fund)?

Answer:

The invoice and associated payments to the Contractor, from FirstNet, will be based on the Offeror’s IOC/FOC milestones and the Offeror’s proposed payment schedule, which will be incorporated into the subsequent contract. Payments to the Contractor will occur after acceptance of the milestones by FirstNet

and submission of a proper invoice, and disbursement of those payments will be in accordance with FAR Part 32.904, Determining payment due dates.

Notwithstanding the above, the Contractor shall submit a proper invoice in accordance with the IOC/FOC proposed milestones but no more than once monthly. Invoices must identify the fixed price payment to the Contractor for each IOC/FOC milestone, corresponding to the pricing tables in Section B, Supplies or Services and Prices/Costs. To constitute a proper invoice, the invoice must include information and/or attached documentation in accordance with FAR Part 32.905(b).

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section G.9.2, Invoice Contents, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to include the following paragraph, which states, “The Contractor shall submit a proper invoice in accordance with the IOC/FOC milestones but no more than once monthly. Invoices must identify the fixed price payment to the Contractor for each IOC/FOC milestone accepted, corresponding to the pricing tables in Section B, Supplies or Services and Prices/Costs. To constitute a proper invoice, the invoice must include information and/or attached documentation in accordance with FAR 32.905(b).”

Question #: 272 – *Please note, the answer to this question hereby supersedes the one issued in Amendment 003*

RFP Section Reference: Section I.7, FirstNet Auditing

Question:

What are the auditing requirements for the Contractor’s partners/subcontractors? How far does the chain of audit exposure go (e.g., if a vendor provides hardware to a subcontractor that is building FirstNet infrastructure, is that vendor also consenting to an audit)?

Answer:

The government’s audit and inspection requirements are primarily found in FAR 52.215-2, Audit and Records—Negotiation (Oct 2010), that is contained in Section I, Contract Clauses, and FAR 52.246-4, , Inspection of Services—Fixed-Price (Aug 1996), H.21, FirstNet Auditing and H.22, FirstNet Inspections. The Contractor shall flow-down to their subcontractors the applicable inspection and audit requirements as noted in each of those clauses.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section I, Contract Clauses, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, and deleted Section I.7, Audits, in its entirety from this section of the RFP. Section H, Special Contract and Task Order Requirements, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to include terms and conditions

applicable to “audits”. Section H.21, FirstNet Auditing, and H.22, FirstNet Inspections, is hereby included.

Question #: 273

RFP Section Reference: Section H.14, Most Favored Customer Pricing Consideration

Question:

How will the existing payment plans be measured for lowest price? There are many different data buckets and tiers for different usage.

Answer:

In accordance with Section H.14, Most Favored Customer Pricing Consideration, Public Safety Entities would pay the lowest price offered by the Contractor for broadband LTE services on Band 14 or other bands. This does not preclude Offerors from incentivizing adoption through discounting commercially available services or subsidized specialized services for public safety customers. The comparison between prices for services offered to Public Safety Entities and other customers will depend on the Contractor’s proposal and other service offerings. Offerors are free to propose the specifics of the most favored customer pricing arrangements.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 278

RFP Section Reference: Section C.5, Objectives, Objective #7, User Service Availability

Question:

What are the RTO (Recovery Time Objectives), RPO (Recovery Point Objectives)?

Answer:

FirstNet’s objectives for service availability and associated restoration time are listed in Section C.5, Objectives, Objective #7, User Service Availability, as “... Service restoration activities shall be undertaken with the highest available priority but shall not exceed two hours for any impaired service. For restoration of service via temporary or secondary service capabilities, the temporary or secondary service must be transparent to the users and provide similar capability.” Section L.3.2.2.5.4, Service Availability, provides detailed instructions regarding information to be provided in an Offeror’s proposal.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 279

RFP Section Reference: Section C.5, Objectives, Objective #4, Device Ecosystem

Question:

Are there requirements to quickly for provisioning? Time limits?

Answer:

FirstNet’s objective regarding its device ecosystem is described in Section C.5, Objectives, Objective #4, Device Ecosystem, which states “The ecosystem shall support Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) as well as, at a minimum, devices that ... Operate seamlessly with a comprehensive device management system to allow remote provisioning and control.” While no explicit timing requirement exists, Offerors are to submit a QASP (see Section J, Attachment J-6, Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan, Section 4, Surveillance Matrix) that “... should include metrics that address each objective described in the SOO and the respective performance standards.”

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 282

RFP Section Reference:

Section L.3.2.2.2, Applications

Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity

Question:

General question:

Are there any specific application or infrastructure security requirements for the use of applications that are not included in the application ecosystem as described in the RFP?

One example of this could be a legacy application that was previously used by a public safety agency on another network and is now used by that agency on the FirstNet NPSBN.

Answer:

In accordance with Section C.5, Objectives, Objective #5, Applications Ecosystem, FirstNet expects the Offeror to provide an applications ecosystem that supports data and applications security and privacy compliance across local, tribal, state, regional, and federal users. In Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, Section 2.1, Public Safety Needs, cybersecurity guidelines for the Offeror’s solution

indicate that the NPSBN is to be protected, operate with an acceptable level of risk, and be accessible for public safety users. Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, Section 2.4.3, Application Security, last bullet, Secure Application Coexistence, states, “The solution should provide a secure method of coexistence among NPSBN-certified applications and commercially available applications on the device.”

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 284

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services

Question:

Is it mandatory to interoperate with another carrier’s IP Multimedia Subsystem or 3rd party IMS application providers if all services provided by the Offeror meet FirstNet’s other requirements?

Answer:

As stated in Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services, the Offeror shall describe the architectural framework to deliver multimedia services, focusing on interoperability with another carrier’s Internet Protocol (IP) Multimedia Subsystem and third-party IP Multimedia Subsystem application providers. Because the possibility of a public safety user’s need for a third-party IP Multimedia Subsystem application may always exist, it is mandatory for the Offeror to address its proposed interoperability framework as part of the proposal submission.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 285

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services

Question:

Is it a requirement that Location and Presence services present SDKs/APIs for use by FirstNet’s application ecosystem or PSEN applications?

Answer:

As specified in Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services, the Offeror shall describe its proposed solution and strategy for providing location and presence services. In Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Application Development Platform, the Offeror should describe its solution to present Software Development Kits

(SDKs) specific to developing public safety applications and provide details on Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that will be exposed to applications.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 286

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services

Question:

Should ICAM be one of the basic network services?

Answer:

No. Basic network services are specified in Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services. The Offeror shall describe its ICAM solution as a separate service as specified in Section L.3.2.2.1.3, Identity, Credential, and Access Management.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 287

RFP Section Reference: Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, Bullet 7, Operational Profiles

Question:

Related to “Operational Profiles - Describe how the solution groups application profiles into operational profiles that can be tailored for each agency”:

1. Does the “operational profiles” reference imply “on-duty/off-duty”?
2. How does an authorized application (such as CAD system or workforce management system) indicate whether a user is on-duty/off-duty?

Answer:

1. Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, requests that an operational profile be described in terms of a group of application profiles, which are described in the sixth and seventh bullets, Application Profiles and Operational Profiles, respectively. No reference is made to personnel duty status within these profiles.

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2. The RFP does not address external applications, such as Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) or workforce management, or their specific functionality. The fifth bullet, Dynamic Data, in Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, indicates the use of “user operational status” and the ability to update the network with this datum via an API.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 288**RFP Section Reference:** Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, Bullet 8, Dynamic QPP Management**Question:**

Related to “Dynamic QPP Management - Describe the overall service delivery, management, reporting, and technical approach for addressing FirstNet’s QPP objectives”:

Does the “service delivery” reference imply an “apps store”?

Answer:

No, it does not imply an “apps store.” “Service delivery,” as referenced in Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, eighth bullet, Dynamic QPP Management, refers to the QPP solution as a service provided by the Offeror. The Offeror is instructed to describe its proposed QPP solution in accordance with Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 290**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR**Question:**

Will backwards compatibility also be available for commercial services (4G, 3G, 2G, etc.)?

Answer:

Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services, instructs the Offeror to propose a strategy to provide basic network services to public safety users, which may include existing commercial services. The Offeror's proposal for coverage and capacity as described in Section L.3.2.1.1.1, Non-Band 14 Area Coverage, may include LTE technology as well as any proposed 3G and 2G technologies.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 291

RFP Section Reference: No RFP reference noted in question submitted

Question:

We seek clarification on how the preemption will be used on the network for commercial users?

Answer:

As indicated in Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, the Offeror shall provide a detailed description of the proposed strategy and design of its QoS, Priority, and Preemption (QPP) solution for the NPSBN, including systems, interfaces, and settings (e.g., Allocation Retention Priority [ARP]), ensuring that primary users (Public Safety Entities) (above secondary users) can access network services during emergencies in spite of network congestion.

Ultimately, it is left to the Offeror to propose a solution that meets the objectives described in Section C, Statement of Objectives, and associated Section J attachments.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 292

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR, Section 4.3.2.6, Device Test Life Cycle

Question:

We seek clarity on what entity will be responsible for testing that would include developing and conducting the tests?

Answer:

Offerors shall propose their approach for testing and approval of devices. Section L.3.2.2.3.5, Device Approval Process, states, “The Offeror shall propose an approach to carrier acceptance, referred to as the Device Independent Verification and Validation Test Plan, which can be used to certify public safety functionalities and features of mobile devices before the device is deployed on the NPSBN. The proposal shall provide an acceptance test plan for any of the Offeror’s commercial band(s) if applicable to the Offeror’s proposed solution.” The FirstNet anticipates Contractor will execute test plans with FirstNet involvement and approval.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 294**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-19, State Plan Template, Section 5.8, Security**Question:**

We seek clarity on the integration of CLA users (commercial CLA users?) and how it will not have an impact on PSE users?

Answer:

Section L.3.2.2.1.2, Quality of Service, Priority, and Preemption, instructs the Offeror to describe how the QPP solution will support control of Covered Leasing Agreement users on the NPSBN at various user states, including free range, restricted, and preempted.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 296**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-18, Delivery Mechanism Objectives for State Plans**Question:**

We seek clarification on “interoperability vs. operability”

Answer:

Within Section J, Attachment J-18, Delivery Mechanism Objectives for State Plans, the word “interoperable” is intended to convey that the network must work seamlessly from one state to the next using the same user equipment and user registration information.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 299**RFP Section Reference:**

Section F.2.1.1, Delivery Mechanism for State Plans

Section F.2.1.2, State Plan Development and Refinement

Question:

Please clarify the timeline for the web-based delivery mechanism deliverable and the State plan development and refinement? Does the government expect that the State plans will be completed before the web based mechanism is completed?

Answer:

No, FirstNet expects that the development and refinement of the Web-based delivery mechanism and state plans will occur concurrently. The Web-based delivery mechanism is planned to be used for state plan development and refinement in order to deliver state plans to the governors.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 301**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-6, Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan**Question:**

How do the requirements for Offeror outlined in the QASP differ in an Opt-out scenario?

Answer:

The Offeror shall propose a QASP that correlates to its proposed solution taking into consideration both FirstNet- and state-deployed RANs. Integration with state-deployed RANs must be addressed in the QASP. The Contractor will not be responsible for performance of a state-deployed RAN.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 316**RFP Section Reference:** Section M.4.3.4.1, Nationwide Core Network Architecture and State Integration**Question:**

How will FirstNet ensure that the prime Offeror develops devices that can successfully roam onto Tier 2 and Tier 3 rural wireless networks? It will be essential that FirstNet is able to roam onto rural networks, at a minimum, in the intervening time period before the NPSBN is available in high-cost rural and remote regions of the country.

Answer:

The Offeror shall propose appropriate device roadmaps to match its corresponding RAN coverage proposal(s) for Band 14 and any additional spectrum bands being proposed.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 317**RFP Section Reference:** No RFP reference noted in question submitted**Question:**

What level of state data is needed by a bidder and what is the evaluation weight of state plan readiness in the RFP? (assuming higher level, lower evaluation weight)

Answer:

The Government is not assigning numeric weights to the evaluation factors for this acquisition. All factors and sub-factors have been identified in Section M, Evaluation Factors for Award, along with their relative importance in accordance with FAR 15.304. That said, “state plan readiness” is not a part of the evaluation criteria stated in Section M. Evaluation criteria are based on a nationwide solution as it relates to the objectives outlined in Section C, Statement of Objectives. Offerors should provide information in accordance with Section L, Instructions, Conditions, and Notices to Offerors or Respondents.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 328

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-19, State Plan Template, Section 4.3.2, Coverage Extension Assets Owned by Public Safety Entities

Question:

Please clarify the ownership of the “coverage extension assets”. The title of this section implies that the PSEs own the assets but the description implies that PSEs will be able to purchase the assets.

Answer:

The description is accurate as the Public Safety Entities will be able to purchase the assets. As stated in Section L.3.2.1.2.4.4, Deployable Units and Temporary Coverage, the Offeror shall propose a strategy on allowing Public Safety Entities to have ownership of deployable assets. The title of the section will be revised to provide further clarification.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section J, Attachment J-19, State Plan Template, Section 4.3.2, Coverage Extension Assets Owned by Public Safety Entities, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to change the title to read, “Coverage Extension Assets for Purchase by Public Safety Entities.”

Question #: 331

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-12, Test Strategy Template, Section 2.1 Test Approach, Bullets

Question:

Will there be a required test strategy and associated tests required for integrating RANs of states that opt out?

Answer:

The Offeror shall propose a recommended test strategy for integrating state-deployed RANs that meets or exceeds FirstNet’s objectives as described in Section C, Statement of Objectives, and associated Section J attachments. The test strategy for integrating state-deployed RANs shall be proposed by the Offeror utilizing the Test Strategy Template contained in Section J, Attachment J-12.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 336

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR, Section 4.8.4, Support for Jurisdictional Security Policies

Question:

What reassurances or notifications will local jurisdictions have concerning their security mechanisms layered on top of the network so that an important event or investigation is not compromised?

Answer:

FirstNet’s security objectives and requirements are detailed in Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, and in Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR. Any additional security mechanisms required above those stated within the RFP would be handled through a formal change process and/or a subsequent task order.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 337

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-10, Cybersecurity, Section 2.9.1, Cybersecurity Incident Response Team

Question:

Will FirstNet consider using regional and local operations centers to co-locate FirstNet cybersecurity operations?

Answer:

Offerors shall propose specific organizational constructs, manning, and locations of Security Operations Centers that meet FirstNet’s objectives.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 338**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-12, Test Strategy Template**Question:**

Given the long term goals for the network would it be more prudent for backward compatibility to be required for all upgrades and the necessity provided and given great weight by the user community?

Answer:

Yes, Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR, Section 1.4.4, Evolution, highlights minimum requirements for the NPSBN, which includes backwards compatibility.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 341**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-19, State Plan Template, Section 4.7, State Assets**Question:**

Will bidders or the eventual awardee be provided information about devices currently used by first responders that will be retained but will ideally be upgraded for FirstNet? For example, mobile data routers that will need Band 14 modules.

Answer:

FirstNet does not anticipate providing this information to the Contractor.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 348**RFP Section Reference:** Section L.3.2.2.5.1, Network and Service Operations, 1st Paragraph**Question:**

What are the Offeror's responsibilities, if any, in participating in state and regions emergency response exercises, such as this year's FEMA planning for the Cascadia Magnitude 9.0 Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami Cascadia Rising exercise in the Northwest?

Answer:

FirstNet anticipates the Contractor will work with Public Safety Entity customers in emergency response communications planning and exercises.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 354

RFP Section Reference: Section I.7, FirstNet Auditing

Question:

FirstNet, the U.S. Comptroller, and others, retain broad rights to audit the Offeror and its subcontractors.

In most contract relationships the customer has broad oversight over the activities of the contractor. To what extent does FirstNet view the 56 states and territories as the customer?

Answer:

FirstNet has spent the better part of the last two years developing relationships at the state and local level through our consultation, outreach, and data collection efforts.

Using the information collected, FirstNet developed and released an RFP that reflects the desires of public safety across the nation, at all levels of government and all disciplines.

The RFP appropriately reflects the customer and provider relationship between FirstNet and the Contractor, where FirstNet is entering into an agreement on behalf of all Public Safety Entities to deliver Band 14 LTE service nationwide.

The relationship described in the question, where the “customer has broad oversight” over its Contractor is correct. FirstNet intends to leverage its relationship with states, territories, tribes, and federal agencies to ensure the Contractor delivers cost-effective services to public safety. FirstNet will also continue to work with the states and territories to bring to bear various assets already on hand to support the NPSBN.

To the extent that any entity—federal, state, or local—purchases services on the NPSBN, it will have a direct customer relationship with the Contractor as a subscriber. Customers in this sense—or, rather, those that hold subscriptions for service with FirstNet’s Contractor—will not have a direct oversight relationship with the service provider.

FirstNet will continue to speak on behalf of its subscribers and continue to engage our stakeholder community throughout the life of the contract to ensure that services are delivered as agreed upon, new needs or emerging technologies are addressed, and that all those party to the agreement set forth in the RFP are heard and responded to.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 368**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-19, State Plan Template**Question:**

The State Plan Template provides a framework for the “plan” that FirstNet will present to each state. The section, once complete, will discuss both a “FirstNet-Deployed RAN” (a.k.a. Opt-in) and a “State-Deployed RAN” (a.k.a. Opt-out).

Is FirstNet open to doing business with a state on a wholesale basis, for instance where the state creates an MVNO to provide services to the first responder community? In such an arrangement FirstNet and its selected Offeror would be one potential network operator. The MVNO could also do business with commercial operators that have an excellent coverage footprint and – in many cases – will offer some form of priority / preemption. Such an arrangement would provide PSEs with exceptional flexibility in procuring services.

Answer:

To the extent that the state or territory RAN is built by FirstNet’s nationwide Contractor, it will be up to the Contractor to determine arrangements, such as MVNOs. FirstNet would like to emphasize, however, that the NPSBN experience for public safety users must be the same throughout the entire network, even in those states or territories that choose to take responsibility for building their own RAN.

The assumption that the State Plan Template (Section J, Attachment J-19) will be used by FirstNet to produce both FirstNet-deployed RAN and state-deployed RAN plans is incorrect. The state plan presented to each governor by FirstNet will only address the FirstNet-deployed RAN.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 369**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-19, State Plan Template**Question:**

The State Plan Template provides a framework for the “plan” that FirstNet will present to each state. The section, once complete, will discuss both a “FirstNet-Deployed RAN” (a.k.a. Opt-in) and a “State-Deployed RAN” (a.k.a. Opt-out).

Is FirstNet open to an arrangement where it builds and operates a network to the specifications of the state (as some major infrastructure providers do for “hands off” commercial network operators)? In such a scenario the state would specify exactly what it requires. FirstNet and its Offeror would then be contractors to the state. The state would pay (presumably with its allocation of the federal funds plus state funds) for the construction and operation of the network. The state would use as much of the network capacity as it needs for first responders then sell the rest to others to help recover costs. The motivation would be to deploy a much more robust network than FirstNet would deploy on its own. Is FirstNet open to such an arrangement? Why or why not?

Answer:

FirstNet is not open to an arrangement as has been described in the question. The Act prescribes the process for states and territories that elect to take on the responsibility to deploy the RAN. The RFP only addresses the FirstNet-deployed RANs. Also, the assumption that the State Plan Template (Section J, Attachment J-19) will be used by FirstNet to produce both FirstNet-deployed RAN and State-deployed RAN plans is incorrect. The state plan presented to each governor by FirstNet will only address the FirstNet-deployed RAN.

The purpose of the question and answer period in the solicitation is to afford an opportunity to clarify the terms and conditions contained within the RFP. Therefore, this response is being provided from an RFP perspective. Any questions not related to the RFP terms and conditions should be addressed through the appropriate FirstNet outreach and consultation process.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 376**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-23, End-User Pricing Tables**Question:**

Table 3, Public Safety Devices and End User Price Points, suggests that FirstNet will be the primary supplier of devices.

If FirstNet expects to generate income from the sale of excess capacity, does this not imply that Band 14 capabilities are also broadly available in consumer chipsets? What plans does FirstNet have to broadly promote Band 14 enabled chipsets in consumer devices?

Answer:

Yes, FirstNet anticipates that Band 14 capabilities will be broadly available in consumer chipsets. As stated in Section C, Statement of Objectives, Offerors are to "... Provide and maintain a 3GPP-compliant, Band-14-capable device portfolio that evolves with the 3GPP standards and provides functionality and price points ..." Table 3, Public Safety Devices and Estimated Price Points, in Section J, Attachment J-23, End-User Pricing Tables, contains estimates used for business modeling but also requests that the Offeror list the anticipated supplier(s) of each device. In addition, FirstNet has an ongoing Band 14 initiative to promote Band-14-enabled chipsets in consumer devices, and the Offeror may incorporate FirstNet's initiative in order to fulfill its proposed business model.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 377**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-23, End-User Pricing Tables**Question:**

Table 3, Public Safety Devices and End User Price Points, suggests that FirstNet will be the primary supplier of devices.

Many rural areas have no cellular coverage today. This means that when an emergency occurs the hurt or endangered party must find a road and a motor vehicle and often drive for miles to reach an area with a cellular signal to call 911. One of the expectations of rural residents has been that excess Band 14 capacity would provide basic communications in rural areas, including the ability of people with cellular phones to call 911. Additionally, the ability to trigger Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages could be beneficially impacted by Band 14 enabled chipsets being universally available in devices. How does the FirstNet chipset / device strategy address these needs and expectations?

Answer:

It is not accurate to state that FirstNet is the primary supplier of devices. As stated in Section C, Statement of Objectives, Offerors are to "... Provide and maintain a 3GPP-compliant, Band-14-capable device portfolio that evolves with the 3GPP standards and provides functionality and price points ..." The Contractor, FirstNet, and others, may be suppliers of FirstNet devices. Table 3, Public Safety Devices and Estimated Price Points, in Section J, Attachment J-23, End-User Pricing Tables, contains estimates used for business modeling but also requests that Offeror list the anticipated supplier(s) of each device.

Any emergency services, including Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages or 9-1-1 calls, will only be available in areas where NPSBN coverage has been deployed. Rural coverage of Band 14 will be a function of the Offeror's coverage plan and the IOC/FOC milestones. In addition, FirstNet has an ongoing Band 14 initiative to promote Band-14-enabled chipsets in consumer devices, and the Offeror may expand upon it in order to fulfill its proposed business model.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 378**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-23, End-User Pricing Tables**Question:**

Table 3, Public Safety Devices and End User Price Points, suggests that FirstNet will be the primary supplier of devices.

In most consumer markets choice is a prerequisite to widespread adoption. If FirstNet expects to reach 4-13 million first responders (many of who no one can identify today), how will FirstNet or its selected Offeror achieve these goals with a small number of devices (9 suggested by Table 3) distributed by a single entity?

Answer:

Table 3, Public Safety Devices and Estimated Price Points, in Section J, Attachment J-23, End-User Pricing Tables, contains nine category types of devices, not just nine devices. Additionally, Offerors may identify other potential devices within their proposed device ecosystem. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the Offeror to propose a solution that identifies how these goals will be achieved.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 380**RFP Section Reference:** Section L.3.2.1, Coverage and Capacity**Question:**

The RFP says “The Offeror’s solution must demonstrate intent to exercise rural telecommunication provider partnerships for at least 15 percent of the total rural coverage nationwide.”

- Why is this requirement specified as a numerical ratio on a nationwide basis?
- If a state has a high percentage of its rural area covered by rural telecommunications providers that could enable band 14 cost effectively, can the state specify a percentage of rural area requirement within the state?

Answer:

FirstNet is pursuing a nationwide solution and, as such, the metric is nationwide in nature due to the variation in rural and non-rural areas across states and territories. Rural coverage of Band 14 will be a function of the Offeror’s coverage plan and the IOC/FOC target timeline as contained in Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline. The 15 percent rural telecommunications provider partnership requirement is for proposal preparation and evaluation purposes.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 386**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR, Section 4.1.1, Interoperability Assumptions, #2**Question:**

At the time this was written in 2012 the team at the FCC put forth recommendations that were based on 3GPP Release 9, yet recommendations are made on the J-4 Systems and Standards View to support Release 13.

By the time RFP responses are due to FirstNet, 3GPP will have frozen and finalized the content for Release 13. There are provisions throughout the document that state the requirements apply to future releases. It should be noted that Mission Critical Push To Talk (MCPTT) requires many of the enhancements for Release 13 to be fully implemented.

Can an Offeror supply a Release 9 compliant system and still meet the bidder requirements by FirstNet?

Answer:

Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR, is restricted to minimum requirements for the NPSBN. Enhancements and new features are highlighted in the IOC/FOC target timeline detailed in Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, including those related to mission-critical services. The Offeror is responsible for identifying and determining which 3GPP release(s) meet each IOC/FOC milestone.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 387

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 3.3, StdV-2 Devices Interface Roadmap

Question:

This document places a massive burden on the offeror to implement standards and specifications “necessary for the implementation of the NPSBN”. Although this document is meant to be an objective it states that the “Contractor shall comply with...the standard specification specified in the tables contained herein.” Several interfaces specified are standards that are not completed yet, have never been commercially deployed and not even part of existing Public Safety LTE networks. The risk here is that this is a “shall” statement on feature implementation without any consideration of product availability or cost. For section 3.2 StdV-1 Devices Interface #1 the Vehicular Network System (VNS) is required to support a Satellite Modem, eNodeB and Evolved Packet Core functionality. All of these products exist in form factors necessary for a VNS. However, this is a tremendous amount of functionality to put into a mandatory VNS and the cost could be very high to not only procure the systems but maintain interoperability.

Table 1 StdV-1 Devices Interface Specifications requires some yet to be completed features such as MCPTT, ProSe and IOPS. These specifications will likely be completed for Release 13 but could easily get pushed to Release 14 or never in the case of IOPS if it doesn’t get a consortium in 3GPP. The timeframe for real implementation puts this in likely the 2018 timeframe, which does align with the IOC times by FirstNet. However, this does not meet the immediate needs of Public Safety and does not help address the current market pressures by agencies to deploy mobile broadband to their workforce. This table also puts in requirements for eMBMS and RCS – features that have had limited deployments. In the case of RCS, it has been a complete failure for the market to adopt. RCS was designed 8 years ago to fend off OTT applications but has proven to be difficult and costly to implement. To place Public Safety in line for use of a messaging application that was designed in a very different telecom world, is not taking advantage of market technology advances that are much more flexible to deploy and cheaper to operate.

Other enhancements like SC-PTM and eMBMS are all very good features that could benefit group communications for Public Safety. However, all the features listed in the table are for devices, which means significant impact to the RF and baseband chipset design of the devices. Section 4 and subsequent sub-sections make reference to multiple backhaul options and interconnection

Several advanced features that are not yet completed are specified in the StdV-2 Devices Interface Roadmap (i.e. MC-PTT, SC-PTM).

- How can FirstNet place a requirement on the Contractor to supply a very specific feature if it hasn't even been built yet and the costs to deploy are unknown?
- Could the use case requirements be used instead of yet to be developed standards?

Answer:

A primary goal of a Vehicular Network System (VNS) is to provide a cost-effective range extension/replacement solution to having terrestrial coverage in all areas.

Regarding evolving 3GPP standards, the Offeror should provide its best estimate of a timeline for the various public safety equipment and services mentioned and the corresponding reasons if their timeline differs.

Regarding specific service offerings, if the Offeror can meet the objectives of public safety with more cost-effective alternatives, they should propose them along with the rationale.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 388

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 3.3, StdV-2 Devices Interface Roadmap

Question:

This document places a massive burden on the offeror to implement standards and specifications “necessary for the implementation of the NPSBN”. Although this document is meant to be an objective it states that the “Contractor shall comply with...the standard specification specified in the tables contained herein.” Several interfaces specified are standards that are not completed yet, have never been commercially deployed and not even part of existing Public Safety LTE networks. The risk here is that this is a “shall” statement on feature implementation without any consideration of product availability or cost. For section 3.2 StdV-1 Devices Interface #1 the Vehicular Network System (VNS) is required to support a Satellite Modem, eNodeB and Evolved Packet Core functionality. All of these products exist in form factors necessary for a VNS. However, this is a tremendous amount of functionality to put into a

mandatory VNS and the cost could be very high to not only procure the systems but maintain interoperability.

Table 1 StdV-1 Devices Interface Specifications requires some yet to be completed features such as MCPTT, ProSe and IOPS. These specifications will likely be completed for Release 13 but could easily get pushed to Release 14 or never in the case of IOPS if it doesn't get a consortium in 3GPP. The timeframe for real implementation puts this in likely the 2018 timeframe, which does align with the IOC times by FirstNet. However, this does not meet the immediate needs of Public Safety and does not help address the current market pressures by agencies to deploy mobile broadband to their workforce. This table also puts in requirements for eMBMS and RCS – features that have had limited deployments. In the case of RCS, it has been a complete failure for the market to adopt. RCS was designed 8 years ago to fend off OTT applications but has proven to be difficult and costly to implement. To place Public Safety in line for use of a messaging application that was designed in a very different telecom world, is not taking advantage of market technology advances that are much more flexible to deploy and cheaper to operate.

Other enhancements like SC-PTM and eMBMS are all very good features that could benefit group communications for Public Safety. However, all the features listed in the table are for devices, which means significant impact to the RF and baseband chipset design of the devices. Section 4 and subsequent sub-sections make reference to multiple backhaul options and interconnection

Much of the proposed functionality relies on features such as eMBMS and RCS. These features, although available today, have not been deployed successfully in commercial networks in the US and have proven costly to operate.

- Has an engineering and cost analysis been done to see what services could be provided by and OTT app as opposed to a network application?
- If so are those results available so that bidders can evaluate the best solutions to propose?

Answer:

This is an objectives-based acquisition, which affords Offerors the flexibility to propose solutions that best achieve FirstNet's stated objectives. FirstNet has not performed an engineering and cost analysis pertaining to the services that could be provided by Over-the-Top (OTT) apps as opposed to network applications.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 389

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 3.3, StdV-2 Devices Interface Roadmap

Question:

This document places a massive burden on the offeror to implement standards and specifications “necessary for the implementation of the NPSBN”. Although this document is meant to be an objective it states that the “Contractor shall comply with...the standard specification specified in the tables contained herein.” Several interfaces specified are standards that are not completed yet, have never been commercially deployed and not even part of existing Public Safety LTE networks. The risk here is that this is a “shall” statement on feature implementation without any consideration of product availability or cost. For section 3.2 StdV-1 Devices Interface #1 the Vehicular Network System (VNS) is required to support a Satellite Modem, eNodeB and Evolved Packet Core functionality. All of these products exist in form factors necessary for a VNS. However, this is a tremendous amount of functionality to put into a mandatory VNS and the cost could be very high to not only procure the systems but maintain interoperability.

Table 1 StdV-1 Devices Interface Specifications requires some yet to be completed features such as MCPTT, ProSe and IOPS. These specifications will likely be completed for Release 13 but could easily get pushed to Release 14 or never in the case of IOPS if it doesn’t get a consortium in 3GPP. The timeframe for real implementation puts this in likely the 2018 timeframe, which does align with the IOC times by FirstNet. However, this does not meet the immediate needs of Public Safety and does not help address the current market pressures by agencies to deploy mobile broadband to their workforce. This table also puts in requirements for eMBMS and RCS – features that have had limited deployments. In the case of RCS, it has been a complete failure for the market to adopt. RCS was designed 8 years ago to fend off OTT applications but has proven to be difficult and costly to implement. To place Public Safety in line for use of a messaging application that was designed in a very different telecom world, is not taking advantage of market technology advances that are much more flexible to deploy and cheaper to operate.

Other enhancements like SC-PTM and eMBMS are all very good features that could benefit group communications for Public Safety. However, all the features listed in the table are for devices, which means significant impact to the RF and baseband chipset design of the devices. Section 4 and subsequent sub-sections make reference to multiple backhaul options and interconnection

Many advanced features are defined in the table for devices, which means significant impact to the RF and baseband chipset design of the devices.

- Will considerations for lower cost tier devices be allowed or will everything be “full featured” – thus requiring the most feature laden chipsets and thus higher cost?
- For M2M/IoT applications several of these features may not be feasible from a cost perspective. Will FirstNet allow for these devices to not be fully compliant with the table?

In general, the evolution of first responder related IoT has minimal public safety engagement, with great implications on the development of their sensor systems (including buildings, vehicles and personal devices). How will FirstNet engage in the RF and baseband chipset design requirements process to achieve these features?

- IR92 VoLTE is required as supported but no device support for IR94 Video over LTE is required – why not?

Answer:

This is an objectives-based acquisition, which affords Offerors the flexibility to propose solutions, including a device portfolio, that best achieve FirstNet’s stated objectives.

As stated in Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 3.2, StdV-1 Devices Interface (Interface #1), “The Contractor shall comply with the mandatory standards interface specification requirements for interoperability with the NPSBN found in Table 1 StdV-1 Devices Interface Specifications.” Also, as stated in the same document, Section 3.2, StdV-1 Devices Interface (Interface #1), Table 1, StdV-1 Devices Interface Specifications, row described as “VoLTE,” GSMA IR92/94 is a mandatory standards interface specification requirement.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 390

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 4, RAN to Core Interface (Interface #2)

Question:

Will macro cells be required (anything over 5W TX power) to support the IEEE 1588 timing requirements?

Answer:

As stated in Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, “These views are not exhaustive and are used as a guideline for the Contractor to identify all standards that are relevant on an interface. The objective is for the Contractor to utilize standard interfaces.” This is an objectives-based RFP. Therefore, FirstNet is looking for an Offeror to provide a solution that best achieves the objectives as described in Section C, Statement of Objectives, and associated Section J attachments.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 391**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 5.3, Std-2 Roaming Interface Roadmap**Question:**

Section 5 Roaming makes several references to supporting VoLTE, MCPTT, Group Communications and ProSe while roaming. The ability and requirement to support roaming interfaces for these features is incredibly costly and perhaps impossible giving current roaming agreements.

- Has FirstNet considered the cost of implementing and mandating this specific roaming interfaces for the features mentioned? If so, can the cost analysis be provided?
- Emergency calling and VoLTE roaming do not exist in the US yet. This may eventually become a reality but it is very burdensome to implement. Since these interfaces aren't available yet, how will they be mandated and then tested to ensure interoperability?
- ProSe can only operate in licensed bands – what is the intent of and need for a roaming interface for ProSe?

Answer:

Roaming is a potential scenario to enhance and/or extend coverage where Band 14 is not deployed or has not been deployed yet. Public safety users expect that their services will work seamlessly across the geography for which they are responsible. Offerors shall identify what the limitations will be for services available while roaming, if roaming is provided as part of the proposed solution.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 392**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 6.2, Std-1 MVNO Interface (Interface #4)**Question:**

Section 6.2 requires a MVNO interface to use 3GPP Release 13 specifications. The MVNO concept was to allow faster time to market.

A MVNO could deploy today on release 9/10 systems – why are they mandated to use 3GPP Release 13 and wait until likely 2018 for full compliance?

Answer:

The Offeror shall propose any initial MVNO deployment strategy per the IOC/FOC milestones described in Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline. This strategy shall identify the proposed 3GPP release starting point. In addition, Section 6.2, StdV-1 MVNO Interface (Interface #4), of Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, specifies up to and including 3GPP Release 13 in accordance with IOC/FOC milestones. It is expected that the network will continue to evolve from deployed 3GPP release to future 3GPP releases.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 393

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views

Question:

Several references are made for NG-911 support in the document.

- Is the intent for the NPSBN to support NG-911 calls and all the inherent requirements of a CMRS?
- NG-911 implementation is often done by each locality within a State. If States and municipalities role out NG-911 capabilities at different times and capabilities, how will FirstNet manage this disparity across the USA?

Answer:

FirstNet does not intend to serve as a primary pathway for NG911 traffic; instead, FirstNet envisions supporting Enhanced 9-1-1 (E911) and NG911 calls. If the Offeror intends to operate as a CMRS provider (the determination as to whether the Contractor will operate as a CMRS provider would be made by applying applicable FCC's rules and precedent), the Contractor would be required to comply with FCC's rules and policies applicable to CMRS providers.

Section J, Attachment J-3, FCC TAB RMTR, Section 4.1.10.1.6, PSTN Voice, and Section 4.4.6.3, NG 911 Services, and Section L.3.2.2.1.1, Basic Network Services, indicate that the NPSBN would need to support E911 calling. Therefore, the Offeror shall propose an NPSBN solution that (a) ensures seamless and secure communications paths from the individuals who originate 9-1-1 traffic, through the call/dispatch center, and (b) ensures that the NPSBN interoperates and interconnects with NG911 systems.

Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 9.2, StdV-1 Public Safety Enterprise Network Interface (Interface #7), instructs the Offeror to comply with mandatory standards interface specification requirements for interoperability with the NPSBN, including 3GPP TS 23.167 specification for Emergency Services IP Network Design for NG911.

Regarding the second question, Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, Section 9, Public Safety Enterprise Network Interface (Interface #7), indicates FirstNet’s intention to work with the Offeror to solidify key PSEN interface requirements to ensure proper connectivity, services, application, security, and functionality objectives of each PSEN interface are met.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 395

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Section 2, IOC/FOC Target Timeline

Question:

Initial and Final Operational Capability timelines for implementation of the NPSBN.

FirstNet is choosing the most aggressive 3GPP commercial deployment guideline in the IOC timeline.

Should consideration be given to choose more stable system releases for reliability of the NPSBN?

Answer:

Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, identifies target milestones. Also, as stated in Section L.3.1.2, Section Two – Leadership and Program Management, third bullet, “The Offeror shall propose a milestone timeline detailing its solution in accordance with the IOC/FOC milestones ...”

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 397

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Section 3.1.2, IOC-1 - Coverage and Capacity Solutions (State and Territory Task Orders)

Question:

High Power UE are available now and can be tested in networks such as Adams County.

Rather than wait until 2017, can FirstNet provide support for testing in existing Band 14 networks such as ADCOM?

Answer:

FirstNet has been and continues to be significantly engaged in an outreach and consultation process that affords stakeholders an opportunity to provide input, which assisted in the development of the objectives and/or requirements contained within the RFP.

The purpose of the question and answer period in the solicitation is to afford an opportunity to clarify the terms and conditions contained within the RFP. Therefore, this response is being provided from an RFP perspective. Any questions not related to the RFP terms and conditions should be addressed through the appropriate FirstNet outreach and consultation process.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 398

RFP Section Reference: Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Section 3.3, IOC-3

Question:

Task Order #3 and IOC-3 requires completion of all mission-critical services, systems and operations?

- If specific features specified in the RFP are not available like MCPTT – what are the financial and contractual penalties?

Answer:

Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, provides Offerors a target milestone schedule to work from. Offerors should propose a timeline based on their proposed solution. Any financial or contractual incentives and/or disincentives shall be included with the proposed QASP in accordance with the instructions contained in Section L.3.1.7, Section Seven – Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 399**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Section 2, IOC/FOC Target Timeline**Question:**

The SMC (e.g. NOC) launch is scheduled for IOC-2.

The SMC seems crucial to monitoring the nationwide network, which launches in IOC-1, should the SMC be coordinated with IOC-1?

Answer:

Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Section 3.1.3.5, Operations, lists specific operational functions targeted for completion in IOC-1. Within the same section, Item 1, Commence Non-Band 14 Network Operations, sub-item (b) states, “Fully operational Services Management Center (SMC) that can monitor non-Band 14 systems.” IOC-2 states that the FirstNet SMC be fully operational. The distinction allows for an initial network operations capability in IOC-1 that evolves to a full FirstNet SMC by IOC-2. Also, as stated in Section L.3.1.2, Section Two – Leadership and Program Management, third bullet, “The Offeror shall propose a milestone timeline detailing its solution in accordance with the IOC/FOC milestones ...”

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 400**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, Section 3.2.2.3, Devices**Question:**

Section 3.2.2.3, Devices states that upon publication of 3GPP Release 12, which was frozen in June 2015, the contractor will update the software of all devices. No devices to our knowledge have all Release 12 features enabled or available due to commercial market forces and technological barriers. Additionally, the primary OS vendors – Apple and Google – control the release of OS functionality.

If access to the software to support Release 12 is not available due to lack of availability, what are the penalties for not being able to implement this?

Answer:

Offerors should include in their solution a proposed timeline and supporting details that are consistent with their business model. If the Contractor fails to meet a specific milestone within the proposed IOC/FOC target, the Contractor will not receive proposed payments and may be subject to any liquidated damages contained in Section I, Contract Clauses, specifically, FAR 52.211-11, Liquidated Damages – Supplies, Services or Research and Development (SEP 2000).

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 401**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-14, Terms of Reference**Question:**

Coverage is defined here as a “...mobile device can reliably communicate with each other above a minimum designed data rate”. VoLTE takes a lower data rate than what is specified and MCPTT may be even lower than VoLTE due to half-duplex rates.

Is voice a consideration for coverage or only data rates?

Answer:

Voice is not considered for coverage evaluation. Coverage is defined as an LTE Band 14 network capable of providing cell edge data rates of 256 kbps uplink (UL) and 768 kbps downlink (DL) measured from outdoor stationary User Equipment at three (3) feet from ground level with a 95 percent confidence margin for the cell area with a uniform cell load of 50 percent for the DL and UL.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

No

RFP Change Description:

N/A

Question #: 402**RFP Section Reference:** Section J, Attachment J-14, Terms of Reference**Question:**

The definition for MCPTT is a methodology of pushing “...a button on the radio and transmits the voice message to other units” – there is no mention of 3GPP specific MCPTT.

Will other applications that work like MCPTT be allowed since the definition is not specific to 3GPP?

Answer:

Section J, Attachment J-14, Terms of Reference, is not an objectives or requirements document. The definition in the Terms of Reference generically describes Push to Talk (PTT). In Section J, Attachment J-8, IOC/FOC Target Timeline, IOC-2 identifies consumer-grade PTT and IOC-3 targets mission-critical PTT as defined in Section J, Attachment J-4, System and Standards Views, with specific reference to 3GPP TS 22.179 and TS 23.779.

RFP Change (Yes/No):

Yes

RFP Change Description:

Section J, Attachment J-14, Terms of Reference, will be revised in a forthcoming Amendment 008, to change the definition of “Mission-Critical Push-To-Talk” to read, “Mission Critical Push-To-Talk is a standards-based voice capability over LTE defined by 3GPP. As defined by 3GPP, MC-PTT is an enhanced PTT service that includes features such as group, private, broadcast, emergency, and immediate peril calls.”
