

Commercial Solutions Opening (CSO) Solicitation

1 General Information.

1.1 Background.

1.1.1 This is a procurement action using the commercial solutions opening (CSO) procedure in accordance with section 880 of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act and is subject to the limitations outlined in the General Services Acquisition Manual (GSAM) Part 571 and associated GSA Procurement Innovation Resource Center (PIRC) CSO Guide. This procurement is part of the GSA PIRC CSO pilot program and is being used to competitively procure with the CSO procedure innovative commercial items, technologies, and services currently in the production/commercialization phase as well as new adaptations of existing commercial products.

1.1.2 GSA has developed this pilot program to be implemented outside the normal Federal Acquisition Regulations requirements to engage traditional and non-traditional Government contractors, including start-up companies. This pilot program is intended to promote competition in accordance with the Competition in Contracting Act with a streamlined approach to address specific needs for innovative commercial items. This pilot program offers a range of advantages to open up the field of competition so that the Government and taxpayers benefit from a large pool of solutions at a better cost and performance, including:

- Streamlined solicitation requiring only minimal corporate and technical information;
- Fast track vendor selection timelines;
- Simplified contract administration procedures and requirements; and
- Preference for the vendor retaining core intellectual property.

1.2 NAICS. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for this announcement is NAICS 541990 -- All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

2 Project Description.

Technology is evolving at a rapid pace, and that growth is being driven by private industry. Major technology trends that affect our national security will continue to emerge from private

industry innovators, and the Department of Defense (DoD) competitive advantage will be the ability to quickly identify, validate, acquire, and integrate those technologies. This project will focus on this integration through commercially available accelerator services.

The objective of the project is to procure a technology accelerator service that will establish an innovative cohort of commercially viable, operationally useful, and technically feasible companies that have advanced their disruptive technology and corporate viability, and have validated or invalidated their technology against United States Air Force (USAF) needs.

The USAF is seeking innovative commercial technology accelerator services that will enhance their ability to acquire innovative commercial technologies that meet warfighter needs.

2.1 Project Objectives.

It is anticipated that the successful offeror will, as part of the accelerator program:

1. Scout and recruit emerging dual-use technology companies (including startups globally) that don't typically affiliate with the government with an emphasis on the following technology areas: Immersive Training & Methods; Data-Enabled Recruiting, Training & Education Systems; Autonomous Systems; Artificial Intelligence; Advanced Space Technologies (though other dual-use technologies will be considered). Future years' programs may have different technology areas of interest.
2. Admit companies that are commercially viable and have a high likelihood of success (even without government funding).
3. Rapidly validate or invalidate the usefulness of those technologies against USAF needs.
4. Leverage private investment to decrease Research and Development costs for the USAF.
5. Advance their existing working relationship with the startup ecosystem to increase understanding of, and engagement with, the USAF.
6. Be able to run two programs per year, in two different locations ((1) Boston, MA; 2) Los Angeles, CA.)), and potentially at the same time (preferred, though not required).
7. Be able to initiate both programs within six months of award.
8. Be able to successfully conclude both programs within 13 months of award.

3 Solution Brief Submission Requirements.

3.1 Submission Requirements.

Written solution briefs as described in 3.2 must be received via email submission by 11:00AM ET on August 27, 2018 to natalie.melomed@gsa.gov. **Solution briefs**

received after the specified due date and time will not be evaluated by the Government.

Oral presentations or other written information may be requested to supplement the written solution brief before potential award. Any oral presentations requested will be coordinated directly with the offeror and may be conducted by videoconference or in-person.

For planning purposes only, it is anticipated that oral presentations will occur by videoconference during the week of September 4, 2018.

3.2 Written Solution Brief Requirements.

3.2.1 Content of Solution Brief.

The written solution brief shall be less than or equal to five pages or, if a presentation, less than or equal to 10 slides. **Any pages or slides submitted beyond this limitation will be removed and not evaluated.** The written solution brief shall include and or address the following:

1. Title Page
 - At a minimum, please include company name, solution name, solicitation number, date of submission, point of contact name, email address, phone number, and company address. This page will not count towards the page/slide limitation.
2. Solution Concept
 - Describe your service/solution and its potential relevance to the project description outlined in Section 2.
 - Address the potential of the service/solution of meeting the project objectives in Section 2.
 - In what ways does it push the state-of-the-art? Please explain this using technical language rather than marketing or sales-type language.
 - Describe your business model, as it relates to accelerator services.
3. Company Viability
 - Describe your customer base and provide some examples of past contracts or sales of this service/solution.
 - Describe your company – How old is it? Where is it located and headquartered (e.g. multiple locations, sales/R&D in U.S. and other countries)? Number of employees?
 - Describe the management team – Who are they? What is their background and history (e.g. previous startups, etc.)?
 - Include other relevant corporate information, as applicable.

3.2.2 Proprietary Markings.

Offerors must mark any pages of written solution brief that contain business plans, technical information, pricing or other business sensitive information as proprietary information, which the Government agrees to safeguard.

To ensure that sensitive data is appropriately marked by the offeror, include the following sentences on the title page: "This solution brief includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the Government, except to non-Government personnel for evaluation purposes, and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed -- in whole or in part -- for any purpose other than to evaluate this submission. If, however, an agreement is awarded to this Company as a result of -- or in connection with -- the submission of this data, the Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent agreed upon by both parties in the resulting agreement. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets [insert numbers or other identification of sheets]."

Each restricted data sheet must be marked as follows: "Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this solution brief."

4 Evaluation of Solution Briefs.

4.1 General.

Both the written solution brief and oral presentation, if applicable, will be evaluated against the solicitation criteria. Each solution brief submitted may be evaluated against the evaluation criteria separately and need not be evaluated against other solution briefs. More than one solution brief may be accepted. The Government reserves the right to request oral presentations, product demonstrations, or additional written information, if applicable, from one or more offerors.

4.2 Evaluation Criteria.

The following evaluation criteria shall be used to evaluate the written solution brief and oral presentation. The evaluation criteria are listed below in order of importance from top to bottom. If a solution brief does not meet the first evaluation criterion, the solution brief will not be further considered for award.

The first three criteria will be used to evaluate the written solution brief:

- **Criterion I: Responsiveness/Relevance of the solution to the Project**
 - The solution brief is responsive to the requirements of the solicitation.
 - The offeror is headquartered in the U.S. and the solution brief and proposed service is relevant to the description and objectives in Section 2 of the solicitation.

- **Criterion II: Transition Approach of the proposed solution into the technical environment**
 - The proposed service can feasibly launch and conclude two separate accelerator programs within six and 13 months of award, respectively.
 - The solution brief adequately addresses how the offeror will recruit, select, and accelerate innovative commercial companies within the requirements levied by the government.
- **Criterion III: Offeror's Capabilities and Related Experience.**
 - The offeror clearly addresses prior worldwide experience (both Government and/or non-Government) attracting a sufficient number of early- to mid-stage startups, yielding a cohort of companies that are commercially viable, and attracting private capital investments.

An additional fourth criterion will be used to evaluate the oral presentations:

- **Criterion IV: Technical Merit**
 - **The solution's technical merit with respect to the following areas:**
 - Recruitment:
 - Access to large, diverse network of early- to mid-stage startups.
 - Established process for identifying and recruiting high-potential startups.
 - Selection:
 - Proven track record of selecting startups relevant and likely to succeed in the topic area markets.
 - Use of best-in-class selection protocols and subject matter experts to aid in the technical evaluations of applicants.
 - Acceleration:
 - Strong track record running corporate technology accelerator programs, resulting in the funding of cohort companies.
 - Availability and adequacy of resources, such as physical space, laboratory capabilities (e.g., dry lab, wet lab),

business programming, staff support, networking activities, and financing options.

- Proven experience building strong relationships and attracting high-caliber technology and business subject matter experts in the Greater Boston- and Los Angeles metro-areas, providing startups the technical, financial, and business resources they need to be successful.

4.3 Evaluation Panel.

An evaluation panel will be used to evaluate the solution briefs and oral presentations, if applicable, submitted in response to this solicitation. The evaluation panel will consist of U.S. Government employees.

4.4 Solution Brief Evaluation and Notification to Offerors.

Solution briefs will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria. After evaluating the offeror's written solution briefs, GSA will notify the offeror whether their solution brief is being considered for award and a proposal can be submitted, an oral presentation or other supplemental information is requested to supplement the written solution brief, or their solution brief was not selected for award. Offerors not selected for an award may request, within 5 calendar days of notification of non-selection, feedback regarding the technical review findings of their submitted solution brief.

4.5 Protests To GSA.

An offeror may file a protest to the agency in accordance with the procedures in GSAM 533.103.

5 Proposal Submission.

5.1 General.

Upon conclusion of the evaluation of the written solution briefs and/or oral presentations (if applicable) in accordance with Section 4, the Government may invite one or more offerors to develop and submit a proposal in accordance with this Section 5. Companies may discuss ideas and details of the proposal with the Government prior to submission. Each proposal submitted shall consist of three sections:

- Section 1: Technical Information
- Section 2: Proposal Solution
- Section 3: Price Information

The cost of preparing proposals in response to this Request is not considered a direct charge to any resulting CSO award or any other contract. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable.

5.2 Technical Approach.

Describe the background and objectives of the proposed work. Include the nature and extent of the anticipated results. Discuss any risks and proposed mitigation strategy to address the risks. Include ancillary and operational issues such as partnerships, protocols, financing, and non-standard business methodologies to be used. Identify the type of support, if any, the Company requests of the Government in general such as facilities, equipment, data, and information or materials.

Please Note: The proposals must identify any proprietary information or associated intellectual property. The proposal should discuss data rights associated with each item.

5.3 Proposal Solution.

The Offeror must submit a proposal solution as part of their final proposal that identifies the work to be performed and the deliverables. Provide a detailed project schedule that outlines the various phases of work to be accomplished within the proposed period of performance. The offeror will be provided a CSO Proposal Solution Template.

5.4 Price Information.

The offeror must submit the total price to complete the project and shall provide any other data or supporting information that the parties agree is necessary for the determination of a fair and reasonable price. A milestone schedule shall be included which clearly indicates the completion of the priced tasks and/or priced deliverables that are required to meet each of the milestones. For Firm-Fixed-Price agreements, the milestone schedule will serve as a payment schedule for any subsequent award.

5.5 Notification to Offeror.

GSA will notify the offeror whether their proposal has been accepted for award, further negotiation is requested, or the proposal is not accepted for award.