

PNNL RFP 746072 Amendment 1
Questions/Clarifications & Answers
June 8, 2023

Please see below for answers to questions submitted in response to the referenced RFP. If your question was not adequately addressed, kindly contact Laurie Martin (laurie.martin@pnnl.gov) with your specific query. In the event an answer/clarification is contradictory to elements of the RFP, the answers/information provided below shall be considered to take precedence.

1. Can we submit questions before that deadline?
PNNL Response: Yes questions can be submitted at anytime prior to the deadline.
2. May we submit questions as they arise? Or do you prefer that we consolidate them and submit them together on the 26th?
PNNL Response: It would be helpful to have the questions consolidated as much as possible however please don't delay in submitting them for the sole purpose of consolidation.
3. What is the format/procedure for answering questions?
PNNL Response: Responses to questions will be posted with the original solicitation on SAM.Gov. if the questions result in an amendment to the solicitation the updated solicitation documents will also be posted on SAM.Gov.
4. When are questions answered?
PNNL Response: Questions will be answered as soon as practicable.
5. Can you confirm that all questions will be submitted to all respondents?
PNNL Response: Questions that apply to all potential offerors will be answered publicly by posting on the SAM.gov solicitation notice for this RFP.
6. Is there room to extend both the Questions and RFP deadline for submissions?
PNNL Response: Both deadlines will be extended as noted in the latest RFP amendment.
7. Typically, and our strong recommendation, our clients buy devices directly from the device manufacturers. Can you confirm whether that is an option here?
PNNL Response: That is not an option the bid has been written specifically for one vendor to oversee all issues with any and all equipment.
8. Will you be open to joint bids between organisations e.g. we may bid on one component of the project and omit another, where a secondary bidder would bid?
PNNL Response: That is not an option, only bids that address the entire scope in the RFP will be considered technically responsive and eligible for award.
9. When the RFP refers to samples per day, can we assume that means a typical 8 hour workday?
PNNL Response: Yes, 8 hour workday which is identified in the SOW.
10. Can commercial terms be discussed (noting that some come from the federal govt and are not negotiable)?
PNNL Response: Certain commercial terms can be discussed/negotiated, but as noted there are some that are non-negotiable.

11. The SOW states that: Containers must be sealable, e.g., with a tight-fitting cap so they can be transported between labs without risk of spilling/cross contamination, but the ***caps could be removed manually when samples are loaded into the system if cross contamination can be avoided.*** The SOW also states that: ***The system must keep samples cool (4 °C) if residence times before processing will exceed 1 hour.***

a. *If operators remove soil sample caps before loading them, would caps need to be put back onto those samples that need to temporarily go to cold storage?*

PNNL Response: Yes, samples going into cold storage need to be capped tightly to avoid evaporation.

12. This is listed as a FP contract. Are you open to other contract types?

PNNL Response: No.

13. Payment Terms – Fixed Price meaning the Contractor is paid at final completion and what are payment terms?

PNNL Response: No, payment is due upon completion of each task as demonstrated by an acceptable deliverable per the contract, not when the entire system is delivered. You're being asked to provide a price for each task. Once you complete Task 1 and can demonstrate completion by submitting the deliverable, you would be eligible to submit an invoice for payment. You have the option to break out tasks within a task (task 1.2). Payment terms are Net 30 upon receipt of an acceptable deliverable or valid invoice, whichever is later. Net 15 is possible upon request.

14. Our payment terms require a 50% upon the purchase order.

PNNL Response: As this will be a contracting utilizing federal funding, the government does not provide an advanced payment if nothing has been received – the government wants to see a product before releasing taxpayer funding. If a PO can be provided that identifies a component or piece of equipment has been purchased, that would constitute evidence that something has been done. This must be established/defined in the contract by way of negotiations between Battelle and the successful offeror prior to award.

15. Are the general provisions negotiable?

PNNL Response: Warranty terms are negotiable. There are other general provisions that are not negotiable, so we would need to know upfront if there are some that are unacceptable to the offeror. If you don't accept non-negotiable terms, it's a no-go and Battelle would proceed to negotiate with the offeror who provided the next lowest priced technically acceptable proposal.

16. There was a link that took us to general terms. Can you tell me the general terms that apply to this contract? The document references A-409.30, but the link is .31.

PNNL Response: The correct General Provisions are A-409.31, this will be updated in the RFP Amendment.

17. Confirm whether a Factory Acceptance Test/Site Acceptance Test (FAT/SAT) that includes validation of equipment and communications only is considered acceptable?

PNNL Response: PNNL's assumption is that the offeror doesn't want to run actual soil samples and verify that the extractions are successful/free of contamination, e.g. they may run with water to show the instruments function mechanically and communicate properly, but not that the system can perform the procedure. A key element of the required scope is accurately measuring out soil aliquots with different soil consistencies, the offeror's request would not provide PNNL with confidence that the offeror's approach as stated could demonstrate the system is able to consistently perform the work. PNNL expects the vendor to demonstrate accurate weighing/aliquoting of the three soil types which PNNL will provide (See updated SOW for details). Subsequent steps can be demonstrated with surrogate liquids as described in the updated SOW) to demonstrate accurate liquid handling.

18. Testing. It's reasonable to request the demonstration of technology. For something that's not standard work, purchased equipment, our position is it is the responsibility of the PNNL scientists to determine if it performs the work they required it to do. Battelle scientists have responsibility to make sure they are getting what they expect. It is unreasonable to expect us to determine something that has never been done. We can commit to delivering the capability, but the team needs to own the output of the capability. Can commit to doing something within a given period of time but cannot commit to saying "that will work". The tool, which we can make **recommendations** based on our experience – stating this tool CAN meet your requirements and you then say it does or does not. You own that. If it breaks, we cannot service someone else's tools, but we can broker that.

PNNL Response: PNNL doesn't expect any contractor to provide a component from a sub-tier contractor and then perform maintenance, but we would expect that contractor to keep the relationship with the sub-tier contractor, arrange for repairs within the warranty period to avoid invalidating a warranty. If the system is required to operate in a certain manner, that must be demonstrated prior to acceptance and to determine the system is fully operational. The SOW has been updated to identify a list of surrogate liquids to be used for FAT/SAT. If PNNL receives information that states this system has capability to do X, Y, Z, that's potentially a part of the deliverable, but ultimately the contractor must prove the system can do that through FAT/SAT, not that it has capability. We need evidence that it has been tested prior to arriving at PNNL's facility. PNNL understands we can't require an advanced extraction method that involves harmful chemicals to be part of the FAT/SAT. But if we give a handler expectation with a workflow and its requirements, PNNL is counting on the contractor to be able to pass methods on to the liquid handler process. One thing that is expected to be required of the system is the ability to perform automatic calculations. Another requirement is that it uses the measured sample weight of each aliquot and adds the correct reagent volume in steps where the volume is relative to the weight so as to not exceed the total capacity of the sample being processed. If the same thing we do manually is unable to be automated, then it is on the contractor to fix and would be part of the site acceptance testing.