

STEC 2004 Frequently Asked Questions

TERMS

1) What does the term STEC stand for?

The Space Test and Engineering Contract (STEC) is the contract for Det 12 SMC/VO operations and mission-specific software/database engineering. The EDS and the STEC contractors work side by side at the RSC and at CERES. The STEC does not support the Deployables (VOD) or Parks (VOA) divisions.

2) What does the term EDS stand for?

Engineering, Development, and Sustainment. The term refers to the associate contract used by Det 12 SMC/VO for engineering development and sustainment of the core architecture.

3) What is the difference between EDS and ESD?

EDS is the acronym for the Engineering Development and Sustainment Contract. ESD is the acronym the Electronic Scheduling Device.

CONTRACT

4) Will there be any oral presentations required as part of the Source Selection?

No.

5) Section L does not appear to address all of the requirements in the Statement of Work. Why is that?

The Government selected those tasks from the SOW that provide the greatest ability to discriminate among Offerors within the Mission Capability factor. The government does not request the contractor to address the remaining tasks in the Mission Capability volume, except to ensure there is sufficient staff with sufficient experience to perform all Core Operations and Representative Customer Workload.

6) Will there be a separate PRAG?

Refer to Sections L and M.

7) What is a "Client Authorization Letter"?

The Government would like to discuss an Offerors past performance on both Government as well as commercial contracts. In order for the Government to discuss past performance on a commercial contract, the commercial agency needs a release from the Offeror. The Client Authorization Letter provides that release. It is a letter sent by contractor A (copy to the PCO) to contractor B authorizing/giving permission for contractor B to discuss the performance of contractor A.

8) For what years is VO funding approved?

VO funding, Operations & Maintenance (3400) funds, is approved on an annual basis.

9) How will you evaluate Transition/Phase-in costs?

The Government will evaluate the phase-in costs for realism and reasonableness, but will not add the phase-in costs to the overall Probable Cost of each proposal.

10) Will you tell us percentage of contract value or headcount required for each location?

No. The relative percentages and headcount will depend on the approach you select. A conformed copy of the current STEC will be available in the updated Bidder's Library (CD).

11) Are the CWBS and CWBS Dictionary not part of the contract, but Deliverable via CDRL on a periodic basis?

Levels 1, 2, and 3 will be placed on contract. Lower levels, if applicable, will be kept by contractor and the government will have access via an access clause in section H.

12) How will small business goals be evaluated?

Refer to Sections L and M.

13) Is there a small business requirement vs. goal?

No, however, refer to the Award Fee Plan on criteria for Small Business participation.

14) Is there an Award Fee guidance as far as desired percentages?

No.

15) How many customers do you have each year?

Refer to the Basis of Estimate, Section L, paragraph 5.5.

16) How many modifications do you expect each year?

Approximately 30 contract modifications per year.

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17) How many PARs do you go through in a year?

One.

18) Does this solicitation have anything to do with the Multi-Mission Soc (MMSOC)?

No, this solicitation does not consider any requirements pertaining to the MMSOC.

ENVIRONMENT

19) Do the STEC and EDS contractors work together?

They are both part of the VO team, each executing the tasks of their respective contracts to achieve our common goals. They interface on a daily basis to provide ground-segment solutions for our customers.

20) Are The Aerospace Corporation personnel on-site?

Yes, located with the government staff at RSC and CERES.

21) Can you explain the CERES relationship to the RSC?

Both are part of SMC Det 12/VO. CERES and the RSC are satellite operations centers using a common ground system baseline. The RSC operates RDT&E satellites. CERES operates post-operational satellites to perform ground system RDT&E.

MISSIONS

22) What is the difference between RSC and CERES satellites?

Currently, CERES flies mostly post-operational DoD satellites and RSC flies mostly one of a kind RDT&E satellites. The satellites flown at CERES have several different orbits, including super-synchronous orbits. The satellites flown at RSC are in low earth orbits. The "VO Strategic Roadmap" paper (located in the Bidder's Library) explain the roles of the two sites more explicitly.

23) How many contacts do you run each day at the RSC?

We typically run 20 contacts each day, but we have run as many as 30 contacts each day during peak loading.

24) How many contacts do you run in a typical Day at CERES?

The number of satellite contacts varies from day to day depending on a variety of factors. We run approximately 600 contacts in a given month. The number of contacts is dependent on state of health requirements for each of the satellites, eclipse season, the type of testing planned for each satellite that day.

25) How many shifts do you run at the RSC?

We currently run four shifts, four operators per shift. Do not base your approach on how operations are conducted currently, but use your best judgment in considering alternative approaches to meet core operations requirements as well as customer loading requirements.

26) Are there mixed contractor/Government operation teams?

Mission controllers who sit console are contractors only. Government personnel provide program management support and are part of the mission control team.

27) Who determines how many Test And Check Out (TACO) contacts are performed?

The requirements for TACO operations are outlined in the Core Operations definition. The actual number of TACO contacts required will depend on a given situation—if there are enough operational missions on-orbit, then no TACO contacts will be required; if there are no operational missions on-orbit, then the number will be whatever is necessary to maintain crew proficiency on two unique missions.

28) At the RSC, what is the typical number of months available to prepare for a satellite launch?

Anywhere from 18 to 48 months, but typically 36 months.

29) Can you elaborate on the STEC role in each of the CERES projects you briefed?

- STEC fulfilled several roles in the various projects. In support of the DTB and ISAS projects they developed advanced situational awareness display screens for the operators. They integrated their previous research of human-machine interfaces and real time visualization into these screens. They also performed database development work for each satellite included in the DTB/ISAS project. STEC personnel collected data and used the data to train the neural networks for the satellites in the project. They developed algorithms to select representative data sets from the recorded data files necessary for neural network training. The provided project management and system engineering task in support of DTB/ISAS.
- In the GPS LADO project, they assisted the 19 SOPS personnel with use of the DCC terminal, familiarized them with components of the Braxton ACE system and provide general ground system technical advice.
- The STEC personnel performed satellite operations, developed the operations procedures and developed the training procedure for S&P. They supported the test planning, execution and reporting.

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- In support of AFSCN upgrade activity, STEC personnel documented all of the processes and procedures used throughout the Operational Switch Replacement Test Case Mod and provided them to the 50th Operations Support Squadron for use in creating the operational procedures used by 50 SW operational units today. STEC also drafted the initial procedures the 50SW uses for the DCC terminal.
- For our Test and Check Out (TACO) operations, STEC performs a variety of tasks to include satellite operations, mission planning, satellite engineering, orbit analysis and mission unique software development.

30) Do you see the role of CERES changing in the future?

No.

ARCHITECTURE

31) At the RSC and CERES you refer to strings of equipment. What do you mean by string?

A string is the set of resources (equipment and software) required to run one real-time contact.

32) Do you maintain the same equipment suites at both the RSC and CERES?

The equipment suites are not identical but both sites have the same core system based on the COBRA architecture.

33) When was COBRA first developed?

In the 1996-1997 timeframe.

34) Are there any plans to change from the COBRA baseline to another ground system?

No. The COBRA ground system continues to evolve. The evolution is controlled by the US Government and implemented by the EDS contractor.

35) Who decides on your equipment changes?

VOX manages the Core architecture. Any equipment upgrades, additions, or modifications are agreed upon through the VO corporate process. Other equipment upgrades/additions are customer/project driven.

36) You stated your COBRA system is re-configurable, can you explain how you re-configure your strings for various missions?

We can reconfigure with manual patching and via software-controlled switches.

37) Can CERES back-up the RSC and vice-versa?

Not fully at this time. Full back-up capability is a goal.

38) Are you planning to use the assets at Camp Parks?

Camp Parks is part of Det 12 VO. Camp Parks is a scheduled resource on an as-needed basis.

39) Have we looked at automating any of our functions?

The Government is open to considering automation when it is cost effective and feasible.

40) Is there a dedicated communications link between CERES and the RSC?

Yes, a T-3.

41) Does CERES use the same scheduling tools as the RSC? Who drives the changes to those tools?

Electronic Scheduling Device is the AFSCN scheduler used at both locations. Changes to that system are governed by an external agency.

42) Does CERES use the Epoch 2000 and the OS Comet ground system?

No. They use the COBRA ground system. They also have a Braxton ACE system used to support the 19 SOPS for GPS LADO development.

43) Do you plan to add additional strings to your ops floor at CERES?

Not at the present time.

44) Do you perform satellite operations from the Mongoose Lab?

No. It is a software development lab.

45) Has CERES ever rejected a project because of AFSCN bandwidth limitations?

No.

46) How many STEC operators work in the PTC?

None.

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ENGINEERING

47) What type of software development is required at the RSC and CERES?

The COTS products need to be tailored for each mission (e.g. command builders, telemetry processing, post-pass processing, planning tools). Concept development may require additional development efforts.

48) Do you require formal process certification levels?

Certification is not required for this contract. Processes used on this contract should be disciplined, yet flexible.

49) What is the breakdown in percentage of software development between the STEC and EDS contractor?

We don't have a percentage point to give you but the STEC contractor is responsible for mission unique software. EDS performs middleware development and maintenance and integrates COTS software into the COBRA core system.

50) Does the satellite vendor assist in your operations at CERES?

The satellite vendors are often involved in test we perform for our SPO customers. The satellite SPO will provide any factory support required. We do not have resident "Factory" engineers in CERES. The STEC contractor has experienced satellite engineers with expertise relevant to the satellites we operate.

51) What are the software components of the COBRA ground system?

See the Bidders Library.

52) Are you using COTS tools or proprietary software for configuration management?

VO currently uses Concurrent Version Software (CVS) to track the configuration management for mission unique and COBRA software.

53) Do you perform all your software development in the Mongoose Lab (at CERES)?

No. STEC and EDS employees have access to RED and BLACK workstations in their office areas.

TRAINING

54) If other than the current incumbent wins the STEC 2004 competition, will the new contractor have to develop all new training materials and programs? If some training materials will be provided, what are they?

The successful Offeror will develop their own training program, however, access will be given to the current training documentation.

55) What is the budget for training?

Training required by the customer will be funded by that particular customer. Core training will be evaluated on an annual basis. Current training and travel budget is \$150K (\$100K for tuition - \$50K for travel). For proposal purposes, the ODC CLIN (which includes travel, training and materials) for Core will include a baseline of \$125K.

56) Are technical training requirements the same at both sites?

For Core system components they are the same. There will be unique training requirements for each mission.

57) What kinds of training are available for systems?

Vendor training is available for Core hardware and software components.

58) Is the contractor responsible for training Government and Civilian personnel?

The Statement of Work outlines the training requirements. The contractor is not responsible for providing formal training to the Government, but may be asked to provide informal orientation or allow Government personnel to audit internal contractor training.

SECURITY

59) Do you currently have satellite operation above the SECRET level?

Not at the present time. We are establishing the capability to support operations at classification levels higher than SECRET.

60) How many TS required at start?

By the end of the transition period, provide the following:

Core Operations: Sufficient TS/SSBI cleared personnel to support the start of one new mission.

Representative Customer Workload: Sufficient TS/SSBI cleared personnel to perform mission readiness, operations support, and engineering development for one mission.

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61) How is data security handled? Who is responsible?

Data security is handled through a set of Government security procedures.

62) Does the STEC contractor have a security interface to the JNIC? If so, where is the person located?

Not directly. The US government and the NAAS contractor act as the security interface to the JNIC.