

Attachment J-7
ProTech Draft Request for Proposal ST-1330-16-RP-0014
Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	General			Will NOAA offer another round of questions on draft RFPs for individual Pro Tech Domain RFPs?	NOAA plans to issue Final RFPs for individual Domains from this point forward. There will be an opportunity to submit questions on each Final RFP.
2	N/A	N/A	N/A	Does the government anticipate including sample task orders for offerors to price, as part of the Evaluation Criteria?	No.
3	N/A	N/A	N/A	How many awards does the government intend to make in each of the domains?	The number of awards per Domain will be determined by the competitive process. It is anticipated that a sufficient number of awards will be made to facilitate competition at the Task Order level.
4	n/a	n/a	n/a	Will the NOAA Project Planning and Management Division (PPMD) have access and use of contracts awarded within each/all domain(s)?	Depending on PPMD's requirements. It is anticipated that PPMD will predominantly utilize the contracts awarded in the Enterprise Domain.
5	n/a	n/a	n/a	Will the NOAA Project Office of Program Planning and Integration (PPI) be able to use contracts awarded within each/all domains?	Depending on PPI's requirements. It is anticipated that PPI will predominantly utilize the contracts awarded in the Enterprise Domain.
6	n/a	n/a	n/a	Will the NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) be able to use contracts awarded within each/all domains?	Depending on OMAO's requirements. It is anticipated that OMAO will predominantly utilize the contracts awarded in the Enterprise Domain.
7	n/a	n/a	n/a	Will the NOAA Environmental, Safety, and Sustainability Office (NESSO) be able to use contracts awarded within each/all domains?	Depending on NESSO's requirements. It is anticipated that NESSO will predominantly utilize the contracts awarded in the Enterprise Domain.
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	Are there any restrictions on prime or subcontracting between the NOAA SETS and NOAA ProTech procurements? Are there any restrictions on prime or subcontracting across or within the ProTech domains?	Other than Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI) clauses contained in the actual contracts awarded, there are no restrictions on bidding as a prime or subcontractor.

9	N/A	N/A	N/A	Does NOAA plan on establishing a technical library and posting relevant technical information for potential bidders in order to allow incumbent and non-incumbent bidders alike equal understanding of relevant technical aspects of the program ?	NOAA does not plan to establish a technical library. Information will be posted and/or website links will be provided if necessary.
10	NA	FedBizOps Notice	3	Could you please provide a schedule for the release of the RFP's for the other domains, even if a draft? It is difficult to plan to ensure NOAA is provided the best possible mission support.	The current plan is to release the Satellites Domain RFP first and then within six month release the Fisheries and Enterprise Domains RFP, followed by the release of the RFP for Oceans and Weather Domains within 6 months.
11				What is the anticipated release timeframe for the Enterprise Operations Domain RFP?	See response to question #10 above.
12				Is this a follow-on requirement? If not, is this a new requirement?	ProTech is a new NOAA Strategic Sourcing Program.
13				Will the exception as described in the definition of the 541330 code be applied for this procurement. That is as follows; 541330 Engineering Services Size Standard: \$15 million annual receipts except \$38.5 million annual receipts for Military and Aerospace Equipment and Military Weapons and Contracts and Subcontracts for Engineering Services Awarded Under the National Energy Policy of 1992 and Marine Engineering	The exception does not apply for this procurement. The size standard is \$15M.
14				In the final RFP, will the scope of requirements be more specific in the Enterprise Operations Service Domain in areas such as Business Management Services and Process Improvement Services?	No.

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1	8	A.1	2	Please provide an estimate of how many ProTech awards will be made overall.	The number of awards will be determined by the competitive process.
2	8	A.1	2	Please provide an estimate of how many ProTech awards will be made under each Domain.	The number of awards per Domain will be determined by the competitive process. It is anticipated that a sufficient number of awards will be made to facilitate competition at the <u>Task Order level</u> .
3	8	A.1	2	Please provide an estimate of how the total cumulative \$3B will be allocated across the five ProTech Domains.	The program estimate will be managed across all domains for the period of performance in accordance with NOAA needs.
4	8	A.1	2	Given the amount of time it will take to carefully review and award the contracts for each domain, we recommend that each domain given an individual five year contract. This would give NOAA more time to move contracts to ProTech before the recompetete process <u>would have to begin</u> .	The Government will evaluate and award separately each Domain for the stated 5-year period of performance.
5	8	A.1	2	Given the amount of time necessary to award all domains, will each domain be a separate 5-year vehicle or will the total ProTech <u>vehicle have a 5-year period?</u>	See answer to question 4 above.
6	8	A.1	2	We recommend that when deciding if there are two viable small businesses, that one of the factors in that decision is verification that the prime holds relevant experience rather than relying <u>exclusively on a subcontractor.</u>	Refer Section G of the RFP for ordering procedures.

7	8	A.1	2	<p>Small Business Reserve Comment #1</p> <p>We support NOAA's decision to procure Pro-Tech as a Full and Open competition with anticipated reserves for small businesses given the wide range of tasks expected to be released over its period of performance. We also support NOAA's approach to an unspecified target percentage of small business reserve work, which allows NOAA to make a task by task decision as to the appropriateness of going small or large business without the pressure of meeting a specific percent target</p> <p>That said, we feel inclined to comment on the current allowance for the Contracting Officer to set aside resulting task orders if two or more small businesses are proven capable of meeting the requirements. First, we strongly encourage NOAA to clarify that the small business alone as the prime - not the prime's team of subcontractors supporting the small business - be required to demonstrate its capability to support the requirement. We believe this clarification is critical to ensure that NOAA positions itself to compete tasks and ultimately work with small business primes directly experienced in the scope of work being solicited to increase the likelihood of success and minimize risk by encouraging small business primes to focus in areas of demonstrated competency.</p>	See answer to question 6 above.
8	8	A.1	2	<p>Small Business Reserve Comment #2</p> <p>Similarly, we encourage NOAA to raise the minimum number of small businesses shown capable of supporting the requirement to three (3) from two (2) businesses. This increase in small business firms capable of meeting the requirements encourages greater levels of competition, which in turn results in better solutions being delivered at lower risk to NOAA. Additionally, without this increase to three from two businesses, we believe that very few task orders are likely to be eligible to be competed as Full and Open on Pro-Tech.</p>	See answer to question 6 above.

9	8	A.1	2	The DRFP states "The Contracting Officer shall reserve the right to set aside any Task Orders for Small Business firms if two or more Small Businesses are proven capable of meeting the requirements." Is the determination to set-aside task orders based on the CO's knowledge of the Small Businesses proposed capabilities or is it based on proposals for the Task Orders?	See answer to question 6 above.
10	8	A.1	2	It is stated in this paragraph "The Contracting Officer shall reserve the right to set aside any Task Orders for Small Business firms if two or more Small Businesses are proven capable of meeting the requirements." Question: To be considered for a Task Order set aside for Small Business firms, does the SB itself need to have the qualification(s) or can one of the SB's teammates have the capability to qualify under the "rule of 2?"	See answer to question 6 above.
11	8	A.1		The DRFP states: <i>The Contracting Officer shall reserve the right to set aside any Task Orders for Small Business firms if two or more Small Businesses are proven capable of meeting the requirements.</i> Please clarify if reserves for small business will be established prior to a Task Order solicitation or afterwards, 1) will the Govt make a pre-determination of capability? or 2) a TO is solicited under full and open and 2 small businesses are capable but so are 2 large businesses, so the TO solicitation will be revised to be a set aside? or 3) the small businesses that responded will have preference?	Reserves are only at the IDIQ level. See answer to number 6 above for the sub questions.
12	8	A.1, B.5	2	What is the basis for the award of contract options? Performance? Convenience? Recertification?	Contract options are exercised in accordance with FAR 17.207.
13	8	A.1, B.5	2	Please explain the rationale for the awarding of option years on a multiple award IDIQ vehicle.	See answer to question 12 above.
14	8 - 14	A.1, B.5	2	<u>Question:</u> What is the basis for the award of contract options? Performance? Business Size Recertification?	See answer to question 12 above.
15	8 & 14	A.1 & B.5.1 - B.5.4	2 & 1	In paragraph 2 of Section A.1 it states "The cumulative total of all Task Orders awarded to all awardees will not exceed \$3,000,000,000 over the 5-year life of the IDIQ program." However, in Sections B.5.1 - B.5.4 it states "The stated maximum of any option for each contract during this ordering period shall be \$3,000,000,000...". Does this mean each contract award for the contract base or option period cannot exceed \$3B or does that \$3B cap apply to the entire ID/IQ period?	The maximum amount for all awards under ProTech will not exceed \$3B over the life of all contracts combined.

16	9	A	A.4	Will non-DOC agencies with similar missions such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, be eligible to use Pro-Tech?	No.
17	9	A.4	1	The Government intends to award contracts in each Domain to large and small businesses with seventy five percent (75%) of awards, no matter the final number of awards, anticipated to be made to small businesses. How will the Government ensure that an adequate number of Small Businesses are selected for IDIQ awards to ensure the 75% goal can be achieved? Will the Government set a minimum number of SB IDIQ Awards to support the concept that if two or more Small Businesses are proven capable of meeting the requirements, Contracting Officer shall reserve the right to set aside to Small Business? With a set minimum number of Small Business IDIQ awards, the concept of "two or more" SB being capable may be ineffective.	The number of awards per Domain will be determined by the competitive process. It is anticipated that a sufficient number of awards will be made to facilitate competition at the Task Order level. There is no predetermined number of awards by domain.
18	9	A.4	3	Can the government provide an approximate range on how many awards will be made in any one domain under the multi-award approach?	See answer to question 17 above.
19	10	A.5	2	Can the government describe how they plan on interfacing with each company's Contract and Task Order Management System including the data they plan on sharing?	The RFP will be revised to remove the interface requirement.
20	10	A.5	2	The government will need to separately interface with as many different Task Order Management Systems as the number of awards. Please describe how they plan on interfacing with each company's Contract and Task Order Management System including the data they plan on sharing? Will these systems need to be FISMA compliant?	See answer to question 19 above.
21	10	A.5	2	Can the Government further describe requirements for Contract and Task Order Management System(s) and how they plan on interfacing with each company's Contract and Task Order Management System including the data they plan on sharing?	See answer to question 19 above.

22	10	A	A.5	Instructions for A.5 Task Orders provide that "primary objective of the ProTech Program is to provide effective and efficient program and contract management processes. To accomplish this, a contract and task order management system will be a mandatory element for all orders placed under each ProTech contract to effectively manage cost, schedule, performance, and quality of each Contract and Task Order." Commercially available automated tools are costly to small businesses, and often require obtaining licenses for each user, which would be difficult to predict in advance. In addition, the use of vendor provided management systems would require NOAA acquisitions and program staff to access potentially numerous contractor systems, maintain numerous logins and passwords, etc. Would NOAA consider providing the contract and task order management system to ease the burden on small business as well as its own acquisition and program staff?	No, the Government will not provide the Contract and Task Order Management System.
23	10	A	A.5	Please provide further detail on the "contract and task order management system" that NOAA will require. These tools can be expensive for small business to acquire and maintain, and could also present a burden to government if different contractors are using various differing systems. Would NOAA consider providing the contract and task order management system to ease the cost to small businesses, and also to increase the consistency of systems used across contractors and the government?	See answer to question 22 above.
24	10	A.4	2	Could you be more specific on "a manageable number" of awards? Range (smallest domain to largest) or upper limit?	The number of awards per Domain will be determined by the competitive process. It is anticipated that a sufficient number of awards will be made to facilitate competition at the Task Order level. There is no predetermined number of awards by domain.
25	10	A.4	2	For each of the domains, is there a maximum number of awards anticipated?	See answer to question 24 above.
26	10	A.4	2	<u>Question:</u> Could you be more specific on "a manageable number" of awards? Range (smallest domain to largest) or upper limit?	See answer to question 24 above.
27	10	A.4	2	Can NOAA estimate the number of contracts anticipated for the Enterprise Operations Domain?	See answer to question 24 above.

28	10	A.4	3	Will the 75% of awards anticipated to be made to small businesses be counted at the IDIQ/contract or task order level?	75% of anticipated contract awards will be at the ID/IQ contract level.
29	10	A.4	3	The government states that 75% of awards will be made to small businesses. Is this percentage representative of the overall IDIQ awards, or Task Order awards?	See answer to question 28 above.
30	10	A.4	3	The Enterprise Domain was originally to be reserved for small business only when the ProTech strategic vehicle was publicized. Why the change to select large and small businesses? There are at least two small businesses that can do this work based on the last draft PWS's in 2012 and 2013. The size of the domain dollars to be awarded in the Enterprise is much smaller than the science domains. This domain should be reserved for small businesses.	Market research demonstrates the need for both large and small businesses to support the requirements in the Enterprise Domain.
31	10	A.4	2nd	How many awards in each task area does the Government anticipate to be "manageable"?	See answer to question 24 above.
32	10	A.4	2nd para	Does NOAA expect to award to more than one large business per domain?	See answer to question 1 above.
33	10	A.4	2nd para	How many large business awards do they expect to make in the Oceans' Domain?	See answer to question 1 above.
34	10	A.4	Last	The DRFP states that "Seventy five percent (75%) of awards, no matter the final number of awards, are anticipated to be made to small businesses under the reserve component of this solicitation." Please clarify how the 75% is applied (i.e., 75% of the number of contracts awarded, 75% of the number of task orders awarded, or 75% of the dollar value of the task orders awarded).	See answer to question 28 above.
35	10	A.4	Last	The DRFP states that "Seventy five percent (75%) of awards, no matter the final number of awards, are anticipated to be made to small businesses under the reserve component of this solicitation." Is the 75% applicable to each domain or is it applicable to the contract (5 domains) as a whole	See answer to question 28 above.
36	10	A.4		Can NOAA please provide a tentative RFQ release schedule for each Domain?	The current plan is to release the Satellites Domain RFP first and then within six month release the Fisheries and Enterprise Domains RFP, followed by the release of the RFP for Oceans and Weather Domains within 6 months.

37	10	A.4		Is NOAA able to advise how many contracts will be awarded in each domain? How will this number be determined? When will the information be available?	See answer to question 1 above.
38	10	A.5	1	Will pricing requirements of the final RFP allow for the use of variable rates between Contractor home office and Government-operated sites?	The draft solicitation instructs offerors (see L.9.5.1) to base their ceiling rates on "the highest cost location" which may be the contractor site. No change in this instruction in the final RFP is anticipated. When an awardee whose ceiling rates are based on performance at a contractor site bids on a task order requiring government site performance, the Government expects the bid to reflect the lower overhead rate(s) associated with government site performance.
39	10	A.5	1	This section says that "ProTech services may be performed on site at Government facilities or at the Contractors' facilities, depending on the requirements defined in individual task orders". Should the Offerors' ceiling rates be for Government facilities or Contractor facilities?	See answer to question 38 above.
40	10	A.5	1	Can NOAA estimate the number of TO's annually for Enterprise Operations domain?	Task orders are based on the requirements from clients. FAAPS provides the anticipated next fiscal year requirements. Enterprise domain.
41	10	A.5	1	The RFP states that " <i>a contract and task order management system will be a mandatory element for all orders placed under each ProTech contract to effectively manage cost, schedule, performance, and quality of each Contract and Task Order. Contractors are encouraged to use commercially available automated tools to manage processes and metrics supporting Contract and Task Order management.</i> " Because accuracy and timeliness of cost estimating, forecasting, and reporting are receiving increased scrutiny across all Federal agencies by GAO, will NOAA require a demonstration of the offeror's contract/task order management system? If not, how will the Government ensure the proposed system is an existing and deployed Task Order Management System as opposed to discussion/screenshots of a 'to be developed' system?	The Government will assess the approach for accurate and timely task order performance reporting to determine system adequacy.

42	10	A.5	2	"Contractors are encouraged to use commercially available automated tools to manage processes and metrics supporting Contract and Task Order management." Does NOAA have a list of preferred tools for this purposes?	No.
43	10	A.5	2	Can the government further describe requirements for the Contract and Task Order Management System(s)?	See answer to question 41 above.
44	10	A.5	2	If the government potentially will use the vendor Contract and Task Order Management system to share data with clients will these systems be required to be FISMA compliant?	See answer to question 19 above.
45	10	A.5	2	The DRFP states "Contractors are encouraged to use commercially available automated tools to manage processes and metrics supporting Contract and Task Order management." Is there a tool or set of tools with which NOAA is familiar and therefore recommends?	No.
46	10	A.5	2	It states in paragraph 2, "...a contract and task order management system will be a mandatory element for all orders placed under each ProTech contract to effectively manage cost, schedule, performance, and quality of each Contract and Task Order. Contractors are encouraged to use commercially available automated tools to manage processes and metrics supporting Contract and Task Order management." Is it necessary to use a commercial COTS system or can the offeror develop their own system?	Offerors may propose any system which provides timely accurate information.
47	10	A.5	2	Will the RFP have sample Task Orders (TO) to bid?	No.
48	10	A.5	2	What commercial automated task management tools are being used by NOAA currently?	None.
49	10	A.5	2	"Contract and task order management system will be mandatory." Will you provide minimum requirements for the contract and task order management system?	See answer to question 46 above.
50	10	A.5	2	Can NOAA elaborate how the requirement for Contract and Task Order Management Systems will be evaluated pursuant to Section M (likely M.4.2.4)?	See question to answer 41 above.
51	10	A.5	2	Can the proposed automated tool to manage processes and metrics supporting Contract and Task Order management be included as an ODC for a specific TO the Government?	No.

52	10	A.5		The Government encourages contractors to use commercially available automated tools as part of their contract and task order management approach. Are there any particular products compatible with NOAA management systems?	No.
53	10	A.5	2	Contract Management and Task Order solution – Why not have a standard solution for everyone to use?	The Government will not dictate an approach for an offeror.
54	10	A.4	3	Is the anticipated 75% awards to small businesses measured at the TO level for all Domain IDIQ contracts held by small business and large business primes combined?	No. The 75% of anticipated awards to small businesses refers to awards at the ID/IQ contract level.
55	10	A.5	2	Please clarify and/or provide an example of what is meant by a "contract and task order management system."	It is not the Government's intent to prescribe a specific system. The intent of A.5, paragraph 2 is to, as stated, encourage to use of commercially available automated tools to manage processes and metrics supporting Contract and Task Order management.

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Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	11	B.1	1	Will the government supply a plug number for the travel and ODC CLINs?	No. The Government is not providing a sample task order.
2	11	B.1	1	Does the government expect bidders to include labor categories and rates in Item 0001 of the CLIN table? If so, what is the intended use of the "Max Quantities Undefined" column?	No. Labor Categories are provided in Attachment J-3. Ceiling rates per labor category are to be proposed in Attachment J-5. The RFP may be amended to remove said column.
3	11	B.1	1	Does the government intend for bidders to include labor categories and rates in Item 0001 of the CLIN table? If so, what is the intended use of the "Max Quantities Undefined" column?	See answer to Question 2 above.
4	11	B.1	1	Does the Government expect bidders to include labor categories and rates in Item 0001 of the CLIN table? If so, what is the intended use of the "Max Quantities Undefined" column?	See answer to Question 2 above.
5	11	B.1	1	Will the Government supply a plug number for the travel and ODC CLINs?	See answer to question 1 above.
6	11	B.1	CLIN Table	CLIN 001 states "attached quality standards". Can you clarify where the attached quality standards are in the RFP or provide them if needed?	Quality standards will be provided for each task order as applicable when a performance work statement is used. The RFP will be amended to clarify.
7	11	B.1 and B.5	1	We recommend that the performance period for the CLINS is five base years and five option years based on amount of time it will take to put the vehicle in place.	The period of performance will be 2 base years and 3 one-year option periods.
8	11	B.1 and B.5	1	The CLIN table provides for a base period of 24 months. We recommend a base performance period of five years and five one-year options, justified by the length of the procurement process and anticipated time to put contracts in place.	See answer to question 7 above.
9	11 - 14	B.1	Table, Item No. X003	Will indirect costs be recognized for Non-travel/Other Direct Cost (ODC)/Material Cost?	Yes, if application of the indirect costs in question is consistent with the contractor's normal approved practice.

10	11 -14	B.1		Please define "Max quantities undefined" and "unit" as used in B.1 CLIN TABLE. Are these definitions applicable to the Travel (XXX2) and ODC (XXX3) CLINs as well?	See answer to question 2 above.
11	13	B.1	CLIN Table - 2003 and 3003	Are CLINs 2003 and 3003 only 12 months vs 24 months as indicated in the table?	The RFP will be corrected to reflect 12 months.
12	13	B.1	Item No 2003 and 3003	Under the Supplies/Services description, it states that these are the "non-travel ODC/material costs for the Base Period (24 months)." Please confirm that this should be for the Option Period (12 months), not the base period (24 months).	The RFP will be corrected to reflect 12 months.
13	14	B	B.4	What is the period between request for offer and contractor's response?	This will be provided for each individual task order requirement.
14	14	B.2	1	Draft RFP indicates support to "other Department of Commerce bureaus". Are there specific agencies within DOC to be supported?	Yes. There are 11 other bureaus within the Department who may use the Enterprise Operations Domain vehicles if the scope supports their requirements.
15	15	B.6	1	"Incentive provisions may also be applied to individual Task Orders." Please provide examples of what those incentive provisions will include.	Fixed priced and cost type incentives may be used if appropriate for task orders.
16	15	B.6/B.7		When proposing fixed priced task orders is the contractor required to propose using the labor categories and ceiling rates in attachment J5?	Proposed rates for task orders shall not exceed the awarded IDIQ ceiling hourly rates per labor category. Unique labor categories maybe proposed with the contractor's task order offer as applicable
17	15	B.8	1	Attachment J-2 assumes that the bidder's fringe, overhead, and G&A rates remain static throughout the life of the contract. Can the Government revise Attachment J-2 so we can adjust those rates each year of the contract?	The Government intends to amend the RFP language in the Instructions to Offerors area on the last sheet of Attachment J-5 stating, if differences between the fully burdened rates for calendar years 2-6 are due to anything other than direct labor rate escalation, an explanation should be included in the explanatory portion of the cost/price proposal. This will allow offerors to reflect in the proposed ceiling rates for years 2-6 changes to forecasted indirect cost rates provided that sufficient explanatory information is provided.
18	14	B.4		Is there a "typical" response time when responding to a "request for offer?"	The response due date will be specified in the RFP for the Task Order.

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1	16	C.3	2	This paragraph suggests that all contractor work will be performed at a government location. Please clarify/confirm.	Contractor work locations will be specifically defined at the Task Order level. RFP will be amended to reflect that government sites identified herein are not all inclusive for potential work sites. Additionally, at the task order level, the Government may support Contractor's use and management of alternate work sites and teleworking options at no cost to government and provided full compliance with IT Security.
2	19	C.3	2	We commend the approach to allow line offices to purchase from all domains to obtain products and services that help them meet their mission and foster cross domain efficiencies.	NOAA clients may use any domain to fulfill their requirements.
3	19	C.3	2	Where are world- wide sites for NESDIS located?	Offices are located, OSPO - Fairbanks Alaska, Suitland and Wallops Island, Virginia, HQ, OPPA, OSGS, and OSAAP Silver Spring, Maryland, JPSS and GOES-R Lanham, Maryland, NCEI - Silver Spring, Maryland, Boulder Colorado, Asheville, North Carolina, and Townsville, Australia.
4	19	C.3	2	Will most of the services provided to NESDIS be performed on-site at this headquarters and laboratories?	See response to question 1 above.
5	19	C.3	2	We commend the intent in this IDIQ that resulting contracts will allow contractors to provide a full range of products and services to all line offices across domains, which introduces a number of efficiencies for the Government throughout the life of the contract.	No response required.
6	19 - 65	C.3.X - C.7.X		Each Domain includes efforts regarding review, analysis, oversight, advising, planning, collaborating of current and/or future programs, requirements, budgets, etc. 1) Does the Government believe there may be potential Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI) on any of those current or future programs based on participation in the IDIQ? 2) the Domain? 3) or the individual Task Order? and 4) where will the Government identify the specific current or future program that the Contractor will/may be precluded from?	Offerors and resulting Contractors are responsible to determine and disclose potential Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCI) issues at both the IDIQ and Task Order level. See Section H.22. The Government will also monitor requirements across organizations to mitigate potential OCI.

7	20	C.3.1.1		Does NESDIS have any modeling and simulation tools that are currently used?	Yes.
8	20	C.3.1.2		The observing systems are part of the satellite load, does NOAA mean that a SB develop and deploy those? Or does it mean that SB analyze the currently deployed observing systems?	The contractor shall provide support to prepare studies, models, analyses, assessments, and reports for future planned satellite systems, including system concepts. This support may also include analysis of currently deployed assets as needed for comparison data.
9	20	C.3.1.3		Calibration and validation activities for what kind of instrumentation?	Typically, this refers to the instrument, or payload, complement on a satellite mission.
10	20, 56, 57, 58, 61, and 62	Various		Multiple tasks identified in the PWS appear to create a perceived or actual OCI (support review of proposals, executing budgets, development of recommendations for award, etc.). Will the Government ensure this OCI type work (primarily under C.7.4) will be issued in a separate task order, to allow companies to no bid work?	See answer to question 6 above.
11	22	C	C.3.2.8	What does the acronym CalVAL represent? Calibration Validation ?	Yes. Calibration: The process of quantitatively defining the system or any component response to known controlled signal inputs. Calibration is a comparison of a measurement standard, instrument, or item with a standard or instrument of higher or known accuracy to detect and quantify inaccuracies and to report or eliminate those inaccuracies by adjustments. Validation: A subjective or analytical assessment, based on objective evidence, that a system meets its intended mission, functions, and objectives
12	26, 34, 41, 51	C	C.3.4; C.4.4; C.5.4; C.6.9	The Satellite, Ocean, Fisheries, and Weather domains contain scope for Program and Project Management and Consulting and Training, which is similar to the Enterprise Operations scope. This overlap appears to dilute the importance of the Enterprise Operations domain. Please explain how NOAA plans to address this overlap in scope or how the Enterprise Operations scope is different.	The scope of requirements identified for each of the Domains has been designed to allow the Domain program areas maximum flexibility in defining requirements at the Task Order level and the capability to span across the broad areas of the SOW to include those requirements that are not severable as separate Task Order requirements. The Enterprise Domain PM support is designed to mitigate OCI issues within the Line offices.
13	27	C.3.4.8		What EVM is being used for NESDIS? Will that system be available for analysis to the contractor? Is this requirement applicable to the tasks awarded to the contractor, or for other projects and programs not awarded to the contractor?	EVM is a standard commercial process specified in ANSI /EIA-748. EVM will be applied in accordance FAR Part 34.2 when applicable at the task order level.

14	27, 29, 34, 35, 42, 51, 52	C.3.4. 12, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27 C.4.4.1, 3, 8, 9, 10 C.5.4.7 - 9, C.6 .9.2 - 6, 13	NA	As stated at the August Industry Day, can a small business bid on only part of the domain i.e. the non-specialized, enterprise-common requirements now also included in the science domains? (if NOAA decides to keep the duplicate requirements, and not eliminate them in favor of providing them only in the Enterprise Operation domain?) How will the selection criteria handle the niche company bids?	Each offeror will be evaluated based on the criteria provided in Section M of the RFP.
15	28	C	C.3.4.20	The task statement appears to require rewording (missing or extra word?); please clarify: "Provide development and implementation procedures to formulate of contract technical requirements packages and assist ..."	The final RFP will be corrected.
16	31	C.4.1.1		IS NOAA using any computer aided statistical packages for doing this analysis?	A combination of internally developed statistical software and COTS products are used such as, MS Excel, Matlab, Statistical Analysis System and "R" (free software environment for statistical computing and graphics.)
17	44	C	C.6.1.8	The task statement appears to require rewording (missing word or punctuation?); please clarify: "Provide engineering and technical services coordinate maintenance actions ..."	The final RFP will be corrected.

18	45	C.6 WEATHER DOMAIN	C.6.2.2	<p>Would the government please provide industry with a list of the different types of equipment under the past contract within the last three – five years and future contracts that the government anticipates needing depot level repair, overhaul, and quality assurance of new and reconditioned parts shipping to worldwide field organizations; install depot level modifications; technical obsolescence and associated risk assessment management; and logistical tracking of new replacement and repair parts inventory?</p>	<p>1) NEXRAD Doppler Weather Radar system (all components, including test equipment). 2) Automatic Surface Observing System (ASOS) (all components, including test equipment). 3) Cooperative Observer program including manual rain gauges, weighing rain gauges (including anti-evaporative oil and propylene glycol) , misc. evaporation pan equipment, manual snow measuring equipment, wind measurement equipment, temperature measuring equipment and shelters. 4) Upper Air program equipment including radiosonde instruments, balloons and balloon train supplies, desktop work stations, supplies used during balloon inflation (excluding gas tanks) and radiosonde baseline, and surface measurement system. 5) AWIPS equipment including NOAA Weather Radio voice synthesis. 6) NOAA Weather Radio Equipment including transmitters, antennae arrays, cables, and test equipment. 7) NWS SAFETY program including fall protection equipment, safety harnesses, signage. Support for these programs includes inventory management assistance, inventory report generation, and inventory data base administration.</p>
19	45	C.6. WEATHER DOMAIN	C.6.2.2 Engineering Logistics Support	<p>Will this new contract be required to use their own inventory tracking system or does the government already have a pre existing tracking system in place that will be used?</p>	<p>There are two primary systems which are used to perform logistics control and management: the Weather Logistics Information System which accumulates requisitions from external agency users and provides inventory cataloging control and management and the Consolidated Logistics System which controls warehouse functions, inventory monitoring, and processes requisitions from internal agency users. These systems are used exclusively to accomplish integrated logistics within the National Weather Service. The contractor will be required to use these systems only.</p>

20	49	C	C.6.5.1	The task statement appears to require rewording; please clarify: "Provide support to develop of ..."	The final RFP will be corrected.
21	49	C.6.6	¶12	"The Contractor shall provide support services for seasonal climate forecasting," but the section describes requirements for "Ensemble and Forecast Product Support." Please clarify.	C.6.6 will be corrected to read, "The Contractor shall provide support services for ensemble forecast systems and ensemble weather forecast product support. The ensemble system and forecast product support services include, but are not limited to the following:"
22	53	C.7	C.7.1.4	Can NOAA specify what knowledge management systems this includes?	The Government is still formulating a response.
23	53	C.7	C.7.1.7	What systems are currently used to track research support requests and awards?	This is managed through SBIR program and Grants program. The Government does not manage research support requests except through the Fleet and Aircraft Allocation Process.
24	53	C.7		The draft RFP states that the Enterprise Operations Domain is for use by all NOAA offices and Department of Commerce bureaus and one of the task areas are program and project management support, however some of the other domains also have a program and project management support task area, how does the government envision the Enterprise Ops domain be used by other offices who already have the program and project management support as part of their domain?	See answer to question 12 above.
25	53	C.7.1 Strategic Planning Support	C.7.1.4	Refers to knowledge management systems. Can the government elaborate on what type of pre-existing knowledge management systems are currently in NOAA's infrastructure?	See answer to question 22 above.
26	53	C.7.1	C.7.1.4	C.7.1.4 Also mentioned conduct development functions to enhance capabilities. Will this service also include enhancement plans to system security such as security authorization assessments?	If ancillary IT requirements include system security issues, the requirement will most likely fall under NOAALink.

27	53 - 65	C.7 in its entirety	All	Shouldn't the Line Offices in the science domains be required to obtain the non-specialized, enterprise-common requirements listed in the Enterprise Domain from the Enterprise Domain awardees rather than in their respective Domains? These domains have duplicated many requirements, for example, budget services. This introduces inconsistencies, duplication, higher number of task orders to be processed and potentially overall higher costs into the NOAA enterprise with multiple contractors, all providing the non-specialized, common NOAA enterprise functions. Recommend NOAA eliminate all common requirements from the science domains that are found in the Enterprise Domain. (Strategic planning, Communications and Outreach, Business Management, Budget and Financial Management, Property Management, Real Property and Analytic Services, Facility Management, Human Capital, Program & Project Management, Legislative Management, Administrative Support). Specifically we recommend that NOAA move the requirements under C.3.4, C.4.4, C.5.4 and C.6.9 to the Enterprise Domain.	See response to question 12 above.
28	53; 63	C.7; C.7.12	¶1; ¶11	The description of Enterprise Operations Domain requirements (C.7) includes "scientific and technical support for ... the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)," and goes on (especially in section C.7.12) to provide a general description of this support. However, other Pro Tech Domains also include requirements for scientific and technical support, generally with much more detail regarding the scientific disciplines and specific technologies to be supported. Given the close coordination inside NOAA of much of the research conducted by OAR on behalf of other NOAA LOs, how will NOAA decide which Pro Tech domain to issue TOs for scientific support?	The decision for selection of the Domain to issue task orders will be made by the Contracting Officer based on the preponderance of the scope of the requirements.
29	54	C.7.2	1	Can NOAA estimate the number of workshops anticipated annually?	The number of workshops may vary on an annual basis across NOAA LO's, program offices, division, etc.
30	54	C.7.2	C.7.2.8	Would the government share with industry what the current platform is being used for their teleconferencing systems? How is the current tracking of action items and associated documentation being captured?	Current platforms include VTC systems, Go-To-Meeting and webinars. The tracking is captured through the on-line system.

31	54	C.7.2	C.7.2.8 - C.7.2.10	In providing conference support (Sections C.7.2.8-C.7.2.10), does NOAA have an estimated number annual conferences based on previous fiscal years?	Number of conferences may vary across on an annual basis across NOAA LO's, program offices, divisions, etc.
32	55	C.7.2	C.7.2.11	What are the current social networking activities that NOAA uses to perform this part of the requirement? Is there a preferred computer-based technical communications tool that NOAA has in place and would like to keep?	Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Podcasts, Tumblr
33	55	C.7.2	C.7.2.11	Will the government require the new awardee to manage the complete booking process of hotel sites to include a block of rooms at each site for each conference location that NOAA decides to attend?	Specific requirements will be defined at the task order level as a supporting function.
34	55	C.7.2	C.7.2.12	How many resident will require residential and computer-based training? What was the number of resident that required this type of training under the previous contract? Is there a standard format required for the training courses, training catalogs and materials? Would the government provide industry with a sample of the workbooks, handouts, exercises, completion certification and course critique forms previously used?	This is determined by the scope of the project being supported. Each product, project or program in NOAA has a group of primary audiences. The scope of the task order requirement will determine these audiences and the size of the population of the primary audiences and determine how to blend the mix of residential and computer-based training based on the resources provided. There is not a standard for training courses, however the highest performance standards and best practices should be used in the development of training courses and materials. Where a project and or program have existing workbooks, handouts, exercises, completion certifications, these may be provided. Course critique forms or evaluation materials may be shared, depending on the developer permissions and intellectual property rights.
35	55	C.7.2	C.7.2.12 - C.7.2.15	When was the last time NOAA updated their education coursework and materials? What is the name of the company that performed this task for NOAA?	Depending on the project or program, NOAA continually updates many of our education coursework and materials. This will be determined based on each specific task
36	55	C.7.2	C.7.2.14	What is the name of current on-line training tool being used to perform this training? Please define CBTs, exercise, and seminars? Does the government have any statics on how many individuals have attended these seminars in the past?	This will be determined based on each specific task.
37	55	C.7.2	C.7.2.9	Would the government please clarify for industry what they mean when you say "disassembly of material?" What type materials other than the monitors would require disassembling?	Disassembling would means taking down the displays, packing up materials, etc.

38	56	C.7	C.7.3.5	What current solutions are being used for databases and websites?	Across NOAA there are a large variety of database and web solutions in place. The NOAALink contracts will be the primary technical support vehicles for these services.
39	56	C.7.3 Business Managem ent Support	C.7.3.11	What level of skills will be required by the contractor to perform print management services for office printer operations?	Professional industry standard management and technical skill levels are needed to manage print services for coordination, integration, maintenance, installation, logistics, and administration.
40	56	C.7.3	C.7.3.5	Has there been an internal audit for how many existing program databases and websites are currently within NOAA's infrastructure? When was the last upgrade performed to existing program database and website and by whom?	The Government is still formulating a response.
41	57	C.7	C.7.4.3	What current solutions are being used for databases and websites?	See answer to question 38 above.
42	57	C.7.4 Budget and Financial Managem ent Support	C.7.4.3	Has there been an internal audit for how many existing financial management databases and websites are currently within NOAA's infrastructure?	The Government is still formulating a response.
43	58	C.7.5 Property Managem ent Support	C.7.5.1	What is the current policy being used for disposal of surplus property? How often will it be necessary to dispose of any surplus property? Is there a required method and/or location for the disposal of the surplus property?	The Government uses GSA policy for disposal of capital assets, such as Ships and Aircraft. Sunflower property system is used for property management.
44	59	C.7.7 Facilities Managem ent Support	C.7.7.1	What level of support is the Help Desk limited to? Tier I, Tier II, Tier III etc.? Would the government provide the name of the particular help-desk tool that is currently in place and the number of current calls/tickets received on a daily/monthly/yearly basis? At what location is the current help-desk setup government/contractor site?	This is not an IT helpdesk requirement, but unique support to facilities management functions.
45	59; 65	C.7.7.2; C.7.12.18	¶19; ¶17	The draft Pro Tech RFP includes requirements for medical services for Health Units at NOAA facilities (C.7.7.2) and on NOAA ships (C.7.12.18). Can NOAA provide information about the qualifications of the medical staff that might be needed	Contract support for Medical staff for Ship Emergency Medical services are not located on the ships. The contract Medical Support Staff consists of at least one Physician with an Emergency Medicine specialty and a staff of RNs and medical professionals. There must be 24/7 access to medical professionals to make fit for duty consultations and decisions about shipboard evacuations.

46	59; 65	C.7.7	¶7	Considering the wide geographic distribution of NOAA facilities, including some facilities in remote locations, are there any geographic limits on locations where Facilities Management Support (section C.7.7) might be required?	Some facilities management could happen offsite, however most of the facilities are Port Offices and are located in populated areas.
47	60	C.7.7 Facilities Managem ent Support	C.7.7.11	How large is the Government-owned and leased vehicles fleet?	The Government is still formulating a response.
48	60	C.7.7 Facilities Managem ent Support	C.7.7.13	Will the government be requiring the new awarded to provide actual physical security at each building as well Common Access Card badging and CCTV control systems for what number of individuals needing access? How many government owned build are there that requires a physical security officer?	The Government uses security services for each of their ship home ports-Charleston, Norfolk, New Castle, RI, Newport and Pascagoula, MS, and locations in Alaska. Aircraft operations are located on a secure military installation.
49	61	C.7.8	C.7.8.6	Has there been an internal audit for how many existing human capital management databases and websites are currently within NOAA's infrastructure? How many collaboration centers are there?	There is one human capital system used by NOAA.
50	63	C.7.11 Administrati ve Support	C.7.11.12	When was the last time NOAA performed an internal audit of their existing Records Management systems? Will NOAA's Records Officer be coordinating with the contractor throughout this entire process?	The Government is still formulating a response.
51	63	C.7.11 Administrati ve Support	C.7.11.2	NOAA mentions servicing the government's records management life-cycle. Are there any pre-existing records commercial off the shelf (COTS) solutions already in use? Additionally, must all records management processes and pre-existing systems be compliant with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) regulations?	The Government is still formulating a response.
52	63	C.7.11.1	¶9	The Enterprise Operations Domain includes requirements for "arrangements for meetings, receptionist, [and] travel" (section C.7.11.1). It would be helpful if NOAA clarified the extent of the support required in this area, in particular: Will "travel" include contracting for accommodations and air travel for guests at NOAA meetings? Will it include foreign travel – either travel to non-US destinations and/or travel by foreign guests to NOAA meetings?	No. NOAA uses SATO for travel arrangements. Specific requirements will be specified at the task order level.



53	65	C.7	C.7.12.18	Will NOAA consider removing this requirement from the Enterprise Operations domain? . The scope of this set of requirements (pg. 63: C.7.12) is "scientific expertise support in ocean science, biology, physical science, science policy, science project management , and natural resource management" . This particular sub-requirement (C.7.12.18) does not meet these criteria.	The Government will consider this.
54	65	C.7.12 Scientific and Technical Support	C.7.12.12	Would the government provide an example of the different types of long-term planning for modifications, maintenance, outfitting, and upgrades to NOAA ships, aircraft, remotely operated vehicles and associated systems in past three - five years?	Some examples are, shipboard launch methods of Unmanned Aerial Systems; upgrades to NOAA Aircraft include Tail Doppler Radar installation, Hurricane Radar systems such as Phased Array Radars, upgrades to install hard points for instrumentation on the wings of a P-3, Gulfstream or Twin Otter. Capital Asset Planning and Fleet composition and recapitalization planning including instrumentation suites and tech refresh. Long term maintenance and progressive lifecycle maintenance planning for a fleet of 16 ships and 9 aircraft.
55	65	C.7.12 Scientific and Technical Support	C.7.12.12	Would the government provide a historically listing of all equipment that is currently in use by NOAA to include ships and sizes, aircraft and sizes, remotely operated vehicles? Would the government please define remotely operated vehicles that are currently in use or planned to be put in use over the life of this contract?	The RFP will be changed to read "Provide 24/7 Medical Consultation Services for Shipboard Medical Case management."
56	65	C.7.12 Scientific and Technical Support	C.7.12.18	Would the government provide the necessary requirements for the professional acute and chronic medical care staff must have to perform rotational and non-rotational assignments abroad NOAA ships and for how long will they be required to perform each task (rotational or non-rotational) duties? Can the government provide a historically list for each port of call that NOAA ships dock throughout the Contiguous United States (CONUS) during the past three - five years?	See answer to question 45 above.
57		General		We were looking for clarification on if NOAA will allow proposals for elements/grouping of core elements of the PWS under a domain or if each proposing team is required to provide every PWS element.	Each offeror will be evaluated based on the criteria provided in Section M of the RFP.

58	19	C.3		Will a list of software systems and analytical models currently being used to support NESDIS activities be provided?	Requirements will be specified at the task order level.
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Attachment J-7
ProTech Draft Request for Proposal ST-1330-16-RP-0014
Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	68	E	E.4(b)	What are "Custom Services "?	Reference to custom services will be removed from the final RFP.
2	68	E.4	d	This paragraph states deficiencies will be corrected within 30 calendar days of the rejection notice. Section E.5(b) states the Contractor will have 15 business days to incorporate any Gov't comments and/or change requests and resubmit the deliverable in its final form. E.5 and E.3 conflict in deliverable review and acceptance timelines. Please confirm which is correct.	The RFP will be amended to clarify 15 calendar days from receipt of initial contractor submission to delivery of final corrective action plan incorporating comments, change requests, and deficiencies.
3	68	E.4 & E.5	(d) & (a),(b)	In Section E.4(d) it states "deficiencies will be corrected within thirty (30) calendar days of the rejection notice.". In Section E.5 (a) it states (b) it states "The Government will provide written acceptance or rejection comments and change requests, if any, within fifteen (15) business days from receipt by the Government of the initial deliverable," and then in Section E.5(b) "Upon receipt of the Government comments, the Contractor shall have fifteen (15) business days to incorporate the Government's comments and/or change requests and to resubmit the deliverable in its final form." Is the review and acceptance period and the Contractor's response period of 15 business days identified in Section E.5 inclusive of the 30 calendar days deficiency period or if deficiencies are identified and sent by the Government, does the Contractor have 30 calendar days from that notification to correct any deficiencies?	See answer to question 2 above.
4	71	F	F.7.2	F.7.2 states Task Order Status Reports are due on the 10th calendar day of each month. The next sentence addresses the due date if the 15th calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday. COMMENT: Change "15th" to "10th" in the second sentence to be consistent with the due date.	The RFP Section F.7.2 will be corrected to read the 10th.

5	71	F.7.2	1	Please clarify if Monthly Task Order Status Reports are due the 10th calendar day of each month or the 15th calendar day of each month (there currently is a discrepancy).	See answer to question 4 above.
6	71	F.7.2	1	The report due date for the Monthly Task Order Status Report has 2 different delivery dates: 10th calendar day of each month and then states, "If the 15th calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday, the report is due the following business day." We assume the Government meant to have the delivery date set for 15th calendar day of each month to be consistent with Monthly Contract Status Report, and the above was just in error.	See answer to question 4 above.
7	71	F.7.2	2	The RFP currently states "The report is due by the 10th calendar day of each month...If the 15th calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday, the report is due the following business day." Please confirm that the section should read "The report is due by the 10th calendar day of each month...If the 10th calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday, the report is due the following business day," which would be consistent with the Table of Reporting Requirements above.	See answer to question 4 above.
8	71	F.7.2	1st	The Monthly Task Order Status Report is due on the 10th calendar day of the month. This section includes a sentence that states "if the 15th calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday...". Please confirm that this should read "If the <u>15th</u> calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday...."	See answer to question 4 above.
9	72	F.7.3	1	If the prime contractor is a small business, is it required to submit subcontracting plan reports?	No.
10	72	F.7.3	3	Does use of the eSRS system require a paid subscription?	No.
11	72	F.7.3	4	SB percentage – for small business and large business goals, is the calculation at task order level or annual average?	SB goals are anticipated to be measured at the IDIQ level, not the TO level, however the Contracting Officer can require goals be met at the TO level if he/she chooses.
12	72	F.7.3	4	SB percentage – For small business goals, will offerors be expected to meet these goals at the task order level or total IDIQ?	See answer to question 11 above.

13	72	F.7.4	c	It is our understanding that the eSRS system does not currently accept Individual Subcontracting Reports (ISRs) at the Task or Delivery Order level. Please clarify Subcontracting Plan reporting requirements.	Correct. The RFP Section F.7.4(c) will be corrected that if required by a Task Order, ISRs shall be submitted to the TO CO.
14	71	F.7.1 F.7.2		Please clarify the difference between the Monthly Contract Status Report and the Monthly Task Order Status Report	The Contract Status Report summarized activity at the ID/IQ contract level. The Task Order Status Report summarized activity at the Task Order level.
15	72 90	F.7.3 H.14(a)		Will a small business prime contractor be required to meet any of the subcontracting goals listed in H.14 (a)?	No.

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Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	74	G.2.1.2	1	Will there be a separate COR for each Domain or multiple COR's for each domain? Or only one per Domain and then a COR for each Task order?	There is anticipated to be one COR for each domain ID/IQ contract and separate COR will be designated for each one of the five (5) Domains. A TO COR will be designated for each Task Order.
2	75	G.2.1.3	N/A	Will there be individual Contracting Officers assigned for each Task Order or will there be only 1 IDIQ Contract Level CO?	There will be one Contracting Officer assigned at the IDIQ Contract Level. Each Task Order will have its own Contracting Officer.
3	77	G	G.3.2	What process will the TO CO use to determine the capabilities of small business award holders ?	The TO CO will use the procedures in FAR Part 19.5 to determine if a small business has demonstrated the capabilities applicable to performing the Task Order requirements.
4	77	G.3.2.	1	Under fair opportunity, what will be the NOAA process, policy, and/or methodology to determine whether the small business awardees can do the work in the task order (and hence the task be set aside for small business)? Suggest NOAA develop and publicize a policy now to avoid the problems related to the NOAA Link strategic sourcing. If not, this uncertainty tends to keep all potential vendors in both categories expending resources toward influencing the direction of the opportunity. This advance policy will ensure better, more prepared contractors.	See answer to question 3 above.
5	78	G.3.4	1	Should "Small Business set aside in which competition will be limited to only Small Business, or a socioeconomic subcategory thereof, Prime Contractors within a Domain" read "Small Business set aside in which competition will be limited to only Small Business, or a socioeconomic subcategory thereof"?	The Government will consider this.
6	78	G.3.5	2	Are Contractors contractually required to bid on all Task Orders that are issued through the specific Domain contracts they hold?	No.

7	78	G.3.5	2	<u>Question:</u> Can the government please provide details on the task order RFP process, particularly as it pertains to Conflict of Interest (COI) or limitations on future contracting for awards? How does the government plan to mitigate potential COI between task orders, or will it be solely incumbent upon the prime contractor to determine whether or not their existing work is a COI to another task order that they are interested in responding to?	Offerors manage OCI risks in accordance with CAR 1352.209-74 and limitation of future contracting in accordance with CAR 1352.209-71.
8	78	G.3.5	3	Will it be possible to request an extension of the due date for submission specified in the offer request?	Yes.
9	78	G.3.5	(b)	The contractor is required to provide no bid notice within 5 days of RFP release. Please consider giving the contractor at least 10 days to provide a No Bid notice to allow them an opportunity to fully evaluate each TO.	The RFP will be amended to state "unless otherwise specified in the TO request for offer, no bid notices must be submitted to the TO CO within five (5) business days of offer request release "
10	78	G.3.5	(b)	Is there an average offeror response time per Task Order RFP?	No. Response times will be based on the estimated dollar value and complexity of the proposed Task Order.
11	78	G.3.5	(b) & (c)	Can the Government specify whether the Government means 5 calendar or business days for contractor notification and clarification response periods?	The RFP will be changed to state five (5) business days.
12	78	G.3.5	(d)(1)(i)	Under FFP Task Orders will the Government be soliciting travel and other materials under a separate Cost Reimbursable CLIN?	All CLIN contract types will be specified at the task order level.
13	78	G.3.5	a	Will the time allotted to prepare a TO proposal vary by task order or be fixed? Can the Government provide an estimate of the average expected response time?	Response times will be based on the estimated dollar value and complexity of the proposed Task Order.
14	78	G.3.5	a	Will sole source task orders be allowed?	Exceptions to fair opportunity for task order awards will be in accordance with FAR Part 16.505.
15	78	G.3.5	c	At the task order level, please explain how the Government will evaluate the experience, capabilities, technical approach, quality of staff and solution and probability of success if no technical proposal is required at the task order level. While the RFP indicates that ProTech awards will be on a best value basis, task order responses that only include compliance or exception to the requirements and a cost proposal seem to indicate more of an LPTA determination.	The Section G.3.5 does not infer the Government will not require a technical offer from a contractor.
16	78	G.3.5		How long does the Government anticipate allowing for offerors to respond to task order RFPs?	See answer to question 13 above.

17	78	G.3.5		Will the customer provide a forecast notice to allow the contractors to evaluate bid/no bid decisions early in the process?	The Government will use FAAPS as one process of advanced notice of requirements.
18	79	G.3.5	1	The Task Order (TO) fully burdened rates is the task order standard for evaluating price. We recommend that is also the standard for the IDIQ evaluation for price.	Section M.4.4 describes how price will be evaluated for the ID/IQ awards.
19	79	G.3.5	1	Are the ceiling rates to be specified in the Attachment J-2 to be used in bidding and invoicing Cost-type task orders?	No. Ceiling hourly rates will be use for FFP and T&M/LH. Cost type awards will be negotiated at the task order level.
20	79	G.3.5	4	Will it be possible for NOAA to award sole source (noncompetitive) Task Orders?	See answer to question 14 above.
21	79	G.3.5	d	Should ceiling rates include hazardous duty pay?	Ceiling rates shall be fully burdened in accordance with Section L.9.5.
22	79	G.3.5 (d) (1)(i)	3	The contractor is required to "make clear into which direct labor categories covered by the ceiling hourly rates established in J-2 the contractor's proposed labor costs fall." This level of detail is unnecessary for FFP projects as the price risk falls on the contractor and would not necessarily track to the labor categories more applicable to T&M and CPFF type pricing.	Offerors shall comply with the terms of the contract and request for offers at the task order level.
23	79	G.3.5.d	1	Is there a dollar value ceiling for noncompetitive task order awards. If so what is the dollar value ceiling for noncompetitive task order awards?	No.
24	80	G	G.3.5.(D).(3).(a)	On page 80, under (3) Adequate Accounting System, NOAA requests evidence of an "adequate accounting system' which would include a written opinion or other statement from the cognizant federal auditor (CFA) or the cognizant federal agency official (CFAO) that the system is approved or has been determined to be adequate. The request goes on to further require the audit report and number, if available. Many small businesses do not have a CFA or a CFAO, but have an adequate accounting system, as assessed by an independent auditor, or by using a regularly accepted accounting system (such as the Deltek accounting system). We would recommend this paragraph be modified to request evidence of an adequate accounting system, or a description of the system being utilized, or any system which has previously been accepted by the CFA or CFAO for cost-reimbursable contracts, whether or not in writing.	The RFP states "If the Contractor does not have an accounting system that has been determined adequate by the CFA or CFAO, but believes its accounting system is adequate, the Contractor shall so state in its offer."

25	80	G	G.3.5.(D).(3).(a)	NOAA requests evidence of an "adequate accounting system", which would include a written opinion or statement from the cognizant federal auditor (CFA) or the cognizant federal agency official (CFAO) that the system is approved or has been determined to be adequate. Many small businesses do not have a CFA or a CFAO, but have an adequate accounting system, as assessed by an independent auditor, or by using a regularly accepted accounting system (such as various commercially available and widely used accounting systems). Please broaden the acceptable evidence to show that a firm is using an adequate accounting system.	See answer to question 24 above.
26	80	G.3.5.(d) (3)	3	All prime bidders without CFA/CFAO should provide an independently audited certification of their accounting practices. If a small business indicates that it is too much of a financial burden to provide the results of an independent audit, they are not suitable to prime. Self certification is a high risk approach.	The Government will consider this.
27	81	G	G.3.5.(i)	Paragraph G.3.5.(i) - Debriefings reports that "An unsuccessful Contractor may request a debriefing from the TO CO if they were not selected for a TO award over \$5.5 million." Will NOAA also provide a debriefing for the successful offeror on TO award over \$5.5 million?	Yes, if requested.
28	81	G.3.5	(e) Evaluation of TO Offers	We recommend that NOAA to consider including the cost or price realism as an evaluation criteria. On NOAA Link competitions, NOAA experienced low bids with unrealistic costs or prices, leading to the failure to retain the critical incumbents and to recruit qualified and experienced staff	Offeror submissions will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in the TO offer submission request.

29	81	G.3.5	(i)	In reference to Paragraph G.3.5 Task Order Request for Offer Process; subsection (i) "Debriefings: An unsuccessful Contractor may request a debriefing from the TO CO if they were not selected for a TO award over \$5.5 million. In accordance with FAR Part 16.505(b)(6), the TO CO shall provide a debriefing to the Contractor to discuss the reasons why that Contractor was not selected." Recommend Government reconsider \$5.5M level to a lower amount as debriefings at any dollar threshold are of value to offerors and provide insight into rationale for selections as well as assist offeror's in improving future submissions.	TO CO may provide information to an unsuccessful Contractor on their proposal if not selected for a TO award lower than \$5.5million. Debriefings for TO awards will be conducted in accordance with FAR Part 16.505(b)(6) as required.
30	81	G.3.5	16 and 20	We respectfully suggest that the stated threshold for Task Order "order of importance" factors and debriefs (\$5.5M) is too high. We recommend that \$100,000 will be more appropriate to allow the contractor community to develop valuable lessons with regard to how their proposals are being evaluated (for future Task Oder-level competitions).	See answer to question 29 above.
31	81	G.3.5	e	It appears that the government will only require cost-price proposals for each task order, which leads to an LPTA competition. Is that the government's intention?	No. Offer submissions will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in the TO offer submission request.
32	81	G.3.5	e	At the task order level, please explain how the government will evaluate the experience, capabilities, technical approach, quality of staff and solution and probability of success if no technical proposal is required at the task order level. While the RFP indicates that ProTech awards will be on a best value basis, task order responses that only include compliance or exception to the requirements and a cost proposal seems the definition of LPTA. Is that the government's intention?	See answer to question 15 above.
33	81	G.3.5	h	Will the unique Labor Categories be identified post or pre Task Order Award? Once created, will these Labor Categories be available for future Task Orders?	Unique labor categories maybe proposed with the contractor's task order offer. Additional labor categories may be added to the base IDIQ if reoccurring requirements exist.
34	81	G.3.5	h	Will bidders be asked to propose to unique and specific Labor Categories be identified post or pre Task Order Award? If so, will these Labor Categories be binding to the Domain contract?	See answer to question 33 above.

35	81	G.3.5	h	Will the unique Labor Categories be identified post- or pre-Task Order Award? Once created, will these Labor Categories be available for future Task Orders? Will Offerors be able to add additional labor categories post-award?	See answer to question 33 above.
36	81	G.3.5 item e	1	The draft RFP states that for "orders over \$5.5 million, the order of importance for the factors will be identified in each individual offer request". How and when is the order of importance specified for orders that are less than \$5.5M?	The order of importance specified for less than \$5.5M will be specified in the offer request.
37	81	G.3.5 item	1	The draft RFP states that debriefs can be requested for TO awards over \$5.5M. That implies no debrief will be conducted for orders less than \$5.5M. Is that correct? Debriefs provide important feedback to bidders and as such are recommended in order to understand and improve a bidders process.	See answer to question 29 above.
38	83	G.4	(h)	In reference to Paragraph G.4, Evaluation of Contractor Performance (Services); subsection "(h) Retention Period - The agency will retain past performance information for a maximum period of three years after completion of contract performance for the purpose of providing source selection information for future contract awards" Recommend Government consider retaining data for 5 years as many other agencies use 5 years of past performance as a basis for contract awards..	The Government will use CPARS for maintaining past performance information.
39	78	G.3.5		Will a prime contractor be required to win a minimum number of Task Orders?	No.

Attachment J-7
ProTech Draft Request for Proposal ST-1330-16-RP-0014
Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	86	H.5	(a)	Please confirm the Government will provide all necessary hardware, software, desks, telephone, etc. for work required to be performed at the NOAA sites.	Yes, unless otherwise specified in a task order.
2	86	H.6	4th	Will performance standards be negotiated or Government defined?	Performance standards will be established based on the requirements and can be defined by the Government or proposed the by contractor.
3	86	H.6 (c)	6	The IDIQ should require a Quality, a Risk and a Transition plan with their own page count and evaluation criteria outside of the current proposed page count.	The RFP will remain as stated.
4	86	H.6 Item c	1	The draft RFP refers to a government Quality Assurance Plan (QASP). Will one be provided?	The Government shall provide a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan at the task order level when using a performance-based approach.
5	86	H.6	c	This clause references SLAs, but SLAs are not discussed elsewhere in this Solicitation. Please confirm that any SLAs and any positive or negative incentives will be provided in the Request For Task Orders and negotiated on a case-by-case basis for any TO awarded under this contract	Yes.

6	88	H	13	FAR Subpart 9.602(b) states that "Contractor team arrangements may be particularly appropriate in complex research and development acquisitions, but may be used in other appropriate acquisitions, including production." This type of arrangement between multiple contractors affords the Government an opportunity to source specific services directly with individual CTA members as essentially "co-primers" (see http://www.gsa.gov/contractorteamarrangements). If NOAA encourages this structure, they could then release task orders under any variety of socioeconomic designations, giving the Government ultimate flexibility in reaching its small business contracting goals and obtaining the breadth of capabilities required. This would also eliminate pass-through costs associated with a normal Prime/Subcontractor relationship in cases where the prime does little of the actual work with the exception of contract administration. By providing privity of contract directly to any individual CTA Member, this structure streamlines the use of small business companies to meet small business contracting objectives and could even eliminate the need for both a large and small business track, decreasing the complexity of the contract. The GSA Continuous Process Improvement BPA is a good example of this construct (see http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21150). Would NOAA consider recognizing GSA Contractor Team Arrangements (CTA) as an alternative to the typical Prime/Subcontractor team arrangements for the IDIQ acquisition?	No, this is not a FAR Part 8 acquisition.
7	88	H.11	1	Contractor Web Page – will the evaluation of other data sources include review of the contractor web page called for in H.11?	No.
8	88	H.11	1	Under Special Contract Requirements the government specifies that the contractor maintain a public webpage dedicated to NOAA/ProTech. Will the government please confirm that this is an <u>after-award requirement</u> ?	Yes.
9	88	H.11	1	Will development/maintenance of the webpage be invoiced as Other direct Costs (ODC)?	No.

10	88	H.11	1	Contractor Web Page – will the evaluation of other data sources include review of the contractor web page called for in H.11?	See answer to question 7 above.
11	88	H.11	1	In the Contractor Web Page, does the Contractor have the right to include current or past NOAA ProTech Task Order awards? Does publicly available mean only to the Government? Is the maintenance of the Web Page funded by the Government and an allowable cost?	Yes. No. The Government does not intend to pay as a direct cost for the maintenance of the webpage for FFP/TM/LH task orders. It would be an allowable cost for cost type task orders.
12	88	H.11		Please confirm that an offeror's general website, which meets the stated requirements, shall suffice, such that, offerors are not required to develop a PROTECH-specific website.	Yes.
13	88	H.13	1	Please confirm that a vendor can Prime one domain and be a subcontractor on another domain; specifically Priming the Enterprise Domain and subcontracting on the other Domains?	Yes.
14	88	H.13	7	The language in this paragraph appears to discourage "niche" or specialty contractors that would be providing a "deep" expertise rather than a "broad" expertise.	The RFP will remain as stated.
15	88	H.13	7	"Because of the diversity of professional and technical work contemplated under this contract, the Government anticipates that teaming may occur at the contract and TO level. Contractors shall consider the following as it relates to teaming arrangements under ProTech. Note that teaming is NOT required in order for an Offeror to submit a proposal, and be awarded a contract or order under ProTech. However, Offerors may consider teaming as a means to more fully meet the array of requirements and resources potentially required under ProTech." The statement above effectively conveys that teaming at the contract level, if it helps the offeror more fully meet the potential requirements, is beneficial at the evaluation phase. It also somewhat implies that NOAA may consider awarding contracts to offerors that do not cover all areas in a specific Domain. Is this the latter statement, in fact, accurate?	Yes.

16	88	H.13	7	It is our understanding that it may be in the Government's interest to have some vendors that have certain specialties rather than a broad-based expertise addressing all of NOAA's needs. The language in this and other sections of the RFP appears to contradict this through multiple mentions of an "array" of expertise, suggesting that contractors with specialties will not be considered. Please clarify whether specialty or "niche" contractors without great breadth of experience will be considered.	See answer to question 15 above.
17	88	H.7	1	Can the contractor web page be access-protected (requiring a log-in) in order to convey complete and appropriate data to the client (NOAA) while protecting potential proprietary data of the contractor?	No.
18	89	H	H.13 (d)	The RFP states: "Note: Offerors should note that for purposes of providing past performance information and for evaluating past performance, only past performance of the JV, and not that of its members, will be considered." This statement appears to apply to a populated JV. During contract execution, an unpopulated JV would draw freely from the resources and experience of both of its members. The combined past performance of the JV and its members would comprise the best performance record to use in assessing that offeror's likelihood of success in performing the solicitation requirements. Therefore, does H.13 (d) apply only to populated JVs?	The Government will consider revising the requirements for JVs.
19	89	H.13	1	Are there any prohibitions from teaming exclusively under the NOAA ProTech IDIQ and each Task Order issued thereunder?	No.
20	89	H.13	7	<i>"Note: Offerors should note that for purposes of providing past performance information and for evaluating past performance, only past performance of the JV, and not that of its members, will be considered."</i> This requirement will diminish the ability of businesses (both small and large) to establish JV arrangements for the specific purpose of competing for ProTech. We request that NOAA consider allowing the past performance of JV members to be considered when evaluating proposals.	See answer to question 18 above.
21	89	H.13	7	If the ProTech prime contractor is already a Small Business, does it need to provide a SBLO as Key Personnel?	No. The RFP will be corrected to reflect this.

22	89	H.13	8	The designation of subsection (d) is used twice in this section [i.e., (d) Joint Venture and (d) Small Business Liaison Officer].	The RFP will be correct to Small Business Liaison Officer as subsection (e)
23	89	H.13	d	Must qualified Small Business primes include a "Small Business" Liaison Officer (SBLO), whose purpose is to "serve as a single point of contract for prospective subcontractors" (presumably small businesses) given that their teammates may all be large businesses needed to address the breadth, depth, and complexity of the requirements scope?	See answer to question 21 above.
24	89	H.13	d	With the statement that Primes are "encouraged to have non-exclusive access to multiple ... service providers," will NOAA favor those with non-exclusive teaming agreements over those with exclusive agreements in some manner in the awards?	No.
25	89, 132	H.13, L.9.4	6, Last	The solicitation states, "Note: Offerors should note that for purposes of providing past performance information and for evaluating past performance, only past performance of the JV, and not that of its members, will be considered." "Offerors shall submit past performance information for up to eight (8) Government contracts (no less than three for the prime or Joint Venture) having performance within the past three years..." Might NOAA consider allowing past performance of members of the JV? Since JVs are formed on a temporary basis and, because certain JV types (i.e. SBA-approved Mentor-Protégé JVs) only allow 3 awards or 2 year span, it seems unlikely that an eligible JV could provide the required 3 past performance references.	See answer to question 18 above.
26	89-90	H.13	(d) Small Business Liaison Officer (SBLO)	The draft RFP states that the ProTech Prime Contractor is also encouraged to have non-exclusive access to multiple product and service providers. Can the government clarify what product and service providers would be needed? Also, is this just a requirement for small businesses?	Service requirements are specified in the SOWs.
27		H.13	TEAMING ARRANGEMENT	Can a firm submit proposal as prime and be a sub on one or multiple teams?	Yes.

28	90	H	H.14(a)	How will the Government evaluate "the best value in terms of meeting all the Small Business Participation goals" ? There appears to be no corresponding evaluation factor listed in Section M.	Subcontracting Plans will be required in accordance with FAR Clause 52.219-9.
29	90	H. 14	(b)	So as to alleviate the need to administer multiple Subcontracting Plans, will the Government allow offerors who have a Government approved Master Subcontracting Plan, provide it, with reporting at the IDIQ level? If so, will the Government also modify Para. (c) and (d) accordingly	See answer to question 28 above.
30	90	H.13	1	<u>Reference:</u> "The ProTech Prime Contractor is also encouraged to have non-exclusive access to multiple product and service providers." <u>Question:</u> What does "product and service providers" refer to? Is NOAA looking for vendor relationships? Will NOAA favor primes with non-exclusive teaming agreements with their subcontractors over those with exclusive agreements, during evaluations?	Product and service providers refer to subcontractors in this context.
31	90	H.14	2	The requirement of a Small Business Subcontracting Plan at both the contract and task Order level seems unnecessary and redundant.	See answer to question 28 above.
32	90	H.14	4	The assignment of liquidated damages for not making a good faith effort to comply with the subcontracting plan is subjective and potentially harsh.	Required by 15 U.S.C. 637(d)(4)(f) and FAR 19.705-7.
33	90	H.14, H.15	NA	H.14 states that Small Business Subcontracting Plan will be at the Task Order Level and in addition H.15 requires a Master Subcontracting Plan at the IDIQ level also. Please clarify and confirm the requirement, typically task orders don't require a separate Small Business Subcontracting Plans when a Master Plan is incorporated into the contract at the IDIQ level. Also please clarify how contractors would submit the required subcontracting reports at both the IDIQ contract level and at the Task order level as eSRS currently only allows for submitting reports either at the IDIQ or the Task Order level but not at both levels for the same IDIQ contract.	See answer to question 28 above.

34	91	H.17	a & b	This section states that other Contractor(s) may be requested to assist the Government in the technical review of the Contractor's technical efforts. This assessment of a competitor may create a bias judgement OCI. How does the Government intend on mitigating this risk?	Contractors may only provide recommendations to the Government. Additionally, Contractors providing assistance with technical reviews of other vendors are prohibited from receiving award for similar work within NOAA.
35	92	H.19		The Government anticipates utilizing a internet portal for TO processing. The contractor will be required to "support the electronic information requirements" Can the Government provide more information regarding what may/will be expected of contractors?	The ProTech program intends to use a similar process to the NOAALink program web-based process.
36	93	H.20	3	Will costs associated with Post Award Conferences be allowable and billable under the contract?	Yes.
37	93	H.21	1	The declaration of an "open season" to add new contractors to the ProTech contract program seems unfair to Contractors who invested significantly and competed in the original competition over the last 2-3 year period. What criteria will NOAA use to determine whether such an "open season" is in the Government's best interest?	On ramping may be used if the competitive pool has diminished for any reason.
38	93	H.21	1	We would like to recommend that the government increase the length of the contract vehicle to 10 years if an On Ramp of companies are expected.	The RFP and resulting awards remain as stated.
39	93	H.21	1	If NOAA's determines it should add new new contractors to ProTech, can it accept the proposals from those in the original submission that were not awarded or will a new procurement activity be required?	No. This will be a new proposal and evaluation process in accordance with FAR procedures.
40	93	H.21	N/A	We recognize the need to replenish the small business pools due to growth of SBs or acquisitions of SBs by larger companies. We recommend that the Government consider an on-ramp for large businesses as well due to the acquisition environment where large business are acquiring or merging with other large business thus potentially decreasing the number of large businesses in a specific domain (e.g., Leidos/Lockheed Martin IS&GS; SAIC/Scitor; Engility/TASC,etc.)	See answer to question 37 above.
41	93	H.21		ON RAMP - Should an organization not be able to certify as a small business after the base year, would they be ON RAMPED to an unrestricted vehicle?	See Section I.7 and FAR 52.219-28. Small businesses retain their certification as a small business for the five year ordering period so long as none of the exceptions found in 13 CFR 121.404(g) apply.

42	93	H.21		We recommend that the Government increase the length of the contract vehicle to 10 years if an On Ramp of companies is expected.	See answer to question 38 above.
43	93	H.22	(a)	Is there an actual or potential OCI concern between the NOAA ProTech and NOAA SETS contracts at the IDIQ level or are OCI restrictions limited on a task order by task order basis?	Offerors and contractors are required to identify and mitigate potential OCI at every level.
44	93; 101	H.21; I.7	1st paragraphs	Paragraph H.21 states that "The Government reserves the right to utilize an "On Ramp" process to manage the recertification process and maintain a sufficient number of contract awardees for ProTech." Paragraph I.7 does not require recertification as the potential period of performance is only 5 years. Suggest the Government have small businesses recertify before the exercise of each option.	Recertification's will only be required in accordance with 13 CFR 121.404(g).
45	94	H.23		Are key personnel reimbursable as direct labor?	The RFP Section L language will be updated to clarify.
46	94	H.23	(a)	Will labor categories be provided for the Program Manager, Contracts Manager and SBLO?	No.
47	94	H.23	(a)	The paragraph reads, "The Contractor shall assign to this contract the following key personnel: Program Manager, Contracts Manager, and Small Business Liaison Officer". However, the gov't has not listed these labor cats in J-3. <i>Q: Will the gov't add these labor cats to I-3?</i>	See answer to question 46 above.
48	94	H.23		The draft RFP states that the Contractor shall assign to this contract the following key personnel: Program Manager, Contracts Manager, and Small Business Liaison Officer (if proposing a teaming approach). Can the government specify the requirements for the key personnel, i.e. PMP, ITIL, etc.?	The offerors shall propose qualified candidates based on the requirements in the RFP.
49	101	I.7	b	Given the terms described, the contract will have a (2) year base and (3) one year option periods – would a small business have to recertify as a small business after the contract base?	No.
50	101	I.7(b)	5	We commend the language to require companies to recertify and encourage the government to vigorously enforce the size standards throughout the life of the contract. It is unfair for companies who have outgrown the size standard to compete with small companies	No response required.

51	86	H.6		Does this Section apply to all prime IDIQ contracts including small business prime contractors?	Yes.
52	88	H.11		Will the "content" of the Contractor Web Page require review/approval by the ProTech CO or PM?	No.
53	89	H.13(c)		Can an additional team member be added after contract award independent of a specific task order requirement?	No.
54	89 132	H.13(d) L.9.3.1		Will a Domain IDIQ small business prime contractor be required to provide, as key personnel, a Small Business Liaison Officer?	No.
55	91	H.17		What steps will be taken to ensure that there will be no COI between IDIQ prime contractor teams when the NOAA ProTech PM requires that there by coordination between contractor teams?	Per paragraph H.17 (b) Non-disclosure Agreements, as appropriate shall be signed by all Contractor employees assigned to perform services under a TO prior to any work commencing on the TO.
56	93	H.22(a)(2)		Please clarify the scope of and how this will be accomplished.	The scope is defined in H.22 (b). How it will be accomplished in defined in H.22 (c) through (g).

Attachment J-7
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Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	109	J	N/A	When will the Section J attachments be made available?	Section J attachments were provided with the draft solicitation. All final attachments will be provided with the final solicitation.
2	109	J	J-2	Will a copy of Attachment J-2 be provided in the final solicitation?	No. As the draft solicitation indicates (see p. 109), this table will be filled out at the time of award and included in the contract based on the awardee's final offered ceiling hourly rates.
3	Attachment	J-3	N/A	<p>Labor Categories Comment</p> <p>We appreciate NOAA's position of trying to establish a reasonable and manageable labor category structure across all of the domains. Ideally, the labor category structure enhances both NOAA's evaluation process and the responding team's proposal submission as all parties are going to live with it for Pro-Tech's period of performance.</p> <p>However, the currently presented labor category structure is very limiting as it establishes highly compartmentalized and rigid labor categories aligned tightly to Pro-Tech's sub-domain areas. Effectively, this creates a pricing structure that forces teams to limit their proposed labor categories to three (3) labor categories on any given task regardless of the size and complexity of the task's scope. Given Pro-Tech is a multi-year, broadly scoped, and highly competitive IDIQ, we request NOAA reconsider this approach and offer more labor categories available to each sub-domain area, including labor categories that cut across sub-domains.</p>	There are three levels for experience within each of the labor categories, not three labor categories. There are between five and 17 labor categories depending on the domain. The Government does not believe that the labor category structure represents a constraint on a task order offeror's ability to propose the best possible solution and reasonable ceiling rates.

4	Attachment J-3			J-3 includes a small number of "Categories" with each containing three levels. Each level has an unusually large range of years of experience. This design will lead to unrealistic pricing. Will Government consider breaking the labor category into 5 levels instead of 3 (for example, level 1: 1 to 4 years; level 2: 4 to 8 years; level 3: 8 to 12 years; level 4: 12 to 16 years; level 5: above 16 years)?	The only pricing that takes place at the ID/IQ level are ceiling rates, not-to-exceed pricing which governs the pricing at the task order level including the direct labor, indirect cost and profit rates applicable to direct labor hours. The Government expects to achieve reasonable, realistic pricing for the task orders it awards through careful specification of its requirements, effective competition, and price analysis evaluation at the task order level.
5	2	Attachment J3	Standard Level Definitions	Please list the number of years experience which can be substituted for certifications with the recognized identity and the <u>certification</u> .	This will be decided by the requiring technical representative and TO CO at the task order level.
6	2	Attachment J3	Standard Level Definitions	Can additional labor categories be added?	Reference Section G.3.5(h): "Task order unique labor categories", that is, labor categories that are not included in the ID/IQ contract itself may be added at the discretion of the task order contracting officer when a type of labor necessary for performance is not captured within the preexisting contract-level labor categories. Offerors shall not propose additional labor categories as part of their response to this solicitation.
7	2	Attachment J3	Standard Level Definitions	How many years of relevant professional experience may be substituted for the following degrees: Associates; Bachelors; Masters; PhD? Please answer for each domain if different for each.	See answer to question 5 above. The figures given in the "standard level definitions" section of Attachment J-3 for how much experience various degrees count for are there solely for the purpose of guiding offerors in the development of ceiling priced hourly rates for the various labor category levels.

8	Multiple	J	Attachment J-3	<p>The RFP provides three Standard Levels Definitions (Level 1 - Level 3) for each of the ProTech Labor Categories. These Definitions group broad ranges of experience into each Standard Level (e.g. Level 2: Minimum of eight years of relevant experience, with up to sixteen years total relevant experience). We recommend providing additional Standard Levels to accommodate more entry level candidates with less experience and to provide further stratification within each labor category. This would allow for a more precise price quotation comparison, and also provide more flexibility for pricing at the task order level. An example of additional Standard Levels for NOAA's consideration is provided below:</p> <p>Level 1: Minimum of 2 years of relevant experience, with up to 5 years of total relevant experience</p> <p>Level 2: Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience, with up to 8 years of total relevant experience</p> <p>Level 3: Minimum of 8 years of relevant experience, with up to 12 years of total relevant experience</p> <p>Level 4: Minimum of 12 years of experience with up to 16 years of experience</p> <p>Level 5: Minimum of 16 years of experience</p>	<p>See answer to question 3 above. A 5-standard-level approach will not allow "more precise price quotation comparison" or "provide more flexibility for pricing at the task order level" than the 3-standard-level approach. As stated in Section M.4.4 the draft RFP, at the ID/IQ level the Government will not use offerors' proposed ceiling hourly rates to develop notional prices for their proposals that will then be compared to one another to rank the offerors.</p>
9	Multiple	J	Attachment J-3	<p>The RFP provides three standard levels for each labor category.</p>	<p>See answer to question 8 above.</p>
10		Attachment J-3		<p>The rollup of specific job functions into the generic labor categories provided in the DRFP will allow bidders to potentially bid drastically different rates for each labor category. Is it the government's intent to establish ceiling rates for each of these labor categories and if so, will the government consider using a common GSA schedule for mapping clarity?</p>	<p>As indicated in the draft solicitation, it is the Government's intention to establish contractual ceiling hourly rates for the various indicated labor category levels. The pricing of actual Government requirements will occur at the task order level.</p>
11		Attachment J-3		<p>With specific job functions such as scientist, engineers, etc. spanning multiple labor categories in Attachment J-3, what method does the government expect bidders to use in establishing ceiling rates? Will NOAA consider aligning standard labor categories to established schedules such as GSA?</p>	<p>The Government anticipates offerors to have an understanding of the labor rates for the market in which they propose.</p>

12		Attachment J-3		With the wide range of labor categories and ceiling rates, how does the government intend to conduct price evaluation and what is the basis of using ceiling rates?	Refer to Section M.4.4. of the draft RFP for price evaluation criteria.
13		Attachment J-3		With the list of labor categories in Attachment J-3 varying from those that are standard across contractors, how are bidders expected to map established labor categories to those described in the attachment? Why is NOAA introducing a different basis for labor categories for Pro-Tech and would NOAA consider explaining the mapping rational that should be used?	Market research has not demonstrated there are labor categories that are "standard across contractors". The limited labor category approach requires contractors to propose ceiling, not average, rates.
14	10	J	Attachment J-3	<p>Based on the Statements of Work for the Oceans and Fisheries Domains, we suggest that several labor categories be added to the Ocean's domain; and that one additional labor category be added to the Fisheries' Domain to accomplish the required work. For the Ocean's domain, we suggest NOAA add the following series:</p> <p>Social Science Services- Requirements C.4.3.2 and C.4.4.13 indicate the need for social science support.</p> <p>Diving Services- Requirement C.4.3.1 indicates diving services may be used for field data collection.</p> <p>Administrative Support Services- NOAA Oceans and Fisheries program procurements often require entry to mid-level administrative support functions for coordinating logistics, calendars, note-taking, answering phones. The administrative support salaries and rates are different from other required services for the same level of experience and is best priced as it's own series. We suggest adding this labor category to both Domains.</p>	The Government will revise the RFP to add the two labor categories of Social Science Services and Diving Services to the Oceans Domain labor categories. Administrative support services are considered to be included within the broader program operations services category.
15	10	J	Attachment J-3	Based on the Statements of Work for the Oceans and Fisheries Domains, there may be several labor additional labor categories that should be added in order to complete anticipated work assignments, for both technical and administrative support. Please cross-reference the statement of work and consider additional labor categories and levels that may be needed.	See answer to question 14 above.

16	11 (Attach J-3)	Enterprise Domain	1	Healthcare professionals are identified as a labor category under Enterprise Operations. Under which of the twelve service areas does NOAA anticipate using labor category?	Under "Scientific and Technical Support" (see C.7.12.18).
17		Attachment J-3		ATTACHMENT J-3 PROTECH LABOR CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS contains three labor categories for a limited number of labor categories with a very broad scope of work. It is our experience, that such a limited number of labor category levels will adversely affect bidding and operations. For example, an offeror could bid the same labor category with 1 or up to 7 years of experience at Level 1, and there is a significant gap in a staff member's experience/expertise at that level. In addition, the offerors will most likely bid at the lower end of the spectrum, which may not result in the right level of expertise required by the NOAA customer. On larger contracts, it might make invoicing confusing for NOAA task monitors, since they will have to verify invoices with so many people in the same labor category with different discounted rates.	See answers to questions 3, 4, and 8 above. Invoicing will be based on the agreed to rates and labor categories in the task orders, not the ID/IQ contracts.

18		Attachment J-3	<p>J-3 includes a small number of “Categories” with a large number of “Example” titles in each. There are no labor category descriptions provided, simply titles. Without descriptions of the qualifications and work to be performed by each “example” for a Category, offerors will be unable to accurately develop appropriate direct labor rates. For example, an entry-level Electrical Engineer would make \$67K a year while an entry-level Chemical Engineer \$75K a year. Aggressive bidders will potentially propose low rates based on the lack of descriptions and, if awarded the contract, will either be unable to perform work at the proposed rates or will submit change requests to the Government to raise the contractual rates. Conservative bidders who do not want to submit change requests will bid high rates based on the lack of descriptions and, if awarded the contract, will cost the Government more than what would be needed. To add to this issue, bidders may not know if they are being “aggressive” or “conservative.” Without specific labor category descriptions, bidders will end up guessing more than bidding. We ask that the Government provide more detailed descriptions of the “examples” listed with each category, along with some estimate of % of effort for each individual “example” so that offerors can provide educated bids and so that the Government can evaluate proposed rates across offerors. If the Government will not provide greater detail in the labor categories, we ask that the Government provide additional direction to all offerors to minimize “blind” bidding for all.</p>	<p>Listing the types of disciplines covered by a category, the extent of experience and education required for the different levels within a category, and the guidance to propose ceiling rates reflecting the cost of the most skilled individuals should provide offerors the information needed to develop the ceiling rates requested by the draft solicitation. Offerors are advised, per Section L.9.5.1, to base their proposed rates on "the most highly qualified employee or class of employees within a category working in the highest cost location". Section M.4.4 states offerors may be deemed unreasonable "by virtue of being sufficiently low so as to represent a risk to successful performance".</p>
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19		Attachment J-3	<p>The generic labor categories in Attachment 3 vary in job functions, some of which, span across multiple categories and also vary from those that are standard across contractors. With the resulting wide range of labor categories and potentially, drastically different bids or ceiling rates for each, we pose the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it the Government's intent to establish ceiling rates for each of these labor categories and if so, will the Government consider using a common GSA schedule for mapping clarity? • How are bidders expected to map established labor categories to those described in the attachment? What is the rationale for introducing a different basis for labor categories for Pro-Tech? • Will NOAA consider aligning standard labor categories to established schedules such as GSA? • Please describe how the Government intends to conduct a fair price evaluation and the basis of using ceiling rates? 	<p>The draft solicitation states the Government will establish ceiling hourly rates for the specified labor category levels.</p> <p>The Domain labor categories have been established based on the types of labor needed to perform the work envisioned for the Domain. The Government does not expect there to be a one-to-one mapping of its customary labor categories to those contained in the ProTech solicitation. The Government expects offerors to present a rational basis, consistent with the offeror's cost structure, for the ceiling rates proposed.</p> <p>The labor categories are aligned to support NOAA's mission.</p> <p>The price evaluation criteria is described in Section M.4.4 of the draft solicitation, based on the pricing instructions in Section L.9.5.1.</p>
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20		J.3	<p>J-3 contains a small number of “Categories”, each containing 3 “levels. In most cases, these “levels” contain an unusually large range of years of experience. For example, the Level 2 for Weather Services ranges from 7 years to 14 years in experience. Using salary survey data for 3 “example” categories shows a salary for 7 years as \$114.6K and a salary for 14 years as \$158.1K. That equates to a range of \$43.5K. If a company chooses the mean salary in that range (\$136,324), they be 16% too low or 19% too high. Aggressive bidders will potentially propose low rates based on the low end of the experience range, if awarded the contract, will either be unable to perform work at the proposed rates or will submit change requests to the Government to raise the contractual rates. Conservative bidders who do not want to submit change requests will bid high rates based on the high end of the range and, if awarded the contract, will cost the Government more than what would be needed. And bidders who bid in the middle of the range bear significant risk because of the large range (see earlier example). During task order competition, furthermore, the only contractor with insight to the actual salary requirements would be the incumbent. This means the incumbent is the only offeror with knowledge that gives the company an advantage to either bid low without risk or bid higher to minimize risk. We ask that the Government break the categories into at least 5 levels, allowing for narrower ranges for bidding. Having 5 levels will allow bidders to mitigate blind risk while also giving the Government more flexibility during performance to use the appropriate category AND level for each individual performing work on the contract. Since individuals’ salaries increase more at the lower levels, we suggest to have a shorter range of years of experience for the lower-level categories</p>	<p>As is typical in multiple award ID/IQ competitions, the Government is requesting offerors to propose ceiling hourly rates by labor category level. The Government will evaluate the reasonableness of an offeror's proposed ceiling hourly rates and all reasonable offerors will be considered as identical insofar as price is concerned.</p> <p>See answers to questions 3, 4, and 8 above.</p>
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21	1	Attachment J-5	Header	The Ceiling Rate Table has only one OH rate. What should be done if offeror maintains Government site and Contractor Site OH rates?	The rates are ceiling hourly rates, therefore the offeror should use the rate that produces the higher figure. See Section L.9.5.1 of the draft RFP. Subsequently, when proposing on a task order for which performance is at a lower cost site, the Government would expect a reduction from the ceiling rate to reflect the lower cost location.
22	Attachment J-5	Enterprise Operations Tab		The Enterprise Operations tab list a LCAT for a Healthcare Professional can the government please clarify the specific requirements for the Healthcare Professional? Will these individuals work with humans and/or animals/wildlife?	With humans (Section C.7.12.18).
23	J-5	Price	1	Fully burdened ceiling hourly Labor Rate should be the only pricing column on this table. Please indicate how you will evaluate fringe, overhead, G&A and profit.	Government must have a clear understanding of the ceiling rates proposed to assist it in making a determination of whether the proposed ceiling rates are reasonable. Section M.4.4 of the draft solicitation indicates, the Government will not use an offeror's proposed ceiling rates to arrive at an evaluated price for an offeror's proposal, which will then be compared to that of other offerors to arrive at a ranking of offerors from low to high price. Consistent with that overall approach, the Government will not compare offerors' proposed cost element and profit rates to rank offerors in each of these individual areas. It is possible, however, that proposed cost elements or profit rates that appear anomalous will generate clarification questions or discussion items.
24	N/A	J-5	N/A	<u>Comment:</u> As Program/Project Management is a functional area within each of the domains, will NOAA add a Program/Project Management Services labor category to each domain?	Program/project management services are included within the "program operations services" category.

25	N/A	J-5	N/A	<p><u>Comment:</u> Many of the labor categories provided within the Enterprise Operations Domain (particularly labor categories #2-3, 5-7, and 10-16) are general labor categories which are commonly used in multiple Domains. These labor categories pertain to specific functional areas vs. specific Domains, and therefore NOAA may want to consider adding these labor categories to all Domains. This will provide us with the flexibility to truly solution a response from the ground up, and propose a BOE that supports best value solutions.</p>	The applicable Enterprise Domain labor categories are already included in the other Domain labor categories based on the stated requirements.
26	J-6	PPQ	1	The vendors can control the timely provision of the PPQ to their customers. They cannot, however, control the rate of return to NOAA.	Offerors are responsible for submission of PP questionnaires.
27	Att J-5	-	-	Please confirm that the Government will be providing individual labor category descriptions with the final RFP for each domain in lieu of the broad categories provided with the draft.	No.
28	1	J-6	1	<p><u>Reference:</u> "<i>Section A (Part I and Part II) shall be completed by the Offeror (the firm requesting the reference) prior to issuing the questionnaires.</i>"</p> <p><u>Question:</u> If the prime offeror plans to use the past performance of its subcontractor, should the prime offeror or the subcontractor (company whose past performance is being cited) complete Part I and II with their company information?</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> May we suggest that the government add to Section A, Part I, an area that allows the subcontractor of a ProTech prime offeror, to list their company information? This will help identify which prime offeror the past performance example belongs to.</p>	The company information in Section A, Parts I and II of the Past Performance Questionnaire should be that of the subcontractor whose performance is being offered.

29	2	J-6	N/A	<p><u>Comment:</u> May we suggest that the government add to Section A, Part I, an area that states which Domain the past performance example is being submitted for? If a prime offeror is pursuing multiple Domains and plans to submit 3 unique past performance examples for one Domain, and 3 other past performance examples for the second Domain, the government will need to know which Domain the past performance examples belong to.</p>	<p>Each RFP will be for one or two domains. Offerors shall submit separate proposals for each domain and specify on the past performance questionnaire in the General Description block the domain as part of the relevancy information.</p>
30	2	J-6	N/A	<p><u>Question:</u> If a prime offeror plans to pursue 2 Domains, and plans to use 1 past performance example for the pursuit of both Domains, will the prime offeror need to submit the same past performance questionnaire twice? One for each Domain?</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> In consideration of the Evaluator that will be completing Section B and the B&P costs of the offeror, we suggest that only 1 past performance questionnaire be required, if being used for the proposals for multiple Domains. (e.g. Company ABC is pursuing the Satellite and Weather Domains, and their Contract XYZ has a SOW that is relevant to both the Satellite and Weather Domains. It would be more efficient to allow Company ABC to submit 1 past performance questionnaire for Contract XYZ and state which Domains the questionnaire should be evaluated for, since the information within the questionnaire will be identical.</p>	<p>See answer to question 29 above.</p>

Attachment J-7
ProTech Draft Request for Proposal ST-1330-16-RP-0014
Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	123	L.4	1	Pro-Tech NAICS Code Determination for Satellite Domain is 541712 with 500 employees. We assume that the 500 employee limit is at time of proposal submission and not proposal award.	Yes, although effective 26 Feb 2016, the size standard will change for NAICS code 541712 to 1, 000 employees.
2	123	L.4	2	Are the NAICS codes designated for each domain representative of the size standards required or are they only designated for showing types of services? In other words, do all companies bidding on Pro-Tech have to be under \$15 Million?	The NAICS codes represent the required business size standard by domain to be considered a small business. This does not preclude large businesses from proposing.
3	123	L.4	NAICS code table	Wanted to confirm that these ceilings are applicable to each individual NAICS code. A company can be more than \$ 15 M, but still can bid for one or more domains.	Correct, see answer to number 2 above.
4	123	L.4 SMALL BUSINESS CLASSIFICATION CODE	Pro-Tech NAICS Code Determination	Would the government be open to reassigning the NACIS Code Determination for the Enterprise Operations Domain from (541611) to (541519)? This request is based on the fact that although there are administrative deities contained within this Domain there are several other duties that would be better suited for the (541519 - Other Computer Related Services), such as (Program Management, Financial Management, Strategic Planning, Human Resources, Communication, Education and Outreach, Business Management, Budget and Financial Management, etc.). Additionally, if the government keeps this Domain as well as all of the others at the \$15M Size Standard industry feels as if this would be very restrictive on the Small Businesses whom would seek to Prime any of the five Domains.	NAICS codes are assigned based on the preponderance of requirements within each domain.
5	124	L.7	1	Since the cited Certificates of Non-Disclosure will be between NOAA and its administrative contractors, will these Certificates be made available to the ProTech bidding community for review to be assured that business sensitive information in proposals is being adequately protected?	No. Offerors may also establish a separate NDA with each company.

6	124	L.7	1	As acquisitions support is within the scope of the Satellite and Enterprise Domains, will task orders issued in those domains identify awardees performing other contracts or Pro-Tech tasks (who may have supported the development of those task order requirements and solicitations) and who may be restricted from bidding on resulting task orders?	A summary of all future task orders will be made available to all core contractors within each domain.
7	124	L.7	2	Will sufficient time be added between release of the ProTech RFPs and proposal due dates to allow for negotiation of mutually agreeable terms to protect ProTech offerors' information from unauthorized use or disclosure. What if NOAA's administrative contractors will not accept the terms provided by the ProTech offerors? Does NOAA plan to participate in such negotiations?	There is sufficient time planned for reaching this standard process agreement. NOAA has NDAs in place for each support contractor and will not participate in industry-to-industry actions.
8	124	L.7	2	Does this mean that offerors have to establish NDA's with contractors that NOAA will be using for the evaluation process?	No.
9	125	General Instructions	L.8	The last sentence of this page states that for pricing purposes in response to Section D, assume a start date of June 30, 2017. Please clarify the reference to Section D (RFP section D is doesn't appear to require the use of the date).	Correction will be made to the RFP.
10	125	L.7	3	Will the government provide the companies cited in this section prior to the RFP as soon as possible?	The companies will be provided with RFP release.
11	125	L.7	2 Last sentence	Seems like Government should have an agreement with third party evaluating contractors to not disclose any information in an offeror's proposal, an don't use that information for purpose other than proposal evaluation.	The Government has existing NDAs with each company and employee with respect to ProTech, however we do not preclude industry from initiating their own process should they feel the need.
12	125	L.8	5	Please provide an anticipated release date of the individual ProTech Domain RFPs.	The current plan is to release the Satellites Domain RFP first and then within six month release the Fisheries and Enterprise Domains RFP, followed by the release of the RFP for Oceans and Weather Domains within 6 months.

13	125	L.8	5	The number of awards...the coverage. The language in this paragraph appears to discourage "niche" contractors.	The number of awards per Domain will be determined by the competitive process. It is anticipated that a sufficient number of awards will be made to facilitate competition at the Task Order level.
14	125	L8	N/A	Reference sentence "Offerors must submit an entire and distinct proposal for each Domain in which it seeks an award." Please confirm that the sentence should read "Offerors must submit an entire and distinct proposal for each Domain in which it seeks an award."	Correction will be made to the RFP to reflect "an".
15	126	L.8		Our company is organizationally aligned in three major components, optimized to develop platforms, develop systems, and sustain and modernize systems. Our company may develop a platform or sensor in one component, develop its software in another, and operate, maintain and enhance it in a third. We expect to bring the full value of these capabilities to NOAA. The restriction of past performance to one division of the company does not allow industry to accurately reflect the capabilities that they have, and can provide, to NOAA. Please consider lifting the restriction of past performance to the submitting division.	The RFP will be amended to remove this limitation.
16	126	L.8	7	The draft RFP states that previously submitted past performance information may be evaluated. Evaluating past performance data submitted in response to another solicitation creates an unfair advantage to incumbent and related service firms in a page-count limited past performance volume. Will the government consider removing this term and require all bidders to equally submit appropriate past performance data for ProTech solely within the ProTech proposal?	It is anticipated past performance for one domain may be relevant to another domain should a vendor propose against multiple domains. PP information shall be submitted separately for each domain. The RFP will be amended to clarify this point.

17	126	L.8	10	The last paragraph of RFP Section L8, General Instructions, provides that, "management processes or past performance of a different Division may not be used in support of the Division submitting the proposal." The word "Division" is capitalized but is not defined in the RFP. Industry often uses the term "Division" to mean the first level of business unit below the CEO or COO on an organizational chart. Companies use different names for that first level of organizational separation, such as "Division," "Business Unit," "Group," or other designations.	See answer to question 15 above.
18				Q1: Will the Government please define the terms "Division" so that offerors can understand the implications of Section L.8 for their own organizations?	See answer to question 15 above.
19				Q2: A company's first level of organizational separation may be a "Division" that has reporting to it sub-divisions, operating subsidiaries, or other kinds of incorporated or unincorporated sub-entities (collectively, "Sub-entities"). We understand Section L.8 to permit an offeror submitting a prime contract proposal for this procurement through a Division to cite and be credited with the past performance of that bidding Division's various Sub-entities, so long as the bidding Division can demonstrate that the Sub-entity's resources will be meaningfully involved in contract performance. Can you please confirm this understanding?	See answer to question 15 above.
20				Q3: Notwithstanding Section L.8, we understand that if a Division submitting a proposal names one of its affiliated Divisions as a subcontractor, the bidding Division may cite and be credited with the past performance of that affiliated Division as a subcontractor under RFP Section L-9. Can you please confirm this understanding?	See answer to question 15 above.
21	126	L.8.1	1	Commend the language on proposal integrity.	

22	126	L.8.1	1	We commend the Government on including the language on proposal integrity and emphasizing Offeror responsibility in providing and presenting the information.	
23	126	L.8.2	1	Did the Government mean MS Word instead of MS Work?	Correction will be made to the RFP to reflect "Word".
24	126	L.8.2	1	Will the proposal responses for each Domain include an initial task order or will it just be an on ramp for the overarching IDIQ vehicle?	The Government does not anticipate requiring offerors to propose on an initial task order in the IDIQ source selection process.
25	126	L.8.2	1, General Format Instructions	Does the graphic/table font also need to be Times New Roman. The RFP merely says a "reduced font size, not less than 8."	Reduced font size can be other than Times New Roman.
26	127	L.8.2	1	We understand the need for faster downloads, but a requirement that limits the file size to 10MB might impact the proposal quality, especially when an offeror wants to use clear images/graphics. Suggest removing the file size requirement.	Correction will be made to the RFP to remove the file size, however the offeror will be responsible to ensure the files are transmitted to meet the submission deadline.
27	127	L.8.2	3	Can an offeror use a font other than Times New Roman in illustrations and tables as long as it is not less than 8 point?	See answer to question 25 above.
28	127	L.8.2	Multiple	MS Word and MS Excel 2010 produce ".docx" and ".xlsx" files by default. Will the Government accept files in those formats or should we save the documents in ".doc" and ".xls" file formats instead?	Both formats are acceptable.
29	127	L.9	1	The table conflicts with Section L.9.1 which has two Section VIIs (OCI Plan and Reqs. and Certs.). Please resolve this conflict.	The RFP will be corrected.
30	127	L.9	1	How will signed copies of the Prime's Teaming Agreements be considered in the proposal evaluation?	The Government intends to evaluate the teaming proposed in the technical approach with the teaming agreements as applicable.
31	127	L.9	All	The proposal instructions are reasonable and well thought out. However, for a contract of this magnitude, a QC, Risk and Transition plan with their own page count is warranted.	The RFP will remain as stated as these detailed requirements are most appropriate at the task order level.

32	127	L.9	Table	In the Page Limitations column, Section IV (Professional Employee Compensation Plan) limits the page limitation for the Professional Employee Compensation Plan to 10 pages. On Page 129, Section IV - Professional Employee Compensation Pan, it states "...the Offeror shall submit a Professional Employee Compensation Plan that addresses the Offeror's philosophy and methodology ..." In order to sufficiently justify the salary and fringe benefits within the Professional Compensation Plan, recommend that the page limitation amended to "No page limit."	Government will consider this.
33		L.9, page 127, and Sections L.9.4, page 133		Past Performance Sections I and II are limited to 2 pages per contract. With the information required by the Government for these sections, we recommend expanding the page limit per contract to at least 3 pages.	Government will consider this.
34	128	L.9	Vol III	The proposal instructions are reasonable and well thought out, indicating the need for the Offeror to demonstrate their experience and plan for quality assurance, transition, and risk mitigation. Would the Government consider allowing offerors to fully respond by requiring these plans outside of the current Management Approach page limitation?	See answer to question 31 above.
35	128	L.9.1	1	We assume that the Master Index in the Executive Summary is not included in the five page limit. Is that correct?	Yes.
36	128	L.9.1	All	Is the master index similar to a compliance matrix or a table of contents? We recommend a table of contents and separate compliance matrix outside of page count to assist the evaluator.	Government will consider this.
37	128	L.9.1	All	This section references a master index and describes something similar to a table of contents. Elsewhere on the same page the index and cross-indexing description reads more like a compliance matrix. We recommend a table of contents (index) and separate compliance matrix outside of page count to assist the evaluator in proposal review.	Government will consider this.

38	128	L.9.1 Volume I – Administrative	Section V - Uncompensated Overtime Policy	Please provide detailed information on how the Government intends to evaluate proposals from offerors including the use of uncompensated overtime versus those not using it, in order to allow for fair evaluations.	Price will be evaluated in accordance with Section M.4.4.
39	128 133	L	L.9 L.9.4.1 - L9.4.2	The table in Paragraph L.9 limits the page count for each Past Performance contract reference to 2 pages. Both the table and instructions in L.9.4.1 - L.9.4.2 require separating the Contract Description and the Contract Performance for each contract reference into different Sections of the Volume. This will require summing the partial pages associated with a given contract reference in the two Sections to ensure the 2 page limit is met for each reference. COMMENT: Respectfully suggest combining the Contract Description and Contract Performance for each contract reference into a single 2-page submittal contained in a single Section.	See answer to question 33 above.
40	128 134	L	L.9 L.9.4.3	The table in Paragraph L.9 and instructions in L.9.4.3 show Past Performance Questionnaires being submitted as Section III of Volume IV. The completed Questionnaires (Sections A and B) are to be e-mailed directly to the Government Contract Specialist by the POCs for the contracts cited. QUESTION: Please clarify what the Government wants the Offeror to submit in the proposal in Section III of Volume IV (e.g. "place-holder" Questionnaires sent to each POC with just Section A completed?).	Section L.9.4.3. states the Offeror shall email to the Contract Specialist a list of all the POC's who were sent a questionnaire. The Offerors shall send questionnaires to customers as stated who will in turn send to the Government for inclusion in Section III for evaluation.
41	129	L.9.1	2	An Executive Summary letter is requested in Section 1 and Section 2 of Volume 1. Does the government require a copy of the Executive Summary letter in both sections?	The RFP will be corrected removing the Executive Summary letter from Section 2.

42	129	L.9.1	N/A	Please reference Section III - CAGE, DUNS, and TIN and Prime Offerors Financial Statements: Are the Prime's proposed subcontractors also required to submit financial statements to include a Balance Sheet; Income Statement; Cash Flow Statement; and Statement of Retained Earnings for the Offeror's past fiscal year and current reporting period as of the date of the proposal? Or is this just Prime submission requirement? Will the Government accept 3rd party audit confirmations as a means of validating financial stability?	Only the prime's financial information is required. A third party audit is acceptable.
43	129	L.9.1		Instructions for Volume I, Section III, requires a certified copy of the Prime's Line of Credit. Is a Line of Credit a requirement for contract award? If so, does the Government have a recommended credit limit?	RFP will be changed to indicate certified line of credit if required.
44	129	L.9.1		Instructions for Volume I, Section III, require CFO certification of Prime offeror financials. Does the Government have recommended language for an acceptable certification?	No, however the Government will consider equivalent text to be less restrictive for small businesses.
45	129	L.9.1(III)	2	Consistent with L.8.1 proposal integrity and our comment on G.3.5, each company without CFA/CFAO should provide documentation of an independent financial audit. At the very least, the small businesses providing the audit document should be evaluated higher and deemed lower risk. Evaluation criteria should reflect it.	No question. Response not required.
46	129	L.9.1(III)	2	We believe that allowing for each company without CFA/CFAO to have their CFO certify their financials introduces an unnecessary level of risk to the Government. We recommend that all companies proposing to hold a prime contract should provide documentation of an independent financial audit.	The Government will consider this.
47	129	Section III		This section requires a company to submit financial statements and a signed Line of Credit to allow the Government to determine Financial Responsibility. We request this requirement be waived for publicly traded companies whose financial statements are public record with the SEC.	All Offerors shall submit required information.
48	130	L.9 (VIII)	4	"More fully meet the array" also discourages "niche" proposals as indicated in sections H.13 and L.8	No question. Response not required.

49	130	L.9(VIII)	6	We recommend that you avoid requiring percentages in the teaming agreements at the IDIQ level and restrict it to the TO responses. The requirements, pace, and nature of the TO's are unknowns at this point and percentages are irrelevant.	The Government will consider this though the Government intends to evaluate the teaming proposed in the technical approach with the teaming agreements as applicable.
50	130	L.9(VIII)	6	We recommend that the Government eliminate the requirement for percentages in teaming agreements due to the unknown nature of the work at the IDIQ level. Expected percentages for subcontractor work are more applicable for task order responses when the work is clearly defined in the SOW.	See answer to question 49 above.
51	130	L.9.1	11	<p><u>Reference:</u> <i>"The Teaming Agreements/Letters of commitment shall include, at a minimum: (1) signatures of the principals or individuals of each team member with authority to commit to the arrangement; (2) a statement as to how the work will be divided either by task area or requirement and the approximate percentage level of work to be performed by the subcontractor; and (3) the relationship of the parties, and responsibilities of the parties."</i></p> <p><u>Comment:</u> Since this is an ID/IQ contract, no actual work will be awarded to any Prime offeror at the ID/IQ contract award level and Teaming Agreements would not normally reflect a work share at the contract level. Work share on this type of contract would generally be determined at the Task Order level. Small business participation commitments would be codified in the Small Business Subcontracting Plan and would result in contract level Goals that must be met to achieve excellent past performance. Therefore, we respectfully request that "and the approximate percentage level of work to be performed by the subcontractor" be removed from the Teaming Agreement requirements in L.9.1.</p>	See answer to question 49 above.

52	130	L.9.1	11	<p><u>Reference:</u> "Teaming Agreements/Letters of commitment must state that they are valid and in effect for a period of not less than six and one-half (6 ½) years from award of the ProTech contract. "</p> <p><u>Question:</u> With regards to teaming partners (subcontractors), will the Prime offeror be allowed to add them to or remove them from the Prime offerors team, post-IDIQ award?</p>	Yes.
53	130	L.9.1	7 and 8	L.9.1 has two Section VII's: OCI Plan and Reps. and Certs. Should they be VII and VIII?	The RFP Section L.9.1 will be corrected.
54	130	L.9.1	N/A	<p>Please reference L.9.1 Volume I - Administrative instructions for Section VIII - Teaming Agreements. The sections states "The Teaming Agreements/Letters of commitment shall include, at a minimum: (1) signatures of the principals or individuals of each team member with authority to commit to the arrangement; (2) a statement as to how the work will be divided either by task area or requirement and the approximate percentage level of work to be performed by the subcontractor;..." Given that this is an IDIQ contract, the "approximate percentage level of work" will be difficult to define. We recommend that the following statement in lieu of (2) above: "(2) a statement as to how the work will be divided either by task area or requirement of work to be performed by the subcontractor;..."</p>	See answer to question 49 above.
55	130	L.9.1	Section VII	Section VII Organizational Conflict of Interest and VII Representations and Certification have the same number, would NOAA consider re-numbering them to avoid confusion or compliance issues?	The RFP Section L.9.1 will be corrected.
56	130	L.9.1	Section VII, 3rd paragraph	Please confirm NOAA will accept redacted Teaming Agreements as long as redactions do not prevent NOAA from being able to review the elements identified in Section VIII - Teaming Agreements.	No.

57	130	L.9.1	Section VIII, 3rd paragraph	This paragraph requires the teaming agreements to include "the approximate level of work to be performed by the subcontractor." Since this is an ID/IQ contract and the specific work requirements that will be issued under this contract are unknown, it is difficult to guarantee teammates, who are often brought on for a niche capability, a specific workshare percentage; work in their niche area may never be required under this contract or work in this niche area may not be awarded to the prime contractor. Suggest removing this requirement.	See answer to question 49 above.
58	130	L.9.1	Section VII	Please clarify the definition of OCI in respect to satellite system development primes.	OCI is defined in FAR Part 2.
59	130	1 (Section	1	The standard industry practice for Teaming Agreements (TA) is either 12 or 24 months, and a TA is terminated once a subcontract is executed to replace it. As such, we recommend that the Government changes the validity of Taps from 6.5 years to 2 years.	The RFP will be corrected to reflect the period of performance of 5 years if all options are exercised.
60	130	VIII	L.9.1	Teaming Agreements -Will the Government remove the requirement to indicate the approximate level of work to be done by the subcontractor as this is an ID/IQ and will be determined by Task?	See answer to question 49 above.
61	130		Section VII	Is there any OCI avoidance or mitigation for companies working ProTech and SMOMS?	Offerors shall assess OCI risks in their proposals.
62	131	L.9.2	1	Industry Day (8/12/2015) Source Selection Process Slide: "Offerors will have to demonstrate capability by domain; but do not have to cover an entire domain". How will that be addressed during the proposal evaluation process?	The Government will use the adjectival rating criteria provided in the draft RFP.
63	131	L.9.2.3	5	"Breadth" also discourages "niche" proposals as indicated in sections H.13, L.8 and L.9(VIII).	The RFP will remain as stated.
64	131	L.9.2.5	5	Recommend "organizational capabilities to manage...task orders" be moved to Management Approach Factor II	Government will consider this.
65	131	L.9.2.6	1	Please clarify the use of the term "invest" in this sentence. What is NOAA expecting in terms of "....Offeror will invest in NOAA's mission...."?	The Government will evaluate the approach Offerors propose to support NOAA's mission for the contract period of performance.
66	132	L	L.94	Will the Government change the period of past performance eligibility from within the last 3 year to within the last 5 years ?	FAR 42.1503(g) states agencies shall use the past performance information in PPIRS that is within three years of the completion of performance of the evaluated contract or order.

67	132	L.9.3	L.9.3.1	This section refers to 'resume highlights' for key personnel. Please clarify if full resumes are required for key personnel and, if so, whether they are included in the page count.	Resumes are not required for the IDIQ proposals.
68	132	L.9.3.1	1	Are separate Program Managers, Contract Managers, and Small Business required for each domain from a company?	No.
69	132	L.9.3.1		The small business provides the resumes of Program and contracts manager -but not Small business Liaison officer. Is that true?	Yes.
70	L.9.3.1			Is Small Business Liaison Officer required for Small Business Bidders?	No.
71	132	L.9.3.3	1	Does the term "NOAA Support" in this paragraph refer to the vendor's support of NOAA or NOAA's ProTech support infrastructure?	NOAA as it relates to ProTech requirements.
72	132	L.9.3.5	1	Does "core resources" refer to key personnel, and if so, does NOAA want resumes?	Core resources are prime resources. Resumes are not required or desired for the IDIQ proposals.
73	132	L.9.3.6	6	We recommend that an IDIQ of this complexity have a required QC/QAP outside of page count with specific evaluation criteria that addresses risk. We also recommend a transition plan with the same requirements.	The Government will consider this.
74	132	L.9.3.7	1	Is the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plan for the management of the IDIQ, or the products and services of a task order, or both?	For the IDIQ level. Task orders may require more specific QA/QC plans.
75	132	L.9.3.8	1	This paragraph states that, The Offeror shall describe its technical certifications, such as, Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) Level, ANSI/ISO/ASQ-9001:2000, Baldrige Award, or other comparable quality management achievement that denotes equivalent process establishment and control." How will these technical certifications be evaluated? Are they requirements for the prime contractor? Is one valued more highly than another?	Section M.4.2.8 defines how the certifications will be evaluated. L.9.3.8 requires the Offeror to describe its technical certifications. There is no ranking of quality certifications.

76	132	L.9.4	1	<p>Is there a process for submitting classified Past Performance information?</p> <p>Rationale: Ocean Services Domain has a SOW paragraph (C.4.1.7) requiring offerors to, "process, analyze, control quality, and disseminate data (to include sensitive or classified data)"</p>	The RFP will be corrected to remove reference to "classified data".
77	132	L.9.4	1	<p><u>Reference:</u> <i>"Offerors shall submit past performance information for up to eight (8) Government contracts (no less than three for the prime or Joint Venture) having performance within the past three years, which are relevant to the efforts required by this solicitation."</i></p> <p><u>Comment:</u> The government may consider defining "within the past three years" by adding language similar to the following: <i>"within the past three years of the final proposal due date ."</i></p>	RFP will be changed to include recommendation.
78	132	L.9.4	132	<p>Will the Government consider changing the Past Performance relevancy period to the past five years from three years to allow a broader range of applicable experience to be referenced?</p>	See answer to question 66 above.
79	132	L.9.4	132, 133	<p>The minimum of three past performances by a prime- could they be in a sub contracting role?</p>	The Offeror shall submit relevant past performance information. The RFP does not require whether past performance was as a prime or subcontractor.
80	132	L.9.4	All	<p>The prime contractors, including small businesses, should provide past performance references for three contracts where they are the prime, not a subcontractor, with similar size, scope and complexity.</p>	See answer to question 79 above.
81	132	L.9.4	All	<p>We recommend that all prime contractors be required to provide past performances for three contracts in which they are the prime, with similar size, scope and complexity. This will reduce risk to the Government by ensuring that the selected contractors have sufficient experience involving direct client interaction and mature infrastructure to manage the complexities of large contracts, task orders, and subcontractors.</p>	See answer to question 79 above.

82	132	L.9.4	First	Limiting the past performance contracts to within the past three years will restrict the competition because many small businesses may not be able to generate a sufficient number of relevant contracts within three years. Suggest for NOAA to change the limitation to five years. We understand the concern with the absence of CPARS beyond 3 years. However, not every Government agency has implemented the CPARS process and even NOAA only started to implement the process two or three years ago within certain organizations.	See answer to question 66 above.
83	132	L.9.4	n/a	If a company is the managing partner of a joint venture (JV) on a contract for another agency, can the company use this contract for another agency as one of the 8 contracts for Past Performance?	Yes.
84	132-133	L.9.4	Last	"In selecting past performance examples, the Offerors should bear in mind the Government will evaluate the extent to which the past performance examples offered cover the delineated Domain requirements." From the prime offeror's standpoint, how will past performance examples be evaluated? Specifically, will each of the three past performance examples be evaluated against the full set of Domain requirements or will the collective set of three past performances be evaluated as a whole with regards to the full set of Domain requirements. The Enterprise Operations Domain, for example, consists of 12 unique requirements that may be difficult to hit with single past performance examples.	Section M.4.3 defines how past performance will be evaluated.
85	133	L	L.9.4	Instructions for Volume IV - Past Performance (Factor III) provide that "Previous CPARS ratings and questionnaires will be used in the proposal evaluations." We have not received CPARS ratings on most of our NOAA contracts awarded under GSA schedules. How will NOAA evaluate contracts performed for the Agency that have not received CPARS ratings?	RFP will be changed to reflect CPARS information, if available, will be used.

86	133	L	L.9.4	We have not received CPARS ratings on most of our NOAA contracts. We have perhaps a single recent CPARS rating from NOAA on one task order. How will NOAA evaluate contracts performed for the Agency that have not received CPARS ratings? We do have CPARS ratings for contracts from other federal agencies on some assignments similar to those we perform for NOAA, would those be considered as well?	RFP will be changed to reflect CPARS information, if available, will be used. CPARS data from other agencies may be used.
87	133	L.9.4	2	<u>Reference:</u> "Note: Relevancy includes such things as service similarity, complexity, contract type, contract dollar value/size, program phase , division of company, major or critical subcontractors, teaming partners and joint venture." <u>Question:</u> Would the government please define "program phase" and clarify how an offeror should show relevancy between the ProTech SOW and the offeror's past performance example?	The RFP will be amended to remove program phase.
88	133	L.9.4.1	b, d	If the past performance contract is active, items b and d seem redundant. Can NOAA combine them into a single request for the contact information of the current Procuring or Administrative Contracting Officer? This would likely be the same contracting person receiving a past performance questionnaire and thus able to provide the best information on the contractor's performance.	The Government will consider this.
89	133	L.9.4.1	Section I – Contract Description	We recommend NOAA allow a Task Order to be included as a Contract. Many of our NOAA contracts were awarded through GSA schedules and majority of them have been consolidated into NOAA Link, SciTech, or OpsTech as Task Orders.	The RFP will be changed to indicate task orders will be considered for past performance.
90	133	L.9.4.2	All	Offerors are unlikely to provide past performance references for contracts that have been terminated. Due to late or uneven reporting by agencies, and to reduce risk, NOAA should require all offerors to indicate if they have had any contacts terminated.	Government will consider this.
91	133	L.9.4.2(5)	4	Please provide information on how you plan to measure/evaluate "professional concern for the interests of its customers."	The Government will use adjectival ratings to evaluate how an offeror addressed customer concerns in the performance of the proposed contract.

92	133	L9.4	133 Relevancy	Contract dollar value/size- Since this is an IDIQ, to be relevant what should be the value in Dollars for relevancy?	Past and current professional, scientific and technical task orders range from \$1M to \$20M. The Government considers this range relevant.
93	134	Cost/Price	L.9.5.1	Should the Pricing Matrix (Attachment J-5) be completed assuming Contractor Site Rates?	See answer to J-21.
94	134	Cost/Price	L.9.5.1	Please clarify that the Pricing Matrix (Attachment J-5) should be completed by Calendar Year, where Year 1 would start in January 2017?	When the final RFPs for the various domains are issued, the calendar years for which ceiling rates are requested will be specified.
95	134	L	L.9.4.3	BASIS OF QUESTION/COMMENT: L.9.4.3 instructs the referenced PP contract POCs to "electronically complete" Section B of the PP Questionnaire, then e-mail their response to Pro-Tech@noaa.gov. The PP Questionnaire in Attachment J-6 is in .pdf format which is not easily completed and returned electronically. COMMENT: Suggest the PP Questionnaire Template in Attachment J-6 be provided in Word format to facilitate POCs completing it electronically.	The RFP will be corrected to include the PP questionnaire in Word format.
96	134	L	L.9.5.1	Will the Government request both onsite (Gov location) and offsite (Vendor location) labor rates for Offerors price proposal? Paragraph A.5 on page 10 reports that "ProTech services may be performed on site at Government facilities or at the Contractors' facilities, depending on the requirements defined in individual task orders."	See answer to question 93 above.
97	134	L	L.9.5.1	Will the Government request both onsite (Gov location) and offsite (Vendor location) labor rates for Offerors price proposal? Paragraph A.5 on page 10 reports that "ProTech services may be performed on site at Government facilities or at the Contractors' facilities, depending on the requirements defined in individual task orders."	See answer to question 93 above.
98	134	L.9.4.3	1	Please confirm the Government that it requires a PPQ filled out by the CO and the COTR, i.e. two questionnaires for each PP program?	No. Only one PP questionnaire shall be provided from a government representative (i.e. CO, COR, PM) for each example.
99	134	L.9.4.3	1	Can the same Questionnaire for a Past Performance Contract be used for multiple Domain proposals or is a separate Questionnaire required for each Domain that references the subject contract?	PP questionnaires shall be relevant to the domain requirements.

100	134	L.9.4.3	1	Does the government require two questionnaires for each reference, i.e. one from the CO and one from the COTR?	See answer to question 98 above.
101	134	L.9.4.3	1	if a bidder intends to use the same past performance reference for more than one domain, is a separate questionnaire required from the CO and COTR?	See answer to question 99 above.
102	134	L.9.4.3	All	All offerors work in good faith to meet PPQ deadlines and encourage their CO/COTRS to respond to the PPQ's and update reporting data bases. We would encourage NOAA to refrain from penalizing offeror's whose CO/COTRS are not cooperating with the schedule deadlines.	The RFP requires offerors to provide the Government the POC for whom questionnaires were sent to assist in obtaining completed questionnaires.
103	134	L.9.5	1	With potential opportunities to support NOAA from New York City to Tuscaloosa Alabama we recommend standardizing on one locality for all vendors in order to achieve uniformity across the price proposals. We recommend the Washington DC and surrounding area.	See answer to question 93 above.
104	134	L.9.5 Volume V		With potential opportunities to support NOAA from New York City to Tuscaloosa Alabama we recommend standardizing on one locality for all vendors in order to achieve uniformity across the price proposals. We recommend the Washington DC and surrounding area.	See answer to question 93 above.
105	134	L.9.5.1	1	Many of the labor categories in the enterprise domain pertain to specific functional areas in other domains (particularly enterprise categories 2-3, 5-7, 10-16) and should be included in the appropriate domains to enhance flexibility in our response to ensure best value solutions and maximize the consistency of the categories across domains. Will NOAA consider expanding the number levels from 3 up to 5 total for most or all of the labor categories in order to provide greater flexibility in proposing the best value workforce for each task order?	See the response to J-3, J-4, J-8 and J-25.
106	134	L.9.5.1 & J-5	3	Labor categories – given the general nature of the position descriptions, how will pricing be evaluated equitably? Would it be feasible to use GSA pricing ?	RFP Section M.4.4. defines the evaluation process for pricing.
107	134	L.9.5.1 & J-5	3	Labor categories – Given the general nature of the position descriptions, how will pricing be evaluated equitably? Would it be feasible to use GSA pricing ?	See answer to question 106 above.

108	134	L.9.5.2	6	In section G.3.5 NOAA indicates that the fully burdened rate will be the standard for evaluating price. This should be consistent with the IDIQ. Please indicate how you will evaluate the elements that you require for reasonableness, such as G&A and profit. With various business models, this is comparing "apples to oranges" for price. We recommend only requiring fully burdened rates.	See answer to question 106 above.
109	134	L.9.5.2	6	How will you determine "evaluated price" if ceiling prices are not the evaluated price?	See answer to question J-23.
110	134 and Section B starting on page 11	L.9.5		Section L instructions do not reference Section B. What is the relation of Section B to Attachment J-5? Does Section B need to be completed as part of our offer? Will the Government provide Not to Exceed figures for Other Direct Cost and Travel expense CLINS in order to normalize bids?	The offeror will not be required to complete Section B as part of its response to this solicitation. The Government will not be providing standard figures for CLINs 0002 and 0003 because the Government is not requesting offerors to price a sample task. The only pricing information the Government is requesting is the ceiling hourly rates described in Attachment J-5.
111	134 1	L Attach J-6	L.9.4.3	L.9.4.3 instructs the Offeror to complete Part I of the PP Questionnaire and the referenced contract POC to complete Part II. This instruction is inconsistent with the instructions and format of Attachment J-6, PAST PERFORMANCE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE. COMMENT: Suggest "Part I" be changed to "Section A" and "Part II" be changed to "Section B" in L.9.4.3 to conform with the instructions in Attachment J-6.	The RFP will be amended for consistency.
112	130	L.9.1, Section VIII	3 (2)	Since this is an IDIQ contract, please provide guidance on how the prime contractor can provide this statement.	It is assumed that, if a prime contractor includes subcontractors as part of their response, subcontractors were added to the team for a specific capability(ies) related to IDIQ task area(s) or requirement(s).
113	131 137	L.9.2.2 M.4.1.2		Are innovative and technical competencies intended to include "emerging technologies?"	Yes.
114				Will the final Satellite Systems Services Domain RFP have sample problems?	Sample tasks will not be provided.

115	133	L.9.4		<p>Can you clarify if the Prime offeror can provide past performance information which was performed as a sub-contractor? Many small businesses are currently teamed with Large Business primes on satellite projects.</p>	<p>Yes. The RFP will be amended to clarify this.</p>
116	126	L.8	<p>5th paragraph on page</p>	<p>The referenced paragraph states that "Offerors are further cautioned that a Division's proposal should address the all of the RFP requirements uniquely based on their particular Division's capabilities. For example, management processes or past performance of a different Division may not be used in support of the Division submitting the proposal. The proposal must be organic to the Division submitting the proposal." Earlier in the paragraph, Divisions are partially defined as "each division registered separately in the System for Award Management..."</p> <p>We feel that this requirement is too restrictive and could unintentionally limit the competition for this procurement. Per the System for Award Management (SAM) website (sam.gov): "The System for Award Management (SAM) is combining federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system." As a result of the combining of information from multiple systems, most large companies now have dozens of registered entities in SAM, which will take time to consolidate as the registration numbers tie to active contracts.</p> <p>As stated, large integrated companies who have multiple SAM registrations would be unable to deliver the full capabilities of their organizations, potentially limiting the ability to cost-effectively deliver the broad scope of services required under ProTech. Integrated companies such as ours would be unable to deliver the best possible support to NOAA, which would impact our decision to invest in this pursuit.</p> <p>We respectfully request that this paragraph be removed from the solicitation.</p>	<p>See response to question 15 above.</p>

Attachment J-7
ProTech Draft Request for Proposal ST-1330-16-RP-0014
Industry Questions and Answers Template

Question Number	Page Number	Section	Paragraph	Question / Comment	Government Response
1	136	M	All	We recommend a more direct tracking of the evaluation criteria to the elements in Section L.	There is a direct link and it will be consistent between L and M.
2	136	M.3	3	Risk is mentioned in the evaluation criteria, but not indicated anywhere in the instructions in Section L. Please indicate where you would want risk addressed.	The RFP does require risk identification.
3	136	M.4.2	2	Data obtained from other sources - What other sources will the Government use, i.e. web sites, etc.?	The Government may use other sources for past performance evaluation.
4	137	M	M.4.1.6	The evaluation criteria M.4.1.6, does not seem to have an alignment to section L. Will the Government provide examples that address the evaluation criteria M.4.1.6. Will the Government identify which instruction to offers in Section L the evaluation criteria M.4.1.6 will be applied toward.	Section L.9.2.6 provides instructions for what will be evaluated in Section M.4.1.6.
5	137	M.3	3	Per Mitch Ross at the August 2015 ProTech Industry Day, NOAA would like to retain existing long term business partners that have and are continuing to provide high quality professional and technical services at a reasonable price. As such, Past Performance should be equal to or more important than the sum of all other non-price factors (Tech and Mgmt Approach) combined.	The RFP will remain as stated.

6	137	M.3	1-3	<p>Evaluation Criteria Order of Importance Comment #1</p> <p>We support NOAA's decision to select awardees based on a Best Value approach using tradeoff source selection procedures. It is definitely the right approach for NOAA to position itself to select a reasonable number of capable teams to compete for resulting task orders on Pro-Tech.</p> <p>However, we strongly request that NOAA reconsider the order of importance of its Non-Price evaluation factors. By making the Technical Approach and Management Approach the two highest scored factors, NOAA creates a situation where firms with limited past experience, but who possibly have as little as one or two good writers available to them, are able to respond and score well despite their possibly limited experience. This scoring approach increases NOAA's future risk on tasks as they will not have fully vetted and prioritized the experience of their selected Pro-Tech teams. Instead, we strongly encourage that NOAA place a premium on Past Performance and make it the highest scored Non-Price factor, which places the focus on and emphasizes a prime and their team's demonstrated experience. In addition, we also encourages NOAA to prioritize Key Staff in the evaluation factors as these individuals will also play a significant role in NOAA's and Pro-Tech's future success.</p>	See answer to question 5 above.
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7	137	M.3	1-3	<p>Evaluation Criteria Order of Importance Comment #2</p> <p>With respect to NOAA's selection of a reasonable number of capable teams, we encourage NOAA to keep the number of awarded teams on each domain to as small a number as possible, ranging as low as six (6) to ten (10) teams. While this may require NOAA to work harder in the near-term to down-select the expected large number of firms submitting bids to be on Pro-Tech, it greatly expedites the competitive procurement process after award as NOAA releases many tasks within and across the domains and then evaluates and scores each and every submission. Every additional team awarded a position on Pro-Tech is another team likely to respond to each task, greatly increasing the daily burden on NOAA's Contracting Office and Line Office evaluation teams over the life of the contract vehicle.</p>	The number of awards per Domain will be determined by the competitive process. It is anticipated that a sufficient number of awards will be made to facilitate competition at the Task Order level.
8	137	M.4.1	1	Evaluation criteria – How does an offeror get evaluated for benefits of access to other companies and sources?	Section M.4.2.2 describes the evaluation criteria for subcontracting methodology.
9	137	M.4.1	First	Section L.9.2 states “The Offeror shall demonstrate the most comprehensive understanding of the SOW requirements for each Domain the offeror intends to propose.” However, Section M.4.1 does not include the “Understanding” as an evaluation factor.	The Government will amend the RFP for consistency.
10	137	M.4.1, M.4.2	1	Will the government provide the weighting of the individual elements of the evaluation factors?	No, individual elements are not weighted.
11	137	M.4.1.1	1	How does a Offeror get evaluated for having access to resources from companies that are not signed team members?	See answer to question 8 above.
12	137	M.4.1.1	1	How will the government evaluate a bidders access to resources of other companies that are not exclusive team members?	See answer to question 8 above.
13	137	M.4.1.4	4	The evaluation criteria appears to discourage "niche" offerings as indicated in sections H.13, L.8, L.9(VIII) and L.9.2.3.	The RFP will remain as stated.
14	137	M.4.1.6	1	Does "Demonstrated corporate investment in NOAA's mission" imply that a company must currently be a NOAA prime contractor in order to be evaluated highly in this factor?	No.

15	137	M.4.1.6	4	How will you measure or evaluate the offeror's "investment in NOAA mission and associated weights"?	The Government will evaluate the offerors corporate approach to support NOAA's mission. See answer to question 10 above on element weights.
16	137	M.4.1.6	4	It is unclear what criteria is associated with the offeror's "investment in NOAA mission and associated weights." How will this be measured?	See answer to question 15 above.
17	138	M.4.2	2	"M.4.2.1 Identify qualified Key Personnel, detailing hiring contingencies, as applicable, for the Program Manager, Contracts Manager, and Small Business Liaison Officer, and any other position the Offeror considers Key, within the corporate structure." Section H.23(a) lists Key Personnel as the following: "Program Manager, Contracts Manager, and Small Business Liaison Officer (if proposing a teaming approach)." However, no qualifications or requirements for the key personnel seem to be provided in the solicitation or attachments. Please provide qualifications or requirements for the key personnel information in the final RFP.	Offerors shall propose qualified candidates based on the requirement in the RFP.
18	138	M.4.2.1	2	Key Personnel - will there be a PMO task order for 3 key personnel to support all other task orders?	No. Support costs should be included within each fully burdened labor category rate.
19	138	M.4.2.1	2	Key Personnel - Will a PMO task order be issued to allow the 3 key personnel to support all other task orders?	See answer to question 18 above.
20	138	M.4.2.7	1	Is there a requirement for a certified Quality Management System (ISO 9000 and/or CMMI for Services)?	No. Offerors are required to describe their certifications or quality management achievement.

21	138	M.4.3	2	<p>This paragraph states, "When assessing past performance relevancy and quality level, the Government will focus its inquiry on the past performance of the Offeror and its proposed team members as it relates to all solicitation requirements in the applicable Domain."</p> <p>What weighting will be applied to Past Performances from the prime versus subcontractors for a team proposal submission? Will additional weight be given to Past Performance by the Prime Contractor?</p>	See answer to question 10 above.
22	138	M.4.3	4	<p><u>Reference:</u> "Offerors are cautioned that in conducting the Past Performance Assessment, the Government may use data provided in the offeror's proposal and data obtained from other sources."</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Since the government may use "data obtained from other sources," will the government provide an adverse score to offerors that do not submit past performance questionnaires, but instead direct the government towards their CPARS records?</p>	Offerors shall provide past performance information as required by the RFP.
23	139	M.4.3	3	Data obtained from other sources - what other sources will the government use, i.e. web sites, etc.?	See answer to question 3 above.
24	139	M.4.4	1	Will the reasonableness be judged on all the rates as a whole, or could a single rate judged unreasonable disqualify a bidder from award?	The Government will only make award to offerors whose individual rates are determined reasonable, since at this point it is unclear which individual rates will actually come into play at the task order level. If upon initial evaluation, the Government has concerns about the reasonableness of particular rates, the Government may request clarifications or enter into discussions with the offeror.
25	139	M.4.4	1	As only one ceiling rate is meant to accommodate personnel in multiple cities, would the Government please provide a breakout of number of positions per city, per domain, to help Offerors calculate the impact of localized costs of living?	Section L.9.5.1 instructs offerors to base their ceiling rates on 'the highest cost location'.
26	139	M.4.4	3	In determining reasonableness of the Offeror's proposed ceiling hourly rates, how will the Government determine whether the proposed rates are "balanced"?	By analyzing the individual ceiling rates. Refer to FAR 15.404-1(g) to better understand the term "balanced" as used here.

27	139	M.4.4	3	The government states that they "will consider whether the proposed rates are balanced, how the proposed rates compare with those in comparable contracts or agreements with the federal Government..." Will the government specify how they will determine "balance" and identify those comparable contracts that will be used to determine price reasonableness?	See answer to question 26 above. The "comparable contracts" mentioned here are the offeror's own contract vehicles about which the Government is requesting information in Section L.9.5.2.
28	139	M.4.4	3	Can the government disclose if they will be using an evaluation model to evaluate cost/price and can the evaluation model be shared with bidders?	No evaluation model is required or anticipated for this solicitation evaluation.
29	139	M.4.4	3	Does the Government intend to compare pricing quotes from different domains for reasonableness? For example, will Satellite Scientific Level 1 pricing be compared with Fisheries Scientific Level 1 pricing?	No. Price proposals from one domain will not be compared to proposals of another domain.
30	139	M.4.4	3	The government states that they "will consider whether the proposed rates are balanced, how the proposed rates compare with those in comparable contracts or agreements with the federal Government..." Will the government specify how they will determine "balance" and identify those comparable contracts that will be used to determine price reasonableness?	See answer to question 27 above.
31	139	M.4.4	3	Does NOAA intend to let the Offerors use different methods of determining the rates for each labor category? If so, we recommend against this as it will increase the amount of work required to evaluate the pricing and reduce NOAA's ability to compare the rates of different Offerors.	No. Offerors shall provide fully burdened ceiling rates per labor category in accordance with their approved accounting practices.
32	139	M.4.4	3	The Enterprise domain includes the broadest range of labor categories but does not include examples or descriptions of these categories, unlike the other domains. Would the Government please provide examples or further descriptions of these labor categories?	The Government consider this.
33	139	M.4.4	3	The Government states that they "will consider whether the proposed rates are balanced, how the proposed rates compare with those in comparable contracts or agreements with the federal Government..." Will the Government specify how they will determine "balance" and identify those comparable contracts that will be used to determine price reasonableness?	See answer to question 27 above.

34	139	M.4.4	3	Can the government disclose if they will be using an evaluation model to evaluate cost/price and if so, will the evaluation model be shared with bidders?	See answer to question 28 above.
35	139	M.4.4	3	Does the Government intend to evaluate and determine price reasonableness for each labor category, or at an aggregate higher level?	See answer to question 24 above.
36	141	M.6	1	Section M.6 states that that they will establish a competitive range and "If the Contracting Officer determines that the number of proposals that would otherwise be in the competitive range exceeds the number at which any efficient competition can be conducted, the Contracting Officer, at his/her sole discretion, may limit the number of proposals in the competitive range..." How does the government intend to determine the competitive range and how will the government determine what vendors within the competitive range will be selected for the vehicle?	A competitive range, if determined, will be in accordance with FAR 15.306.
37	141	M.6	1	How will the offeror learn that they have been given an adverse past performance prior to being informed of whether they have made competitive range. What is considered "adverse"? Please describe the exact procedures for the proposed exchange to respond to the findings and recourse available. Such a process could introduce schedule risk to the IDIQ.	The source selection will be conducted in accordance with FAR 15.3 and notifications in accordance with FAR 15.5.
38	141	M.6	1	This paragraph states that, "Any Offeror eliminated from the competitive range on the basis of new adverse past performance will be given an opportunity to respond to such findings prior to determination of the competitive range." Please describe how the offeror will learn that they have been given an adverse past performance prior to being informed of whether they have made competitive range and what the process is for the offeror to respond. We respectfully suggest that this "back and forth" process introduces potential schedule risk to the IDIQ awards.	See answer to question 37 above.

39	141	M.6	1	This paragraph states that, "Any Offeror eliminated from the competitive range on the basis of new adverse past performance will be given an opportunity to respond to such findings prior to determination of the competitive range." Please specify what constitutes an "adverse" past performance.	See answer to question 37 above.
40	141	M.6	1	Section M.6 states Government will establish a competitive range and "If the Contracting Officer determines that the number of proposals that would otherwise be in the competitive range exceeds the number at which any efficient competition can be conducted, the Contracting Officer, at his/her sole discretion, may limit the number of proposals in the competitive range..." How does the Government intend to determine the competitive range and how will the Government determine what vendors within the competitive range will be selected for the vehicle?	See answer to question 36 above.
41	141	M.6	2	<p><u>Reference:</u> <i>"If the Contracting Officer determines that the number of proposals that would otherwise be in the competitive range exceeds the number at which an efficient competition can be conducted, the Contracting Officer, at his/her sole discretion, may limit the number of proposals in the competitive range to the greatest number that will permit an efficient competition among the most highly rated proposals. "</i></p> <p><u>Question:</u> Would the government please clarify the number or range of proposals it would take to create an "efficient competition," per domain?</p>	See answer to question 36 above.