

**TIPSS-4 Procurement Industry Day**  
**Date: February 13, 2008**  
**Comments/or questions**

1. Is the threshold for Small Business higher on TIPSS 4 than it was on TIPSS 3? (\$250k)? **Answer - We have not determined what or if there will be a threshold in TIPSS-4.**
  
2. Are the CAS requirements the same since you mentioned moving from the Cost environment to FP?  
**Answer-**  
**Small Business must have an adequate accounting system**  
**Small business is not subject to CAS**  
**CAS definitely applies to the prime contractors**  
**We will be promoting more FP proposals**
  
3. Will you do a FAR 15.202 Multi-step Acquisition? Pros: Thresholds are given, Protests won't happen, CAS included, Big benefit to Small Business, Liability Letter goes out to everyone letting them know if they are in the running or not  
**Answer-**  
**We are going with FAR 15, Source Selection/Best Value.**  
**Government will look into your suggestion.**
  
4. TIPSS-3 is CMMI 2, will TIPSS-4 have the same requirement?  
**Answer –**  
**The government has not determined CMMI level at this time.**
  
5. CMMI 2 is a restriction for Small Business. Will you allow SB to partner on TIPSS 4 in order to fulfill CMMI requirement?  
**Answer-**  
**Anyone that touches code must be CMMI certified. The prime must be CMMI certified if touching code or doing software development.**
  
6. What type of Advanced Planning or forecast will TIPSS-4 have in place? Response time? Tiered approach possibility?  
**Answer-**  
**1) We are looking into all avenues as we develop the processes to ensure that advance planning is optimally used.**  
**2) We are looking at other agencies with contracts of similar scope and will look at their processes and procedures.**  
**3) We are also looking to you (Industry) for feedback based on your experience.**

**4) Can't answer specifically (the structure of the tiered approach)**

7. CMMI requirement from Task Order level or contract level?

**Answer-**

**Evaluated at the beginning of Contract, then at TO level**

8. **Comment from Industry:** Future needs of the IRS - increasing communications from IRS to Industry; ex: response time a problem, don't publish on Friday, businesses lose 2 days to respond. More awareness of IRS agenda, not just an Industry day.

9. Will the RFP be sectioned off for different services or will it be one big call for service?

**Answer - Unknown at this time**

10. **Comment from Industry:** For the Computing Model, use Services Model instead for security

11. **Comment from Industry:** Quality Assurance takes on a check box approach. Consider a Performance Management approach using artifacts for quality measures.

12. What advantages does IRS put in place for Mentor-Protégé program? What fair and equitable adjustments for Small Business?

**Answer-**

**1. Points are given in evaluation process (determined by the criteria).**

**2. Pre-award - Mentor-Protégé rules are given up front.**

**3. Post award- It's the right thing to do; You are publicly recognized at the IRS Small Business Award Program.**

**4. No monetary award.**

**5. Tiered approach for fair equitable adjustment.**

**6. Pull information from other agencies.**

**7. Make sure it (the Mentor-Protege program) is as fair as possible.**

17. How can SDVOSB or WOSB get to be a prime versus a sub?

**Answer -**

**1. IRS Small Business Specialist vision: No competition.**

**2. Sole source under \$3.5M.**

**3. Tiered approach for opportunity to bid on work would flow like this:**

**1) 8(A), HUBZone**

**2) SB**

**3) Large**

18. Can a large bid with a small business and be both a prime and a sub?  
**Answer - Yes**
19. SB Set-aside? Will there be any?  
**Answer - We don't know at this time.**
18. Will the IRS consider publishing Task Orders to subs along with primes?  
**Answer-  
The government will take the suggestion into consideration.**
19. **Comment from Industry:** Limit the number of vendors on TIPSS 4. The Census Bureau did the multi-step process to ensure small business relationships with the prime and partnering.
20. Has the IRS thought about having tiered primes like the DHS Eagle and the GSA Alliant contracts? **Answer: We will look at other federal agency vehicles to ensure that we are using the best approach for tiering TIPSS-4 requirements.**
21. TIPSS-2 & TIPSS-3 have a notorious history of selecting incumbent vendors for award of re-compete task orders. This has been discouraging to large & small TIPSS-2 & 3 primes & the general thinking is "why bother" bidding on a TO when it will be awarded to the incumbent. **Answer - The objective is to work closer with our customers to ensure that their requirements are not so specifically directed to a particular company. In our efforts to increase performance base acquisitions, the possibility to use more statements of objectives (SOO) will allow for more competition in soliciting the contractors to prepare the Performance Work Statement to fit the need of the requirement of the customer.**
22. How will the IRS change that in TIPSS-4? **Answer - TIPSS-4 will be more focused in using the PBA methodology and implementing new processes and procedures to manage how task orders are being issued.**
23. What is the process & timing involved in getting mentor-protégé relationships approved by Treasury? **Answer - Please see the Treasury website at:**  
<http://www.treas.gov/offices/management/dcfo/osdbu/mentor-protége/> for complete details regarding the Treasury Mentor-Protégé program. The website details the application process and fully explains the program. Typically, per the website, the review period is 30 days from receipt of the signed mentor-protégé agreement by the Office of Small Business Development at the Department.

24. Will there be a dedicated public TIPSS-4 procurement website where industry can monitor changes/updates as the procurement goes forward? **Answer – Yes, the website is located on [www.irs@gov](mailto:www.irs@gov) under contracting opportunities.**
25. What is the anticipated period of performance for TIPSS-4 – breakdown of option years, etc. **Answer - Once market research is complete and the customers have estimated their requirements forecast, a determination of anticipated period of performance would then be identified for the life of the contract.**
26. Will you consider something similar to Navy's Seaport communication structure where Seaport releases a weekly matrix on the status of current and upcoming task orders, which assists industry in learning changes in status in plenty of time to prepare. **Answer - Market Research will be maximized to ensure that IRS has gathered sufficient information to provide a product that is inclusive of the federal government best contracting practices.**
27. What would be the best way for an 8a company to connect with a large company for sub opportunities? **Answer - An 8(a) firm, or any other type of small business firm, that needs assistance to connect with a large company should contact Ms. Jodie Paustian, IRS Small Business Specialist, to receive advice and assistance regarding marketing to large prime contractors for subcontracting opportunities. Ms. Paustian can be reached via e:mail at [Jodie.L.Paustian@irs.gov](mailto:Jodie.L.Paustian@irs.gov).**
28. Anticipating RTCP Announcements:
- A forecast by quarter of anticipated RTCP requests would be very helpful to the vendor community for planning of resources allocation for responses, staffing of key personnel, internal funding that are in competition with our other RTCP needs as well as other agency work. No business is large enough to manage to four or five RTCP request on an August 2007 Friday night to prioritize assess, staff, and respond within five-ten business days to that volume of RFP's.
  - Can you please give us an anticipated forecast?
- Answer -**  
**The new process and procedures for TIPSS-4 will take into consideration sufficient time needed to request proposals in a timely manner. The procurement office will assist the customers in forecasting their requirements to avoid the end of the year rush. However, it may be prudent to anticipate the surge in government spending during the last quarter of the fiscal year and begin staffing up resources necessary for that timeframe.**

29. In the past, prime contractors have been fulfilling their small business obligations by providing business to staffing companies for the most part. Is there an intent for IRS (concernment) to ensure more competition develops by encouraging small business that are interested in task based subcontracting as oppose to providing resources?

**Answer - Yes, the TIPSS-4 intent is to structure the new contract to increase fair opportunity to maximize competition and increase opportunity to small businesses.**

30. Can the IRS prohibit primes from limiting subcontractors to be exclusive to one prime for the TIPSS-4 solicitation? **Answer – The IRS cannot prohibit primes from limiting the subcontractors that choose to team with more than one prime. It behooves the subcontractor to carefully read the language in the prime’s teaming arrangement for such limitations. However, the IRS may impose a time limit to establish teaming arrangements to avoid frivolous “flip-flopping” once performance is executed.**

31. Would the IRS please consider publishing RTCP’s instead of sending to just the prime contract holders? **Answer - This procedure will be considered carefully for the TIPSS-4 project.**

32. Comment on IRS question about service offerings areas:

- a. **Consider revising the Quality Assurance Service area to include performance management as well. Perhaps a Quality Management Service area that combines process improvement with measurable business outcomes. Services include:**
- b. **PMO – Process Improvement**
- c. **ITIL - IV&V**
- d. **ISSM - Performance Assessment & Measurement**

The reason you may want to consider this service areas is that there are companies who do these things that may not want or be able to do application development, so it makes sense to pull it IT Mt. of ISS.

33. What relationship is there going to be with TNET to TIPSS-4? TNET is only to buy circuits. **Answer - TNET will continue to provide the specific services that have been acquired for that contract. TIPSS-4 will focus on the support services of information technology in all aspects.**

34. **Comment from Industry:** IRS should consider adding software and application security as part of TIPSS-4.
35. **Comment from Industry:** IRS should add training on how to develop secure software as part of the training requirement function area.
36. Provide information to vendors about “Tiering” that was mentioned. What is it? How would it work: **Answer - Tiering/cascading procedure under which any award would first be made on the basis of competition, considers only eligible 8(a) small business concerns. If adequate competition between section 8(a) concerns does not exist, awards would then be made on the basis of competition considering all small business concerns. If adequate competition between small business concerns does not exist, award would then be made on the basis of unrestricted competition. However, all avenues of contracting methodology will be considered before a final method is used to structure the TIPSS-4 acquisition.**
37. Comment: Areas to focus on in IT:
- a. **Service-oriented architecture (SOA)**
  - b. **Software as a service**
  - c. **IT Service Management**
  - d. **ITIL**
  - e. **Data Center Optimization**
  - f. **Going to Green data centers**
  - g. **Utility services model**
38. To give all small companies an opportunity to serve, why not use a cyclical process where there will be a list of small companies that meet qualifications for a T.O. and a sole source contract be awarded, in turn, to each company on the list. There will be no granting of a contract to a small company if there is another company on a list w/similar qualifications. **Answer - The government will take this suggestion into consideration with further research on this approach.**
39. Are biometrics and geospatial capabilities going to be requirement of the contract? **Answer – Biometrics may be an area of consideration, but that will have to be determined by the requirements organization. At this time, geospatial is not viewed as an area that correlates with IT services.**
40. **Comment from Industry:** TIPSS-3 Contract currently requires an 18 month re-certification of CMMI level 3. CMI has determined that CMMI certifications are valid for 36 months. Would IRS consider moving to a 36 month recertification cycle? Also, consider that PARM reviews are annual and the 18 month cycle for CMMI means that you are always

applying resources to CMMI process instead of performance. This change would reduce costs for both IRS & contractors.

41. **Comment from Industry:** Allow bidders to get credit for a Performance Based response to a CPFF request.
42. **Comment from Industry:** We have provided several times in the past feedback but prime have not cared to send a single task orders. If your guideline does not let you say anything to prime about distributing at least info about task orders then change it so information can be shared with small subs...follow Obama change...
43. Can small businesses register with the IRS small business office?  
**Answer: Yes; There is no formal registration process at the IRS; however, small businesses can feel free to contact Ms. Jodie Paustian, IRS Small Business Specialist, to market their company capabilities. Ms. Paustian can be reached via e:mail at Jodie.L.Paustian@irs.gov.**
44. We are sub on the TIPSS-3 as a small 8(a) SDB. To big prime we have seen no task order from our prime. Yes, not even seen a single task order ever under TIPSS-3 even after several requests. Do you as a customer plan to do anything that forces prime to share the task orders with subs? Can you get rid of such prime? **Answer - TIPSS-4 will include new processes and procedures to monitor how task orders will be managed and distributed to create fair opportunity among the companies (Large and Small).**