

## Small Business Governmentwide Acquisition Contract Polaris Q&A

GSA is working closely with internal and external stakeholders to bring the first two Polaris Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to industry soon. In preparation for the upcoming solicitations, GSA considered industry questions and comments to help finalize and clarify the language in the RFPs. Below are answers, clarifications, and updates to the RFPs since the last RFP drafts and Interact postings. GSA appreciates your continued engagement.

1. **Question**-When will the Polaris RFPs be released?

**Answer**-The RFPs for the Small Business and WOSB Pools are anticipated for release soon. GSA anticipates releasing the RFPs for the Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) Pools in the 4th quarter of FY2022.

2. **Question**-How will Polaris proposals be submitted?

**Answer**-Polaris proposals will be submitted through the Symphony Polaris Submission Portal. Specific details on accessing the Portal and submission instructions will be provided with the release of the Polaris RFPs.

3. **Question**-Can I register now in the Symphony Polaris Submission Portal? If not, what can I do now to be prepared?

**Answer**-The Symphony Polaris Submission Portal will open for registration following release of the Polaris RFPs. To register in and access the portal, an Offeror must already be registered in SAM.gov. If not already registered in SAM, offering entities are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

4. **Question**-Will consideration be given for accounting system audits from Third-Party Certified Public Accountants (CPA)?

**Answer**-Yes. This is a change from the draft RFP. While not at the same amount as audits and adequacy determinations from DCAA, DCMA or other cognizant federal agencies, points will now also be available for accounting system audits with determinations from a Third-Party CPA.

In order to receive points for this factor, Offerors must provide a copy of a Pre-Award Survey of Prospective Contractor Accounting System (SF1408) or a letter from the auditing agency/CPA, on auditing agency/CPA letterhead, from DCAA, DCMA, Cognizant Federal Agency (CFA), or Third-Party CPA indicating unequivocally that the Offeror's accounting system has been audited and determined adequate for determining costs applicable to a cost-reimbursement type contract or order in accordance with FAR 16.301-3(a)(3). The Offeror will only receive points for either verification from DCAA/DCMA/CFA or from a CPA, not both.

5. **Question**-Are there other changes to the solicitation that have occurred since the draft Sections L&M were posted on Interact in September?

**Answer**-Key changes that have been made to the solicitation in response to industry feedback include the following (*italics are used to highlight changes to the language below*):

- a. **L.5.1.3.1 Joint Venture (JV), if applicable**, has been modified to remove the restriction that *“no more than three primary relevant experience projects may be provided by the mentor.”* There are now no restrictions on the amount of relevant experience projects that may be provided by a mentor in a JV, mentor-protégé arrangement.
- b. **L.5.1.3.1(3) Joint Venture, if applicable, (fourth bullet)**, has been updated as follows: *“Offerors submitting as a joint venture must provide evidence of any claimed system, certification, or clearance in the name of the joint venture itself or in the name of a member of the joint venture.”* This changes the former requirement that *“Any claimed clearance must be in the name of the joint venture itself or in the name of every member of the joint venture.”* Now, a JV may claim scoring for a clearance if any member of the joint venture possesses the clearance.
- c. **L.5.1.3.1(3) Joint Venture, if applicable, (sixth bullet)**, has been updated as follows: *“The Uncompensated Overtime Policy must be from the Joint Venture. The Professional Employee Compensation Plan may be either from the Joint Venture or from each member of the joint venture.”*

The added language clarifies which parties must submit the Uncompensated Overtime Policy, and Professional Employee Compensation Plans.

- d. **L.5.1.3.2(4)(ii), Proposed Subcontractors, if applicable**. Based on concerns from industry regarding the limitation on relevant experience only being submitted once within a pool, this section has been updated to suggest Letters of Commitment may specify the specific Relevant Experience Projects being authorized and for which pool(s).
- e. **L.5.2.2.4, Projects with Cost Reimbursement (Federal Government Contracts Only)**. The language here has been changed to allow for *“a FPDS-NG Report **OR** contract award documentation* in accordance with L.5.2.2.1.1 that indicates a cost-reimbursement contract type *(for the contract or a specific CLIN)* for verification purposes.”
- f. **L.5.5.1, Organizational Risk Assessment**, has been changed to expand the definition of *“business arrangement.”* A *“business arrangement”* now includes joint ventures (including a Mentor-Protégé Joint Venture) and its proposed subcontractor(s).
- g. **L.5.5.1, Organizational Risk Assessment**, has also been changed to expand the conditions of when a *“business arrangement* that is considered to have previously performed in the same business arrangement” as follows:
  - 1. An individual company [not proposing as part of a joint venture or with a proposed subcontractor(s)] has previously performed on a contract or order as itself, or
  - 2. For offers from a joint venture (with no proposed subcontractors):
    - a. A joint venture has previously performed on a contract or order, or
    - b. All members of a joint venture have previously performed together on a contract or order as a joint venture, or
    - c. *All members of a joint venture have previously performed together on a contract or order with one member as the prime contractor and the other member(s) as a subcontractor, or*
    - d. *All members of a joint venture have previously performed together on an order as a Multiple Award Schedule Contractor Team Arrangement, or*

3. Each proposed subcontractor has previously performed on a contract or order as a subcontractor to the offering prime contractor. *This may be on separate contracts or orders.*
  4. *For offers from a joint venture with proposed subcontractors, the conditions of both 2 and 3 must be met.*
- h. **L.5.5.2, Limitations on Subcontracting Compliance Risk (WOSB Pool).** This factor has been removed from the solicitation.
- i. **L.5.6.1 Cybersecurity and SCRM Assessment.** This assessment has been removed as a submission requirement within the proposal. A SCRM Plan will still be required as a post-award contract deliverable.
- j. **M.5.2, Volume 3 - Past Performance,** has been updated to provide scoring for each project demonstrating positive past performance. This is a change from the draft indicating scoring only if all projects demonstrated positive past performance.
- k. **M.6, Polaris Scoring Table.** The updated draft Scoring Table is provided below.

Section	Element	Point Value	Maximum Number of Potential Occurrences	Total Max Points Per Element	Max Point Value
<b>L.5.2</b>	<b>Relevant Experience</b>				
	Primary Relevant Experience Projects (minimum number of required experience is 3)	4,000	5	20,000	20,000
<b>L.5.2.2.2</b>	<b>Project Size</b>				
	Project with a value greater or equal to \$1 Million, but less than \$5 Million	500	5	2,500	15,000
	Project with a value greater or equal to \$5 Million, but less than \$10 Million	1,500	5	7,500	
	Project with a value equal to or greater than \$10 Million	3,000	5	15,000	
<b>L.5.2.2.3</b>	<b>Demonstrating Experience with Multiple Federal Government Customers</b>				
	Unique Customer (Federal Government Customer is determined by the Funding Agency ID identified within the FPDS-NG Report.) Note: minimum 2 or higher	500	4	2,000	2,000
<b>L.5.2.2.4</b>	<b>Projects with Cost-Reimbursement (Federal Contracts Only)</b>				
	Project is cost-reimbursement type	500	2	1,000	1,000
<b>L.5.2.2.5</b>	<b>Task Order against a Federal Multiple-Award IDIQ Contract</b>				
	Project was a task order against a Multiple-Award	400	5	2,000	2,000

	Federal Government Contract				
<b>L.5.2.2.6</b>	<b>OCONUS Project - Federal Government Contracts Only</b>				
	Project included OCONUS work	1,000	1	1,000	1,000
<b>L.5.2.2.7</b>	<b>Project with Cybersecurity Services</b>				
	Project included cybersecurity services	3,000	2	6,000	6,000
<b>L.5.2.2.8</b>	<b>Breadth of Relevant Experience</b>				
	Experience Demonstrated in Two NAICS Areas	2,000	1	2,000	9,000
	Experience Demonstrated in Three NAICS Areas	3,000	1	3,000	
	Experience Demonstrated in Four NAICS Areas	6,000	1	6,000	
	Experience Demonstrated in Five NAICS Areas	9,000	1	9,000	
<b>L.5.2.3</b>	<b>Emerging Technology Relevant Experience</b>				
	Relevant Experience Projects	1,000	3	3,000	3,000
<b>L.5.2.3.2</b>	<b>Breadth of Emerging Technology Relevant Experience</b>				
	Experience Demonstrated with Two Emerging Technologies	700	1	700	1,000
	Experience Demonstrated with Three Emerging Technologies	1,000	1	1,000	
<b>L.5.3</b>	<b>PAST PERFORMANCE</b>				
	Past Performance	20,000	1	20,000	20,000
<b>L.5.4</b>	<b>SYSTEMS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND CLEARANCES</b>				
	<b>Accounting System and Audit Information - SELECT HIGHEST LEVEL APPLICABLE</b>				
<b>L.5.4.1</b>	Audit and adequate determination by Third Party Certified Public Accountant	750	1	750	3000
	Audit and adequate determination by DCAA, DCMA or CFA	3,000	1	3,000	
	<b>Approved Purchasing System</b>				
<b>L.5.4.2</b>	Approved Purchasing System	1,000	1	1,000	1,000
	<b>Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) - SELECT HIGHEST LEVEL APPLICABLE</b>				
<b>L.5.4.3</b>	CMMI - SVC or DEV - LEVEL II	500	1	500	750
	CMMI - SVC or DEV - LEVEL III OR GREATER	750	1	750	
	<b>International Organization for Standardization (ISO) - SELECT ALL APPLICABLE</b>				
<b>L.5.4.4</b>	ISO 9001:2015	750	1	750	2,250
<b>L.5.4.5</b>	ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018	750	1	750	
<b>L.5.4.6</b>	ISO/IEC 27001:2013	750	1	750	
<b>L.5.4.7</b>	<b>Facility Clearance Level (FCL) - SELECT HIGHEST LEVEL APPLICABLE</b>				

	Secret	2,000	1	2,000	3,000
	Top Secret	3,000	1	3,000	
<b>L.5.5</b>	<b>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>				
<b>L.5.5.1</b>	Organizational Risk Assessment	5,000	1	5,000	5,000
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS:</b>					95,000

6. **Question**-Can a joint venture offeror utilize proposed subcontractors within their proposal?

**Answer**-Yes, Section L.5.1.3.1 Joint Ventures; within the RFP has been updated and will provide further information.

7. **Question**-Can a federal contract without an FPDS record be used as a Relevant Experience Project?

**Answer**-Yes, a federal contract without an FPDS record can be used as a Relevant Experience Project. Section L.5.2.2.1.1(2) of the RFP will provide information on how to validate the project when a FPDS record is unavailable.

8. **Question**-Please confirm that Emerging Technology Relevant Experience Projects referenced in Section L.5.2.3 of the RFP do not need to be in the same NAICS codes as the Relevant Experience Projects referenced in Section L.5.2.2. of the RFP.

**Answer**-Confirmed, Emerging Technology Relevant Experience projects do not need to be in the listed NAICS codes in Section L.5.2.2 of the RFP.

9. **Question**-May an Offeror submit separate proposals for each pool or must the same proposal be submitted for all pools?

**Answer**-An Offeror may submit the same or different proposals for separate pools, but an Offeror may only submit one proposal per pool.

10. **Question**-May an Offeror receive contract awards in multiple pools?

**Answer**-Yes, an Offeror may be awarded a contract in more than one pool. An Offeror can only receive one award within the same pool.

11. **Question**-The Draft RFP states "No project, to include Primary Relevant Experience and Emerging Technology Relevant Experience, may be used in more than one proposal for the same Pool under this Solicitation." Can the government confirm that a prime contract and a subcontract under that prime contract are considered two different projects, and will not be in violation of this requirement? Can you also confirm that a subcontract reference would be considered a commercial reference since the actual contract is not with the Federal government?

**Answer**-This is accurate. The prime contractor would be able to submit their performance as a Relevant Experience Project, AND the subcontractor would be able to submit its performance under the subcontract as its own Relevant Experience Project. The subcontract performance would be considered a commercial project.

12. **Question**-In reference to Organizational Risk Assessment, would the Offeror be awarded all the points for this subfactor if an Offeror bids without any teammates. Please confirm.

**Answer-**Yes, confirmed. See response provided in 5(g) above regarding Organizational Risk Assessment.

13. **Question-**Can Offerors utilize Other Transaction Authority (OTAs), Small Business Innovation Research (SBIRs), and/or research grants as a project reference?

**Answer-**Offerors may utilize OTAs, SBIRs, and/or research grants as a project reference if the project meets the requirements of L.5.2.2 Relevant Experience Submission and/or L.5.2.3 Emerging Technology Relevant Experience.

14. **Question-**For past performance performed as a subcontractor on a federal project, is it acceptable for the Past Performance Rating Form to be completed and signed by the prime contractor's company official rather than a Contracting Officer, COR, or COTR?

**Answer-**As this project was performed as a subcontractor, the Past Performance Rating Form must be completed and signed by a Corporate Officer/Official of the customer (prime contractor) with cognizance over the submitted Project.