

RFP-2012-6 Gas Safety Inspection Management System

Questions and Answers

1.) Does the \$100,000 figure reflect the first year through June 2013 or the complete term of the contract through June 2014?

Answer:

It reflects the complete term of the contract through June 2014.

2.) What is the source of funding for this project?

Answer:

Federal grants will cover most of the costs for this project.

3.) Does the PUC anticipate obtaining additional funds for the fiscal year 2013-2014?

Answer:

The aforementioned federal grant is renewed annually.

4.) Is this a fixed price contract or a time and material contract that cannot exceed an established cap?

Answer:

This is a fixed price contract. Invoices must be submitted for services performed monthly pursuant to the contract at Appendix D, Part B, Expenses and Payment.

5.) Will PUC accept the firm's most recent Federal Acquisition Regulations 48 CFR Part 31 prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant firm as suitable documentation for overhead rate calculations?

Answer:

Yes.

6.) Does the PUC anticipate purchasing an "off-the-shelf" commercial software package or a custom developed solution specific to the needs of the PUC inspection management and incident reporting system?

Answer:

We anticipate purchasing a custom developed solution specific to the needs of the PUC inspection management and incident reporting system.

7.) Does the PUC currently have a database management system in production for inspection and incident management that the mobile software will interface to and upload field data collected?

Answer:

No.

8.) Can you provide descriptions of the database searches that need to be supported? How and when would this function be used?

Answer:

We would like to run search queries on most of the fields in which our inspectors enter data, and we may need to search for keywords. The inspectors would use these search functions routinely. An example of when the function would be used is prior to an inspection, when one of the engineers may want to check the information gathered from a previous inspection that has already been conducted for a utility.

9.) Can you provide descriptions of the formatted reports that need to be supported while in the field? How and when would this function be used?

Answer:

We need this information for audits, risk assessment, and general reporting purposes. There will be numerous reports, and we have posted two of the more basic reports on the website. We will work through the details of the rest with the selected vendor.

10.) Is field printing of reports a requirement?

Answer:

Yes.

11.) What is the volume of inspections and incidents recorded each year?

Answer:

Right now, the team is conducting around 2,500 inspections each year, and we anticipate that amount to rise to ~3k. There are only about five incidents each year.

12.) Will existing data need to be migrated into the new database system to support the field data forms on mobile platforms?

Answer:

We currently keep information in an Access database, which we would like to migrate if possible.

13.) Will it be necessary to enter legacy paper documents/forms in order to implement the new system? If so, please describe the types of paper documents and quantities involved.

Answer:

It will not be necessary.

14.) Do the field units need to support capturing digital photography?

Answer:

Yes, and movies also.

15.) Do the field units need to support capturing GPS coordinates?

Answer:

Yes.

16.) What brands/models of mobile hardware platforms must be able to use the mobile forms?

Answer:

Right now, the gas safety inspectors all use Dell E5420 laptops.

17.) How many users are expected to use the mobile units while in the field to enter inspection and incident reports?

Answer:

There will be between twelve and twenty users. All but three or four of them will be entering information from the field.

18.) Will the Commonwealth purchase all hardware and commercial software licenses that are required to implement the mobile devices and database management system or are the contractors expected to provide turnkey pricing for all these items?

Answer:

The PUC will obtain software licensing for the laptops and tablets. However, the vendor will be expected to obtain all software licensing needed for hosting the database.

19.) The selected vendor is required to host the system. Does the PUC place any restrictions or requirements regarding where the hosting service is located (e.g. at the PUC building versus contractor's facility versus Internet Cloud)?

Answer:

The server should be housed at the contractor's facility.

20.) Does the PUC have any training facilities available for conducting training?

Answer:

Although we do not have any facilities purchased for that specific purpose, we should be able to train them within the Keystone building. There are no rooms with computers set up, but our inspectors can use their laptops.

21.) Does the system development work need to be performed on site at the PUC or at the contractor's office?

Answer:

The system should be developed (and maintained) at the contractor's office.

22.) Is the PUC willing to consider a two phase approach to project pricing: an initial budget to develop the system requirements specification and follow-on design specification as a fixed price budget and a second project phase and budget to develop and deploy the solution with an option to adjust the budget within a certain percentage pending completion and acceptance of the first phase?

Answer:

Yes.

23.) Is the PUC looking for a vendor hosted solution?

Answer:

Yes.

24.) Are there specific SLAs required by the PUC for a vendor hosted solution?

Answer:

If the system goes down, we would like it to be restored within four hours, but this is negotiable.

25.) Will the PUC provide the server hardware and software for hosting?

Answer:

Since this is a vendor hosted solution, the vendor should provide the server, Windows licenses, and SQL license.

26.) Is there a specific product of COTS package that the PUC would like to implement?

Answer: Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 (asp.net 4).

27.) What are the hardware and software technology constraints for this project?

Answer:

It should be Windows based.

28.) Will the vendor be able to stipulate the software requirements for inspector field devices?

Answer:

Yes, as long as we agree with the vendor prior to implementation.

29.) Will the Gas Safety Inspectors be able to attend training at the Harrisburg office?

Answer:

Yes.

30.) How much assistance will be available from the PUC technology staff?

Answer:

None.

31.) Should maintenance costs be included in the Cost Proposal?

Answer:

Yes.

32.) Should hosting costs be included in the Cost proposal?

Answer:

Yes.

33.) Can the proposal be delivered in person? If yes, to what location?

Answer:

Yes, it can be delivered by courier to the Commission's mailroom, located in the basement of the Keystone Building or hand-delivered to Kasha Schreffler at the address listed in the RFP. The Commission must receive all proposals by May 15th.

34.) There are 2 user roles specified within the Inspection Division's Gas Safety team. They are the Gas Safety Manager and Gas Safety Inspectors. How many of the system will there be for each user role?

Answer:

There will be two users with the Manager role and between eight and fifteen users with the inspector role. We are also thinking of adding a third role to be used by six supervisors and administrators, who will have more privileges than the inspectors, but less permissions than the two managers. Either way, we do not anticipate that we will need more than twenty users overall.

35.) Will each user require offline access? If so, on what devices is the PUC Gas Safety Inspection Division planning to capture data during field inspections (i.e. Offline tablet PCs, iPad/iPhone Devices, other devices).

Answer:

Yes, they should be able to use their laptops offline to store the data until it can be uploaded. At some point, we may also consider using Androids or another type of tablet that can sync to the laptops. The PUC will be purchasing its own laptops and any handheld devices we may also need.

36.) For Incident Reporting, are there requirements for access to reporting incidents for those inputting data into the system (i.e. via externally linked web portal, capability to anonymously report incidents, telephone hotline, etc.)? How does this division envision incidents being recorded into the system for management?

Answer:

User names and passwords should be assigned to all users, and there must also be an SSL connection. Otherwise, we are open to suggestions on this item, but we do have certain pieces of information that must be incorporated into the database. However, we do not need the ability to anonymously report incidents, nor do we need a telephone hotline. We are interpreting “externally linked web portal” as a link that would make the database available from the PUC’s website or other websites. If this interpretation is accurate, the answer is “no”.

37.) If the Commission is willing to use a COTS software package, would the Commission consider waiving the IP requirements in lieu of a software escrow account?

Answer: No.

38.) Does the Commission currently have an inventory of its gas lines and related assets?

Answer:

Not at this time, but we will.

39.) “The System must incorporate approximately 45 standardized forms”, only 28 of these forms are posted at http://www.puc.state.pa.us/transport/gassafe/Inspection_Forms.aspx. Where can more of them be found? What is the overall size of the data files?

Answer:

Our best estimate for all of the blank templates combined is ~20 MB. These are the only forms we have at this time. The remaining forms are not complete, and we anticipate that some of the forms will change during the two year contract.

40.) “The system must integrate with .net programming”. Do you mean that the system must be developed with .net programming technology?

Answer:

Yes, that is what we mean.

41.) What client application must be developed – Windows application, Web-application, iOS – or Android application?

Answer:

It must be a Windows application with Visual Studio 2010 (asp.net 4).

42.) What system architecture must be used (web-application, mobile application, stand-alone application with direct connection to database)?

Answer:

We will need to utilize both a web app and a stand-alone app since we want to sync between the two.

43.) “Utilization of database synchronization technology is necessary”. What kind of synchronization do you mean?

Answer:

Since our inspectors are out in the field, they need to be able to enter data into some sort of template and then sync that info into the web app later on when they have network access.

44.) “The selected vendor will host the servers”. Can we use Amazon hosting?

Answer:

No. We want to avoid cloud computing, and we want the vendor to house all the servers at their physical location.

45.) We realized that the system must provide two main functionalities – filing forms and making reports. Is there any other functionality assumed?

Answer:

The primary purpose of this database will be to organize, store, share, and retrieve data.

46.) How many users will access the system concurrently?

Answer:

Assume that all users could be on the system simultaneously, at any given time.

47.) Must the system have an ability to provide custom reports?

Answer:

Yes.

48.) “The system must possess data retrieval capabilities”. Do you mean import/export functionality? If yes, could you describe import/export formats, please?

Answer:

We do not want to stipulate the import/export formats. This is something we want to discuss in more detail with the selected vendor.

49.) What DBMS must be used (Oracle, MS SQL Server, MySQL and etc.)?

Answer:

MS SQL.

50.) How much routine maintenance can be expected after development is complete?

Answer:

During the first year of the contract, there will potentially be a great deal of maintenance. After that, the necessary maintenance should taper off.

51.) What is the expected delivery date for the system? When would the project start?

Answer:

The Commission is interested in delivery as soon as possible. We will discuss a more specific timeline with the vendor selected to develop the database.

52.) Are all of the forms already programmed on a laptop (Word) such that the vendor is handling data storage only and not programming new forms, or must we re-program forms?

Answer:

The forms already exist for data storage (or they will be created in the near future). However, all of the reporting capabilities we want do not exist, so the vendor will need to create those formats.

53.) Would a Windows 7 Tablet be acceptable in place of an Android tablet? An Android tablet operating system will add cost and complexity.

Answer:

We are still open to other devices.

54.) What version of Microsoft Office will the PUC install on the laptop? Can we stipulate 2010?

Answer:

MS Office 2010 is installed on all of the Gas Safety inspectors' laptops and our desktop computers.

55.) Are all of the forms filed with PHMSA?

Answer:

No, not all of them are filed with PHMSA. The forms mostly stay in-house with the PUC, and we should be able to retrieve all of them electronically. We do give a copy of the inspection report to the company that is being inspected. This is usually provided by e-mail.

56.) Is there any workflow that should be supported by the future system? Can you provide a simple user story?

Answer:

No, a workflow is not necessary.

57.) Would you like the solution to provide the ability to capture signatures, photos, and scan bar codes on the device and add them to forms?

Answer:

We do need to add photos and movies to the system, but we won't need to scan bar codes. The ability to electronically sign reports would be nice, but it is not mandatory.