



National Center and State Collaborative

**National Center and State Collaborative GSEG Project
Assessment Technology System
RFP #2013-03-01**

NOTE: The “Intent to Bid Form” can be found under the Procurement Tab on the www.ncscpartners.org website. Two-thirds of the way down the page will be a sentence “Organizations interested in bidding should indicate their intent by April 10, 2013, by completing this form.” The actual form can be found by clicking on the link.

Question Received April 10, 2013

Question 1: Sec. 4.4.4 (o), Vendor Activity, Page 50-51. Text of Passage being questioned: “No activity is to be executed in an off shore facility, either by a subcontracted firm or a foreign office or division of the Vendor. The Vendor must attest to the fact that no activity will take place outside of the United States in its transmittal letter. Failure to adhere to this requirement is cause for elimination from future consideration.” Question: Can NCSC confirm that the following is considered to be in compliance with Section 4.4.4 subparagraph **o. Vendor Activity** which prohibits offshore activity:

100% development by Vendor for this NCSC program will be executed solely onshore, with leveraging of open source platforms that have been developed globally and will continue to be managed globally. Vendor will not use NCSC funds under any circumstances for off shore development but instead will execute all development onshore and simultaneously, contribute not only to an evolving open source core platform but also to the open source community.

Response: *A vendor’s use of open source software will not violate Section RFP Sec. 4.4.4 (o) as it concerns off shore activities, as long as the vendor’s performance under the contract takes place in the United States.*

Question Received April 17, 2013

Question 2: Sec. 3.2.7, Certification, Training and Support, Page 23. Text of Passage being questioned: The Vendor should also propose training initiatives and resources to ensure that the system administrators and users are knowledgeable in the use of the system. This should involve resources available through the portal (e.g. documents, demonstrations, pre-tests, and instructional videos). A comprehensive training program should also involve interactive training such as webinars. The Vendor



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should propose the timing and nature of certification and training activities to insure successful implementation of all aspects of the system. Question: How many people should we estimate for training across the national centers and states? For the live webinars can we train a certain number of people per state that would then conduct their own training to other end users? Would NCSC prefer the contractor train UKY who would turnkey the training we provide to them? Does NCSC require reporting on who attended a training session? Does NCSC require reporting on who accessed training documents/videos that are posted online?

Response: *At this time, the project does not have precise figures for the number of educators and leaders that need to be trained. At a high level, NCSC estimates we serve approximately 100,000 students. With an estimated 5:1 student to teacher ratio there would be 20,000 teachers across all the project's states and entities that may interact with the system. This is likely a conservative estimate and the respondent is advised to plan for flexibility and scalability in the proposal.*

NCSC is open to proposals for the most efficient and effective manner to train all system users based on the Vendor's experience and expertise, leveraging the work NCSC has done related to PD delivery, referenced in the architecture plan, section 3.2.5, for professional development. We expect this will involve a combination of training modes and resources. It is reasonable to assume that end users could access training in a variety of ways (e.g., in-person or via live Webinar or archived, on-demand Webinar). Training will occur with content and procedural oversight by project staff at UKY, but with leadership from each state planning for and ensuring that all teachers make use of the systems. However, the Vendor should ensure that all system users will have adequate access to ongoing supports and resources during the contract period (e.g. phone support, documents, training modules/ videos etc.)

NCSC requires a system to certify that users are trained. The project is open to the respondent's most effective and efficient proposal for how to accomplish this, which may include reporting on who attended sessions or accessed training materials or may include other approaches to meet this requirement. Again, vendors should plan to work closely with our UKY partner considering how to leverage our NCSC system for delivering PD through WIKI and LMS platforms.

Questions Received April 23, 2013

Question 3: NCSC Architecture and Technology System Requirements, Page 57. Text of Passage being questioned: Usage/Utilization. Question: The utilization model, yearlong, explicit the total number of expected users. Could NCSC estimate the average total concurrent users expected at peak times?



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Response: *At this time, NCSC is not able to provide more precise information regarding system utilization than is found on p. 57 of the NCSC Architecture and Technology System Requirements. Respondents are encouraged to propose a scalable solution that includes methods to monitor capacity and adjust as needed to ensure the system operates without disruption.*

Question 4: Sec. 3.2.3, Evidence Capture and Scoring, Page 19. Text of Passage being questioned: Distributed Scoring. Question: Shall the solution support multiple grades by independent graders with a reconciliation of any conflicts in the grades process? Could NCSC provide information with a typical distributed scoring process?

Response: *The system should allow multiple independent scorers to provide a rating and process to audit, flag, and reconcile discordant ratings according to decision rules that will be established.*

Question 5: Sec. 3.2.3, Interactive Flexible Sessions, Page 18. Text of Passage being questioned: Deliver assessment on Paper/Pen- PDF. Question: Shall the system generate automatically from the electronic version, the pdf version? Please note that depending on the item template and interactions, some restrictions may apply or will the item creator provide a specific pdf version for those items?

Response: *It is expected that items will be developed in order to render appropriately with paper-based presentation. The project appreciates the implications of certain item design and presentation decisions and will work with both the item developer and the provider of the NCSC technology system to minimize such restrictions.*

Question 6: Sec. 3.2.3, User Interface, Page 18. Text of Passage being questioned: Mobile Devices. Question: Is there any more fine grained requirements in terms of the used platforms (IOS, Android, Blackerry, Windows?) and/or used web browsers? What is the standard for mobiles in the target states?

Response: *The respondent is asked to propose a solution that meets the minimum hardware and software requirements presented in the NCSC Architecture and Technology System Requirements (p.69). The project does not have additional information to provide at this time.*

Question 7: Sec. 6, Paragraph 1, Page 60. Question: Does NCSC have an anticipated budget for this work or a not-to-exceed price?

Response: *Our NCSC GSEG project was funded for just under \$45 million to develop a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development for 18 states. The states and staff partners provide the conceptual*



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underpinnings of the entire system, and NCSC GSEG works in partnership with each of our vendors to provide the leadership as the pieces of the system are being built. A full-time NCSC project manager ensures smooth and timely communication between NCSC state and staff persons, and between the vendors doing particular tasks. Given this, we believe that vendors will be well served by demonstrating through the RFP process how they can leverage and operationalize the considerable conceptual work done by the NCSC partners, with their best and most reasonable pricing structures.

Question 8: Sec. 3.2.9, Paragraph 3, Page 25. Text of Passage being questioned: The vendor releases ownership rights to the system or any data within the System.

Question: The RFP requires an open source solution. Is the NCSC willing to consider alternative licensing/modification/distribution scenarios in which a vendor does not have to relinquish full ownership of the system (as described in this section) and all intellectual property associated with it?

Response: *NCSC requirements for an open-source system are provided in section 3.2.9 of the RFP. Proposers may also propose other cost-effective solutions that meet the intent of the NCSC project. Any alternatives to these specifications/ requirements should be clearly noted in the proposal along with a budget for purposes of allowing budget comparisons.*