AFLCMC/XA Commercial Solutions Opening (CSO) Call 002

Federal Agency:	Air Force
Program Office:	AFLCMC/XA, Architecture and Integration Directorate
Call Title:	AF SD-WAN Test Event
NAICS:	541512 – Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering and Life Sciences
Call Type:	Two-Step, Closed Call
Call Number:	FA8612-21-S-C001, Call 002
Call Release Date:	Friday, 6 January 2023 at 5:00 PM EDT
Proposals Due:	Monday, 6 February 2023 at 5:00 PM EDT

1.0 Introduction

The Architecture and Integration Directorate (AFLCMC/XA), on behalf of the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Command, Control, Communications, and Battle Management (C3BM) seeks to develop a cross-cutter portfolio of complimentary/ linked projects and programs to support Joint All-Domain Command & Control (JADC2) and the Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS). The Department of the Air Force intends to facilitate the rapid exploration and maturation of innovative technologies. The Air Force will support future operations by providing the critical surveillance, tactical edge communications, processing, networking, and battle management command and control capabilities to the joint warfighting force.

This announcement is for a Category/Area of Interest (AoI) under the AFLCMC/XA JADC2 Commercial Solutions Opening. Interested parties are highly encouraged to visit the Government Point of Entry (www.beta.sam.gov) to review the JADC2 CSO special posting in its entirety to obtain more information on the process for submission and evaluation of the CSO solution White Papers and proposals.

This Call seeks to solicit innovative solutions that meet the objectives detailed in Section 2.0. The term innovative is defined as any technology, process, or method, including research and development that is new as of the date of proposal submission; or any new application of an existing technology, process or method as of the proposal date.

AFLCMC/XA is not obligated to extend a request for proposal or make an award as a result of this Call; all awards are subject to the availability of funds and successful negotiations. This Call is not an authorization to begin performance, and in no way obligates the Government for any costs incurred by the Offeror associated with developing a White Paper. Prior to commencement of any activities associated with performance under this Call, the Government will issue a written directive or contractual document signed by the Contracting Officer with appropriate consideration established. AFLCMC/XA reserves the right to modify the requirements of this Call. The authority to issue this Two-Step, Closed Call is derived from AFLCMC/XA Commercial Solutions Opening, FA8612-21-S-C001, dated 28 June 2021. The CSO authority is Class Deviation 2022-O0007.

2.0 Category/Area of Interest (AoI): Connectivity / SD-WAN products

As defined in the JADC2 CSO, the Connectivity category is described as:

Development and fielding of networks to enable the timely processing and dissemination of data from any sensor to users at the tactical edge and/or strategic levels. Assets in any domain may be platforms-of-opportunity to serve as communications nodes enabled by omnidirectional and directional line-of-sight (LOS), and beyond-line-of-sight (BLOS) capabilities. Attributes of interest include: increased data rates, resiliency, reduced latency, improved anti-jam, Low Probability of Intercept/Low Probability of Detection (LPI/LPD) characteristics, scalability of nodes/connections, improved integration of dissimilar users, etc.

There are many commercial SD-WAN capabilities available for procurement, but there has not been a holistic survey of the available commercial solutions and their ability to meet Department of the Air Force operational requirements. AFLCMC/XA, on behalf of DAF PEO C3BM, is looking to assess OEM SD-WAN products against a rigorous set of objectives and test criteria to validate the SD-WAN products use within a larger Department of the Air Force architecture.

This Call is intended to solicit *innovative* technologies that propose new solutions to expand Air Force capabilities as it relates to Connectivity / SD-WAN products.

Objectives:
AFLCMC/XA is pursuing the development of a Battle Management Network. A cornerstone of this network will be an SD-WAN solution that enables connectivity across multiple connectivity services (MPLS, DISN MILSATCOM, DISN OTN, Broadband Internet, etc.). The SD-WAN solution will form one piece of a larger network architecture that offers the battle manager continuity of operations through denied, degraded, intermittent, and latent (DDIL) network conditions. This provides the battle manager flexibility and maneuverability to connect through a ubiquitous black fabric mesh leveraging multiple modalities of WAN transport. Traffic within the network will be subject to encryption from both Commercial Solutions for Classified (CSfC), and NSA Type 1 encryption devices to enable data transport of classified data.

The SD-WAN product will be controlled and secured by a Department of the Air Force NOC/SOC provider. SD-WAN end points will be deployed across multiple nodes from enterprise hubs, to tactical low connectivity platforms. Connectivity across each of these nodes must be stable and resilient to allow for high priority traffic to make it to its destination.

Approach:

Each OEM provider will be asked to provide an initial White Paper submission, interested vendors should provide details on how their SD-WAN product can meet AFLCMC/XA objectives, and a rough-order-of-magnitude (ROM) on the associated equipment/licensing costs necessary to accomplish the stated objectives.

Selected OEM SD-WAN products from the White Paper submission will proceed to step-two where they will be assessed against a rigorous set of objectives. Those SD-WAN OEM offerors that proceed past step-two will be funded to take part in a test event and graded against a set of detailed test

criteria. The test period will be allotted three weeks per SD-WAN product, where the SD-WAN vendor is expected to be on-site at a testing facility to provide a fully configured environment against test objectives provided by the Government and witnessed/tested by an independent evaluation team. There will be an opportunity for Offeror(s) participating in the test event and selected by the Government to be awarded option contracts for acquisition of SD-WAN product licenses and services. The SD-WAN product(s) chosen will form the basis for a world-wide battle management network deployed across multiple Department of the Air Force platforms.

An example of the anticipated end-state Digital Infrastructure enterprise architecture is depicted in Figure 1.

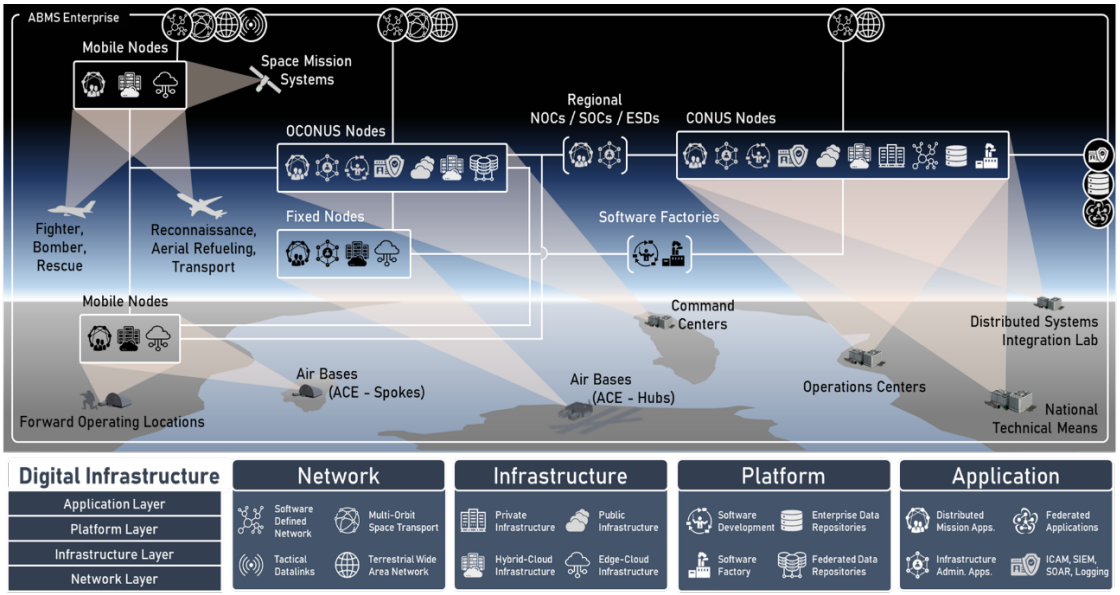

Figure 1: ABMS Digital Infrastructure Enterprise Architecture

The SD-WAN router will be a key piece of the transport layer to connect the enterprise, regional, and tactical nodes (terrestrial, space, and aerial).

An example of one of the expected test configurations is included in Figure 2 below.

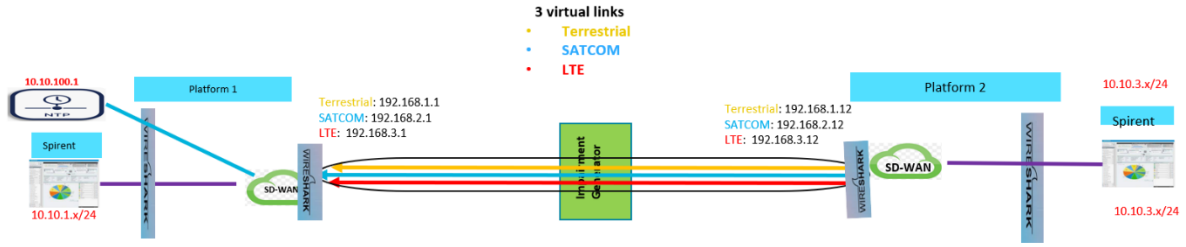

Figure 2: Point-to-Point Connectivity

Refer to Sections 3.0 through 9.0 for detailed instructions as to White Paper submission(s).

3.0 Call Timeline and General Information

Milestone	Date
Two-Step, Closed Call Published	Friday, 6 January, 2023
White Papers Due (Step-One)	Monday, 6 February, 2023
Request for Proposal (RFP) Issued or Non-Select Letter Issued	Tuesday, 14 March, 2023
Proposals Due (Step-Two)	Tuesday, 2 May, 2023
Target Selection Date/Contract Award	Tuesday, 23 May, 2023

*AFLCMC/XA reserves the right to alter or change any of the due dates listed above.

Two-Step, Closed Call Published: AFLCMC/XA publishes a Two-Step, Closed Call.

White Papers Due (Step-One): White Papers addressing the Area of Interest (AoI) defined in Section 2.0 are due no later than the AFLCMC/XA deadline listed in the table above. **Late White Paper submissions will not be considered** (see FAR 52.215-1(c)(3)). All White Papers submitted must adhere to instructions listed in Section 4.0 and Section 5.0 of this Call.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Issued: Offerors who submitted White Papers by the required due date and who have been favorably evaluated will be issued a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP will detail the requirements (e.g. required content and evaluation criteria) that prospective companies should tailor their proposal towards.

Proposals Due (Step-Two): Offerors who have received an RFP from AFLCMC/XA are required to submit their proposals by the stated due date. More details and requirements that companies shall adhere to will be contained in the RFP.

Vendor Test Selection: Select offerors will be asked to test their solution against Government objectives and test plan. More details and requirements will be contained in the RFP.

Contract Award: The Government anticipates making one award out of the vendor test event, but reserves the right to award zero, one, or more Contracts for all, some, or none of the solicited effort. Details as to the negotiation and award process will be contained in the RFP.

4.0 White Paper Format Instructions

Each White Paper submitted shall be created using 8.5 x 11 inch portrait format pages with single spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font with 1" margins. White Papers shall not exceed 10 pages, not including the cover page. The cover page shall be limited to and shall include the following: Contractor Name, CAGE Code, Name of the Call and the Area of Interest, and date.

All text, including text in tables and charts, must adhere to font sizes and line spacing requirements listed herein. Pages submitted in excess of these limits will not be read or considered in the Government's evaluation of the White Paper.

5.0 White Paper Contents

White Papers shall be valid for 180 days. All White Papers should include the following content:

- The White Paper shall address how the Offeror plans to provide an innovative approach to meet the objectives listed in Section 2.0.

- The White Paper shall include a ROM price for a proposal. Inclusion of the ROM does not imply or guarantee an RFP will be issued to the Offeror.
- The contents will be evaluated against the factors listed in Section 6.0. Offerors should strive to make clear connections between the proposed technical content and the evaluation factors.
- The White Paper shall be limited to 10 pages in technical length.

6.0 White Paper Evaluation

The White Paper shall be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation factors listed below. The Government will evaluate the Step One White Paper and rate it as "Selectable" or "Not Selectable." To be rated "Selectable," the proposal must meet the following criteria:

1) **Importance to Agency Programs/Commercial Innovation**: The degree to which the proposed concept provides an innovative, unique and/or previously under-utilized capability for Government application.
2) **Price**: Price shall be considered to the extent appropriate, but at a minimum to determine the price is fair and reasonable. For the purposes of the White Paper, the ROM shall be used to inform the availability of funds.
3) **Availability of Funds**: Any award shall be subject to the availability of funds.

White Papers will be evaluated on the basis of the merit of the proposed concept in addressing the Area of Interest and not against other White Papers submitted in response to the Area of Interest.

7.0 White Paper Submission Instructions

This solicitation will be conducted in two steps. The Government intends to evaluate Step One White Paper submissions, due NLT Monday, 6 February, 2023 at 5:00pm Eastern Daylight Time, in accordance with the Step One evaluation criteria above. **Late White Paper submissions will not be considered** (see FAR 52.215-1(c)(3)). The Government may then request a Step Two proposal from some subset of offerors, which will be due approximately one week later. Those offerors not requested to submit a Step Two proposal will be notified. An Offeror submitting a Step Two proposal without submitting a Step One proposal will not be eligible for award.

At each step, the Offeror's proposal package shall include one (1) electronic copy submitted via DoDSafe. The electronic copy shall be in a format readable by Microsoft (MS) Word and/or Adobe Acrobat Pro DC, MS Excel, MS-Power Point.

In order for an Offeror to submit a proposal via DoDSafe, they must request a DoDSafe drop off link NLT Tuesday, 2 May, 2023, at 5:00pm Eastern Daylight Time. Requests for the DoDSafe drop off link shall be made to Mr. Nic Correa at nicomedez.correa.1@us.af.mil. Proposals may be submitted through the drop off until the proposal due date and time. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Only one (1) proposal shall be submitted, per company, in response to this requirement. Proposals received after the date/time specified will not be evaluated. Proposals shall be addressed to the Contracting Officer, Mr. Nic Correa.

LATE WHITE PAPER SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. AFLCMC/XA will not be responsible for any proposals that are late due to issues with either Offeror or Air Force

email systems or the DoD SAFE. It is the Offeror's responsibility to ensure the Air Force receives the email with all attachments at the designated email address or the DoD SAFE website (if requested) by the specific due date and time.

A confirmation email will be provided by the Contracting Officer promptly upon receipt; therefore, Offeror's are urged to submit as early as practicable in order to receive confirmation of timely submission.

8.0 Projected Acquisition Particulars

As previously stated, the submission of a White Paper does not imply or guarantee that an Offeror will receive an RFP after the White Paper is evaluated. The information contained in this solicitation is provided to allow Offerors the opportunity to make an informed business decision in determining whether to respond to this Call. The Government reserves the right to change, add, remove, or modify this information in the RFP.

A. The Government intends to award one contract following the evaluation of both White Papers and proposals but reserves the right to award zero, one, or more Contracts for all, some, or none of the solicited efforts.
B. A Pitch Day will **not** be used for White Paper evaluation, however the Government reserves the right to utilize a Pitch Day in conjunction with the proposal submission and evaluation. The resulting contract shall be a FAR Part 12, Firm-Fixed-Price effort. The expected period of performance for the awarded contract is 12 months or less.
C. The successful Offeror(s) shall be an American entity with all work performed in the United States.
D. Should an award(s) be made, the resulting contract will include FAR 52-204-21. For this effort, an authorized user for the purposes of FAR 52.204-21 Basic Safeguarding of Covered Contractor Information Systems (Jun 2016) is limited to U.S. Citizens. Non-U.S. Citizens shall not be considered an authorized user for the purposes of this effort and under no circumstances will be considered authorized, without written permission from the Contracting Officer before the Non-U.S. Citizen begins work or receives any information related to this contract.
E. Use of Non-Government Advisors: Offerors are advised that technical and cost/price data submitted to the Government in response to this Call may be released to non-Government advisors for White Paper review and analysis. All non-Government advisors have appropriate signed non-disclosure statements.
F. The data rights for deliverables under the contract shall be specified in the proposal.

9.0 Contact Information

The Points of Contact for this effort are the Contracting Officer, Mr. Nic Correa, and the Contract Specialist, Mr. Wes Livesay. The Offeror shall not contact any other Government personnel or offices regarding this Call.

Position:	Name:	Email:
Contracting Officer:	Mr. Nic Correa	nicomedez.correa.1@us.af.mil
Contracting Specialist:	Mr. Wes Livesay	wesley.livesay@us.af.mil