Selective Service System (SSS)

Readiness Simulation (RS) Project – Question and Answer

1. The Evaluation Addendum and Volume II instructions describe a "commercial readiness simulation solution," require a "commercial product description," and provide for demonstration of the vendor's "proposed commercial solution" and "commercial product." The PWS and the CUN structure describe a Government-owned system to be designed, developed, and validated across phased milestones, with full source code, pipelines, and Terraform infrastructure-as-code delivered to an SSS-maintained GitHub repository. Will the Government confirm whether it is seeking (i) configuration and delivery of an existing commercial DES product, (ii) a newly developed, Government-owned custom application, or (iii) a custom application built using commercial or open-source DES components?

ANS: Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

2. If the Government is seeking a newly developed Government-owned system, will the Government confirm what vendors are expected to demonstrate in Stage 1 and Stage 2? Specifically, will the Government accept demonstration of an analogous discrete-event simulation model or working prototype built by the vendor, rather than a licensed commercial product, and will it accept a prototype developed after quote submission using the Government-provided demonstration guidance?

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS. The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate.

3. PWS 3.1 requires that the Government be able to operate, modify, and sustain the RS without contractor-exclusive development licenses, and that the RS remain functional and accessible without degradation if licenses are not renewed. Will the Government confirm that these requirements apply to any commercial DES engine or runtime, including per-seat, server-based, or runtime-licensed models, and confirm the Government's preference as between a commercially licensed DES engine and an open-source or Government-owned simulation implementation?

ANS: The referenced PWS 3.1 requirements apply to any solution. Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

4. The PWS anticipates 6 to 12 months for initial delivery; 52.217-9 limits total duration including options to 12 months and 52.217-8 permits up to 6 months of extension. Will the Government state the anticipated base period of performance and the period of performance for option CLIN 1001, so that vendors may price CLINs on a common basis?

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

5. The evaluation refers to a "commercial readiness simulation solution" and "commercial product," while the PWS requires Government ownership, full source-code delivery, no contractor-exclusive development licenses, and continued functionality if licenses are not renewed. Please confirm whether a solution built on a licensed commercial DES engine is acceptable if all licenses are perpetual or transferable to the Government and PWS §2.3, §3.1; 52.212-2 Factor 1 PWS p.3-4 separately priced, or whether a fully Government-ownable solution with no proprietary runtime dependency is required.

ANS: The Government confirms that solutions built on a licensed commercial DES engine may be proposed, provided all requirements of the PWS are fully met. In fact, per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different. A solution with no proprietary runtime dependencies is not mandatory. However, any proprietary component must comply with all PWS conditions to ensure the Government maintains full control, operability, and sustainment of the Readiness Simulation (RS). The Government requires full ownership of all RS-specific source code, configuration artifacts, and associated technical deliverables, as well as unrestricted ability to operate, modify, and sustain the RS. Licensing terms must provide the Government with perpetual or transferable rights sufficient to operate the RS without degradation.

6. For the two-phase demonstration, please confirm whether the Government will provide the demonstration environment, scenarios, and representative data, and whether vendors must demonstrate a fully working system or a representative prototype at the time of demonstration.

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS.

7. Please confirm the anticipated timeframe between quote submission (August 14, 2026) and the Stage 1 demonstration, so vendors can plan environment and data readiness.

ANS: The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written

quotations and only to vendors invited to participate.

8. Will the Government furnish baseline datasets and parameters at award (for example registration volumes, MEPS throughput, no-show and medical-disqualification rates, ASP diversion rates), or is the contractor expected to source and derive all parameters from industry benchmarks under the Data and Benchmark Justification Package?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

9. Please identify the SSS-designated cloud platform (for example AWS GovCloud, Azure Government, or others) in which the RS will be developed and hosted.

ANS: The SSS-designated cloud platform will be an FCN-managed Microsoft Azure Commercial environment.

10. Will the RS be deployed within an existing SSS FISMA Moderate authorization boundary and inherit existing common controls, or must the contractor establish a new authorization boundary?

ANS: The RS will operate at FISMA Moderate. The contractor shall document inherited, shared, and system-specific controls. SSS will provide the applicable common-control and control-implementation information during onboarding. The final authorization boundary and the allocation of inherited, shared, and system-specific controls will be confirmed through the standard FISMA Moderate authorization process and are not expected to require changes to the contractor's proposed technical approach or pricing.

11. CLIN 0004 references a complete ATO package and issuance of an ATO or IATT continuation by the SSS Authorizing Official. Please confirm whether the contractor is responsible for producing ATO artifacts for SSS adjudication or for achieving a full ATO within the base period, and please define the acceptance criteria.

ANS: The contractor is responsible for producing ATO artifacts for SSS adjudication. The following are acceptance criteria: All vendor-responsible NIST SP 800-53 moderate controls must be implemented, testable, and validated, including authentication, logging per OMB M-21-31/BOD 26-14, encryption requirements, vulnerability management, and secure build-pipeline evidence. The contractor must provide clear, reproducible evidence that each control is functioning.

12. Given the PWS states the RS operates on anonymized aggregate data only and that per-registrant microsimulation is out of scope, please confirm the system security categorization (FISMA Moderate) and whether any CUI or PII will be handled.

ANS: The system security categorization is FISMA Moderate. No PII is expected, but at least some data, inputs, and/or parameters may be non-PII CUI.

13. Please confirm the anticipated base period of performance start date and duration, as the CLIN period-of-performance fields are blank.
ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

14. The requirement is for one Past Performance reference of similar size, scope, and complexity. Please confirm whether references demonstrating discrete event simulation, analytical modeling, or comparable software delivery of similar size will be considered relevant, and whether a vendor may submit more than one reference.
ANS: Yes, references demonstrating discrete event simulation, analytical modeling, or comparable software delivery of similar sizes will be considered relevant.

15. Section V.2.d and Evaluation Factor 1 both refer to a "commercial readiness simulation solution" and require a live demonstration of the offeror's "commercial product." Does the RFQ require offerors to propose an existing, already-fielded COTS discrete-event-simulation product, or would a solution built using general-purpose/open-source simulation frameworks and delivered specifically for SSS also be eligible, provided it meets the PWS requirements and can be demonstrated per Stage 1/Stage 2? Section V.2.d / 52.212-2 Addendum, Factor 1 Pg. 21 and Pg. 28
ANS: Yes, such a solution may be proposed. Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different. Also, the demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS.

16. PWS Section 5.3 states this contract covers design and delivery only, and that ongoing O&M is out of scope "unless explicitly identified in a future task order." Do the Section 6.0 Performance Standards (99.9% availability, 1-hour incident acknowledgment, 24-hour critical defect resolution) apply during this initial delivery-only period, or only once O&M is authorized under a future task order? PWS Section 5.3 and 6.0 PWS Pg. 8-9

ANS: The Section 6.0 standards apply during contractor-controlled development, testing, acceptance, and any exercised post-delivery support period. Ongoing operations and maintenance are not included beyond the scope stated in the contract.

17. Can the Government provide additional detail on the anticipated timing of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 demonstrations relative to the August 14, 2026, quote due date, so offerors can plan scheduling accordingly? 52.212-2 Addendum, Factor 1 Pg. 28

ANS: The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate.

18. Please clarify what you are asking bidders to prepare if selected for the live demo phase. Does the government expect bidders to prepare a prototype entity simulation model for the demos?

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS.

19. Related to question 1, is the government only considering commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solutions?

ANS: Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

20. The evaluation criteria refer to the "functional capabilities of the proposed commercial solution" and require vendors to address demonstration scenarios "using the capabilities of their commercial product." The PWS requires delivery of a government-owned solution including full source code, build pipelines, and Infrastructure-as-Code. Will the Government confirm whether it is seeking a configured commercial product or a custom-developed Government-owned application?

ANS: Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

21. Will the Government provide the anticipated award date and Period of Performance start date?

ANS: The award is anticipated for September 2026 and Period of Performance start in the same month.

22. The Volume II Technical Narrative instructions and the two-stage demonstration description refer to the offeror's "commercial product" and "proposed commercial readiness simulation solution," while PWS Sections 1.1 and 5.2 require a government-owned, custom-built Readiness Simulation with full source code and Terraform infrastructure-as-code delivered to an SSS-maintained repository (PWS Section 3.1 addresses COTS and proprietary components only as a disclosed, priced option). Please confirm that a custom-built, government-owned solution satisfies the "commercial product" language, and that "commercial product description" means describing the proposed custom solution and its disclosed components rather than requiring an already-existing commercial product.

ANS: Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

23. PWS Section 6.0 (Performance Standards) requires "Vulnerability Remediation Within BOD 26-4 defined timelines," but "BOD 26-4" is not defined anywhere in the PWS or RFQ package. The closest public match we located is CISA Binding Operational Directive 26-04. Please confirm whether PWS Section 6.0 refers to that directive, and if so its specific remediation timelines, or to a different directive or an SSS-internal standard, so remediation service levels can be scoped correctly.
ANS: Yes. The reference is to CISA Binding Operational Directive 26-04. The applicable vulnerability-remediation requirements are those established by the directive.

24. PWS Sections 2.3 and 3.0 require the RS to "Support 0MB M-21-31 audit logging." 0MB Memorandum M-21-31 (August 27 was dated (July 22, 2026), and M-26-14's baseline retention window (6 months searchable, 12 months retrievable) is shorter than M-21-31's pattern (12 months active, 18 months cold). CISA's implementing Logging Reference Architecture under M-26-14 is not due until on or about August 20, 2026, after this solicitation's proposal due date. Please confirm whether RS should be designed to M-26-14's current framework instead of the rescinded M-21-31, and if so, to what event-monitoring maturity level and retention duration, given the implementing guidance will not exist at Proposal due date.

ANS: The contractor shall implement the M-21- 31 logging and retention standards specified in the PWS. If alignment with superseding federal guidance (e.g., OMB M 26 14) is required during contract performance, SSS will provide direction and any updates are expected to involve routine configuration adjustments rather than changes to the contractor's proposed architecture or pricing.

25. PWS Sections 1.2 and 2.0 state the RS "shall operate within an SSS-designated cloud environment" but do not name the PWS Sections 1.2 and 2.0 platform. Given that SSS is elsewhere described as a Microsoft Entra ID, Windows 11, and Office 365 environment, and the PWS mandates Entra ID SAML 2.0 authentication, please confirm which government cloud platform SSS will designate, for example Microsoft Azure Government, Azure Commercial GCC High, AWS GovCloud, or another environment. This determines the applicable FIPS 140-3 cryptographic modules, the Entra ID tenant type, and the infrastructure-as-code provider configuration.

ANS: The cloud platform will be Microsoft Azure Commercial.

26. The CLIN 0001 description lists "SSS cloud dev environment access established" as a precondition milestone but does not state who provisions or funds that development and staging environment, or on what timeline relative to CLIN 0001 kickoff. Please confirm whether SSS provisions and funds the development environment directly, and the expected lead time from award to environment access being granted, since this is a schedule-critical dependency for the CLIN 0001 review gate.

ANS: SSS will provision and fund the designated development environment. Access will be provided upon completion of required onboarding and identification of the contractor's technical and access requirements. The specific provisioning schedule will be coordinated at kickoff.

27. PWS Section 5.2 lists "SBOM, SAST/DAST, audit logging, ATO/SSP artifacts for shared controls" as a single PWS Section 5.2, Technical Deliverables PWS 6 to 7 Security Documentation deliverable. The phrase "shared controls" suggests RS is expected to inherit common controls from an existing SSS authorization boundary rather than obtain a standalone Authority to Operate. Please confirm whether RS

will join an existing SSS authorization boundary and inherit common controls, in which case its System Security Plan would document only system-specific and inherited controls, or whether RS requires a fully standalone System Security Plan and Authority to Operate built from a new authorization boundary. If inheritance is expected, please confirm whether that boundary's current System Security Plan or control-implementation summary can be provided as Government-furnished information during CLIN 0001, so the Draft SSP vl deliverable can describe the inheritance accurately from the outset.

ANS: The contractor shall prepare the required SSP and document inherited, shared, and system-specific controls. SSS will identify the Authorizing Official and provide the applicable common control and control implementation information during onboarding. The final authorization boundary and the allocation of inherited, shared, and system specific controls will be confirmed through the standard FISMA Moderate authorization process and are not expected to require changes to the contractor's proposed technical approach or pricing.

28. PWS Section 3.0 requires RS to "map workload and MEF responsibilities to specific SSS offices and Directorates" and Requirements to "estimate office-level staffing demands." Publicly available sources describing the SSS field structure disagree substantially: GAO-18-226 (2018) cites 436 area offices under 56 state headquarters and 3 regional headquarters; the SSS 2023 Annual Report cites over 1,700 local and district appeal boards; and Congressional Research Service report R44452 (2019) cites 2,069 local boards plus 96 District Appeal Boards and 1 National Appeal Board, a spread of roughly a factor of five. Before the office-level and Directorate-level staffing allocation logic can be finalized, can SSS provide a current, authoritative organizational chart or office and board count as Government-furnished information?

ANS: SSS will provide the organizational chart during the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase.

29. The CLIN tables in Section II do not state explicit period-of-performance start or end dates. Please confirm the anticipated contract award date and the CLIN 0001 start date, so that vendors may align their Integrated Master Schedule to a fixed calendar baseline rather than a relative "Week 1" assumption.

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts. Award expected in September 2026.

30. PWS Section 9.0 states the period of performance will be defined at the task order level, with an anticipated initial delivery duration of 6 to 12 months. Will the Government specify the intended duration of the base period, of each individual CLIN, and of the option period? Vendors cannot derive the labor hours by category required at Volume IV without a duration basis.

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

31. Where a vendor proposes COTS discrete event simulation software, PWS Section 3.1 requires that the Government be able to operate, modify and sustain the system without contractor-exclusive development licenses. How many Government user seats must be licensed for SSS personnel to both operate and modify the model following delivery, and should those license costs be presented as separate line items on the Attachment 3 pricing sheet?

ANS: Two licenses will be required. The solicitation will be modified to designate licensing costs as a separate CLIN.

32. Amendment 0001, item 5, states that vendors are requested to use demonstrations of prior completed work or notional examples comparable to Agency requirements. As the PWS contemplates development of a new system under this contract, no vendor would possess the delivered solution at the time of demonstration. Will the Government confirm (a) that a demonstration comprising prior completed work and/or a notional comparable example is fully responsive; (b) whether demonstration of discrete capabilities or modules, rather than a single integrated end-to-end system, is acceptable; (c) the expected duration and format of the demonstration; and (d) when demonstration guidance, time limits and evaluation criteria will be provided to invited vendors?

ANS: a) Yes. Demonstrations based on previously completed work and/or notional examples comparable to SSS requirements are fully responsive. Vendors are not expected to possess the delivered RS solution, as it is to be developed under this contract. The demonstration is intended to assess capabilities, architectural maturity, usability, and functional relevance, not possession of the final SSS system.

b) Yes. Demonstration of discrete capabilities, sub-modules, or functional components is acceptable. The RFQ states that vendors will demonstrate "related work in the industry, similar projects, or a notional example comparable to the SSS requirements," and nowhere requires a fully integrated end-to-end system at the time of demonstration.

c) The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations.

d) The Government will provide all demonstration materials after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate in the demonstration phase.

33. Incumbent/ existing work: Is there an incumbent contractor, or an existing model, prototype, or dataset that the awardee is expected to build upon or inherit? If so, will it be made available to the awardee?
ANS: This is a new requirement.

34. Budget/ level of effort: Does the Government have an anticipated budget range, a not-to-exceed ceiling, or an estimated level of effort (e.g., labor hours or team size) for the base period that it can share to inform pricing?

ANS: The Government does not intend to share such information. Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

35. Capability demonstration: To confirm our understanding of Section 52.212-1(d)(5) - will a notional example comparable to the SSS requirement (for example, a discrete-event/ Monte Carlo simulation with scenario analytics from a similar domain) satisfy the demonstration requirement, in lieu of an existing SSS-specific system?

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS

36. Cloud environment: Will the Government provide the SSS-designated cloud environment (e.g., Azure Government) and the Microsoft Entra ID tenant, or is the contractor responsible for provisioning the hosting environment?

ANS: SSS will provide access to the designated Microsoft Azure Commercial environment and coordinate access to Microsoft Entra ID. The contractor shall implement the required Entra ID/SAML 2.0 integration.

37. Period of performance: Could the Government confirm the anticipated base-period duration and the intended start date, so we can align staffing and the project schedule?
ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts. Expected award will be in September 2026.

38. The PWS (Section 2.0) requires the Contractor to design, develop, validate, document, and deliver a Government-owned Readiness Simulation, while the RFQ evaluation criteria and Volume II instructions reference a "commercial solution" and request a "Commercial product description." Would the Government confirm whether it is seeking (a) an existing commercial simulation product configured for SSS, (b) a purpose-built Government-owned application developed under this contract, or (c) either, evaluated on merit? This materially affects both technical approach and price.

ANS: Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests an existing commercial simulation product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

39. PWS Section 3.1 requires that the RS remain functional and accessible without degradation if licenses are not renewed, and that the Government be able to operate, modify, and sustain the RS without contractor-exclusive development licenses. Would the Government confirm that these conditions apply to any proprietary runtime, analytics, or server component required to execute the delivered model, and clarify how it intends to evaluate solutions whose continued operation depends on license renewal?

ANS: A solution with no proprietary component is not mandatory. However, any proprietary component must comply with all PWS conditions to ensure the Government maintains full control, operability, and sustainment of the Readiness Simulation (RS). Solutions which depend on license renewal will be evaluated the same way as other potential solutions. A separate CLIN will be established for licensing costs.

40. PWS Section 2.2 assigns the Contractor responsibility to supply and justify data inputs, parameter sets, and industry benchmarks, noting that legacy SSS data may be outdated or unreliable. Will the Government make available any existing baseline artifacts -- prior modeling assumptions, historical throughput figures, MEPS processing rates, office staffing tables, or outputs of previous modeling efforts -- even where considered outdated, so that vendors can calibrate scope and level of effort on a consistent basis?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

41. For MEPS throughput, no-show rates, and medical disqualification rates, does the Government expect the Contractor to source these from DoD/MEPCOM data, from published literature and benchmarks, or from Government-furnished figures provided during the Discovery Phase?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

42. Per Amendment 0001 (item 5), vendors are requested to demonstrate prior completed work or a notional example comparable to Agency requirements. Would the Government clarify (a) the expected duration and format of the consolidated demonstration, (b) whether it will be conducted virtually or on site at SSS National Headquarters, (c) approximately when it will occur relative to the 14 August closing date, and (d) whether demonstration guidance will be published in advance?

ANS: The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all of this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate.

43. Will the notional example be evaluated primarily on the fidelity of the simulation methodology demonstrated, or on the specific applicability of the scenario demonstrated to the SSS mobilization pipeline?
ANS: The Government will provide specific demonstration instructions prior to the demonstrations.

44. PWS Section 5.3 states that this contract covers design and delivery activities only, and that ongoing operation, maintenance, and sustainment are not within scope, while PWS Section 6.0 establishes performance standards including 99.9% system availability, one-hour incident response acknowledgement, and 24-hour critical defect resolution. Would the Government clarify how the Section 6.0 standards apply to a design-and-delivery effort -- for example, whether they apply only during Government-witnessed testing and acceptance windows, or whether a post-delivery warranty or support period is contemplated?

ANS: The Section 6.0 standards apply during contractor-controlled development, testing, acceptance, and any exercised post-delivery support period. Ongoing operations and maintenance are not included beyond the scope stated in the contract.

45. PWS Sections 1.2 and 5.2 reference IATT and ATO readiness and an "ATO/SSP artifacts for shared controls" deliverable. Would the Government confirm that the RS will be authorized as a component inheriting common controls from an existing SSS FISMA Moderate environment rather than requiring a standalone authorization boundary, and identify which controls SSS will provide versus which the Contractor must implement?

ANS: The Government will provide the applicable common control information during Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation. The final authorization boundary and the allocation of inherited, shared, and system specific controls will be confirmed through the standard FISMA Moderate authorization process and are not expected to require changes to the contractor's proposed technical approach. The contractor is responsible for producing ATO artifacts for SSS adjudication.

The following are acceptance criteria: All vendor-responsible NIST SP 800-53 moderate controls must be implemented, testable, and validated, including authentication, logging per OMB M-21- 31/BOD 26-14, encryption requirements, vulnerability management, and secure build-pipeline evidence. The contractor must provide clear, reproducible evidence that each control is functioning.

46. Will SSS provide the cloud environment, tenancy, and Microsoft Entra ID integration as Government-furnished, consistent with the reference in PWS Section 8.0 to access to SSS-designated cloud development environments? Is there a specified cloud service provider and region the solution must target?

ANS: SSS will provide access to the designated Microsoft Azure Commercial environment and coordinate access to Microsoft Entra ID. The contractor shall implement the required Entra ID/SAML 2.0 integration. Vendors may assume deployment within a standard U.S. Azure region; SSS will confirm the specific region after award. Region selection will not require multi-region design or materially affect vendor architecture or pricing.

47. Please clarify whether the Government requires an existing commercially available discrete-event simulation product or whether a contractor-developed solution using an established commercial or open-source simulation framework will be considered compliant, provided all functional, security, ownership, and sustainment Requirements are satisfied.

ANS: Yes, such a solution may be proposed. Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

48. Please identify the anticipated SSS-designated cloud platform and the development services that will be made available to the contractor. Is the anticipated environment Azure Government, AWS GovCloud, or another Government-authorized platform?
ANS: The SSS-designated cloud platform is Microsoft Azure Commercial.

49. Please clarify whether the contractor is responsible for obtaining a Compliance, and Risk Management; and final Authority to Operate or for preparing an ATO-ready package and supporting the Government through its authorization process.
ANS: The contractor is responsible for producing ATO artifacts for SSS adjudication.

50. The PWS requires contractor-provided datasets, validated parameter files, benchmark references, and methodology documentation. Please tell which categories of data and benchmarks the contractor is expected to independently source and what authoritative historical SSS data, process information, or Government-furnished parameters will be provided.

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

51. Please provide the Government's anticipated duration or target completion date for each base CLIN within the overall period of performance.

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

52. Approximately how much advance notice will invited vendors receive before the live capability demonstration, and what is the anticipated Capability and Demonstration and duration of the demonstration?

ANS: The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate.

53. The PWS states the RS shall operate within an SSS-designated cloud environment, and Section 8.0 lists "Access to SSS-designated cloud development environments" as GFI. Can the Government identify the cloud platform (e.g., Azure Commercial, Azure Government) and confirm that the Government will provision and bear the cost of the development, test, and production environments, including cloud consumption charges?

ANS: SSS will furnish the Microsoft Azure Commercial development, test, and production environments and bear approved cloud-consumption costs. Contractor-provided software, tools, and license costs shall be separately priced.

54. PWS Section 3.1 addresses licensing requirements where COTS DES software is proposed. Will the Government accept a solution built on mature open-source discrete-event simulation frameworks (e.g., Python-based simulation libraries), delivered as fully Government-owned source code with no licensing, subscription, or runtime fees of any kind?

ANS: Yes, such a solution may be proposed. Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

55. The Volume II instructions (Factor 1, item 1, Technical Approach) request a "Commercial product description." For vendors proposing a custom-developed, Government-owned solution rather than a commercial product, should this element be addressed as a description of the proposed solution's architecture, components, and any third-party libraries?

ANS: Yes, the element may be addressed that way. But again, per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS, unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

56. Amendment 1 revised the CLIN 0001/0002 descriptions from "GFI data inventory and parameter review" to "data, inputs, and parameters review." Can the Government confirm that SSS will provide available historical and aggregate operational data, documentation, and SME access as GFI during the Discovery Phase, with the contractor responsible for supplementing gaps through documented industry benchmarks per PWS Section 2.2?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. SME support will be available. During the Environment

Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

57. Given that this contract covers design and delivery activities only (PWS Section 5.3), the RS is hosted within SSS-designated environments, and ongoing operation and maintenance are out of scope absent a future task order, can the Government confirm that the "System Availability 99.9% uptime during operational periods" standard in Section 6.0 applies to periods when the contractor is responsible for the system during performance and acceptance testing, and that availability of the underlying SSS cloud infrastructure remains a Government responsibility?

ANS: Yes. The 99.9 percent availability standard applies during periods when the contractor is responsible for system performance, including applicable testing and acceptance periods. Availability of the underlying Government-furnished cloud infrastructure remains a Government responsibility.

58. The Period of Performance start and end date fields for the CLINs in Schedule Bare blank. Can the Government share the anticipated award date and period-of-performance start date for the base CLINs, for scheduling and pricing purposes given the 6-12 month anticipated initial delivery window in PWS Section 9.0?
ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts. Expected award will be in September 2026.

59. What branch of the military will this readiness need to simulate? Is this for all the branches?
ANS: Conscription covers all branches of the military.

60. What are examples of the data inputs that will be provided? Can you provide any categories of data?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

61. What data is currently available for the 6 Mission Essential Functions?
ANS: The Government will discuss this with the Contractor during the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase.

62. Will the SSS provide the data documentation assumptions in order to create and validate the model?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

63. Will SSs provide the anticipated number of units and users, and will any historical data need to be considered?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the
Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity. There will be two users of the delivered product.

64. Will we be provided with a portion or sample of the conscription data? What is the population size of the data?
ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts.

Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

65. The PWS identifies performance at SSS National Headquarters, 1501 Wilson Blvd, Arlington VA 22209. For effort under CLINs 0001 through 0004 (Environment Onboarding, Model Architecture, Full Model Build, and ATO/V&V), may Contractor personnel perform work at the Contractor's own facility or via telework, with on-site presence required only for scheduled milestone reviews, ATO working sessions, (OR/leadership touchpoints, and final acceptance? Please confirm any minimum on-site days per CLIN or milestone.
ANS: On-site presence will be limited and scheduled collaboratively with the Government, and is expected to be occasional rather than routine. The Government does not anticipate continuous onsite staffing for this effort.

66. CLIN 0001 requires the Contractor to finalize Discrete Event Simulation (DES) tool/framework selection. For Volume II (Technical Narrative Quote), should offerors propose a specific DES tool-commercial off-the-shelf, open-source, or proprietary-in the technical narrative, or is tool selection deferred to the post-award Requirements Elicitation phase? If the Government has preferred tool categories, standards, or interoperability constraints (e.g., discrete event vs. agent-based, license terms, model export formats), please clarify what should be addressed in the narrative now.

ANS: Offerors may propose specific tools in the Technical Narrative Quote at their discretion. The Government is open to any tool categories, standards, or interoperability constraints which conform to the requirements in the PWS.

67. For the SSS-designated cloud environment in which the RS will operate, please confirm: (1) the specific cloud platform and tenant (e.g., Azure Government, Azure Government Secret, AWS GovCloud, M365 GCC High); (2) the FISMA Moderate baseline plus any required impact level (IL2, IL4, ILS, IL6); (3) whether the Government provides the cloud tenant, FedRAMP-authorized baseline services, and boundary infrastructure; and (4) whether the Contractor is expected to budget for continuous monitoring tools, scanning licenses, and ATO sustainment beyond initial authorization.

ANS: The RS will operate in an FCN-managed Microsoft Azure Commercial environment at FISMA Moderate; DoW impact levels do not apply. SSS will provide access to the cloud environment, approved FedRAMP-authorized services, and applicable boundary infrastructure. The contractor shall separately price any contractor-provided monitoring tools, scanning licenses, or other software required during contract performance. Ongoing ATO sustainment beyond initial authorization is not included unless separately exercised or acquired.

68. The PWS requires use of 'anonymized aggregate data' and the Contractor shall support validation, after-action reconstruction, and sensitivity analysis. Will the Government provide anonymized aggregate datasets (historical or representative) sufficient to seed, calibrate, and validate the model against realistic pipeline behavior? If not, is the Contractor expected to generate synthetic data; are there authoritative statistical baselines (e.g., Census-derived demographic distributions, historical induction rates) the model must reflect; and how should offerors price data acquisition vs. data systems.

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements

will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

69. The PWS states the RS shall be Government-owned and support 'complete Government ownership and sustainment.' Please confirm: (1) the Government requires unlimited rights (per FAR 52.227-14) to all custom-developed source code, model logic, scenario libraries, configuration files, and documentation; (2) the Contractor may retain rights to pre-existing commercial COTS, open-source, and background IP not specifically created for SSS; and (3) any required carve-outs, deliverable formats, or repository standards (e.g., SSS Git repository structure, license tagging) for source artifact delivery.

ANS: The Contractor may propose a solution with proprietary components. However, any proprietary component must comply with all PWS conditions to ensure the Government maintains full control, operability, and sustainment of the Readiness Simulation. (IT, answer the rest of the question).

70. For the optional live demonstration referenced for down-selected vendors, please clarify: (1) whether the demonstration will be conducted virtually or on-site at SSS HQ; (2) whether offerors may demonstrate a prototype, model excerpt, or pre-recorded scenario run rather than the full production model; (3) the expected duration and demonstration scenario(s); and (4) the relative weight of demonstration performance within Factor 1.

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS. The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all of this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate. The relative weight of demonstration performance will be decided at a later point in time.

71. The RFQ states the simulation shall operate within an SSS-designated cloud environment. Please identify that environment and confirm whether the offeror must deliver into an existing Government-authorized enclave, or whether the offeror is expected to provide the hosting environment and supporting authorization documentation.

ANS: The SSS-designated environment is Microsoft Azure Commercial. The Contractor must deliver into this environment.

72. Regarding complete Government ownership and sustainment: does the Government require unlimited rights only in newly developed deliverables, or does it also require rights in an offeror's pre-existing commercial software, frameworks, or libraries incorporated into the delivered solution?

ANS: A solution with no proprietary component is not mandatory. However, any proprietary component must comply with all PWS conditions to ensure the Government maintains full control, operability, and sustainment of the Readiness Simulation.

73. Will the Readiness Simulation be deployed inside an SSS cloud environment that already holds a FISMA Moderate Authorization to Operate, allowing the RS to inherit common and hybrid NIST SP 800-53 controls from the existing System Security Plan, or will the RS require a standalone authorization boundary with a full control set? The RS will operate in an FCN-managed Microsoft Azure Commercial environment at FISMA Moderate .

ANS: The contractor shall prepare the required System Security Plan and document inherited, shared, and system-specific controls. SSS will identify the Authorizing Official and provide the applicable common control and control implementation information during onboarding. The final authorization boundary and the allocation of inherited, shared, and system specific controls will be confirmed through the standard FISMA Moderate authorization process and are not expected to require changes to the contractor's proposed technical approach or pricing.

74. PWS Section 9.0 states the period of performance "shall be defined at the task order level" and anticipates 6-12 months for initial delivery, but this RFQ awards a single firm-fixed-price contract and the Period of Performance Start and End Date fields on Schedule Bare blank for all CLINs. Please confirm the contract period of performance, or the number of months vendors should assume for pricing.

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

75. Please confirm whether the SSS-designated cloud development and production environments, including compute, storage, and any associated subscription costs, are furnished by the Government as GFI/GFE, or whether vendors should include those costs in their price.
ANS: SSS will furnish and fund approved Microsoft Azure Commercial development, test, and production resources, including compute and storage. Vendors shall include separately required contractor-provided software, tools, and licenses in their proposed price.

76. PWS Section 3.1 requires that the Government be able to operate, modify, and sustain the RS without contractor-exclusive development licenses, and that the RS remain functional without degradation if licenses are not renewed. Please confirm that a solution built on permissively licensed open-source simulation libraries, delivered as Government-owned source code with no runtime or seat licensing of any kind, fully satisfies this requirement.

ANS: Yes, such a solution may be proposed. Per the President's Executive Order 14271, "Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts", the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

77. Amendment 0001, item 5 states that vendors are requested to demonstrate prior completed work or notional examples comparable to Agency requirements. Please confirm that a purpose-built notional

demonstration, developed by the vendor to illustrate its proposed approach against a representative mobilization pipeline, is acceptable and will be evaluated on equal footing with a demonstration of a previously delivered system.
ANS: Yes, such a solution for the demonstration would be considered.

78. PWS Section 2.2 requires the Contractor to identify, validate, and supply required data inputs, parameter sets, modeling assumptions, and industry benchmarks, noting that legacy SSS draft data may be outdated or unreliable. So that vendors can scope this firm-fixed-price effort accurately, please describe what Registration, Selection, Notification, Delivery, Classification, and ASP data currently exists, in what form, and at what level of aggregation.

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

79. PWS Section 6.0 establishes performance standards including 99.9% system availability, critical defect resolution within 24 hours, and one-hour incident response acknowledgement, while PWS Section 5.3 states that ongoing operation, maintenance, and sustainment are not within the scope of this PWS. Please clarify the period during which the Section 6.0 standards apply and whether they apply to the Contractor following Government acceptance.
ANS: The Section 6.0 standards apply during contractor-controlled development, testing, acceptance, and any exercised post-delivery support period. Ongoing operations and maintenance are not included beyond the scope stated in the contract.

80. The PWS (Attachment 1, Sections 2.0 and 3.0) describes the design, development, and delivery of a custom, Government-owned Readiness Simulation, and the pricing structure (Attachment 3, CLIN 0002 "Model Architecture & Core Prototype") reflects phased custom development. However, the evaluation addendum (52.212-2 Addendum, Factor 1) references demonstration of the vendor's "commercial readiness simulation solution" and "commercial product." Will the Government consider quotations proposing custom-developed solutions, with the two-stage demonstrations conducted using a working prototype developed for this requirement, or is a pre-existing commercial simulation product required to participate in the demonstrations?

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS.

81. To assist vendors in appropriately scoping their technical and price quotations, can the Government share the anticipated budget range, Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) magnitude, or period-of-performance assumptions for the base CLINs (0001–0005)?

ANS: The Government is not releasing the anticipated budget range, IGCE magnitude, or period-of-performance assumptions for CLINs 0001–0005. Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

82. PWS Section 3.0 requires the RS to operate within an SSS-designated cloud environment with Government-furnished access (PWS 8.0). Please confirm which cloud platform(s) constitute the SSS-designated environment (e.g., Azure Government, AWS GovCloud), and whether the Government-furnished environment includes the platform services required for deployment (compute, database, identity integration with Microsoft Entra ID).

ANS: The SSS-designated environment is an FCN-managed Microsoft Azure Commercial environment. SSS will provide authorized access. The contractor shall identify the Azure compute, database, identity, and other services required for its proposed solution. SSS will confirm service availability and configuration during the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase. Any adjustments identified at that stage will be routine configuration refinements consistent with the established Azure Commercial environment and will not require material changes to the contractor's proposed solution.

83. Is an Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) or budget ceiling available for this effort? If so, please provide it.

ANS: The Government is not releasing IGCE magnitude or budget ceiling. Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

84. What specific cloud environment has SSS designated for hosting the Readiness Simulation? (e.g., AWS GovCloud, Microsoft Azure Government, other FedRAMP-authorized platform)

ANS: The designated environment is Microsoft Azure Commercial.

85. The PWS permits use of COTS tools with full disclosure. Are commercial Discrete Event Simulation platforms (e.g., Anylogic, Sirnio) acceptable? If so, should associated licensing costs be priced as a separate CUN or bundled within the applicable base CLINs?

ANS: Yes, Discrete Event Simulation platforms are acceptable. Licensing will be a separate CLIN – the solicitation will be updated accordingly.

86. Beyond what is noted in the PWS, what Government Furnished Information (GFI) will SSS provide to support model calibration and parameter development? Will any current operational data, staffing records, or MEF workflow documentation be made available?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation

phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

87. Regarding the two-phase technical demonstration for top-rated vendors: what is the anticipated format, duration, and timeframe post-award? Will it be conducted remotely or on-site at SSS headquarters?

ANS: The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate. Also, the demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS.

88. Can SSS confirm the anticipated base period of performance? The PWS references 6-12 months; is there a preferred or planned duration?

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

89. Are there any minimum qualifications or required certifications for Key Personnel (e.g., Project Manager, Lead Developer, ISSO)?

ANS: No. The Government does not prescribe any minimum qualifications or required certifications for Key Personnel (e.g., Project Manager, Lead Developer, ISSO). Vendors may propose personnel consistent with their technical approach, ensuring they possess the experience and capabilities needed to perform the tasks described in the PWS.

90. Volume II instructions request a "Commercial product description," and the evaluation addendum references the "proposed commercial solution." Will the Government confirm that a custom-developed solution composed of commercially available, non-proprietary components — carrying no recurring runtime, seat, or server license fees, and delivered as fully Government-owned source code consistent with PWS Section 3.1 — satisfies the solicitation's intent, and that offerors are not required to propose a pre-existing commercial-off-the-shelf DES product?

ANS: Yes, such a solution may be proposed, provided all requirements of the PWS are fully met. Per the President’s Executive Order 14271, “Ensuring Commercial, Cost-Effective Solutions in Federal Contracts”, the Government strongly requests a commercial product configured for SSS unless the contractor provides robust justification for using something different.

91. Is there an incumbent contractor, prior contract, or existing Government-developed model or tool that the RS replaces or supersedes? If so, will its outputs, assumptions, or documentation be available as GFI during the Discovery Phase?
ANS: This is a new requirement.

92. Can the Government identify the SSS-designated cloud environment (e.g., Azure commercial, Azure Government) and the categories of platform services approved for the RS (e.g., container hosting, managed databases)? Should Infrastructure-as-Code artifacts target a specific Terraform provider and version baseline?

ANS: The SSS-designated environment is Microsoft Azure Commercial and supports approved infrastructure and platform services. The contractor shall identify its required services and provide the Terraform artifacts required by the PWS. Final platform-service selection and Terraform provider/version baselines will be validated with SSS during the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Eliciation phase and are expected to require only routine configuration alignment rather than changes to the contractor's proposed architecture or pricing.

93. Will the Government share the magnitude of the Independent Government Cost Estimate, or a not-to-exceed range, to assist offerors in calibrating phased CLIN pricing to the Government's resourcing expectations?

ANS: The Government does not intend to share the magnitude of the IGCE or a not-to-exceed range. Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts.

94. For the two-stage demonstration: what is the anticipated demonstration window relative to the August 14 submission date, and will invited vendors receive the Stage 2 Government-developed operational scenarios in advance of the demonstration or upon its commencement?

ANS: The demonstration requirement is being revised to a single-stage format that may reflect relevant industry work, similar projects previously completed, or a notional example comparable to SSS requirements. It will not require vendors to demonstrate any capability specified in the PWS. The Government will provide demonstration instructions, the demonstration schedule, time limits, and additional logistical information to invited vendors prior to the demonstrations. The Government will provide all of this information after completion of the initial evaluation of written quotations and only to vendors invited to participate.

95. Does SSS maintain an existing FISMA Moderate authorization boundary with inheritable common controls available to the RS (e.g., enclave-level controls), and can the Government identify the Authorizing Official role for the IATT and ATO decisions referenced in CLINs 0001 and 0004?

ANS: SSS will identify the Authorizing Official and provide the applicable common control information during Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation. The final authorization boundary and the allocation of inherited, shared, and system specific controls will be confirmed through the standard FISMA Moderate authorization process and are not expected to require changes to the contractor's proposed technical approach.

96. PWS §2.2 assigns the contractor responsibility for supplying validated data inputs and industry benchmarks. Does the Government expect benchmarks to derive from specific authoritative sources (e.g., Census Bureau demographics, DoD MEPS processing statistics), or is source selection at the contractor's discretion subject to the Data and Benchmark Justification Package?

ANS: The Government will furnish the baseline datasets and parameter values required to initiate model design and development. During the Environment Onboarding & Requirements Elicitation phase, the Government and Contractor will jointly review these inputs to determine whether any limited, targeted benchmark refinements would improve scenario fidelity. Any such refinements will be Government-approved, clearly scoped, and capped within the Data & Benchmark Validation Package. If discovery identifies gaps where supplemental benchmarks would be helpful, the Contractor may propose efficient methods—including AI-assisted literature review or synthesis—to accelerate parameter derivation, provided all values include traceable sources, reproducible methodology, and documented confidence ranges. The Government does not expect vendors to price broad, open-ended data-collection or independent large-scale sourcing efforts. Vendors should base proposals on Government-furnished baseline data, with any supplemental benchmark refinement addressed as a limited, discovery-driven activity.

97. What is the Government's anticipated award date and period-of-performance start date for the base period?

ANS: Vendors should propose pricing and performance timelines consistent with their technical approach and industry standards for similar efforts. Award is expected in September 2026.

98. PWS Section 3.0 requires NARA compliance. RFI Q&A Set 2 (A6) stated transfer specifications would be in the RFQ, but they appear to be absent. Will the Agency provide the specific required mapping schemas (e.g., XML templates) as Government-Furnished Information (GFI) at project kickoff, or must the Contractor design custom NARA-compliant schemas independently?

ANS: The Agency will not provide system-specific NARA mapping schemas or XML templates as Government-Furnished Information. NARA does not prescribe a single system-specific schema for this solution. The Contractor shall provide the schema definitions, data-mapping documentation, and export capabilities using open, non-proprietary, machine-readable formats where practicable. The proposed approach will be subject to Government review and approval. Any additional requirements for a future NARA transfer will be provided by the Government through the applicable task order or other contractual direction.