

**INTEROPERABLE SOFTWARE VOICE CLIENT**  
**W56HZV-13-R-0179**  
**Questions and Answers Summary as of 05 June 2013**

1. The NET training schedule is unclear to me. Is there only one 40hr class or many 40hr classes spread out over a ten week period? If so, is it expected that the trainer train the students every week? Based on our understanding of the documentation, there will be a total of 309 students. Is this correct?

**Answer:** Section C.3.2.4 has been updated to reflect that NET duration shall be no more than 80 hours consisting of one week for Administrator Training (including Power User Training) and one week of User Training.

2. After reviewing the documentation, it looks like there may be a small discrepancy between the number of components listed in section M.4.3.2 and C.3.1.1. If the numbers are correct, can you please provide clarity?

**Answer:** C.3.1.1 refers to Lab Based Risk Reduction (LBRR) that is independent of the Stage II lab assessment described at M.4.3.2, which is part of the Source Selection evaluation process. The Stage II lab assessment will be completed prior to contract award. LBRR will be conducted as part of the awarded contract scope. The architecture and, therefore, client requirements are different for both.

3. Section M.4.3.1 states, "An acceptable proposal demonstrates the proposed software client software client will meet each of the threshold requirements marked "D" in the "Method" column of Exhibit A, Interoperable Software Voice Client Product Specification." When reviewing Exhibit A, there are some "D" marks next only Objectives. Is it safe to assume that these requirements will not be used during Stage I's evaluation phase?

**Answer:** Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification has been updated to reflect the removal of test and demonstrate from the objective requirements.

4. C.3.2.1 calls for an onsite FSR for a two week period; F.2.1.1 requests an onsite FSR requirement for four weeks. Do you know which one is correct or help clarify?

**Answer:** Section F.2.1.1 has been updated to reflect "two weeks between date of contract award and Feb 2014 in which the contractor shall provide on-site support at APG, MD in accordance with C.3.2.1."

5. During the FIELDEX, there is a requirement for (x4) FSRs - if 12hr shifts are performed. This appears somewhat high. Is this correct?

**Answer:** Section C.3.2.7 FIELDEX has been updated to reflect one FSR on-site per shift.

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6. Section C.7.2 makes mention that the government will furnish all hardware the client and server apps will run on for the LBRR and NIE. Is it safe to assume that the government will also supply hardware for the other exercises and phases too?

**Answer:** Section C.7.2 has been updated to reflect that the Government will provide all hardware for all Phases. Vendors are required to provide software only, and are not permitted to provide hardware.

7. It appears that the "software voice client", as written, is a single component. Can it be made up of multiple types of voice clients?

**Answer:** As noted within, 3.2.1 Power Users of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification, vendors may provide “the existing software voice client, an additional local voice client with enhanced capabilities, a web interface, or any combination thereof” to meet the requirements to enable Power User functions. Therefore, the solution may consist of more than one type of client for purposes of enabling Power User functions.

8. Can we get clarification on the terminology, a comparison, and purpose of the words "Threshold" and "Objective"?

**Answer:** Threshold is intended to convey those requirements that MUST be met in the proposed solution. Threshold requirements will be assessed either in a Test Environment, via Documentation review, or both as outlined in Table 4.1 Verification Method of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification. See Attachment 001 – Capabilities Requirements Matrix for required documentation related to Threshold Requirements. See Attachment 005 – Stage II Test Procedure for test procedures related to Threshold Requirements.

All references to Objective are desired features only and are NOT required, nor will they be assessed. Any vendor responses relating to Objective requirements will be treated as informational only.

9. The scope states that, "the requirements and functionality of the interoperability software voice client," are defined in this document. Is it assumed that all listed "Threshold" and "Objectives" must be met, in order to be considered a solution candidate?

**Answer:** See the answer to item 8 above.

10. 3.1.5 Speaker User Identity Display: Is it expected that the client illustrate speaker identifiers from the Inc2 CNR gateway and the radio users it services?

**Answer:** Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification denotes item 3.4.5 Integration with Inc2 CNR Gateway as an Objective requirement, and is NOT required. Therefore, vendors are not required to illustrate speaker identifiers from the Inc2 CNR Gateway and the radio users it services.

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11. 3.1.10 Direct Client-to-Client Voice Communication: Will a phone call between software voice clients suffice or is our assumption incorrect?

**Answer:** Yes that will suffice, provided that one voice client user is able to place a VOIP phone call to enable direct voice communication with another voice client user without the need for a predefined Talk Group in accordance with 3.1.0 Direct Client-to-Client Voice Communication of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification. However, the voice client is not limited to this method; it will also suffice if there is another method by which the voice client can meet the requirement.

12. 3.1.11 Integrated Text Chat: If more than one type of voice client can make up a "software voice client" system, is it required that all of the participating voice clients be able to pass XMPP messages between each other?

**Answer:** The requirement outlined in 3.1.11 Integrated Text Chat of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification falls under the section 3.1 Voice Client Features and is, therefore, applicable only to the standard user voice client. Integrated Text Chat does not apply to any additional software clients permitted by 3.2.1 Power Users that may be introduced to meet the required Power User functions, as those requirements are for a different purpose. Version 29 of the specification (Exhibit A) removed the requirement for compatibility with other XMPP chat solutions and, therefore, it is not a requirement of the Request for Proposal (RFP).

13. 3.2 Power User Features: Can we get more information about what roles the "Power User" will perform? For example, is the "Power User" a Solution Admin, a voice client user with additional client capabilities, or both...

**Answer:** Power Users as defined in 3.2.1 Power Users of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification denote users that are assigned elevated permissions to perform additional functions outlined in 3.2.2 through 3.2.9. Given that these functions can be accessed through the existing software voice client, an additional local voice client with enhance capabilities, a web interface, or any **combination** thereof, it is clear that the Government is not defining exactly how this is accomplished. It is up to the vendor to provide a solution that enables the execution of these functions. If a combination of client and web interface is provided to perform these functions, for example, then it may be reasonable to define multiple levels or groups of Power Users to provide access to each interface to perform the different functions. Additionally, some of the Power User features may be interpreted as "Administrator" functions; however, the specification does not distinguish between such Administrative Users and Power Users, and therefore combines them into one grouping for purposes of executing Power User functions. Ultimately, elevated privileges can be assigned in any way or via any combination of interfaces (as defined in 3.2.1 Power Users) as long as when combined, they enable the execution of all of the Power User functions.

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14. 3.2.9 Talk Group Priority Speaker Preemption: Are there any metrics defined for this? For example, when the Commander speaks, remote users are notified, and once this is complete, the Commander is notified that he/she has the floor. This all must take place within 500ms.

**Answer:** 3.2.9 Talk Group Priority Speaker Preemption of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification is denoted as Objective, and is therefore NOT required for this solicitation.

15. 3.3.2 Voice Client Minimum Hardware Specifications: Are the system specifications fixed? Some of the specifications don't meet the recommended values for a 64-bit OS. In particular, RAM. Can the RAM requirement be bumped up to meet the recommended numbers (e.g, bump RAM up to 2GB)?

**Answer:** 3.3.2 of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification has been updated to reflect a Minimum Hardware Specification of 2GB RAM.

16. 3.3.3 Voice Client Operating System Requirement: Is there a version type that is planned? For example, Windows 7 Enterprise, Windows XP Pro, other...

**Answer:** Section L.3.2.5.b, Stage II Test Procedure has been updated to reflect that Voice Clients be installed on Windows 7 (64-bit) native operating system and Windows 7 (64-bit) hosted on VMWare VSphere 5.0 (ESXi). These will be the versions against which vendor solutions will be assessed.

17. 3.3.5 Server Minimum Hardware Specification: Are the system specifications fixed? Some of the specifications don't meet the recommended values for the NOS. In particular, RAM. Can the RAM requirement be bumped up to meet the recommended numbers (e.g, bump RAM up to 2GB)?

**Answer:** Whereas recommended specifications for Windows Server 2008 R2 (64-bit) calls for 2GB of RAM, the minimum requirement is 512MB. There may be many instances where 2GB or more of RAM can be allocated for server resources, but there are certain locations in the current architecture that can only make 1GB available until future upgrades.

18. 3.3.6 Server Operating System Requirement: Is there a version type that is planned? For example, Windows Server 2008 SP1 Enterprise, Core, Standard, other?

**Answer:** Section L.3.2.5.b, Stage II Test Procedure has been updated to reflect that server components be installed on Windows Server 2008 R2 64-bit operating system hosted on VMWare VSphere 5.0 (ESXi). This will be the version against which vendor solutions will be assessed.

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19. IP Voice via UDP: Our solution has a feature that provides the ability to adjust between using TCP/UDP between network segments. It first must make a TCP connection and negotiates whether or not UDP is possible. If UDP is possible, it tears down the TCP legs and establishes UDP legs. During the negotiation phase, it may be possible that RTP may flow between the network segments. The time is minimal. Will this be ok? If not, we can use a different technique to meet this requirement.

**Answer:** Whereas TCP sessions may be required for certain functions, the Government requires a solution that can be configured to deliver voice payload traffic exclusively via UDP to overcome previous challenges experienced with TCP-based voice solutions. It may be the case in the future that alternative configurations can be explored to meet specific unit architecture and overall integration needs. However, during the Stage II Test Procedure vendor solutions will be assessed on their ability to transmit voice payload traffic via UDP only.

20. Virtualization: Is it assumed that the hardware specs that are defined in the document will be the same specifications that are allocated to the VMWare instances?

**Answer:** Yes, the hardware specs that are defined in the document will be the same specifications that are allocated to the VMWare instances.

21. Virtualization: Will the allocated resources be shared or fixed? For example, a shared or dedicated core processor...

**Answer:** Dedicated resources will be assigned.

22. Virtualization: The Applicable Documents section references VMWare vSphere 4.1 (ESXi) and 5.1 (ESXi) documentation. The requirements list doesn't make mention of VMWare vSphere 5.1. Should we consider 5.1 and/or not consider 5.0?

**Answer:** 2.1.1 of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification has been updated to reflect version 5.0, not 5.1.

23. 3.3.22 Web Browser Client: Does the Web Browser Client need to be able to communicate with other XMPP enabled clients?

**Answer:** 3.3.22 Web Browser Client of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification is denoted as Objective and is NOT required for this solicitation.

24. 3.3.23 Talk Group Voice Traffic Recording: We are a little confused on this requirement. Does the system recording component need to be storage space aware and adjust its recording functions based on the available space?

**Answer:** Yes, the Power Users of Exhibit A – Interoperable Software Voice Client Specification has been updated accordingly.

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25. 3.5.3 Participant Scalability: With not knowing the placement of 500 users and WAN bandwidth capacity, is it possible to place additional server/s in LAN's 3's architecture? This may help with scalability issues and reduce telephony-to-talk group latency.

**Answer:** The diagram has been updated to include a server in LAN3.

26. Based on the instructions found in the documentation, it requests that the responder provide costs that will be associated to the Voice Client solution. Without having a better understanding of the network infrastructure, user location, administrative location/req, bandwidth capacities, latency, jitter, firewall restrictions, protocol support, technologies being used, and etc it may be hard to provide an accurate number. If I use the Stage II drawing as an example, I am not confident if all server components need to be placed on every LAN, if the server/s can be centrally managed, or other. As of now, we will need to provide a worse case solution that may make it more expensive. Can you provide more architecture/design detail?

**Answer:** The Government has provided architecture diagrams and quantities of components by echelon as Attachment 009 to the solicitation to aid vendors in designing a solution and providing pricing. Attachment 009 can be found at: <https://contracting.tacom.army.mil/research/niecycle/niecycle.htm>

27. What if I have compliance testing results from a different version/release or standard as specified in the RFP for a specific area?

**Answer:** If you are providing test results that trace to a different version of the required standard it needs to be stated up front and each variance from the specification standard must be annotated. Specify if the test results are in accordance with an older or newer version/release of the annotated standard, or if they are in accordance with another, similar standard.

28. What if I do not have documentation to submit for certain areas specified in the RFP (i.e. Training & Lesson Plans)? Can I leave blanks or just not submit information for those areas of the RFP that I have no information, or know anything about?

**Answer:** Areas left blank or missing attachments/appendices will result in an incomplete submission, which may result in a determination that your proposal is non-responsive and not eligible for continuation in the RFP process. If an area/question is not applicable to your system, please list it and mark it as "N/A" with a detailed explanation of why it is not applicable as part of your proposal submission. If you are unsure if an area applies to your system, please submit your question to the POC specified in the RFP for clarification.

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29. Does the Army require that the offeror verify, in the written proposal, that 100% of the requirements are met?

**Answer:** Yes, for a proposal to be considered for award it must specifically state that the offeror proposes to meet all of the requirements of Section C, including intent to provide the requisite NIE laboratory product and support (pre-award) as required by Section L.3.2.3 of the RFP. The offeror must also clearly establish conformance with all "Threshold" requirements as prescribed in Exhibit A, Interoperable Software Voice Client Product Specification, of the RFP by completing Attachment 001, Capabilities Requirements Matrix, and providing written supporting compliance documentation to support responses to Attachment 001 as required in Section L.3.3.1.2(b) of the RFP.

30. Attachment 001, Capabilities Requirements Matrix, does not contain all of the listed Threshold requirements from Exhibit A, Interoperable Software Voice Client Product Specification, Table 4.1. Which document takes precedence?

**Answer:** The Interoperable Software Voice Client is required to meet each of the Threshold requirements in Exhibit A. Written supporting compliance documentation is only required to support responses to Attachment 001 as required in Section L.3.3.1.2(b). Attachment 001, Capabilities Requirements Matrix, does not address all Threshold requirements of Exhibit A. Exhibit A - Interoperable Software Voice Client Product Specification, states the requirement and, consequently, takes precedence. Attachment 0001 - Capabilities Requirements Matrix is a tool for evaluation of proposals.

31. If exercised, will the voice clients procured under CLIN 0002AA - NIE Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option) and CLIN 0004AA - LBRR Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option) be delivered to the same events (during the same timeframe and same place) as those voice clients delivered under CLIN 0001AA - NIE and LBRR Basic Award?

**Answer:** If exercised, the voice clients procured under CLIN 0002AA - NIE Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option) and CLIN 0004AA - LBRR Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option) will be delivered to a future NIE event to be prescribed in the option exercise modification. For pricing purposes, licenses would be delivered to the same locations as those voice client licenses delivered under CLIN 0001AA for NIE: Ft. Bliss, TX (FBTX) and LBRR: Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), MD; however, the timeframe would differ.

32. If exercised, will the FSR support procured under CLIN 0006AA - NIE and LBRR FSR Support (Option) be taking place at the same events (during the same timeframe and same place) as the FSR support included in CLIN 0001AA - NIE and LBRR Basic Award?

**Answer:** If exercised, the FSR support procured under CLIN 0006AA - NIE and LBRR FSR Support (Option) will be for a future NIE event to be prescribed in the option exercise modification. For pricing purposes, the place of performance would be at FBTX and White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), NM for NIE and APG, MD for LBRR; however, the timeframe would differ. The scope will be the same as the FSR support for CLIN 0001AA, Sections C.3.2.1 through C.3.4.

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33. There is only one CLIN for FSR support, and so in developing the proposed price for CLIN 0006AA - NIE and LBRR FSR Support (Option), should we assume that the support will be provided for all events (i.e. LBRR, Golden Vehicle Design, Fleet Build, NET, VALEX, COMMEX & FIELDEX, Pilot & NIE, and Recovery)?

**Answer:** Yes, if exercised, assume that the FSR support included in CLIN 0006AA - NIE and LBRR FSR Support (Option) will be provided for all events.

34. Is the FSR support included in CLIN 0006AA - NIE and LBRR FSR Support (Option) only associated with the additional voice clients that the Government may procure under CLINs 0002AA - NIE Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option) and 0004AA - LBRR Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option)?

**Answer:** Yes, the FSR support included in CLIN 0006AA - NIE and LBRR FSR Support (Option) will only be associated with the additional voice clients that the Government may procure under CLINs 0002AA - NIE Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option) and 0004AA - LBRR Interoperable Software Voice Client (Option).

35. Product Specification 3.4.1 identifies H.323 interfaces to the TOCNET for radio connections. RFP Work Statement paragraphs 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4.1 all describe licensed quantities of system content (clients, telephones and simultaneous talk groups) but no quantities are given for the number of TOCNET interfaces. We believe this missing data is needed to facilitate a complete licensing content to fulfill the Threshold Specification requirement for TOCNET interconnections.

**Answer:** Each Brigade will contain 10 TOCNET eMCSU, four of which can connect to up to eight radios and six of which can connect to up to 16 radios.

36. Comparing the requested number of manweeks support in C.3.2.1-C.3.3 to the proposed schedules for each of these shown in F.2.1.1-F.2.1.10 leaves some confusion on how many actual personnel might be required. Can you clarify how the "continuous weeks" might overlap (i.e. are any/all of these support periods parallel or serial)? Given the data provided there is no accurate way to account for actual personnel that will be required.

**Answer:** LBRR (C.3.2.1) and NET (C.3.2.4) are the only activities that will overlap, all others (C.3.2.2 – C.3.2.3 and C.3.2.5 – C.3.3) are serial. In accordance with C.3.2.4, NET training for the Interoperable Software Voice Client shall be no more than 80 hours which shall consist of two separate week-long blocks of instruction; one week for Administrator Training (including Power User Training) and one week for User Training. Administrator Training shall be conducted in a 40-hour block of instruction over 5 days (8 hours per day) for up to 20 students. User Training shall be conducted in multiple 1-hour blocks of instruction over the course of a week to accommodate up to 400 students. This training will require NET instructors. Any other support to sustain operational readiness of the Interoperable Software Voice Client during NET shall be FSR support (the same FSR supporting Golden Vehicle, Fleet Build, VALEX, and COMMEX should be fixing any operational problem experienced in NET).

Support to LBRR (Phase III) must be independent of on-site support to NIE (Phases IV, V, and VI). LBRR runs through all Phases (III through VI).