REQUEST FOR QUOTES #2024-03
NIST COMPLIANCE IMPLEMENTATION
RESPONSE TO CLARIFYING QUESTIONS I
March 4, 2024

Note that these are questions submitted by interested firms to this solicitation. The below answers are for clarification purposes only and in no way alter or amend the RFQ as published.

1. QUESTION: Is onsite presence required or can this work be completed via remote meetings and interactions?

   ANSWER: It is not anticipated that the selected contractor will need to be onsite at OMIC for any part of this engagement. OMIC's Managed Service Provider is local and will handle any onsite work that needs to take place.

2. QUESTION: What is the timeline for the engagement?

   ANSWER: We would like to schedule the initial assessment to start within 2 weeks of the contract being executed. The assessment findings will determine the amount of time for planning and any necessary corrective action on OMIC's part to be completed. Ideally, we would like to complete the assessment and implementation within four months from the starting date. Post implementation would involve monthly meetings of 1-2 hours in total duration for the remaining months of the initial 12-month contract. Bidders are free to add an optional second year of monthly engagement/review if they so choose.

3. QUESTION: Who is your managed security service provider and what are their responsibilities?

   ANSWER: OMIC contracts Managed Service Provider services through Covenant Technologies. Their role is managing OMIC's network, end points and serving as a help desk solution to our employees when assistance is needed. OMIC does not have a formal MSSP and as part of the assessment we expect to determine what additional cybersecurity services we need to implement post NIST control implementation.

4. QUESTION: Is a physical security assessment part of the scope of this project?

   ANSWER: We anticipate that some of the NIST controls will involve continuing to improve upon the physical security of our campus which currently consists of two buildings. We will work with OMIC's facilities manager to address current physical security or to carry out additional physical security measures deemed necessary to meet the controls standards.

5. QUESTION: What is meant by the anticipated training/informative sessions?

ANSWER: After the initial assessment, an overall findings session should be conducted with the OMIC leadership team and MSP educating them on what was found and a general plan forward with the guidance of implementing all NIST 800-171 controls. Towards the end of the implementation there should be an all-staff education session on measures put in place and any specific training needed around working with DoD and government entities for future projects and interactions.

6. QUESTION: Are there opportunities to reduce the number of servers/storage devices in which CUI resides?

    ANSWER: Based on the assessment and recommendations as the controls are implemented, OMIC is open to setting up a secure environment in conjunction with OMIC's MSP partner.

7. QUESTION: Does OMIC wish to have a second year NIST assessment? What are the future plans?

    ANSWER: OMIC anticipates that cybersecurity monitoring and the implementation of new security measures will be an ongoing need. This initial bid is focused on initial assessment, guidance of putting controls in place, and monthly monitoring and meetings for one year after which time we will evaluate future needs.

8. QUESTION: Do you currently have a DOD contract?
    We are just entering the contracting phase of doing research for the Airforce National Guard.

9. QUESTION: Do current contracts or future contracts require ITAR?
    Our assumption is that yes, we will need to be compliant, however we are not a manufacturing facility.

10. QUESTION: Will you be looking to meet CMMC Level 2 Requirements?
    As those requirements continue to be solidified, we anticipate this to be a starting point for us and will be open for discussion over time.

11. QUESTION: Are you open to exploring non-USA based hybrid options to provide the requested services and solutions?

    ANSWER: No.

12. QUESTION: Is this the first time this type of assessment has taken place?

    ANSWER: Yes.

13. QUESTION: Is there a specific budget allocated?

    ANSWER: While there are some internal estimates, part of this process includes receiving cost information from the experts to inform us of the amount needed for this project.

14. QUESTION: Do you have an existing security program, or do you have any controls documented and/or implemented?

    ANSWER: We do not. This is new ground for OMIC R&D, as we are hosted by Oregon Tech with specific needs and requirements.

15. QUESTION: Are you looking for fixed rate pricing? It is hard to price advice and oversight of implementation without having completed the initial assessment, as we will not know the extent of the work until we understand what the gaps are.

    ANSWER: Yes, we are looking for a fixed bid cost for this contract.

16. QUESTION: Are you planning for an assessment from DIBCAC or from a C3PAO or possibly both?

    ANSWER: Yes, that will be a third-party full assessment under a future separate contract.

17. QUESTION: Could you expand more regarding the ongoing calls? Would that be monthly, and for how long?

    ANSWER: We anticipate a monthly one- or two-hour call and likely for one year.

18. QUESTION: Do you know the CUI inventory and where it resides on the network? Do you need discovery as part of the assessment?

    ANSWER: We do not currently have contracts that have classified information so would not need any discovery.

19. QUESTION: Given the chosen firm is not responsible for the work to close the gap on NIST compliance, are you looking for rough budgets on what that work, equipment, etc. will be for Covenant to complete? Or is that out of scope?

    ANSWER: No, budgets need not be supplied for work or purchases needed to become compliant.

20. QUESTION: Do you have federal contract information on your systems?

    ANSWER: Currently we do not, however, will need to in the future. There will also need to be involvement of Oregon Tech Office of Sponsored Research regarding future contracts.

End of Clarifying Questions I