

Vendor Questions to RFI #AFDO-21-01

1. Is AFDO willing to extend the deadline for submission of proposals?

AFDO has extended the deadline to August 31, 2020.

2. Is AFDO willing to be part of a larger user community in an already existing COTS format?

If the COTS solution meets or exceeds the SAFHER's business, performance, cost and technical requirements, AFDO is willing to consider being part of an existing larger user community.

3. What is AFDO's definition of "offshoring"? We are a global company with offices worldwide that does not outsource any work, however having international offices requires clarity for us on this point.

No work may be performed out of the United States. All data associated with the contract must also be maintained within the United States including hosting solutions.

4. Is the goal one individual contract with AFDO for resale use of the product to the individual states or will each individual state be required to put out a public notification of intent to use or purchase software?

Per RFI, pg. 3: "A successful RFP would include an agreement for development and support of the core system used by all state users along with a master contract that individual states could opt into to provide for state specific development, hosting, licensing, and support."

AFDO is not a reseller but an advocate for states. The vendor should anticipate individual state contracts and public notifications will depend on each states procurement requirements

5. What is AFDO's role in this project? A question inside asks about AFDO being an advisory panel while the RFI seems absent of many end user requirements typically presented by clients looking for auditing software. Please explain what level of access to data AFDO would be required and able to access.

As proposed in the current model, which may change, AFDO will coordinate the support of the main system, develop key common components across states, support the user group, and provide key staff to lead the implementation process of the core system and assist states in implementation. AFDO will also be responsible for long term support of the CORE system.

6. Would AFDO be interested in a contract that supports the Vendor training, installing and guiding individual states for the success of end user day to day work requirements?

These services should be proposed and clearly articulated in the cost proposal.

7. Who has the decision making ability to make changes in the system, IE are the states allowed to make business decisions in regards to the software or does that have to be cleared through AFDO?

States currently can make individual changes, but changes over a certain level or that may negatively impact states are reviewed by a Governing Council to provide additional review and guidance to both the vendor and the requesting state.

8. Is AFDO flexible with longer relationship contracts for a more approached and sustainable success model?

We anticipate the initial contract term would likely be five years, we also would anticipate the option to further extend for a period of time.

9. Does AFDO expect to own the code?

It depends on vendor's proposed architecture and intellectual property. A possibility is to escrow code to minimize risk on both sides of contract. For a fully custom application, we anticipate 100% ownership. For a COTS or pre-existing product, we anticipate ownership of the modifications.

10. Is AFDO interested in predictive Analytics to analyze and predict anomalies, KPI's and business intelligence?

Yes. Predictive Analytics will not be in first generation of product but KPI and business intelligence will be present from the beginning.

11. Given that every states accounting payment system is possibly different, is AFDO willing to accept a system for payment portals to redirect to states individual payment sites?

AFDO is willing to consider that option for states whose policy does not preclude the external payment portal option. Most states currently have an existing required payment portal that is integrated into the legacy systems likely via an API.

12. What are the projected timelines for the RFP and following steps of the projects with estimated rollout times available for the states?

All timelines are dependent on funding, but we would anticipate procurement and contracting with AFDO would in occur in 2021, contracting with states in 2022-2025, development occurring for the pilot phase in 2022, implementations and configurations for states in 2023-2025.

13. Is AFDO only looking for a development contract instead of a SaaS based COTS system?

AFDO is looking for a development contract or SaaS based COTS specifically. We invite varied perspectives and proposals when meeting the state's and SAFHER requirements.

14. Does AFDO understand with a lack of ongoing assurances or flexibility of an ongoing relationship the costs of dramatically higher?

Nothing in the plans to deliver SAFHER preclude contracting an ongoing relationship with the selected vendor. The initial contract will not continue longer than the term of the funding stream for the project and existing state resources. A resulting contract would likely include options for additional renewals.

15. Does this project require a public complaints portal?

Yes. The enterprise architecture document and hierarchy image within the RFI demonstrate the need for a complaints module which will include a public complaints portal.

16. What access or information does the public need?

The public will primarily access inspectional information that is based on each states' public information laws.

17. Is the cost estimation meant to be reflective of training and implementing with all of the state agencies as well or only training and setup with AFDO who will then retrain and teach individual states as they sign up?

The cost estimation should be reflective of training and implementation of all state agencies. States may choose the training option while others will take training in-house. Generic materials should be created to be used across all states. AFDO may coordinate a train-the-trainer program for states who choose to use it.

18. What type of scoring models to the states run?

We are unclear of exactly what scoring this question refers to, we have provided two answers.

1. RFP Scoring: AFDO will coordinate the scoring of the future Request for Proposal (RFP) using a universal scoring model that will be applied to the RFP respondents and will standardize how the vendor selection will be made across all relevant states.
2. Scoring of inspection: Inspection scoring will vary from state to state and program to program.

19. What type of audit types do the states audit to?

A variety of inspection are completed at the state level. Please see the sample states on pages 22-24 of the RFI to better understand the types of inspections performed by states.

20. How many reporting agencies do the states interface with?

If the question is referring to APIs, we anticipate the following interface categories will be considered below and each state and program will be different on which interfaces will be required.

Interface Categories:

- Payment Processors
- Accounting/Finance Management Systems (whether state centralized or agency independent)
- Lab (e.g. LIMS, LabWorks)
- Federal (e.g. FDA)
- Information Concentrators (e.g. Alstar)
- Trade Organization Linkages
- Other Intra-State Regulatory Institutions (e.g. Block Chain Intra-state data cooperative)
- Other Inter-State Agencies (e.g. Secretary of State Offices)
- Industry Integrations (e.g. A Corporate or Agency Portal for Certification Compliance Application/Renewal)
- General Secure and Approved Data Sharing Integration Requirements (e.g. Approved research organizations, Media)

21. How many reports does each state use (Reports meaning audit reports, certificates, and non-conformities)?

Each state has the ability to perform customize reports so the number is variable. States rely on the variability to manage each program.

22. Do most states utilize 2, 4 or 6 eye approach in their post audit workflow?

Post-inspection workflow approach and requirements will vary between states.

23. Does this project expect digital application onboarding?

If the context of this question is referring to SAFHER's ability to digitally onboard Users/Facilities/Firms then digital application onboarding is expected.

24. Do all states utilize office 365?

On page 19, we specifically require the system to be compatible for both Microsoft Office (including 365) and Google associated applications.

25. What is AFDO's preferred implementation timeline by module?

Please refer to the discussion for question 13.

26. We may be interested in joining forces with other vendor(s) to provide a best of breed solution. Can you provide a list of vendors invited to participate in this RFI and their contact information?

No, we encourage you to work with partners you have worked with in the past.

27. Can you provide the “700 detailed functional requirements” cited on page 17 of the RFI? This list of requirements will help all responding companies understand the scope of this request.

Please request the requirements document from the procurement officer, Kyle Green at kgreen0455@gmail.com. The detailed functional requirements are in a “work in-progress” state and are subject to change.

28. Can you provide the recorded demonstrations of USAFoodSafety and USAPlants software (page 9 item c)?

Demonstration are available by request to the AFDO Procurement Officer, Kyle Green at kgreen0455@gmail.com.

29. Is data conversion limited to the USAFood and USAPlant products?

We anticipate other states may opt into this system and require differing data conversion options, but likely initial participants will be from the two legacy platforms.

30. Will you be able to provide entity diagrams and field layouts of the USA products, so that we can provided an estimated cost of conversion by module?

These items are not available at this time.

31. Who will own the SAFHER software? Is this a work-for-hire arrangement like ComputerAid had with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture?

Please see the answer for question 10 and others. To the extent there is ownership, we expect the code to be jointly owned by all participating states.

32. Will the SAFHER platform allow for the integration of third-party or competitive software solutions that are not defined on page 19, item a?

Yes, please include in your response along with the cost

33. If we do not participate in the bid, will our clients and prospects still have the opportunity to receive grant funding from AFDO, FDA, USDA, etc. to purchase products they may overlap or compete with the SAFHER system?

AFDO does not have a role in determining the federal governments funding priorities and is unable to answer this question.

34. Understanding that the legacy system will no longer be supported, what functional challenges / concerns with the current system have proven the hardest to overcome?

Some of the functional challenges/concerns with the current system are the inability of the software to adapt to meet state’s needs (i.e. configurability), reporting, limited business process builder, and built for one state and reengineered to fit many states.

35. How does AFDO see PaaS as being not dependent on a single vendor? While it’s understandable to expect an architecture that depends on commodity services (e.g. SQL as a service, VMs, etc.), at what level does AFDO envision either directly managing these PaaS resources or distributing that management across vendors?

As SAFHER’s architectural implementation strategies evolve, AFDO is open to considering multi-PaaS constructs. AFDO will play a key role in overseeing the management of the PaaS resources but will heavily rely on vendor(s) to directly manage these resources.

36. Can AFDO elaborate on the expectation of vendors to maintain call centers and if so, to whom the call center would be beholden (e.g. individual states or AFDO)?

We anticipate the call center will work predominantly with state users. AFDO facilitates and will likely facilitate and monitor the call centers performance across the states.

37. Within the Integration requirements, can AFDO elaborate on the “Alstar” requirement?

See question 21. Alstar is an information aggregator.

38. In Additional Requirements “n”, can AFDO provide a list of known payment processors used by States to this point understanding that this isn’t meant to be a definitive list, but guidance as to what processors are most commonly used?

Each state has their own payment processing relationship and the system will need to adapt to each processor. Interfaces are unique but are fairly standard.

39. To what extent will the USAHA application be available for initial discovery and analysis of existing functionality? Support for technical questions? Test environment for investigational insights? Access to core code base? Configurations? Custom integrations?

We are unsure about the reference to USAHA. We are answering the question with an assumption of will the vendor has access to the current applications. A vendor may have access to the applications if selected through the RFP process as the successful applicant.

40. In a hybrid PaaS model, what potential infrastructure services or resources would not be cloud-based?

When a hybrid PaaS model is preferred, the mix of SAFHER’s computing, storage and services between on-premises and private/public cloud infrastructures is dependent upon the needs, requirements and policies of the individual state.

41. AFDO contracted with a Consultant to help define the SAFHER vision, was a formal detail Gap Analysis ever performed between what exists today and the SAFHER vision that can be share?

The contracted consultants completed detailed analysis of the current state of several representative states’ food safety regulatory management program. The resulting technical and business requirements reflect the attributes determined necessary to address the current challenges, functional and technical gaps between the current state and SAFHER’s vision.

42. Is there any written documentation from the past or present that defines the key features of the current solution(s) for each business area that can be shared?

We would suggest the demonstration as an option to better understand these key features. Also please refer to the answer for Question 28.

43. Can offers assume the ‘External service providers’ costs’ would be used for a system integrator or implementation costs (configure, customize and implement the COTS solution)?

Yes, those costs may include system integrator or implementation costs. In addition, they may include external services like design work, business change process support, configuration tasks, targeted documentation, knowledge transfer, project/change management support, training curriculum design and others the vendor may feel are required.

44. Based on the uncertainty of the state and AFDO employee costs, are there assumptions that can be made to level set all vendor responses? For example, the average cost for one resource is \$50/hour multiplied by the number of AFDO/State resources each vendor believes is necessary to support their solution.

The vendor should not estimate AFDO and state employee costs.

45. Can AFDO further explain what is meant by 'coordination costs'?

These are costs associated with AFDO/State and Vendor administrative and technical coordination activities.

46. Based on the proprietary information that will be contained in the RFI response, we would like to propose an additional term be added: "AFDO or any government having access will not disclose any vendor technical responses or partnership disclosures to any third-party vendors. The cost response will be limited to a select executive group within AFDO."

We are very careful to protect any information provided in individual responses and responses will be aggregated and anonymously provided to states. If chosen to interview the vendor may disclose information that we cannot provide any assurances on during the interview.