

QUESTIONS 1 – 21 WERE PREVIOUSLY TRANSFERRED FROM THE CoP

1. Who can use this contract?

All military services and other DoD and Federal agencies.

2. How would non-DoD Agencies use NETCENTS?

Economy Act determinates will be accomplished at the Task Order level by the decentralized contracting agency issuing the order. Contracting officers must process a Determination & Findings (D&F) citing the Economy Act and then they can order from the contract.

3. Does this contract provide better pricing than FSS?

Part of the NETCENTS source selection included an evaluation of each offeror's guaranteed minimum discounts from the Manufacturer's List Price. In each case that we have examined, the NETCENTS individual purchase prices listed on the contractors' catalogs do not exceed the FSS prices for the same OEM product and/or component; furthermore the NETCENTS catalogs are far more comprehensive for network-centric products. Additionally prices for these items are negotiated even lower for quantity buys or those components installed as a part of a network-centric solution.

4. Whose idea was it for GSA to use this contract?

GSA was not specifically designated as a user. It is open to all Federal Agencies. However, in defining requirements we did note that GSA issued several orders against ULANA II. NETCENTS is available to GSA, if they decide to use it. However, it should be noted that there are several AF agencies that have chosen to use GSA as their contracting agency. When the NETCENTS mandatory use policy was issued by the AF-CIO, those customers provided their GSA contracting officers with a copy of it so that they would use NETCENTS to ensure the AF customers' compliance with this policy

5. Is there a fee to use the contract, if so, how much?

Yes, all AF enterprise contracts awarded and managed by HQ OSSG/KAB (formerly known as the CIT-PAD) are authorized by the OSD comptroller to charge fees to recoup expenses associated with awarding and managing these contracts. NETCENTS falls into this category and a 1% fee is applied to all orders and is paid to the AF by the contractors. This fee is "transparent" to end user because of the deep discounts from the manufacturer's recommended list prices.

6. How do you market the NETCENTS contract?

HQ OSSG/KA has an "outreach" team that takes the ESC Operational Support Services (OSS) Wing "Booth" to trade show events and government IT conferences to make other government agencies aware of all the BPAs and contracts managed by HQ OSSG/KA for the Air Force, as well as contracts available through other OSS wing agencies. Additionally, team members of the 8 NETCENTS Prime contractors market NETCENTS just as they market any other contract to agencies authorized to place an order.

7. What does the AF hope to gain by having a central contract – why did the AF make it mandatory?

Air Staff (AF-CIO, AF/XIC, AF/ILC) expanded NETCENTS from a ULANA II replacement contract that was primarily focused on local area networks to an AF IT Enterprise Network-centric solutions vehicle for achieving standardization and interoperability required in a net-centric war fighting environment. Even before the Acquisition Strategy Panel was convened, the Air Staff announced its

intention to issue policy making the use of NETCENTS mandatory in order to enforce AF IT standardization and configuration management of the net-centric infrastructure

8. What socio-economic goals are built into the NETCENTS contracts?

HQ OSSG/KA teamed with SAF/SB to incorporate robust small business considerations for small business into the acquisition strategy approved at the ASP: • 4 of the 8 awards were set aside for small business –20% of contract dollar value directed to small business awardees • Large businesses are required to direct at least 20% of total dollar value to small business subcontractors • Evaluation consideration for proposals submitted by large business indicating increase in small business participation over contract life • Performance to be reported in CPARS • Close monitoring of performance in meeting these objectives • To be reported to ESC/CC at each PMR If data indicates the contract fails to meet its small business goals SAF/SB will advise contract manager of needed corrective actions

9. Can I include a higher level of socio-economic considerations in a task order to address our concerns for local small businesses capable of performing tasks that fall under the Mandatory Use policy?

YES! You may also define in your individual task orders your own small business goals (e.g., certain amount of the work to be done by local 8(a) companies, etc.) -- and include this as a consideration in your evaluation of proposals.

10. Do we still have to "go through all the wickets as though we were doing a standalone acquisition"?

The acquisition process for orders issued against NETCENTS and other ID/IQ services contracts awarded under the oversight of the AFPEO/CM has been significantly simplified. See the Policy letter posted to this website for more details. Also, because the maximum number of contractors for a full and open award solicitation is limited to 8 (4 for small business set-aside) program managers and contracting officers know ahead of time the "worst case" quantity when planning source selection teams and schedules.

11. Is NETCENTS a commodities contract or a services contract?

NETCENTS is both a commodities and services contract. You can use the contractors' electronic catalogs to search for low quantity buys or post an RFQ to the NETCENTS Portal for quantity purchases or to request prices on items not listed on the catalogs. For services, contracting officials can post RFPs to the NETCENTS Portal.

12. How can I access the NETCENTS Portal?

Log into Air Force Way (AFWay) and then click on the NETCENTS option on the left side of the page. In order to access all the capabilities, be sure to establish an account on the Portal. Note: the AFWay link is available on the homepage of the NETCENTS CoP.

13. I've heard rumors that IT O&M services are outside of scope. Is this accurate?

These services are within scope of the contract, but my interpretation of the memo is that NETCENTS is not the mandatory vehicle to meet these requirements due to the Small Business community's concerns. However, if the ITCC should come up with a spend leverage strategy for a selected IT O&M service, then it is very likely that it would be exercised through the NETCENTS contract, due to the partnership relationship the ITCC expects to develop with each of the 8 prime

contractors and would then become a mandatory contract for that specified IT O&M service.

14. What contracts should I use to purchase that laptops/desktops?

As per current Air Force Policy, the majority of all these purchases should be planned for quarterly purchases through AFWAY and the Quarterly Buy strategy in order to leverage buying power. Out of cycle purchases should be issued through AFWAY contracts other than NETCENTS.

15. I'm assuming all microsoft software covered by the MS-Enterprise License Agreement (MS-ELA) will be mandated purchase through the ELA, please confirm.

Yes, this is correct. When you have NETCENTS requirements, work with the NETCENTS contractor and the contracting officer of the MS ELA if you wish new products/licenses to be purchased by the contractor-integrator on your behalf. If you take this approach, you, the customer will still be required to budget for future "software assurance" licensing requirements.

16. What vehicle will be used for the purchase of printing hardware?

Networked printing devices/services may be purchased under NETCENTS. The ITCC is considering it as a possible option for their DPI project. Stand-alone (side-by) printers are not available on NETCENTS but they may be purchased on AFWAY (CIT-PAD BPA).

17. What kinds of processes will be implemented for Small Business? Will the MAJCOMs be given goals/targets to reach or will this be done collectively at the AF level?

For the 1st year, our plan is to collect data on how the contract performs without additional guidance. If the performance metrics show we do not meet the 20% small business set-aside goal, then I expect SAF/SB to re-engage with us to define additional means for ensuring that the AF meets these goals in the future. At the 6-month point after contracts award, the contract was significantly exceeding its SB goals.

18. What is the process to deconflict ITCC Commodity Strategies with NETCENTS? For example, the ITCC has formed a Wireless Tiger team to develop a commodity strategy for wireless services and devices. According to the bubble chart, PDAs are within the scope of NETCENTS, but you don't list wireless services (O&M). If the ITCC has not developed a strategy by the time our BPA expires will we need to process a waiver until the strategy is complete or will the AF do that for us?

The NETCENTS contract was structured to support the AF ITCC in all of its endeavors, including wireless services. Also, we see wireless networks as being integral to the mandatory elements detailed in the memo (products and services associated with design, engineering, integration, installation and configuration of AF networks and network infrastructure). A review of the contract's Performance Work Statement indicates that wireless services is just one of the MANY services available on the contract. Our recommendation is to use NETCENTS to fill the void left by your expiring BPA and be sure to forward your wireless requirements through your MAJCOM ITCC representative to ensure that they are factored into the ITCC/NETCENTS strategy development.

19. How can an IDIQ contract be mandatory-after the guaranteed minimum has been obligated?

The mandatory use policy was issued to implement standardization and configuration control of the AF IT infrastructure. It is totally unrelated to a guaranteed minimum buy obligation for the contract.

20. We do not have access to the contractors' pricing. It is currently password protected? We also

need access to all the pricing in order to determine if a waiver is applicable.

We agree and are working with each contractor to remove the log-in requirement for users who are only trying to view pricing data on the catalogs. As of 22 Mar 05, both Multimax and Northrop Grumman have done this. We are hoping that the remaining 6 will soon comply with this request.

21. We could not locate a SOW reference that allowed for receipt of resumes. We have several customers that require review of resumes prior to award of a contract action.

You may definitely include this requirement in any task order solicitation.

THIS SECTION BEGINS NEW QUESTIONS UPLOADED ON 1 APR 05

22. Did the NETCENTS program or contracting office accomplish the bundling justifications and contract consolidation approvals required by FAR and DFARS? If not (maybe because the extent of contract use could not be ascertained up front), do the justifications/approvals need to be accomplished at the delivery order level? We are definitely seeing bundling and consolidation at the local level.

The contract was awarded under the oversight of the AFPEO/CM. All approvals and documentation required by the FAR and DFARS as applicable to this effort are in place. If bundling is occurring at the order level, the appropriate justifications and approvals would be required.

23. How do you purchase non-commercial equipment which is currently purchased on a sole source basis from a company which cannot sell their product under NETCENTS?

If you have a requirement for a non-commercial item that can only be met through a sole-source procurement, you probably have justification for a NETCENTS waiver.

24. What do you do with existing requirements type contracts for non-commercial secure voice requirements?

The CIO chain will need to determine if requirements currently being met by those contracts fall under the Mandatory Use policy. If the requirements address networks, routers, cable, servers, etc., then they will need to be phased out and replaced by NETCENTS contracts (Rick Nelson-AF-CIO/S).

25. What if the component you need is not in the Commercial Catalogs under NETCENTS?

Issue an RFQ through the NETCENTS Portal so that the Primes can provide pricing data for that item and then add it to the catalog.

26. Why would sole source requirements be placed on NETCENTS and a fee be paid to SSG in addition to pass through costs when the company you need to get to is not the prime?

The root of the answer to this question is not centered on contract fees to HQ OSSG but rather on the AF desire to standardize and control the Enterprise IT infrastructure. If the item in question is one that clearly impacts the standardization and configuration management of the AF IT infrastructure, then senior leadership wants these items to be procured through one of the 8 NETCENTS primes with whom Air Staff is partnering to implement standards, profiles, and architectures throughout the AF. The fee paid to SSG is to support the administration costs of the 8 basic contracts.

27. If you have a large multiple year requirement, why not write a stand-alone contract and save paying the fee to SSG? This could become a significant cost to programs, which are continually taking

cuts in their budgets.

See the answer to question #5. Your question assumes that it is cheaper to put a contract in place and administer it than it is to pay the 1% fee. With the Air Staff's intent to partner with the contractors to manage the IT network infrastructure, the contract management is far more complex than that associated with a "normal" commodities/services contract.

28. How you establish T&M orders for a company which does not have rates in the basic NETCENTS contract?

We are unsure of what is meant by this question. All the 8 primes have labor rates on contract that are negotiable at the Task Order level. If the question is directed at the methodology for getting local small businesses to perform work on NETCENTS, the answer is that those SBs can certainly partner with any one or all of the NETCENTS Prime contractors and labor rates for that T& M work would be negotiated at the Task Order level.

29. Could a company protest a scope issue if you add requirements for systems which are not covered in the PWS?

The NETCENTS scope statement specifically excludes the purchase of office automation hardware and software – both of which are covered in other Enterprise initiatives such as the Microsoft Enterprise License initiative and the Quarterly Buys for desktop and laptop computers. Outside of these items, the scope of the PWS was intentionally written to provide generic but very broad coverage of the entire spectrum of IT products and services – with more detailed requirements to be detailed in the Task Order PWS. We do not envision that any task order written to meet information technology network-centric requirement, except those noted above as being addressed in other Enterprise initiatives, would be subject to protest.

30. Why is this a mandatory use contract, when the NETCENTS user's guide states: "It is not the intent of the NETCENTS contract to compete with other agency and Air Force non-Network-Centric commodity contracts, BPAs and other agreements for non net-centric oriented products (stand alone hardware/software) and services, unless they are required as a part of a total network, system, engineering service or system solution?"

The sentence quoted here addresses the Enterprise initiatives mentioned in our answer to a previous question and DoD Enterprise Software Agreements. The Air Staff determined that the remainder of the network-centric requirements would be met through the NETCENTS Enterprise contract.

31. What is the definition of Network Centric or Non-Network Centric?

The current terminology is Net-Centric vice Network-Centric. Net-Centric is defined as the exploitation of advancing technology that moves from an application centric to a data-centric paradigm – that is, providing users the ability to access applications and services through Web services – an information environment comprised of interoperable computing and communication components. Application-Centric focuses on the application as the foundation or starting point. In an application-centric system, the program is loaded first, which in turn is used to create or edit a particular type of data structure. Data-Centric focuses on the central design data repository as the foundation or starting point. In a data-centric system, the data is primary and services manipulate the data. (Rick Nelson, AF-CIO/S).

32. Does NETCENTS only apply to those IT acquisitions which fall under FAR Part 39?

FAR Part 39 outlines procedures for purchasing Information Technology. The Performance Work Statement outlines the scope of the contract. I'm not sure if I've answered the question, but if not, please clarify.

33. Is there a CICA violation if the FBO announcement does not allude to NETCENTS becoming AF-wide mandatory, but subsequent to the FBO announcement the AF decides to and does make NETCENTS mandatory (enlarge the scope, so to speak)?

Even prior to the November 2003 Acquisition Strategy Panel briefing, the AF-CIO had announced to the MAJCOM CIO's and the press Air Staff's intent to issue a mandatory use policy for the contract. The plan to issue the mandatory use policy was incorporated into the Acquisition Strategy, as documented in the Acquisition Strategy Panel briefing and the Acquisition Strategy Report, that was reviewed through the AFPEO/CM and OSD/NII MOASP process. The policy memo issued in January does not represent a change in scope. CICA is not violated because competition has not been restricted. We still require that Fair Opportunity be given to all contractors IAW the ordering instructions set forth in Section H Clause H-107.

34. Has the AF-CIO policy on NETCENTS mandatory use clearly been detailed in the original NETCENTS ASP and ASP Report?

See the answer to the previous question .

35. Has SAF/AQ researched where the one percent fee is going?

The OSD comptroller issued a directive to the Air Force stating that all the AF Enterprise BPAs and contracts awarded and managed by HQ OSSG will be funded on a cost reimbursable basis. These fees help recoup "out of hide" source selection costs and the expenses (people, supplies, equipment, etc) incurred in the administration of these Enterprise contracts for the Air Force.

36. Once OSSG moves out of working capital in Oct 05, can NETCENTS still charge the one percent fee?

For this component of HQ OSSG, the answer is yes.

37. Since NETCENTS never completed a DDD for this acquisition, how are they hiring A&AS support contractors on this contract?

The scope of the NETCENTS contract does not allow procurement of AA&S SPO support such as program control, financial management, and other generic program management skill sets. It does provide the ability to contract for engineering support services and consultation, training, testing, information assurance services, maintenance, IT operations, etc. If a CO determines that a DDD is required for these services, it would be accomplished for the task order.

38. Why would the AF allow the number of small business currently being used in IT support at AF bases be drastically reduced for the sake of using NETCENTS, thereby decreasing the pool of women-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, 8(a)s, HUBZone or SDVOSB firms across the entire AF, especially since the bulk of our IT service support contractors are "local?" This is causing a terrible SB industry relationship problem.

The Air Staff made a strategic business decision that the standardization and configuration management of the IT infrastructure is essential to supporting the DoD Netcentric Warfare vision. Given that the IT infrastructure exists primarily for this purpose, senior leadership determined that

NETCENTS acquisition strategy would implement an aggressive set of SB socioeconomic elements through the contract but place limitations on the use of “mom & pop” local suppliers who may or may not be implementing the strategically critical standards, architectures, and profiles that all of the NETCENTS Primes are mandated to implement throughout the Air Force. Each of the 8 primes actively seeks partnerships with local SBs who meet the technical criteria in order to facilitate the viability of the local SB communities. Currently, there are 160+ small businesses available through the NETCENTS contract.

39. Comment: The dialogue seems to be addressing only the overall category of SB (i.e., keep current SB work with SB firms under NETCENTS). Why is no one addressing the current women-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, 8(a)s, HUBZone or SDVOSB firms providers, and the fact we have none of those under NETCENTS?

Each of these categories are represented on the NETCENTS Prime contractors’ teams. There are over 160 small businesses covering a breadth of these categories teamed with these primes. This number is growing as the Primes respond as indicated in the answer to a previous question. In addition, those categories are tracked through the Prime contractors’ subcontracting plan that is reported semi-annually.

40. Is what is typically considered O&M, mandatory to be bought under NETCENTS or not mandatory?

Operations and Maintenance (O&M) is not mandatory but could be acquired under the NETCENTS contract (Rick Nelson, AF-CIO/S)

41. Instead of a litany of what is mandatory under NETCENTS, would it be better to state that if one is changing the design/installed architecture, it is mandatory to use NETCENTS, but if one is not changing the designed/installed architecture, use of NETCENTS is not mandatory?

The NETCENTS contract is the mandatory source for communications capabilities procured to satisfy AF appropriated fund (AFP) requirements, e.g., upgrading, modifying, or replacing the “designed/installed architecture.” (Rick Nelson, AF-CIO/S)

42. Comment: Recommend that the new policy memo encourage the use of small business, women-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, 8(a)s, HUBZone or SDVOSB firms, when non mandatory work can be purchased separately from mandatory work instead of encourage the use of NETCENTS for non mandatory work.

Noted (Rick Nelson, AF-CIO/S)

43. Clarify whether or not waivers can be sought (and justified and granted) solely for the purposes of preserving the historical use of small business, women-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, 8(a)s, HUBZone or SDVOSB firms.

No. The purpose of the mandatory use policy has been explained above. The AF primary objective is to standardize core elements of the IT infrastructure through the NETCENTS contract.

44. If an RFI is published and none of the NETCENTS primes respond, is this reason enough for not using NETCENTS? Is a waiver required in this case?

No it is not sufficient reason. If none of the contractors respond they probably were not given sufficient time to adequately respond to the complexity of the requirement or the requirements was

not sufficiently clear for them to develop a proposal. If this happens, notify the NETCENTS CO immediately so she/he can assist you.

45. If a PMO determines work is not mandatory under the NETCENTS policy, then no waiver is required? Correct?

The answer to this question should be answered through the MAJCOM CIO's office, since the command CIOs will be held ultimately responsible for all the waivers issued vs programs electing not to use NETCENTS for applicable work without getting a waiver approved.

46. Comment: Request Air Staff read the actual NETCENTS SOO/SOW and compare to the original acquisition documents (ASP, etc) and the AF CIO policy letter to see if all three areas are in sync.

Air Staff has read the NETCENTS PWS and compared it to the acquisition program documentation throughout acquisition process. Six Air Staff offices were represented on the Source Selection Advisory Council and SSA and those individuals understood those documents prior to drafting the CIO policy letter. The only disconnect is that the mandatory use memo covers only a portion of the total contract scope of services available.

47. It appears NETCENTS is for base IT contract for base infrastructure only. Is development work to be bought separately?

NETCENTS is scoped to support all network-centric requirements – from base infrastructure to wireless PDAs and ground station receivers; it is not to be used for application software development for AIS systems.

48. Comment: Suggest the new AF-CIO policy letter clearly revoke the prior AF memo and all MAJCOM and local policy memos which implemented and passed on the AF-CIO memo, and start with a clean slate. Suggest MAJCOMs and local units not be allowed to supplement so there is only one approved policy throughout the AF.

Noted. That is an Air Staff decision.

49. The AF Memo dated 27 Jan 05 states : "In addition, Consistent with Presidential and Congressional objectives to seek alternative acquisition strategies and limit unnecessary requirements consolidation, commanders and procurement officials must ensure that requirements not associated with achieving our goal of a consistent, standard communications architecture be considered for direction to the small business sector, where those capabilities exist." We read this to state that, unless the requirement meets the definition for MANDATORY NETCENTS usage, we should consider contracting outside NETCENTS where we have capable 8(a) firms, or SDVOSB, or HUBZone, etc, as these are programs being heavily pushed by Congress and the President, as there are no such firms with direct awards under NETCENTS. Correct?

The sentence in question was written in response to concerns voiced by the local SB communities about the mandatory use policy. For requirements falling outside the mandatory use mandate, contracting agencies may elect to use other SB contracting vehicles, or write orders against NETCENTS that specify local socioeconomic goals that will ensure utilization of local SB companies while still reaping the benefits of standardization and interoperability offered under NETCENTS.

50. Comment: The AFMC Memo dated 04 Feb 05 states: "Consultant, tech advisory or analytical "services" are not mandatory, but NETCENTS may be used for such services AND THIS IS

ENCOURAGED." Such language renders NETCENTS as the automatic default for all IT requirements, and small business offices are unfairly prejudiced by such language when attempting to get buy-in from requirements and contracting personnel to use already existing, 8a, SDVOSB, WOSB, and HUBZone firms for such IT services. In fact, our IT organization has already drafted a memo for our CV to sign out which uses the AFMC language. If signed, we will be in an untenable position when trying to direct work to subcategory SB firms who are today performing such work for us.

Noted. We believe that NETCENTS offers the ability to support the local SBs.

51. Comment: I suggest language that is more supportive of using capable SB subcategory firms in lieu of NETCENTS, provided the capability exists by such firms and we will not adversely impact our goal of achieving a consistent, standard communications architecture.

Noted

52. Please provide clarification on what is mandatory and what is not mandatory and then for a quid pro quo, mandate that all non NETCENTS mandatory requirements be bought on the open market from small business, women-owned small business, small disadvantaged business, 8(a)s, HUBZone or SDVOSB firms, when such are determined interested and capable by conducting market research. State that a waiver is required to purchase non NETCENTS mandatory work from a large business or by use of NETCENTS.

Noted. The CIO and Program Office is working with SAF/AQC to provide clarification of which types of work covered by the NETCENTS contract scope are mandatory and which ones are preferred.

53. Does this policy apply only to Air Force Network systems, such as, personal computers, servers, the Anywhere AFB network, etc? Or, does it also apply to the hardware and software incorporated into weapon systems, such as our Ground Theater Air Control System (GTACS)? For example, contractors may be required to purchase computer hardware, software and other information technology items that become part of the weapon system they are producing or maintaining for the Air Force. What is the scope of this NETCENTS IT policy?

Per the AF-CIO 27 January 2005 Action Memorandum, the NETCENTS contract is mandatory for National Security Systems (NSS - DODI 4630.8) products and services associated with design, engineering, integration, installation, and configuration of AF networks and networked infrastructure. (Rick Nelson, AF-CIO/S)

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"Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up. "
-- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

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AFMC/TRC DSN: 986-2356/Comm: 937-656-2356
Last Modified on Friday, March 12, 2004 10.0



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IAW [AFI 33-129](#)
