Request For Qualifications

Information Technology Support Services/NATC Certified Support Contractor

BACKGROUND

AgraGuard is a comprehensive suite of Microsoft-based software solutions offered under license from The NATIONAL AGRIBUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTER (NATC). Since 2008, agriculture departments and agencies in over 38 states and 46 organizations have implemented one or more AgraGuard components. AgraGuard thus represents a practical, effective means for state agencies to use public-sector software to support them in their role of protecting the nation's food supply.

The NATC maintains "Gold Masters" of all AgraGuard Products and licenses the current NATC AgraGuard product release to eligible licensees. To maintain license eligibility and benefit from future software version releases from the NATC, each licensee is required to have all maintenance and any local enhancement development work performed by an NATC Certified Vendor. To date, all maintenance and enhancement work has been performed by a single Certified Vendor.

The NATC licenses the following AgraGuard Software(s) to eligible entities on a national basis:

USAHERDS is a Microsoft-based enterprise repository for animal health data. It provides all data elements needed by states to manage and monitor animal health within their jurisdiction; report test results to USDA's Veterinary Services; and prevent, control, eradicate, and recover from disease and all-hazard incidents at the local level. It is configurable for use by individual agencies based on state-specific requirements, including integration with other commercial off-the-shelf software.

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USALIMS is a Microsoft-based "smart client" application designed to provide comprehensive support for all administrative workflow in animal laboratories. It manages all data related to specimens, accessions, test results, etc. It provides automated client report generation, distribution, an auditing; advanced search options; stored comments and shortcuts; and client account and billing management functions.

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USAPLANTS USAPlants is Microsoft-based data repository for managing licenses, certificates, coursework, laboratory testing, and other aspects of the plant industry. It is a stand-alone component of the AgraGuard suite of software used by the agriculture departments of multiple states. USAPlants supports registration of pesticides; feed, fertilizer, and lime (FFL) producers; soil/plant amendments and other regulated products; as well as licensing for nurseries/dealers, apiaries, seed distributors, and more. It includes a disconnected component that enables field inspectors to use a laptop or tablet PC to collect samples from nurseries and dealers, record data, and synchronize their work with the host repository. Staff can use it to generate inspection reports and certificates on-site.

USAFOODSAFTY/SAFEINSPECT is an enterprise system that consolidates food, health, and public safety information from state and local governments into a state-wide repository. It seamlessly integrates the workflow for licensing, mobile inspections, certification, recall & trace back, complaints, enforcements, laboratory sampling, and billing and accounting processes. There are four major components of USAFoodSafety: mobile disconnected inspections; a web portal for facilities to renew and apply for licenses; a web portal for citizens to view inspection reports; and an executive dashboard for near real-time visibility and trending of revenue, inspections, complaints and violations. USAFOODSAFETY is pre-configured with over 100 business programs such as manufactured food, retail food, eggs/fruit/vegetables, seafood, milk, schools, swimming pools, hotel and the list is growing with each state and local government addition.

USAMEALS is a Microsoft web-based application used to manage multiple federally funded programs such as the National School Lunch Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program. It also assists in the distribution and tracking of funds sent to eligible Women, Infant and Children (WIC) and senior recipients as part of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

VENDOR CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The NATC is requesting a statement of qualifications (proposal) from professional technology vendors as the first step for selection and formal designation as and NATC Certified Support Contractor in support of the NATC AgraGuard Software Products. The submitted statement of qualifications should provide information that addresses each requirement below.

a. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES.

The qualified vendor would:

1. Provide the necessary technical services, which would enable the NATC Licensee Users (USERS) to:

   I. Install and Maintain, Protect and Secure their AgraGuard Software.
   II. Ability to provide cost competitive, high-quality services to the AgraGuard User Community.

2. Work with the USER(s) to develop and maintain enhancements to the existing AgraGuard Software Suite. The VENDOR will provide engineering, planning, design, architecture and development services for major system enhancements and/or upgrades to existing systems; provide recommendations for future purchasing and technology needs, when requested or necessary.

b. CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Qualified Vendor will provide a customer management system (CMS) with the ability to create tickets for the efficient tracking and resolution of all USER queries. The vendor is expected to report on the status of technology issues and communicate a monthly summary of HELP DESK activity with the

NATC User Groups and the NATC. The qualified vendor will assist USERs to resolve computer system compatibilities to be addressed by USERs, and address fixes in code in accordance with standard and acceptable maintenance and support benchmarks.

VALIDATION CRITERIA

The NATC will give significant importance to the following VENDOR Validation Criteria. The submitted statement of qualifications should provide information that addresses the VENDOR's ability to meet each validation criteria.

a. Minimum Five years of agribusiness experience (either from team members or at a company level)

b. Significant.Net Developer experience and capabilities

c. <u>Significant SQL experience and capabilities</u>

d. Minimum of ten years' experience in dealing with the public sector (either from team members or at a company level)

e. Experience with Microsoft VSTS or TFS

f. Ability to host or provide a means to host applications

g. Minimum of five years' experience supporting enterprise-wide Public Safety applications.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

This request for qualifications (proposal) may allow an approved submitting company to apply for certification for one or more of the AgraGuard Software products.

will be received by the National Agribusiness Technology Center for companies seeking eligibility to perform Information Technology Support Services as an NATC Certified Vendor. Interested vendors should submit one electronic copy (as one PDF file) of their proposal response to

VendorProposals@tnatc.org

The proposal response will consist of two subsections (Transmittal Letter and qualification's Proposal) to be including in the one file submitted.

Prospective VENDORS may submit questions until 5:00 pm November 9, 2018. Formal proposals must be received by Tuesday November 13, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. at which time the RFQs will be aggregated and submitted for evaluation.

Prospective Vendors may not contact individual NATC AgraGuard Users for information or clarification in regard to this Request for Qualifications all inquiries must be submitted to [VendorProposals@tnatc.org.](mailto:VendorProposals@tnatc.org)

Letter of Transmittal

The Letter of Transmittal will appear before the qualification's proposal.

The letter of transmittal must contain the following statements and information and appear prior to the qualifications' s Proposal:

- Company name, address, telephone number(s), and website.

- A brief summary of your corporate structure.

- Name, title, email address, and telephone number of the contact person and who is authorized to represent the firm and to whom correspondence should be directed.

- Federal and State taxpayer identification numbers of the firm.

- Proof of liability insurance in the amount of $2,000,000 or greater. This includes personal injury, blanket contractual and broad-form property damage.

- Proof of worker's compensation and unemployment insurance coverage as required by law.

- A brief statement of your understanding of the services to be performed, including a positive commitment to provide services as specified for the entire AgraGuard Software Suite or individual subcomponents.

- Explanation of any contract termination for default or other incident in the past five years. Termination for default is defined as notice to stop services for non-performance or poor performance, and issue was either litigated or not litigated. If default occurred, list name, address, and telephone number of the party. If NO such termination occurred for default, declare it.

- The letter must be signed by a corporate officer or person authorized to bind the vendor to the requirements of becoming an NATC Certified Vendor.

- The naming of proposed staff resources, with the identification of principals and key personnel. Resumes of Team Leaders, Subject Matter Experts or Key Employees who will be assigned to provide services to NATC USERS.

Technical Proposal

Each Technical proposal should be brief and to the point and consist of no more than fifteen pages, not including the letter of Transmittal information. Each Technical Proposal should:

1. Address how you will provide each of the **Vendor Certification Qualification Requirements** including the approach the firm will use in providing the services requested and how the firm is positioned to provide the services requested.

   When addressing "**Information Technology Support Services**", be sure to include your overall software development methodology, best practices, and any process certifications. Also address your approach to managing a software code repository.

   Be sure to also include the following information related to the "**Customer Management Support Services**" in your approach.

   a. Overview of Vendor's HELP DESK operations.
   b. Support availability (days of week and time, including how you will deal with after hours and weekend calls).
   c. Steps for resolving problem escalation.
   d. Final authority regarding conflicts.
   e. Response time and goal for resolving problems.

2. Address each "**Validation Criteria**" as listed above. Also include information related to availability of resources to staff the areas listed in the "**Validation Criteria**".

3. Provide the name, title, address, and telephone number of three public sector or commercial references for clients to whom similar services have been provided.

EVALUATION AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

The following are topics that carry significant importance in the certification evaluation process.

   a) Information listed in Vendor "**Validation Criteria**" above.

   b) Past references for public sector clients.

   c) Availability of staff is an important consideration.

   d) Support services approach related to:

      1. Overview of Vendor's HELP DESK operations.

      2. Support availability (days of week and time, including how you will deal with after hours and weekend calls).

      3. Steps for resolving problem escalation.

      4. Final authority regarding conflicts.

      5. Response time and goal for resolving problems.

Evaluation Process

All vendors' qualifications will be reviewed, and an independent evaluation and selection process will be completed based on the criteria contained in this request for qualifications. A rating system will be used to evaluate the proposals based on these criteria. The NATC reserves the right to accept whichever proposal (s) are deemed to be in the best interest of and

provide the best services to it's USERS as well as to reject any and all RFQ submissions for any or no reason.

Miscellaneous

The NATC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for failure to meet the requirements contained herein, to waive any technicalities, and to select the proposal(s) which best meets the requirements of the program. The RFQ creates no obligation on the part of the NATC to award Certified Vendor Status or to compensate the vendor for any costs incurred during proposal presentation, response, submission, presentation, or oral interviews. The NATC reserves the right to award a contract based on proposals received without further discussion or negotiation. Vendors should not rely upon the opportunity to alter their qualifications during any discussions.

The NATC further reserves the right to make such investigation as it deems necessary to determine the capability of the vendors to furnish required services, and vendors shall furnish all such information for this purpose as the NATC may request.

Vendors must specifically identify any portions of their submittals deemed to contain confidential and proprietary information, or trade secrets. However, the vendor should also understand that information submitted may be disclosed if requested.

This RFQ is issued by the NATC. All questions are to be directed to the NATC only. In no circumstance is a responder to this RFQ allowed to engage in calling, emailing or communicating with a participating Agraguard member state directly. If a responder violates this direction their RFQ response may be deemed disqualified. The only allowable

communication to a participating AgraGuard state is to submit a request for referral or reference.

All questions clarifications and inquiries must be submitted to

VendorProposals@tnatc.org