Invitation to Negotiate No. 15-01-STP

ITN Title: Development of a Comprehensive Branding Plan

Opening Date (Proposals Due): Friday, June 5, 2015

Addendum No. 1

Please review the following changes/additions to Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) No. 15-01-STP. Questions submitted by vendors are listed below with answers provided for each one.

1. Q: Page 15, Item 53, states that documentation must be provided for the following: "Five (5) years of experience required from the date that this ITN is issued." "Vendor must supply references for each year, beginning with 2011 through 2015*, a minimum of one reference per year." (*I have in my notes revised dates per your remarks during the ITN reading.)
   A: Five years from the date of the ITN issuance is April 14, 2010 to April 13, 2015. The requirement for references is being changed from five (5) to three (3) specific references with appropriate contact information, period of performance engagements, and the value of services performed. Preference will be given to references from higher education entities.

2. Q: Based on dialogue at the pre-bid meeting, my associate understood this to mean that the company itself had to demonstrate five consecutive years in business. Thus, my first inquiry is for further clarification of this item. It reads simply, "five years of experience." Does this mean company experience or individual experience?
   A: Five years of experience refers to the company. If the company has not been in business five years, but staff members who will be working directly on the proposal, including presentation, negotiations and implementation of awarded contract – have a minimum of five years of experience in brand planning, that will be considered and should be noted in the submitted proposal.
3. Q: Do subcontractors need to also provide financial statements, or only the lead vendor company?  
A: Yes, subcontractors do have to provide financial statements too. Statements required by lead vendor and subcontractors are: Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Statement of Cash Flow.

4. Q: Under "Vendor Qualifications” Are we limited to only one reference per year or can we supply additional references. Also, if we plan to use a subcontractor who has relevant references, can they be included as one of the five or in addition to the primary vendor’s five annual references?  
A: Yes, additional references are okay beyond the three (3) required. Subcontractors have to provide three (3) relevant references of their own.

5. Q: If we have done previous work with USFSP, can we include that as a reference or case study in our proposal?  
A: Three other relevant references must be included in addition to the reference of USFSP.

6. Q: Should the Brand Plan include a new USFSP logo, or is that dictated by USF branding guidelines? In other words, is USFSP looking for an entirely new redesigned logo, or should we assume that the current USFSP logo/mark itself must remain, and the vendor would be building a new graphic identity system around the existing logo/mark?  
A: We are not requesting a new logo. Rather, we would ask the branding group to recommend a graphic identity system around the existing logo mark, with the intention to gain clarity around the strengths and weaknesses of the use of the USFSP pediment (block logo).

7. Q: On page 15, vendors are asked to provide 1 reference per year for the past 5 years. One page 19, it asks for 3 references. Can you clarify if these are two separate sets of references, or if there can be overlap between the 5 and the 3 references?  
A: The requirement for references, found on page 15 is being changed from five (5) to three (3) specific references with appropriate contact information, period of performance engagements, and the value of services performed. Preference will be given to references from higher education entities. The need to provide a year by year reference over five years has been removed.

8. Q: While UF, UCF and FSU are the three main universities some potential students see as first choice, which institutions in Florida or around the country do you see as exemplary of best practice when it comes to campus identity and branding? Which do you see as your peer institutions?  
A: Clearly, universities like Notre Dame, the University of Alabama and Auburn all have well-branded identities with mascots and historical significance. In Florida, there are schools like Eckerd and UNF which have developed strong messaging. USF St. Petersburg is in the process of creating a peer and aspirant list.

9. Q: The RFP states: "In 2013, USFSP commissioned an Identity Messaging Plan and Communications Needs Assessment.” What company did that work?  
A: We will share the study with the agency commissioned to do this branding work.
10. Q: In reviewing the objective of 10 in 10, where does the University believe the incremental students will come from, i.e. growing existing student count based on existing behavioral norms and attitudes? Development of additional programs and facilities such as the Kate Tiedemann College of Business and/or other degrees? Population growth of the region? Other?
   A: All of the above.

11. Q: Given the upcoming 50th anniversary, what are the expectations for the timing of having the branding initiative completed? Is there an opportunity to launch the new brand within any of the 50th anniversary activities?
   A: In that the Anniversary will kick off in July of 2015, it is likely that new branding initiatives would/could launch in the Spring of 2016.

12. Q: Historically, what was the original catalyst to establish a satellite campus in St. Petersburg in 1965? Also, what was the catalyst to establish accreditation as a separate entity in 2006-2007?

13. Q: Scattered throughout the ITN and other sources identified in it are references to the desire for internal integration and the establishment of brand clarity. What communication devices are currently being used by the institution to deliver information to internal faculty and staff, either formally or informally? (intranet, email, newsletter, etc.)
   A: Yes, we use any and all communication devices, including email, newsletters and Town Hall meetings.

14. Q: Is there an online repository where we can see current marketing materials and messaging?
   A: Our weekly newsletter, Harbor Notes, is archived in the Library’s Digital Archives, although this is largely a news vehicle, versus marketing. We will make available printed collateral to the agency commissioned.

15. Q: If awarded the contract, what access will the agency have to communicate with key staff members/decision makers, outside of the marketing department?
   A: We expect the agency of choice to have access to key decision-makers for interviews or surveys.

16. Q: On page 8, under Branding Strategies, "optimized SEO" is listed. Should the agency interpret this as managing an ongoing SEO program, or simply providing keywords that are aligned with proposed Comprehensive Branding Plan?
   A: Keyword recommendations will be welcomed.

17. Q: Does the dashboard to assess the ROBI need to be a tool that will be accessible to the public, or can this be built as an internal site?
   A: We do not view this to be a public site, rather for internal use.

18. Q: Who will be collecting the data needed to measure against previous year's data (Satisfaction survey results, student head count, etc…)
   A: We anticipate that many of these functions would be managed by our director of Institutional Research.
19. Q: Will the agency be given access to current online platforms (website, social media accounts, etc…) or is there a staff member at USF that will propagate the content we provide and supply metrics to the agency as requested?

A: It is more likely to be the latter, specifically the Assistant Director of Digital Media.

20. Q: Page 17 Background: There is mention of an “Identity Messaging Plan and Communications Needs Assessment.” Is USFSP providing the results (or summary reporting) of this endeavor to vendors prior to response submittal or will the findings be provided at project start?

A: We will share the study with the agency commissioned to do this branding work.

21. Q: Page 17 Scope of Work: “Existing research” will be available to inform the brand project at hand. Do the findings/results provide any insight into the mission-critical questions outlined below, specifically numbers 9, 11, 12, and 13. Again, will findings be shared prior to response submittal or at project start?

A: We will share any prior findings at project start.

22. Q: Page 19 Proposal Format; Item C.c. Does this reference request supersede Vendor Qualifications on page 15 Item 53, bullet #2?

A: The requirement for references, found on page 15 is being changed from five (5) to three (3) specific references with appropriate contact information, period of performance engagements, and the value of services performed. Preference will be given to references from higher education entities. The need to provide a year by year reference over five years has been removed.

23. Q: Page 18 Brand Strategy Part 2: Is the USFSP team anticipating significant participation in the development of the Marketing Communications Plan or would the University prefer the selected partner provide a written plan to you? Please describe your desired level of involvement.

A: Our hope is that the agency will develop a Marketing Communications Plan in collaboration with key members of the USFSP team.

24. Q: Has a target date been identified for brand rollout/launch?

A: We anticipate an initial launch during Spring of 2016.

25. Q: What do you believe is the core idea that USFSP currently embodies as a brand and an institution of higher learning? What do you believe are your most important differentiating factors?

A: Please refer to the Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan, specifically our Core Values. Our differentiating factors are detailed in the plan as well.

26. Q: What do you believe is the core idea that USFSP should embody (aspirational) as a brand and an institution of higher learning? What do you believe should be your key differentiating factor?

A: These are, indeed, the very questions we hope the commissioned agency will help us answer.

27. Q: What would you most like prospective students to understand about USFSP?

A: Again, this is work we would hope is among the outcomes of this branding project.
28. Q: What do you believe current students and faculty understand USFSP’s core brand idea to be?

A: Some of this information is covered in the study that was conducted in 2013. We would anticipate that the commissioned agency will build on existing research.

29. Q: How strongly do you regard faculty as targets of your brand messaging?

A: We view the faculty largely as brand ambassadors. That said, faculty buy-in will be critical and much of the newsworthy work being done on campus today is theirs.

30. Q: Based on the outtake from the ITN initial meeting, it seems that potential students (admissions function) are considered the most important target. Please rank priority for your brand message among a broader array of targets:

   a. prospective students
   b. current students
   c. alumni
   d. faculty
   e. community at large
   f. supporters & private funders
   g. the state
   h. others: ( )

A: One of the most important outcomes of this branding initiative is the prioritization of audiences and key messages.

31. Q: Do you currently have any efforts that visibly engage with the community of St. Petersburg (e.g., through on- or off-campus programs that invite collaboration between students, professors, and residents or organizations of St. Petersburg?)

A: Please see the Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan, both sections on Faculty Excellence and Strategic Partnerships. Community engagement is considered to be a hallmark of the USFSP experience.

32. Q: What do you consider your most important organizational values? What principles guide day-to-day actions and decisions?

A: Please refer to the Core Values in the Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan.

33. Q: How large of a role do you believe PR will play in terms of your expectations in this project?

A: We anticipate that a solid PR plan would be incorporated into the overarching Marketing/Communications plan.

34. Q: What CMS platform and programming languages are used on the USFSP website? Is programming and content all currently managed in-house?

A: Currently we are operating on WordPress. Content is managed in-house.
Note: Proposal Requirements

All bid proposals must be submitted on our standard Invitation to Bid Form. Bid proposals on vendor quotation forms will not be accepted. All bid document responses must be properly completed, in ink or typewritten, signed by the bidding entity and returned with the bid in a sealed stamped envelope. Responses in pencil will not be accepted and your bid response shall be disqualified as non-responsive.

Note: Please note receipt of this addendum by signing and returning with your bid response.

__________________________________________
Authorized Signature

__________________________________________
Company Name

__________________________________________
Date

BB/GC