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Paratransit / Micro-transit CAD/AVL and Scheduling Intelligent Transportation System

Request for Proposal # BATA-2-2021

Questions and Answers Submitted to Date

Q: Can proposals be submitted via email?

Yes - the RFP allows for proposals to be submitted by e-mail. See section 2.8
Submission: Proposals may be hand delivered, mailed, or sent via an overnight courier. Due to coronavirus impacts, electronic submission is also acceptable to lingaure@bata.net.

Q: The RFP outlines that at any given time BATA's Link service currently has up to 15 vehicles on the road providing paratransit/micro-transit service. Are the paratransit and micro-transit services co-mingled, meaning that both paratransit and micro-transit riders are on the same vehicle at the same time?

A: Yes – BATA provides what's called complimentary paratransit service and does not have a standalone paratransit offering. BATA's Link service meets ADA paratransit requirements but is open to the general public.

Q: If not, could BATA estimate how many vehicles are on the road providing paratransit service and how many are providing micro-transit service at a given time?

A: See response above.

Q: How many paratransit trips does BATA perform a year? How many micro-transit trips does BATA perform a year?

A: BATA's total ridership for FY2021 (Oct. 2020 – Sept. 2021) was 319,245. Link service (demand response, paratransit and micro-transit) made up 66,598 of those rides.

Q: Could BATA outline what technology/equipment is currently installed in the vehicles performing paratransit/micro-transit service?

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A: Specifically for its paratransit/micro-transit service BATA uses:

- Apple 8thGen iPads (Link On-Demand service)
- Driver app and cloud-based software (Link On-Demand service)
- Mobile Data Terminals / AVL Tracking (Village Link service)
- Demand response / paratransit scheduling software (Village Link service)

The only information we're able share about our current CAD/AVL technology vendors at this time is what is publicly available on BATA's website www.bata.net.

Q: The RFP requests that the CAD/AVL system should allow “User configured filters of what information to display for a vehicle”. Could BATA clarify what vehicle information is useful for dispatchers to be able to configure filters for?

A: Examples include bus number, bus driver, wheelchair availability, vehicle passenger capacity, number of riders onboard, bike rack availability, passenger name, passenger destination, etc.

Q: Could BATA provide some examples of the canned messages it expects dispatchers to send to driver operators and the responses driver operators should send back to dispatchers? Does BATA expect these messages to be able to be received by driver operators while the vehicle is in motion?

A: 10-100 codes for bathroom breaks or dispatch notifications, accident information, pick up or drop off note modifications, confirmation of instructions, etc.

A: The expectation would be drivers would not see or respond to messages while the vehicle is in motion unless in an emergency situation.

Q: The RFP requests to have “long-term subscription (reoccurring rides) scheduling functionality”. Does BATA currently have any policies with respect to handling no-shows or cancellations for subscription rides, if so could BATA outline this policy?

A: Yes – BATA does have a No-Show and Late Cancellation policy that can be found here: [No-Show & Late Cancellation Policy | BATA](#)

Q: The RFP requests functionality for “emergency covert alarms”. Could BATA provide more context for the types of situations which would occur that such alarms would be used for? What are the remediation actions taken when such alarms occur to enable the alarm to be cancelled?

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A: BATA currently has a silent emergency alarm button built into the MDTs installed on all BATA vehicles. This alarm alerts dispatch of an emergency situation on the vehicle that would need immediate dispatch support or police support. Since this RFP would replace the existing MDTs, we would like similar functionality on the technology that replaces them.

A: When dispatch is alerted to an issue they follow a specific protocol with the driver to verify the issue or determine if it was a false alarm.

Q: The RFP requests to include “Proposer provided ruggedized laptop computers, ruggedized tablets, or other ruggedized automation device”. How many such devices would be used at a given time during service? What information do road supervisors and maintenance staff need to access through such devices?

A: There would be 2-3 devices in use at any given time. These devices would enable supervisors and mechanics to determine the location of the vehicle while in transit, what service they are providing, passengers on-board, and other information that would be helpful when assessing needs in the field.

Q: The RFP includes a requirement for “ITS [to have] the ability to cap the number of requested rides per hour based on vehicle resources available.” However, currently on BATA’s information page for the LINK On-Demand service (<https://www.bata.net/maps-schedules/link-on-demand/>) it states that “Link On-Demand riders will no longer be told rides aren’t available during operating hours”. Does BATA intend to deny rides if the number of rides per hour based on vehicle resources is over a certain number? If so, what is the number of rides per hour for which BATA anticipates denying ride requests?

A: BATA’s current Link On-Demand service accepts all rides requested and adjusts pickup and travel times based on the number of rides in the queue and the number of vehicles on the road. In ideal situations, when the number of requested trips increases during a certain period of time BATA would try to add additional vehicle resources to help keep wait and ride times manageable. Due to extreme staffing shortages BATA is unable to add more drivers during increased ride request fluctuations causing long wait and ride times. BATA would like the ability to limit the number of rides received in a certain timeframe to keep wait and ride times manageable and better meet rider expectations.

A: BATA’s Link On-Demand currently has the ability to put 3-6 vehicles on the road at any given time and can adequately handle 10-15 rides per hour without significantly increasing wait/travel times.

Q: Due to the challenges of putting together a full response for submittal during the holiday season and the relatively short notice for the RFP and the relatively distant desired May 2022 start date, is it possible for the due date for the RFP be extended?

A: No – the RFP due date will not be extended unless BATA doesn't receive the required amount of RFP responses (3) or the responses received do not meet the requirements of the RFP.

Q: Integration with the Passage Application would be an expensive and time consuming customization that would require significant work on both vendors part, work on Passage Application is also being discontinued by its vendor and this might preclude any possible integration with it. We ask if this requirement is an absolute minimum need for BATA and if proposals that do not offer In-application integration will be still considered?

A: Integration with BATA's current mobile ticketing vendor is not required. BATA would like its new CAD/AVL fixed route and paratransit/microtransit vendor to have fare payment integration functionality. Responses that do not have fare payment integration will be considered, but could be scored lower than applicants that do have that functionality.

Q: Section 2.3 Proposal Requirements states, "Respondents shall submit five proposal copies and one electronic (PDF) copy on a CD/DVD or flash drive." With December 24th being a Holiday and an increase in delivery of packages during the season that could lead to delays, would BATA be open to amend the requirement to be an email/dropbox electronic submission? Section 2.8 does mention "electronic submission is also acceptable." Confirming that vendors can choose any preferred option.

A: Yes – electronic submission via e-mail or Dropbox is acceptable.

Q: With a proposal due date of Wednesday, December 24th being a Holiday, would BATA be open to extending/amending the deadline?

A: No – the RFP due date will not be extended unless BATA doesn't receive the required amount of RFP responses (3) or the responses received do not meet the requirements of the RFP.

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Q: On the "1.3 Project Specifications checklist" can vendors submit an XLS/Excel sheet equivalent of this checklist with our proposals? This would allow vendors to fill-out the comments as requested in the response within the checklist items.

A: Yes – an Excel or Word document is acceptable for responding to the item check list listed in the RFP.

Q: Section 2.3 Proposal Requirements states "An official authorized to bind the respondent to the proposal must sign the Signature Page [Attachment A] of the proposal in ink." Due to remote work practices, would BATA be open to DocuSign signatures as an alternative?

A: Yes – DocuSign or electronic signatures are acceptable.

In order to ensure proposals are organized correctly per Section 2.3 requirements, where should vendors insert our completed "1.3 Project Specifications checklist"?

A: There is no specific proposal placement location required for inclusion of the check list requirements.

Q: For the 1.3 Project Specifications checklist, can vendors use the "comments" cell for additional information or could BATA clarify what it should be used for per instructions?

A: Yes.

Q: With an integration with fixed route being preferred, would BATA be interested in vendors offering and including some professional planning and design consulting services information to support multi-modal system as an optional item to support implementation?

A: Yes – but it is not required.

Q: Page 19 of the RFP Document states "Attachment D: Federal Clauses – Materials and Supplies More Than \$150,000" but does not provide any forms or indicate if signatures are needed regarding compliance with certain federal clauses. Could BATA please provide PDF copies of any additional forms (beyond Attachment A and the pricing form) that need to be submitted with the response?

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A: Each submission should contain the following: RFP response, Attachment A – Signature Page (included with the RFP), Attachment B – Price Proposal Form (included with the RFP), Attachment D - Federal Clauses – Materials and Supplies More Than \$150,000 which can be found here: [Request for Proposals | BATA](#).

Q: Confirming that the Total Price, on Page 17 Attachment B: Price Proposal Form, be for a 3 year contract?

A: Yes

Q: When & how will proposer receive the responses to these questions? (i.e. direct email, website post, etc.)

A: Responses to all questions submitted will be posted here by Dec. 13, 2021: [Request for Proposals | BATA](#)

How many days should the bid be valid for?

A: We ask the bids be good for a minimum of 90 days please.

Q: Is it acceptable to submit an electronic copy of the proposal, in addition to the paper copies?

A: Yes – electronic copies can be submitted in leu of printed paper copies due to COVID-19 impacts.

Q: If so, is a USB (flash drive) an acceptable form of Electronic Copy?

A: Yes.

Q: Can a USB containing additional materials and videos be included with our proposal for better understanding of our software?

A: Yes.

Q: Does the price proposal need to be in a separate sealed envelope from the technical proposal?

A: No – price is part of the scoring formula and does not need to be kept separate.

Q: Can Proposers include a copy of the specific vendor pricing sheet as explanation along with the required pricing form?

A: Yes - any information related to vendor pricing may be included.

Q: What are some of the biggest concerns seen with the current software solution that you would change immediately if you could?

A: More customization to meet an individual transit's needs to match the driver and vehicle resources available. Flexibility to develop and design customizable features. Hardware that is adaptable and upgradable to meet changing technology requirements.

Q: What are the goals of (agency) surrounding this software upgrade?

A: Improve efficiency, overhaul siloed and antiquated technology, make it easier for staff to deliver service, make it easier for the public to use public transit.

Q: What is the budget for this project?

A: BATA is unable to share budget information during the Request for Proposals solicitation process.

Q: What is the funding source for this project?

A: State and Federal grants and local agency funds.

What are the funding deadlines/timelines for this project, ie, when does the money need to be spent?

A: BATA needs to spend the State and Federal grant funds by the end of 2022, but would prefer to have all funds spent by May / June 2022.

Q: Does (Agency) have a preferred cellular network? If so, please provide contact information for our account manager.

A: BATA does not have a preferred cellular network. Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile all work in BATA's service area.

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Q: Does (Agency) provide any other types of service that may be used by the awarded solution?

A: BATA provides fixed route, demand-response/paratransit/micro-transit and some contracted service for a local health and human services agency. BATA has also provided NEMT from time to time as well.

Q: Does (Agency) have an IVR system currently?

A: BATA's ride reminder services send ride reminders via text, e-mail or voicemail.

Q: If so, who is the current IVR system with?

A: Both our demand-response and micro-transit vendors have ride reminder notifications built into their service/software. The only information we're able share about our current CAD/AVL technology vendors at this time is what is publicly available on BATA's website www.bata.net.

Q: What type of functionality does it provide (i.e. night before reminder calls with cancel option, arrival notification calls, floodgate messaging, English, Spanish?)

A: Notifications are delivered a day in advance, at the time of booking and in real-time depending on the service being used – aka Link On-Demand or Village Link. They are only available in English to our knowledge.

Q: Is it an onsite server or hosted solution?

A: BATA has both an on-site server-based solution for its Village Link service and a hosted cloud-based solution for its Link On-Demand service.

Q: Does (Agency) have any Commuter Routes that would be considered part of this project? If so, how many?

A: BATA has multiple fixed routes that could be considered commuter routes. Currently BATA has 11 fixed routes that could be considered commuter routes.

Q: Is there a consultant involved with this RFP? If yes, what is the name of the firm or individual?

A: No.

Q: How many in office users will you have?

A: Currently there could be 3 – 6 scheduling/dispatching staff using the software at any given time.

Q: Do you want the chosen vendor to do all the driver training or are we training the trainers?

A: We'd like it to be a combination of both – train our training and operational staff and potentially train some key front-line staff.

Q: If training the trainers, how many of those are there?

A: There would be 5-10 “trainers”.

Q: How many depots do you operate if more than 1?

A: BATA currently operates two transfer stations. Their locations can be found here: [How to Ride | BATA](#)

Q: Do you have any subcontractors?

A: No.

Q: If there are subcontractors, will those subcontractors need go-live support on site?

A: BATA does not subcontract transportation services.

Q: Are any private contractors/subcontractors used to provide trips for (agency)? If yes, how are these contractors paid, by the trip or by the hour?

A: BATA does not subcontract transportation services.

Q: Will (agency) allow proposers to provide a demo of the software before awarding the contract?

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A: Yes – if an applicant is considered one of the top candidates follow up interviews and demos will be scheduled accordingly.

Q: What is your agency expectations related to data conversion?

A: Not sure what this question is asking. We'd hope that data reporting would be able to transfer into multiple formats and meet NTD reporting requirements.

Q: Are there any interfaces required to external sources such as Medicare? If so, what other external source?

A: BATA currently provides bus schedule information to the Transit app, and we'd like the new solution to be flexible to provide data to external sources as needed. Having an open API is a bonus.

Q: Please provide 3 years of monthly reporting summaries for your demand response system.

A: Appendix B will provide 3 years of OAR data that includes demand response ridership data.

Q: What is the total number of Drivers to be trained?

A: BATA currently employs 80+ drivers, but when fully staffed has more than 100 drivers.

Q: How many hybrid positions (i.e., reservations/dispatch scheduling) in one position does your agency have?

A: BATA has a combined scheduling, dispatching and customer service department. When fully staffed it comprises about a dozen staff members.

Q: How many dispatchers does your agency have?

A: BATA has a combined scheduling, dispatching and customer service department. When fully staffed it comprises about a dozen staff members. One to two team members dispatch at any given time.

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Q: How many reservation agents does your agency have?

A: BATA has a combined scheduling, dispatching and customer service department. When fully staffed it comprises about a dozen staff members. Two to four team members are available to make reservations at any given time.

Q: Are the Drivers and/or Dispatchers represented by a Union? If so, which Union?

A: Yes – Teamsters Local 214.

Q: Does the service area encompass more than one county? If so, which counties (other states as well)?

A: Yes – BATA provides service to both Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties in Northwest Lower Michigan.

Q: Does your agency provide group trips? If yes, what percentage of trips are group trips?

A: Yes – BATA provides group trip requests on a case-by-case basis. Less than 5% of all trips are group trip requests.

Q: What is the maximum number of paratransit vehicles at peak service on any given day?

A: Maximum number of paratransit/micro transit vehicles on the road at any given time is 15-20.

Q: Please indicate if there are any holidays for no service or reduced service.

A: BATA's holiday schedule that can be found here: [Holiday Service Guide \(bata.net\)](http://bata.net)

Q: On what days of the week are trips provided?

A: BATA provides service seven days a week.

Q: What are your hours of service?

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A: Current hours of service can be found here: [Service Hours & Locations | BATA](#)

Q: What are your current Rides per Hour (RPH)?

BATA's Link On-Demand service currently provides: 1.2 rides per service hour

BATA's Village Link service currently provides: 2.5 rides per service hour

BATA's fixed routes services currently provide: 3.2 rides per service hour

Q: What is your average trips per day?

Link On-Demand averages 170 trips a day

Village Link averages 100 trips a day

Q: What is the average trip length?

A: Average trip length is 5.6 miles per trip.

Q: What is the number of will calls weekly?

A: N/A.

Q: What is the weekly average number of declined trips?

A: BATA's Link On-Demand service does not decline trips. BATA's Village Link service has decline rate of less than 10%.

Q: What is average number of one-way trips provided weekly?

A: N/A.

Q: Does your agency provide subscription trips (standing orders)? If so, what percentage of trips are subscription trips?

A: Yes – less than 5% of total riders are subscription rides.

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Q: What is the number of Flex Routes (Deviated Fixed Route) per day and per week?

A: BATA has 7 daily flex routes that run Monday – Friday, and 5 flex routes a day on the weekend at full service levels.

Q: What is the current size of your client population?

A: Total population in our service area is about 120,000 people (100,000 Grand Traverse County and 20,000 Leelanau County).

Q: What is the growth rate?

A: Pre-COVID-19 BATA's ridership was growing about 20-30% year over year. Current ridership growth is about 2-5% growth year over year.

Q: On average, how many taxi trips are used per day?

A: BATA does not use taxi resources.

Q: On average, how many calls will your call center handle?

A: BATA's call center handles about 200 calls a day.

Q: What is the peak number of calls handled per hour?

A: Peak calls per hour is about 20-25 calls per hour.

Q: Can you expand on this requirement: ITS can be setup with a variety of service areas, zones or hubs depending on the service need. And also can connect with fixed route service delivery when appropriate.

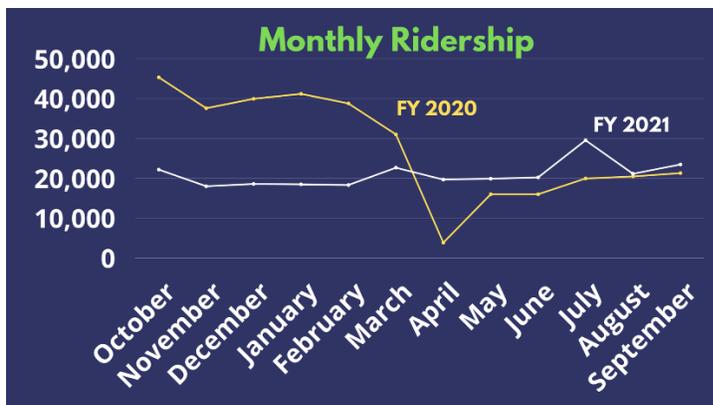
A: BATA provides service in both an urban (Traverse City) and rural (greater Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties) environment. The service delivery area and type of service can vary depending on the location. BATA's total service area is 900 square miles, so it isn't always feasible for a micro-transit trip to go door to door and sometimes makes more sense to connect with a fixed or flex route bus heading in the desired direction. Having the flexibility to adapt the solution to accommodate service types and parts of the service area is a plus.

Q: Since the submission date is Dec 24th, day of Christmas eve and right around the Holidays, would it be possible for agency to extend the proposal deadline by 2 weeks?

A: No – the RFP due date will not be extended unless BATA doesn't receive the required amount of RFP responses (3) or the responses received do not meet the requirements of the RFP.

Q: Can the Bay Area Transportation Authority elaborate on the 35 vehicles that they want the vendor to outfit. Are there reports or data that suggest increased ridership etc.? Can that be shared?

A: BATA has currently designated 30-35 vehicles in its existing fleet to provide Link demand response/paratransit/micro-transit service. BATA has seen increased ridership year over year since the pandemic.



Q: The RFP mentions of more than 80 vehicles as fleet size, and 35 that the agency plans to acquire. Is the SW Solution going to be used for all 80 existing fleet plus the 35 new vehicles? Does this new solution intend to replace the existing 2 scheduling systems?

A: BATA's entire fleet consists of more than 80 vehicles. The 35 vehicles identified in the RFP are not being acquired. They are existing vehicles in BATA's fleet that provide Link demand response/paratransit/micro-transit service. The CAD/AVL demand response/paratransit/micro-transit ITS solution will be applied to these vehicles only. BATA has a separate RFP for a fixed route CAD/AVL ITS that will be equipped on the other buses in the fleet. The new system will replace BATA's existing software and hardware technology.

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Q: What are the pain points with the 2 current scheduling systems?

A: More customization to meet an individual transit's needs to match the driver and vehicles resources available. Flexibility to develop and design customizable features. Hardware that is adaptable and upgradable to meet changing technology requirements.

Q: To be clear the existing vehicles have MDTs and the Agency plans to acquire only 35 more tablets. Is that correct?

A: BATA plans to replace the existing MDTs with the winning applicant's recommended on-vehicle hardware solution, which could be a new MDT, tablet or some other device.

Q: In order to compile a thorough and thoughtful response to BATA's RFP and in light of the upcoming holiday season, we respectfully request a three-week extension of the proposal deadline to January 14th, 2021.

A: No – the RFP due date will not be extended unless BATA doesn't receive the required amount of RFP responses (3) or the responses received do not meet the requirements of the RFP.

Q: Can BATA share its total and annual budget for this procurement? Providing Offerers with a clear estimate of the budget will benefit the public by allowing for the most competitive procurement process, as Offerers will compete to provide the greatest value for BATA's money.

A: BATA is unable to share budget information during the Request for Proposals solicitation process.

Q: Can BATA share any service data (trip volume, origins and destinations, etc.), to provide proposers with a more detailed understanding of current demand for the Link On-Demand service?

A: See similar Q&A above that provides ridership data, etc. If more information is needed please let us know.

Q: On pg. 3 the RFP states: "BATA's currently offers complimentary paratransit / demand-response / micro-transit services using two different software solutions." Can BATA share the name(s) of the current paratransit / demand-responsive software provider(s)?

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A: The only information we're able to share about our current CAD/AVL technology vendors at this time is what is publicly available on BATA's website www.bata.net.

Q: On pg. 4 the RFP states: "Integration with a fixed route system is also preferred." Can BATA share additional information regarding its vision for the requested integration with its fixed route system? What does BATA hope to achieve with this integration?

A: The main goal of being able to integrate BATA's new demand response/paratransit/micro-transit CAD/AVL ITS with a new fixed route service CAD/AVL ITS is to maximize efficiencies for both staff resources and riders. Having the ability for riders to easily choose which service type works best for their needs or combining fixed and micro-transit for first and last mile solutions to provide the most direct transportation possible. For example: BATA provides service in both an urban (Traverse City) and rural (greater Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties) environment. The service delivery area and type of service can vary depending on the location. BATA's total service area is 900 square miles, so it isn't always feasible for a micro-transit trip to go door to door and sometimes makes more sense to connect with a fixed or flex route bus heading in the desired direction. Having the flexibility to adapt the solution to accommodate service types and parts of the service area is a plus.

Q: For any required integration, is BATA open to proposers suggesting alternative methods of achieving the same goal sought by the requested integrations?

A: Yes.

Q: We read the RFP to understand that BATA is interested in trip planning functionality (pg. 5). Can BATA share additional information regarding its interest in trip planning?

A: Trip planning functionality is more of a desired feature of the fixed route CAD/AVL ITS, but integration with the demand response/paratransit/micro-transit CAD/AVL ITS is a bonus.

Q: Can BATA confirm whether or not the micro-transit services will be open to the general public?

A: Yes – BATA's current micro-transit service (Link On-Demand) is open to the general public and the new solution will be as well.

Q: On pg. 8 the RFP states: “The AVL system must provide a wide range of CAD information to road supervisors and maintenance shop trucks through awarded Proposer provided ruggedized laptop computers, ruggedized tablets, or other ruggedized automation device. The devices provided must be easily mountable/removable from the support vehicle and provided with appropriate accessories to maintain the device’s electrical charge.” Can BATA share the specific information it is requesting that the AVL system must be able to provide?

A: There would be 2-3 devices in use at any given time. These devices would enable supervisors and mechanics to determine the location of the vehicle while in transit, what service their providing, passengers on-board, and other information that would be helpful when assessing needs in the field.

Q: Can BATA please confirm that verified e-signatures will be acceptable for this submission?

A: Yes – e-signatures are acceptable.

Q: In addition to submitting a completed version of the Price Proposal Form, can Proposers include a supplementary pricing form that clarifies the cost structure of the proposed solution?

A: Yes.

Q: Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

A: Yes - companies outside the USA can apply.

Q: Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

A: We would hope the selected vendor would be available for onsite installation support and training as needed.

Q: Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

A: We think most of the tasks could potentially be performed remotely (outside the USA), but some onsite technology and training support would be preferred as needed