ADDENDUM

IMPORTANT DOCUMENT – INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

ITN NUMBER: 2024-11TCSA

ITN TITLE: DEVELOPMENTAL EAVUATION AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM ENGAGEMENT

OPENING DATE & TIME: ~~May 1, 2025 @ 3:00PM EST~~ **May 2, 2025 @ 3:00 p.m. EST**

ADDENDUM NUMBER: II   ADDENDUM DATE: 04/21/2025

The purpose of this addendum is to:
- **Answer questions submitted during the Question/Answer period.**
- **Extend the due date for offer submission to 5/02/25 @ 3 p.m. EST.**

PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS ADDENDUM AND RETURN IT WITH YOUR OFFER.
FAILURE TO SIGN AND RETURN WITH YOUR OFFER COULD RESULT IN REJECTION OF YOUR OFFER.

_____   _____
PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE   PRINT OR TYPE PROPOSER'S NAME

_____   _____
COMPANY NAME   EMAIL ADDRESS

Answers to Questions
ITN2024-11TCSA

QUESTION 1: Which NSF Grant is this solicitation related to?

Answer:
NSF Accelerating Research Translation

QUESTION 2: Could you share a more detailed description of the project to be evaluated?

Answer:
This project (UCF ART) will accelerate the University of Central Florida's (UCFs) contributions to the regional and global innovation ecosystem centered in the Central Florida area. UCF is part of a strong and supportive innovation ecosystem primed for research translation. UCF has partnerships and collaborations with the sectors of space, aerospace, health, defense (optics and lasers, AI/ML/computer vision, digital twin, simulation, and modeling), energy, and many others. Accelerating UCF research translation will create an enormous economic development opportunity since UCF already produces high levels of fundamental research. This project will create the infrastructure needed to connect fundamental research produced by UCF and to train diverse talent to meet the needs of the Central Florida ecosystem and the nation's ecosystem. Because of the industry sectors (space, aerospace, defense, and energy), and the global nature of the companies involved, this project will have national and global positive impact on economic growth, societal wellbeing, and national security.

This project will enhance the research translation capacity of UCF, by building missing and by leveraging existing infrastructure with the assistance of mentoring institution, Georgia Tech, a high research translational institution. The project will undertake activities along the following key thrusts: (1) Enhance research translation capacity by creating a Venture Lab to directly support translation, and by reorganizing entrepreneurial support organizations to follow a more advanced model similar to our mentor institution. (2) Expand the educational and training opportunities for students across campus with reprograming and expansions of evidence-based entrepreneurship education at the colleges of engineering and computer science and business; and expand the pathways graduate students can pursue after graduation to include startup development and industrial research and development. (3) Recruit, mentor, and support six seed translational research projects aimed to be developed into successful technology startups. (4) Create, expand, and sustain a network of entrepreneurship and innovation ambassadors from industry and community partners in support of the project objectives 1-3.

QUESTION 3: Did UCF work with an evaluator to develop an evaluation plan for this project during the project proposal stage? Was the evaluation plan included in the funded proposal?

Answer:
Yes, we worked with an evaluator and the evaluation plan was included as part of the proposed work.

QUESTION 4: Does UCF have an estimated budget set aside for the evaluation? What is the approximate budget amount?

Answer:
Our estimated budget amount is in the range $300K-$360K. However, the budget is flexible and commensurate with usual NSF's project evaluation cost and the proposed work. As a reference, the total budget of the project to be evaluated is $6.2M over 4 years. We are seeking evaluation of project year 2 to project year 4 (3 years of evaluation work in total).

QUESTION 5: What are the expectations for an annual report due August 2025?
Answer:

NSF Annual report for year one of this grant was already submitted (Jan 2025). Expectations for annual report for year 2 (Jan 2026) are a complete set of metrics with their evaluation outcomes, same for years 3 and 4. The evaluator internal reports (August 2025 and others) are in support of our NSF annual report. Due to the timing, the expectations for August 2025 will be adjusted to take into account when the evaluator subcontract start date. We will accommodate for some ramp up time for metrics definition and starting data collection before starting to report on evaluation outcomes.

QUESTION 6: Will the evaluation require on-site visits or meetings at UCF, Georgia Tech, and/or a third university partner?

Answer:
Yes, about 2 on-site visits per year at UCF are expected as part of the evaluation process.

QUESTION 7: Team Dynamics: Can responsibilities for this engagement be shared across a team of professionals, particularly if some team members have part-time availability?

Answer:
Yes, responsibilities can be shared. However, we expect to have a main contact point for the evaluation team that is responsive, available and coordinating all evaluation activities.

QUESTION 8: Stakeholder Meetings: Are meetings with stakeholders scheduled during standard business hours? If so, are these meetings expected to be virtual, in-person, or a combination of both?

Answer:
We expect all meetings to be during standard business hours. Stakeholder meetings can be virtual, in-person or a combination.

QUESTION 9: Proposal Format: Could you confirm the specific formatting and submission expectations, particularly for any attachments or appendices?

Answer:
The specific formatting and submission requirements are outlined in the ITN under Section 3.0 Required Offer Format and 3.2 Respondent/Offer Submittal Sections. All appendices and forms are to be filled out, signed and included with the proposal submission.

QUESTION 10: Past Challenges: Are there any specific challenges or gaps identified in past similar projects that this engagement should aim to address?

Answer:
Not past challenges.

QUESTION 11: Is this ITN solely for an external evaluator or are there development services needed?

Answer:
The ITN is for an external evaluator.

QUESTION 12: The ITN says in Section 1.3 that "Supplier will engage with community and corporate economic development and training partners as a part of the evaluation and innovation ecosystem engagement."
   a. Is this 1) inclusive of strategic guidance and recommendations or 2) limited to interviewing and evaluation/scoring?
   b. Can you clarify what "the evaluation and innovation ecosystem engagement" means?

Answer:

   a.
      1) No, it is evaluation-related engagements only

      2) Yes, it is interviewing, evaluating, scoring and any other evaluation-pertinent activities.

   b. It means the engagement with our innovation ecosystem partners for evaluation activities.

QUESTION 13: The ITN mentions the first annual report due Aug. 1, 2025, while the contract starts June 1, 2025. Can you confirm that the first-year evaluation should be done in two months?

Answer:
Please see answer to Question 5.

QUESTION 14: With regard to the budget guidelines, is this a fixed cost contract, or can suppliers propose hourly rates not to exceed a maximum?

Answer: This is not a fixed cost contract and suppliers can propose hourly rate. Annual hourly rate increases must be delineated.

QUESTION 15: Can you clarify what the personnel annual fee listed in Appendix V refers to?

Answer: The proposal shall specify the annual hourly rates for the personnel(s) involved in the project activities.

QUESTION 16: Is this ITN package in response to the attached RFQ that we submitted last year? We are not seeing a requested scope of work outline in the ITN so just want to clarify.

Answer: This ITN package is not in response to last year's RFQ.

QUESTION 17: Are there any additional details related to the scope of the project that you are able to provide?

Answer:
Please see question 2.

QUESTION 18: Is there a budget in mind for this project?

Answer:
Please see question 4.

QUESTION 19: Who are the stakeholders?

Answer:
NSF, UCF, UCF innovation ecosystem partners including economic development organizations, corporate, technology startups, affiliated educational institutions, non-profits and government.

QUESTION 20: Are all meetings and presentations in person or hybrid or virtual?

Answer:
We have in-person meetings approximately two times a year (one-day workshops). We also have virtual weekly meetings. The evaluation team is expected to participate in these meetings.

QUESTION 21: What is the UCF staff responsible for to build this ecosystem out?

Answer:
Multiple organizations at UCF are working collaboratively on this project including Vice-President for Research and Innovation, Office of Technology Transfer, Venture Lab, Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, Business Incubation Program, and others. Collaboratively these organization form "UCF Innovate". UCF Innovate is responsible to maintaining and growing the UCF's innovation ecosystem.

QUESTION 22: What is the estimated budget? ideally by year?

Answer:
Please see question 4.

QUESTION 23: How detailed do you want the proposal?

Answer: Please see question 9.

QUESTION 24: Is UCF leveraging other funding (not necessary)?

Answer:
No. The scope of work is only associated only with the UCF ART award.

QUESTION 25: What is the expected level of awardee collaboration with the NSF?

Answer:
No collaboration with NSF is expected. However, coordination among all project stakeholders is expected including NSF.

QUESTION 26: How much collaboration, if any, is expected with Georgia Tech?

Answer:
Please see question 25

QUESTION 27: Scope Alignment: With reference to National Science Foundation Award #2331319 (https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=2331319&HistoricalAwards=false), please confirm whether the objectives and activities outlined in the award abstract constitute the specific scope of evaluation under this ITN solicitation

Answer:
Confirmed.

QUESTION 28: Budgetary Clarification: As the solicitation documents do not explicitly outline financial parameters, could you confirm the total funding allocation for this initiative and whether it includes provisions for subawards or cost-sharing?

Answer:
Please see Question 4

QUESTION 29: Cost Proposal Evaluation: The evaluation criteria allocates 30 points to the cost proposal. Could you clarify whether scoring prioritizes cost reasonableness (e.g., alignment with scope and deliverables) or favors the lowest-cost submission?

Answer:
Award is made to the supplier with the best value to UCF.

QUESTION 30: Contract Type: Please specify the contractual arrangement for the resulting engagement (e.g., time-and-materials, cost-plus, fixed-price) and whether payment terms will be tied to milestone deliverables.

Answer: The subcontract will be cost reimbursable. Payments will be based on quarterly progress reports.

QUESTION 31: Entity Incorporation Requirements:
- Is formal incorporation within the State of Florida a mandatory prerequisite for award of contract?
- Is formal incorporation within the State of Florida a mandatory prerequisite for respondents at the time of proposal submission?
- If incorporation is required, would post-award Florida incorporation (prior to contract performance) be permissible for a successful respondent?
- If incorporation in Florida is not mandatory but only desired, does the ITN allocate additional evaluation weight or scoring advantages to entities incorporated within Florida?

Answer:
Please refer to Section 2.15 State Licensing Requirements of the ITN. Incorporation in Florida is not mandatory. The award is made to the supplier with the best value to UCF.

QUESTION 31: Proposal Format
- Are there prescribed templates or structural requirements (e.g., sections, headings) for the technical proposal?
- Does the budget section require a specific format (e.g., line-item breakdown, narrative justification)?
- What are the page limits, font size, and margin requirements for the proposal?

Answer:
- Are there prescribed templates or structural requirements (e.g., sections, headings) for the technical proposal? **Please see question 9.**
- Does the budget section require a specific format (e.g., line-item breakdown, narrative justification)? **Please refer to Appendix V Pricing Structure Table of ITN.**
- What are the page limits, font size, and margin requirements for the proposal? **Please refer to Appendix IV of the ITN on Bonfire Submission Instructions for Suppliers.**

QUESTION 32: Submission Structure
Should the technical and budget volumes be submitted as separate documents or consolidated into a single file?

Answer:
Please refer to Appendix IV of the ITN on Bonfire Submission Instructions for Suppliers.

QUESTION 33: Incumbent Status: Has a vendor previously conducted NSF-funded assessments of similar scope or scale for the University of Central Florida? If so, please identify the incumbent.

Answer:
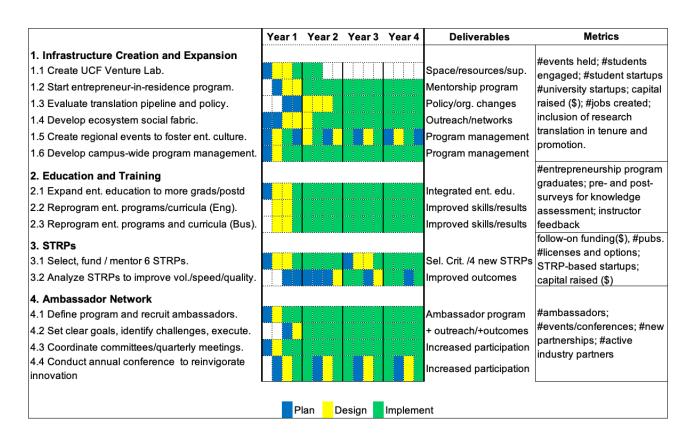The incumbent working on this grant in year 1 is Venn Collaborative.

QUESTION 34: Evaluation Plan Emphasis: The evaluation criteria appear to emphasize three areas:
a) Organizational infrastructure assessment (e.g., Venture Lab development, partnership networks)
b) Education/training program efficacy (e.g., student pathways, industry collaboration)
c) Translational research impact (e.g., commercialization outcomes, seed project success)
Could you elaborate on specific metrics or priorities within these domains?

Answer:
The areas of evaluation are correct. Metric definition is part of the evaluation work. Please see activity details and suggested basic metrics on the Figure below. This ITN is for UCF ART project years 2-4.

QUESTION 35: Year 1 Timeline: Given that the first annual report is due August 1, 2025, please provide a detailed timeline of Year 1 deliverables and activities, including the reporting period covered and key milestones preceding the report submission.

Answer:
Please see question 5.

QUESTION 36: Response to questions: Where will the response to questions be posted? By when can we expect response to questions. Accordingly, will the deadline for submission be extended?

Answer: All Addendums and information related to this ITN will be posted on the UCF Procurement Services Website: https://procurement.ucf.edu/solicitations/

QUESTION 37: Can UCF provide an overall purpose for this solicitation? In other words, what will the information and data be used for? Decision-making? Learning and improvement? Transparency and accountability? All of the above?

Answer:
All of the above.

QUESTION 38: Who is the primary audience for the annual reports?

Answer:
UCF ART management team.

QUESTION 39: The ITN references 3 broad objectives. Is there additional information with more detailed scope of work? Is it UCF's intent to award 3 different contracts to address each of these objectives?

Answer:
No, this ITN covers all three objectives.

QUESTION 40: How many departments/units across UCF will this ITN impact?

Answer:
Please see question 21.

QUESTION 41: Have any departments already undergone an assessment, evaluation or review in the past? If so, may vendors and/or awardee have access to those findings, results and recommendations?

Answer:
Yes, the UCF ART project has undergone evaluation for year 1. Awardee will have access to all information for UCF ART year 1 evaluation.

QUESTION 42: Might UCF clarify the preferred methodology or is it for the vendor to propose an appropriate methodology?

Answer:
Developmental evaluation is the preferred methodology. However, we will consider any methodology that is appropriate and conducive to accomplishing UCF ART objectives.

QUESTION 43: Can the UCF let vendors know what existing shared portals/platforms exist for operations and management?

Answer:
No shared portals or platforms related to evaluation or related to the particular project (UCF ART) to be evaluated. UCF in general (all projects) use Workday and other commercial ERPs.

QUESTION 44: What level of access will the vendor have to data/documents/papers across UCF being considered?

Answer:
The evaluation team will be provided with adequate data access for the evaluation and assessment of the project from various UCF organizations holding pertinent data. The evaluation team is expected to further collect evaluation data particular to this project.

QUESTION 45: Does the UCF have a theory of change or logic model already in place and if so, can UCF share these frameworks with vendors?

Answer:
No there are not models in place.

QUESTION 46: What is the approximate budget for this multi-year project?

Answer:
Please see question 4.