Climate Controls RFP Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated February 10, 2011

Below are 13 common questions and answers for the [Request for Proposal (RFP) Climate Controls Usability Testing for ENERGY STAR](#), listed in alphabetical order by subject.

1) **Ambient conditions measurement**. How often must temperature, humidity, and sound level measurements be taken?

   Answer. From Section G, Data Collection, of the draft test method:

   > *Ambient temperature, relative humidity, and ambient noise shall be measured and recorded prior to the start of each day of usability testing.*

   There is no requirement for additional measurement and recording of ambient conditions, however, the test method does require maintenance of quiet, comfortable conditions during testing.

2) **Confidentiality**. The *Confidentiality* section of the RFP (page 7) states that the contractor is required to keep confidential the nature of the testing. Is it safe to presume that once the test method is finalized and put into practice, the contractor may publicly state they were involved in the test development process, as well as the nature of that involvement at a very summary level?

   Answer. Once the test method is finalized and put into practice, the contractor may publicly state that they were involved in the test development process.

3) **Cost breakdown**. How should cost be broken down in the proposal?

   Answer. As stipulated in the RFP cover letter, cost should be broken down into three separate areas:

   1) Cost proposal for purchasing climate control units to test;

   2) Cost proposal for administering actual tests; and

   3) Cost proposal for evaluating data and writing recommendations report.

4) **Equipment Purchases**. Is the Contractor responsible for purchasing the UUTs?

> **Answer**. The UUTs will be delivered to the Contractor. Contractors do not have to account for the cost of the UUTS in their proposals.

5) **Fixed price bids**. Should the quote included in the proposal be a "fixed price" bid, meaning DOE and EPA award the work based upon the total proposed cost to complete the work? Or, should cost be based upon the hourly rates for services from different employees (plus materials, equipment, supplies, overhead and profit margin)?

> **Answer**. The proposal should include a "fixed price" bid.

6) **Group Size**. How large should the user group size be for this testing?

> **Answer**. The user group size for this round of usability testing will be 50 as described in the RFP.

7) **Length of Test**. Does DOE or EPA have an estimate on how long the testing session might last?

> **Answer**. Test time should be estimated by the RFP respondents by assessing the requirements and test procedure contained in the draft test method.

8) **Non-U.S. residents**. The RFP states that testing locations shall be in the continental U.S. or Canada but that individual users must be U.S. residents. If testing is performed in Canada, can the user group be composed of Canadian residents?

> **Answer**. DOE and EPA welcome all contractors' responses to the RFP and support recruiting Canadian residents for the test user group. As DOE and EPA review proposals, the agencies may take into account that the users will not be U.S. residents, as Canadian residents' perspectives and/or experiences with HVAC devices might be slightly different than the perspectives and experiences of U.S. residents.
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> Note that the upcoming round robin testing RFP (the RFP that follows this one) will be designed to check geographical variation of results.

9) **Script modifications**. Contractors understand the test is to be run strictly according to the test methods and script provided. That said, if the contractor feels that there is a shortcoming with the test method or script can the contractor change the method or script? Or must the contractor only make such observations and recommendations in their report?

> **Answer**. Suggested improvements to the test procedure and administrator scripts are welcome and encouraged. Please include those suggestions in the test protocol, which will be included as part of the RFP response. DOE, EPA, Navigant, and ICF will work with the contractor, once the contract is awarded, to finalize both the test procedure and administrator script before testing begins. Once finalized, the documents should not be changed and any additional recommended edits should be included in the draft and final reports.

10) **Subcontractors**. The *Testing Location and Use of Second-Tier Subcontractors* section of the RFP (page 7) stipulates the contractor shall not subcontract the testing work or otherwise assign third parties to conduct the testing work. Does this preclude the use of subcontractors for the following two specific tasks (below), which many contractors believe to be peripheral to the actual testing work?

   a) Recruitment of Individual Users. This is a service commonly provided by independent entities which maintain a database of contacts and provides the screening services.

   b) Administration of personal identifying information on Individual Users.

> **Answer**. The use of Subcontractors for the two tasks listed above is acceptable. The cost of using said Subcontractors must be incorporated into the total proposed cost submitted with the RFP response.

11) **Video delivery method**. Will DOE and EPA require video be uploaded via the internet or delivered on digital media?

> **Answer**. Video can be submitted on DVD data disks or via the Internet.

12) **Video file types**. Are there requirements for the video file type, such as Window-compatible, or a list of acceptable file formats?

> **Answer**. All video files should be:

> 1) Provided in both .wmv (Windows) and .mov (Mac) file formats.

2) Named in a descriptive manner corresponding to the associated test data. For example, u49_t1_02.22.2012_14:02.mov (user number 49, task 1, test started at 2:02PM local time on Feb 22, 2012).

13) **Video file storage**. Are contractors required to retain a copy of the video files?

Answer. The contractor does not need to retain a copy of the video files.