

Innovation Technique 9 — Discovery

Sometimes, we want prospective offerors to **learn** before submitting full proposals – think about a site visit before construction bidding occurs, where the Government opens the work site and offerors walk around, make observations, ask questions, make notes, and so forth. For complex services acquisitions, the Government will sometimes make a reading room available. We want to get the best proposals possible, so let's make this process more **interactive and let the offerors ask questions!** This is called "Discovery."

1. Done after release of final solicitation and **before** receipt of full proposals (possibly after Phase 1).
2. Offerors can ask questions of requirements and the 'as is' operational landscape.
3. Answers are provided by the Government requirement owners.
4. Different from a Q&A process or pre-proposal process, these sessions are done with individual offerors.
5. Exchanges made during Discovery session are typically not shared with other offerors **unless** those lead to a change in the solicitation's requirement.
6. *The main purpose is **prospective offeror learning** and the Government answers questions as best it can. The Government assumes no responsibility for any conclusions or interpretations made during Discovery, or for any representation made by any of its employees or agents during Discovery.*



Sample from *Information Systems Division Professional Services*—

A.3.4 Discovery Session

Those Offerors that either received advisory notifications to proceed to Phase II . . . shall be invited to participate in a scheduled discovery session to review Software Change Requests (SCR), CG FIXIT tickets, examples of code, and examples of ALC organic support to assist in oral presentation preparation. The Discovery Session will be conducted at a minimum of two (2) weeks from the date of receipt of the advisory notification letter. Each Offeror will have its own Discovery Session, without other Offerors present.

Offerors will receive instructions and schedule dates and times to visit ALC to review relevant data. The date and time to have access to ALC's data will be coordinated with the Offerors POC upon approval of proposed personnel. The Government will have two (2) optional dates and times that will be made available to review the data provided by the Government.

The Government will not delay the discovery session for personnel vetting issues. Additional personnel will not be processed for access to ALC if submitted personnel are not approved by the Government prior to the scheduled date and time.

During the Discovery Session, each Offeror will be provided two (2) hours to review the data and ask questions to increase their understanding of the Government's requirements based on the data provided. Each Offeror is permitted to bring up to five (5) personnel to the Discovery session. The Government will answer the questions, at its discretion, in a one-on-one setting in real time. This Discovery Session is not intended to provide feedback on Offerors proposed approaches. Questions and answers may differ across Offerors. Answers during these sessions are non-binding unless it results in an amendment to the RFP. Offerors are encouraged to prepare questions that are sufficient and detailed enough to support the preparation of Phase II proposal.

