QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR PCORI RFQ # PCO-CVDLDSR2013 “Understanding Options to Reduce Disparities in Cardiovascular Disease through Comparative Effectiveness Research”

Q. On page 4 of the RFQ, the numbering of tasks under the Scope of Work section appears to skip from 3 to 5. Is there a task missing from the Scope of Work?

A. No. The error in sequence was purely typographical. All the task items were listed.

Q. On page 4 of the RFQ, is the item numbered 5 meant to be a part of the bulleted list of sections for the report under item number 3 in the Scope of Work?

A. No, PCORI is also seeking to understand, separately, possible opportunities generated from the literature that may lead to funding comparative effectiveness research studies on CVD.

Q. In the event of delays in the award date, will the period of performance (RFP page #5) be extended in equal measure?

A. PCORI expects to adhere to the timeline posted in the RFQ. However, PCORI will work with the chosen Contractor to establish an amenable period of performance.

Q. Does PCORI have a preferred Project Management Approach (traditional/waterfall, agile, lean, etc.)?

A. No, PCORI welcomes innovative project management approaches that provide the best fit between the Contractor and the Scope of Work outlined in the RFQ. Since this solicitation is an RFQ, we will give preference to those organizations that show exceptional value to PCORI (typically at lowest cost). Given these parameters, we recommend submitting the most cost-effective approach.

Q. Will the selected contractor have the freedom to survey/engage researchers funded by PCORI on projects related to cardiovascular risk that may not yet have been published?

A. All survey and research plans should be clearly delineated in the quote for services. With prior approval, PCORI may support, as part of this project, the activities described in the question above.

Q. Should contractors include costs to make documents Section 508 compliant in their quote for services?

Q. Does the final report need to be 508 compliant?
A. No, reports do not need to be 508 compliant. Compliance (in Section 8, page 6 of the RFQ) refers to Contractor compliance with PCORI Rules and Regulations. This includes PCORI’s “flow down” of Section 508 compliance to all employees and other persons who will be working on the PCO-CVCLDSR2013 project. It is expected that people compensated under this award will receive reasonable Section 508 accommodations, when requested.

Q. ☐ With the proposal due only a week and a half after questions are submitted, would PCORI entertain extending the proposal due date by one week so that any responses to questions can be considered in the proposal response?

A. No. This solicitation is a Request for Quotes. PCORI is seeking organizations that already possess the ability to analyze literature and provide a systematic report on the available evidence—and gaps—to support funding work addressing disparities in cardiovascular disease.

Q. Are bidders allowed to use a format not listed in Attachment C if their format contains all of the cost elements needed to evaluate the cost proposal?

A. Yes. Offerors may choose to submit a budget in a different format. However, note that PCORI prefers budgets that are presented either by task or by the level of effort and compensation rates of key personnel. Offerors may amend the sample budget formats listed in Attachment C to add additional rows or detail that delineates the various budget lines and cost components.

Q. Does the cost reimbursable contract mean that we cannot quote a fixed fee?

A. No. Offerors should submit a budget that delineates all direct and indirect costs. Costs and fees should be uniform and in line with past projects. PCORI reserves the right to exclude budget items, unsubstantiated rates, and other charges that are deemed unreasonable. On the basis of the Scope of Work and familiarity with similar projects, PCORI expects to issue a cost-reimbursable contract. However, PCORI will consider and may issue other contract types if it is in the best interest of PCORI and the ultimate success of the project.

Q. Does the cost reimbursable contract allow us to request additional funding if after our best efforts to complete the work we still need additional funding?

A. No. We expect the cost-reimbursable contract to have a Not-to-Exceed (NTE) cap.

Q. When the RFQ states “What are the opportunities to fund CER studies to address the issue through comparative effectiveness research,” does this refer to the viability of new initiatives, other PCORI contracting vehicles, and intra-agency initiatives such as Million Hearts? Or is this asking for what are the most promising approaches to CVD disparity reduction that additional CER can shed light on?
A. **PCORI** seeks to identify the most promising approaches that could be used to fund comparative effectiveness research to reduce disparities in the various components of cardiovascular disease. The Contractor could also discuss the viability of new or ongoing initiatives, potential research opportunities focused on implementation, or other ideas.

Q. Should we restrict our search to interventions in the United States, or can we include information from sources abroad?

A. **The Contractor may include interventions or studies from outside the United States. It would be helpful to note whether a procedure mentioned is available in the United States.**

Q. The “Key Deliverables and Timeline” Table 1 on page 4 of the Request for Quote states that a Kick-off meeting will take place within 1 week of contract award. For the purposes of developing a budget, would PCOI allow the Contractor to conduct the kick-off meeting via phone?

Q. Are meetings such as the kick-off meeting intended to be over the phone or in-person?

A. **Kickoff meetings (as well as check-in meetings during the award) may be conducted in person, via video teleconference, or via phone conference.**

Q. Are there any presentations expected after the final report?

A. **In-person presentations of the final report are not required.**

Q. What is the maximum score for each section of the proposal? Is there a rubric?

A. **Please refer to the Quote Evaluation Criteria on page 7 of the RFQ. This RFQ requires Offerors to perform all elements in the Scope of Work. Therefore, quotes will be evaluated only as “pass” or “fail.” Preference will be given to the lowest-cost quote or quotes rated “pass.”**