



PATIENT-CENTERED OUTCOMES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Response to Questions

Dissemination and Implementation Action Plan

Posted September 30, 2013

Contract Evaluation

Q: In the technical evaluation, how will PCORI weigh contractor (and sub-contractor) health industry subject matter expertise and marketing and communication expertise?

A: PCORI seeks a balance in the total composition of the contract and prescribed subcontractors as they relate to the health, marketing, and communication industries. Provide a narrative justifying your subcontractor selections and associated subject-matter expertise.

Also refer to the Evaluation Matrix on page 18 of the updated RFP. The Management Approach (inclusive of your project team, subcontractors, subject-matter experts, etc.) will be weighted as roughly one-third of the overall score.

Contractor Consortia and Stakeholder Involvement

Q: Is there a pre-existing list of stakeholders (e.g. Roundtable participants) that PCORI has that should be engaged in the Action Plan process?

A: Yes, the roundtable participants are listed [on the event page](#)¹ on the PCORI website. In addition, the PCORI stakeholder engagement team will be available to the contractor in determining stakeholder inclusion and outreach.

About This Document

This document supports RFP # PCO-DIAP2013 and answers all of the questions received between August 30 and September 16.

Questions are listed exactly as they were received. Language that includes personal or organization identifiers has been redacted.

The updated Request for Proposal is available online at pcori.org/assets/2013/09/PCORI-Dissemination-Implementation-updated-RFP-093013.pdf.

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is an independent organization created to help people make informed healthcare decisions.

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¹ Available at <http://pcori.org/events/dissemination-and-implementation-roundtable/?type=past>.

Q: Please confirm that it is allowed to sub-contract with certain existing PCORI stakeholders, for instance those that have participated in the Roundtable process to date.

A: Yes, the contractor is allowed to subcontract with PCORI stakeholders, including those that participated in the roundtable.

Q: Please confirm that it is allowed to sub-contract with organizations that currently hold other PCORI grants or contracts.

A: Yes, the contractor is allowed to subcontract with organizations that currently hold other PCORI grants or contracts.

Q: For Task 2: If the D&I action plan involves “linking agents” within governmental agencies (e.g. profession or disease-specific liaisons working within state health departments, dissemination and implementation program leads at AHRQ and NIH), does PCORI have a mechanism to provide financial support to those linking agents, or would PCORI expect the other agencies to fund the work?

A: It depends. Legislation requires that we work together with some agencies and coordinate in a manner that requires no financial support. But, if the contractor foresees any potential expenditure, then please delineate proposed linking agent costs in the budget. If financial support is not necessary, then PCORI will renegotiate the budget during final contract negotiations.

Q: Do selected subcontractor’s need to be pre-screened by PCORI?

- **Should all subcontractor fees be rolled into our proposal (regardless of any partnerships that may already exist between subcontractor and PCORI)?**

A: PCORI reserves the right to review, screen, and request adjustments in the proposed project team. All proposed subcontractors and their associated expenditures must be clearly listed (with detail) in your proposal. Budgets should delineate all proposed direct and indirect costs. If needed, explain the role of the proposed subcontractors in the budget justification. Note that page limitations do not apply to the Cost Proposal.

- If your proposal will create new engagements with subcontractors and your organization will be issuing payment to the subcontractors, then your proposal should openly list all associated fees, rates, and expenses. But, if the subcontractors already have a contractual relationship with PCORI that compensates them for the work you are referencing, then those items should be excluded from your proposal.

Q: May the prime contractor engage the various stakeholder groups and partners required via consultant or faculty agreements rather than as consortia arrangements or institutional subcontracts?

A: Yes. PCORI will consider all subcontracting and partnering arrangements in support of the requested Scope of Work. It is recommended that Offerors submit proposed subcontractor budgets in accordance with their organization’s budgeting and enterprise accounting systems. All proposed engagements must clearly delineate requested direct and indirect costs.

Direct and Indirect Costs

Q: Can PCORI please clarify whether there will be any restrictions on DHHS-approved direct or indirect cost agreements; may full indirects be charged?

A: This opportunity is a best-value solicitation. Accordingly, PCORI will consider all proposed costs and their 1) relationship to the key work streams in support of the proposed Scope of Work, and 2) comparison to current market research, cost/price analyses, and the competitive bids submitted by other Offerors. PCORI internal service contracts (re: this solicitation) are not restricted by indirect cost caps.

Q: Should the cost of developing and managing (logistics, overall agenda/content development, recruitment, onsite meeting management) the February 2014 workshop be included in the cost proposal?

- **As a live meeting with streaming webinar?**
- **How many individuals will be invited to participate in the live portion of the workshop (ie. PCORI members, roundtable members)?**
- **Where is the anticipated location of the workshop?**
- **Will the workshop be one 8-hour day?**

A: No. The cost of the 2014 workshop, which was originally scheduled for February but has been moved to September (please see updated [RFP](#)²), will be managed by PCORI. The contractor will work with PCORI to provide the content. The goal of the workshop is to present the plan and gather broad-based input. The September 2014 workshop is anticipated to be in the metro Washington, DC, area. PCORI and the contractor will work together to determine the optimal number of participants and the length of the workshop.

Q: Are there any caps on the salary rates, consulting rates or indirect cost rates allowable under this contract?

A: PCORI will consider all proposed costs and evaluate them for reasonableness. Salaries must be based on actuals. Proposed rates must be in line with industry standards and necessary for the level of support requested. Cost proposals and the overall project cost must be competitive. Specific examples of similar federal/nonprofit projects that honored the requested rates will be taken into consideration. Indirect rates will be considered – and approved – based on the overall value of this engagement and expected benefit. PCORI internal service contracts (re: this solicitation) are not restricted by indirect cost caps.

Q: Are there any specific forms required for budget or proposal documents beyond the formatting instructions included in the RFP?

A: No. It is recommended that budgets (and resultant invoice submissions) conform to your organization's enterprise accounting system. Line-item detail is encouraged. Direct and indirect costs should be delineated.

² Available at pcori.org/assets/2013/09/PCORI-Dissemination-Implementation-updated-RFP-093013.pdf.

Q: Will PCORI accept other arrangements for securing stakeholders and partners besides formal subcontractor agreements?

A: Yes. When specific work tasks are proposed, it is expected that collaborators and partners will be fairly compensated. Offerors should provide proof/documentation that the proposed partnerships are secured, in place, and ready to collaborate on this project.

Q: Please provide an anticipated level of effort for the contract

A: This solicitation provided a comprehensive RFP with a detailed Scope of Work, timeline, deliverables, and weighting/evaluation matrices. Accordingly, PCORI expects to receive responsive proposals that 1) sufficiently address the aforementioned elements, 2) demonstrate efficiency and value, where appropriate, and 3) provide creative and innovative options. As noted in the Evaluation Matrix on page 18 of the updated RFP, the Technical Solution comprises a 50% weighting factor. Comparatively, cost accounts for a 10% weighting factor.

Q: Does an offeror need to provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement?

A: Yes. All requested indirect rates must be substantiated with Facilities and Administrative Rate Agreements, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements, or other independently audited documentation. PCORI reserves the right to disqualify proposals with unreasonable, excessive, or unsubstantiated costs and rates.

Q: Does an offeror need to provide supporting documentation to validate salaries?

A: Offerors must submit their standard base salaries and rates. All base rates must be actuals, with indirect cost application detailed separately. PCORI reserves the right to request additional payroll or financial statement/audit documentation. All contractors are subject to post-award audit by the Government Accountability Office.

Q: Are subcontractor cost proposals only needed for those supplying Key Personnel or should all subcontractors provide cost proposals?

A: Cost proposals delineating direct and indirect costs should be submitted for each proposed subcontractor. All proposed key personnel must include their actual institutional salary, level of effort on this project (or hour commitment), and any requested indirect rates.

Timeline

Q: Given the complexities of dissemination and implementation that were identified in the roundtable discussion, can PCORI clarify why the time frame for developing the draft D & I Action Plan is so short (less than 3 months, including the holiday period)?

A: We appreciate the complexity of dissemination and implementation activities. Accordingly, PCORI has extended the timeframe. The February 2014 workshop has been moved to September 2014, allowing more time for development of the dissemination and implantation action plan. Please review the updated RFP.

Q: Will PCORI consider a extending the period of performance for tasks 1-6 to 6-12 months? Our assessment is that it would be very difficult to accomplish the tasks outlined at an acceptable level of quality within the timeframe proposed.

A: Yes, PCORI has extended the period of performance. The February 2014 workshop has been moved to September 2014, allowing more time for development of the dissemination and implementation action plan. Please review the updated RFP. The initial first draft of the plan must be delivered in June of 2014.

Q: Will PCORI consider a extending the period of performance for Task 9 into 2015? In our estimate, this will be necessary to both implement and usefully evaluate the plan.

A: Yes, PCORI will consider extending the period of performance for Task 9. Provide a recommended work plan explaining rationale for extended timeline. Some PCORI pilot projects are due to be completed in December 2013; meanwhile, another set of projects will be completed by December 2014.

Q: For planning purposes, what is the anticipated delay between completion of the initial tasks and authorization of contingent tasks?

A: There is no anticipated delay between completion of the initial tasks and authorization of contingent tasks. We foresee starting on the contingency task immediately after completion of the initial tasks.

Pilot Programs

Q: The scope of work states that for contingent task 9, the contractor will need to conduct a D&I test and evaluation using PCORI's Pilot Programs. Can PCORI confirm that the pilot programs are ones listed at the following URL (<http://pcori.org/funding-opportunities/funding-announcements-2/funded/>), or provide an alternate url where the description of pilot programs may be found?

A: Yes, the stated URL is where the PCORI pilot programs can be found.

Scope of Work

Q: Does PCORI anticipate the D&I plan would focus on disseminating only results from PCORI-supported studies, or also combined with findings from other relevant research studies? (The latter approach seemed strongly supported by Roundtable participants.)

A: The goal of PCORI's dissemination and implementation action plan is to disseminate both PCORI-funded studies, as well as other relevant, evidence-based comparative effectiveness research (CER) studies.

Q: Task 8, listed on p.3, is to deliver recommendations for evaluating and measuring the impact of PCORI's D&I efforts. The evaluation planning task is also included in the description of Task 2, p.6. Can PCORI clarify whether the evaluation plan is part of Task 2 (to be produced before the workshop) or a separate task, Task 8 (to be completed after the workshop)?

A: The evaluation plan, metrics, and proposed checklist requirement listed in Task 2 is a draft or preliminary version of the final recommendations, which will be presented in Task 8. The purpose of Task 2 is to present a draft of the dissemination and implementation action plan, including the evaluation plan, so that the contractor can receive feedback on the preliminary recommendations for

further refinement. Task 8 should be the finalized version of the recommendations compiled in Task 2 and presented in Task 3 for initial input and feedback from the stakeholder groups.

Q: The task lists on pp.3 and 11 of the RFP do not match. No deliverable is listed on p.11 for Task 8 (evaluation). Further, p.9 of the RFP states that Task 7 is contingent (conduct D&I test and evaluation, including submission of an approach for testing and evaluation) Can PCORI clarify whether Task 8 is contingent or part of the initial award?

A: Thank you for pointing out the error. For clarity, we are reposting the RFP. Please note that the order of tasks has changed because we have added another task.

Q: For the case studies, is PCORI looking for brief descriptions of “success stories” or longer, formal case study reports?

A: PCORI seeks case studies that highlight best practices, lessons learned, or innovative approaches that have relevance for the dissemination and implementation action plan. The length of the case study reports is to be determined by the contractor. PCORI can link the contractor to the appropriate stakeholder involved in the roundtable that identified case studies as an instrument to support its interests. The stakeholder can provide previous examples and share experiences on the use and format of case studies.

Q: Is the contractor expected to disseminate products developed by grantees (e.g., decision aids) or create products for dissemination de novo, based on findings?

A: The contractor is only expected to come up with a generalizable plan of action. The actual dissemination of products developed by grantees or the creation of products for dissemination is possibly the next phase of this project.

Q: Can PCORI share a progress update for each of the pilot grantees at this time so that we can better anticipate what we need to disseminate?

A: Yes. Preliminary estimates based on project plans indicate that the first round of projects will be completed in December 2013 and the second round will be completed in December 2014. When the dissemination and implementation contractor is identified, greater specificity will be provided.

Q: What is the current PCORI approach for dissemination of research findings? Is there a flow chart or process chart that can be shared?

A: There is none. The Dissemination and Implementation Roundtable held on July 29, 2013, and this RFP are the preliminary steps PCORI has taken to develop a plan. To date, no funded research project has been completed.

Q: Why does it take “upwards of 17 years” for research findings to be used in practice? What differentiates cases taking shorter or longer times?

A: There are many variables that contribute to the lag. The study cited can provide more details. (See Balas EA, Boren SA. Managing clinical knowledge for health care improvement. In: Bemmel J, McCray AT,

editors. Yearbook of Medical Informatics 2000: Patient-Centered Systems. Stuttgart, Germany: Schattauer Verlagsgesellschaft mbH; 2000:65-70).

Q: What does PCORI expect to happen once the results are disseminated?

A: PCORI expects that, once the results are disseminated, they will be adopted into practice or implemented in systems. In addition, we seek to address the second goal stated in PCORI's Strategic Plan (in draft) "To speed the implementation and use of patient-centered outcomes research evidence."

Q: Other than the sample of products showcased in Figure 3 of the RFP – are their live meetings, forums, or online initiatives that contribute to the current dissemination plan?

A: All of the relevant materials for PCORI's dissemination and implementation action plan can be found [on the event page](#)³ on the PCORI website. Also, we encourage the contractor to explore the [Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality](#)⁴ (AHRQ) website.

Q: Based on PCORI experience (primarily Dr. Beal, Dr. Mittman, and Ms. Slutsky) what were the elements that defined successful or failed programs?

A: This question is unclear. If the question is about a successful or failed research project, then the dissemination and implementation action plan should include an initial assessment to determine a project's level of dissemination effort. Based on that determination, the extent of dissemination and implementation efforts should align with the project's success. Failed projects should have limited dissemination, while successful projects should be widespread. If this question is about the success of the dissemination project, then the Offeror should provide the evaluation framework outlined in Task 2 and Task 8 for determining the success of the dissemination and implementation action plan.

Evaluation Recommendations

Q: Does PCORI expect the evaluation recommendations for the D & I work to be implemented by an independent contractor, or to be part of ongoing quality improvement evaluation built into the work of PCORI and partner agencies? Or both?

A: Both. Evaluation recommendations should be implemented by an independent contractor and should be part of ongoing quality improvement evaluation built into the work of PCORI and partner agencies.

³ Available at <http://pcori.org/events/dissemination-and-implementation-roundtable/?type=past>.

⁴ Available at <http://www.ahrq.gov>.