GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: The RFP outlines discovery/assessment and also mentions design around data models. Can you elaborate on how much of the overall scope is planning vs actual development/design? Estimated timeline/length (ballpark figures).

A: The team assumes that planning in the context of this question relates to development of BIIP’s project goals, scope, and requirements gathering. In that context, the team estimates 75% (ballpark) of the vendor’s effort is expected to be spent on design and prototype development.

Q: Please describe the current VEIC team working on this project.

A: VEIC’s core project team has 5 VEIC staff and 1 subcontractor. This project is also supported by 3 members of our Finance department and a team of 8 advisors representing key departments around the organization.

The core project team includes members with intermediate SQL Server DBA, SSRS, SSIS, SSAS skills.

Q: What is the allotted budget for Data Warehouse Design Support services requested in the RFP.

A: VEIC expects the costs for the Data Warehouse Design Support RFP to exceed 20,000 dollars. It is at this threshold that VEIC policies require an RFP process to be conducted.

Q: What is the duration of the project?

A: Completion of this phase of development is expected by the end of 2014.

Q: Are there any other incumbents providing these services?

A: No.

Q: Will VEIC accept proposals which include proposals which include team members who are overseas?

A: VEIC will consider all responses received.

Q: Is VEIC looking for a Time and Material project or a fixed-price project?

A: VEIC will consider responses which include both or either time and material or fixed price estimates.

DATA WAREHOUSE CURRENT STATE

Q: Could you detail the existing documentation, including business rules for each of the critical applications as described in the RFP and how detailed, relevant and current it is?

A: While VEIC staff are very knowledgeable about each system, have direct experience in working with all of them, and have some formal and informal documentation describing each of these system, our documentation is not comprehensive or fully developed.
The project team is currently developing additional documentation which describes data and business rules most relevant to our planned data warehouse.

**Q: Please describe the existing warehouses maintained by VEIC, including the number of tables.**

A: VEIC currently has 3 production warehouses storing energy efficiency data. Each stores data specific to a single energy efficiency program. Each warehouse includes ~250 tables.

VEIC also maintains a single warehouse storing corporate data. This warehouse includes ~30 tables.

**Q: Please describe the existing OLAP databases, including the number of measure groups and dimensions.**

A: VEIC currently has 4 production OLAP DBs with on average 5 measure groups providing facts, 6 measure groups supporting MTM, and 16 dimensions for each.

**Q: Is VEIC potentially looking to redesign the existing Data Warehouse?**

A: This project is not meant to replace or augment our existing data warehouses. The proposed data warehouse may leverage our existing warehouses as a data source.

**Q: Please describe the size and type of reporting and dashboard infrastructure used by VEIC currently.**

A: Reports are principally delivered via SSRS with over 700 developed reports. Dashboards built in SSRS are used to support specific needs, but are not used widely.

**Q: Does VEIC use Tableau Server or Tableau Desktop with SSAS?**

A: Tableau desktop is used by a limited number of staff at VEIC principally for ad hoc analysis of single data sets.

**Q: Please describe at a high level the current systems and data sources which feed the existing data warehouses.**

A: VEIC’s existing Data Warehouses are principally fed by transactional databases housed in Microsoft SQL Server supporting custom developed line of business applications. These applications are developed by VEIC staff.

**Q: Please explain to what degree is security implemented in the DW architecture?**

A: Active Directory and SQL Server permissions are used to secure VEIC’s existing warehouses.

Most of the highly confidential data, which is encrypted in our transactional databases, is not transferred to our warehouses.

**PLANNED WAREHOUSE**

**Q: Can an approximate estimate be given for the number of dimensions that can be shared across financial, corporate budget, and efficiency program systems?**

A: We expect to end up with 4-6 dimensions that can be shared across the three systems. These would include market group, date, work breakdown structure, organizational structure, and account grouping.
Q: In addition to collecting and maintaining other Budget and Goal data are there sources other than the 3 identified systems (KITT, Financial Data, Corporate Budget Data) e.g. Master Data Management (MDM) structures for reporting rollup etc.?

A: Yes. Examples of this would include specific types of market, sector and project classification.

Q: Please describe as well as you can the kinds of questions (analytics) your users need answered from the data that will be in scope for this BI solution:

A: Examples include:

- Executive: The ability to see corporate budget to actuals in a dashboard for all VEIC organizational units.
- Department Head: The ability to see each major project, including program budgets which are independent. This would in some cases include energy data and targets.
- All staff: Dashboard which includes financial and energy metrics compared to goals by divisions.

Q: The RFP states that VEIC “lacks a central system for storing additional budget and goal data.” Are you looking to build simple data capture forms/web pages to maintain this additional data?

A: This RFP’s scope will not include the development of entry tools to support data collection for additional budget and goal data. We anticipate the need for such a tool will come up in our discussions but expect VEIC staff to develop such a tool.

Q: How often does VEIC expect the new data warehouse to be refreshed?

A: VEIC expects that data will be refreshed nightly.

Q: Is the project scope limited only to the EDW design & development?

A: The project’s scope is principally focused on the design of the DW but we do expect design to include Semantic models. We also wish to leverage the vendor’s experience to discuss the design of dashboard and ad hoc reporting systems as described in the RFP.

Q: What data sources will be used by R & Mathematica (i.e. source OLTP, the new DW, SSAS models)?

A: VEIC does not expect the planned BIIP DW to be a data source for R & Mathematica in phase 1. References to Mathematica and R were included for informational purposes.

Q: Will the Adaptive Insights database also be a data source (for the data warehouse and/or semantic models)?

A: It is a data source. VEIC expects to receive Adaptive data via manual export of data in flat file format. Such exports would be extremely infrequent and import of this data would be expected to occur between 1 and 4 times per year into the warehouse.

Q: Please describe at a high level the planned architecture and systems which will serve the new warehouse.

A: VEIC expects to deploy the data warehouse on premises using existing infrastructure. VEIC uses Dell blades and EqualLogic SANs, and we virtualize our current warehouse. We expect to use virtualization for this DW. VEIC would consider using column store, in-memory storage if design and vendor recommendation warrants.
Q: Is VEIC planning on using Multi-Dimensional (UDM) and in-Memory Tabular models for BI?
A: VEIC is open to exploring both Multi-Dimensional (UDM) and in-Memory Tabular models for BI.

Q: Are there existing standards e.g. ETL and SOA frameworks, build and release processing? Is VEIC looking for "Best Practices"?
A: VEIC is looking to build easy to maintain and administer ETL processes that integrate well with our environment. We strive to adhere to best practices and in-house guidelines, but are open to discussion when necessary.

Q: Please describe additional requirements around authentication and security.
A: Current design assumes authentication through Active Directory integration, and we have identified use cases which would require the use of Kerberos.

There are no plans for external non Active Directory users to have access, but we do anticipate making reporting available for authenticated users from outside our network.

The initial warehouse is anticipated to include limited PII, but future requirements will necessitate enhanced security.