Questions and Answers

1) Requirements 2.1 States that only three (3) specific nomenclature firearms from each offeror shall be submitted for solicitation testing and be considered for contract award. Does that mean that each offeror can submit three separate proposals?

Each manufacturer can submit up to three (3) unique weapon 'variants' (six identical samples of each) as part of a singular proposal for consideration. By allowing manufacturers to submit up to three different variants, the USSS will avail itself the ability identify an operating system* and that best suits its diverse mission set. Variants could encompass different operating systems, materials, and/or different configurations of furniture (such as handguards, stocks, etc), as long as each variant meets the requirements set forth in the SOW.

*As outlined in 2.11.5, the USSS will accept either a direct-impingement or a short-stroke piston operating system.

2) Requirements 2.11.4.1.4 Dimensional Requirements provides a barrel length (min-max) of 10-12 inches. Standard commercial offerings for barrels are typically in .5 increments. Would USSS consider moving the maximum to 12.5 inches provided that the overall length threshold for the rifle is not exceeded?

The USSS has no intention of revising this requirement.

3) Requirements 2.11.6.1 States that the barrel shall have a minimum service life of 20,000 rounds. How is "service life" defined?

The USSS determines 'service life' utilizing a two-tier system: an accuracy requirement and a velocity requirement; both will have specific/clearly defined acceptable levels of degradation over the course of the 20,000 round requirement, and will be identified in the final SOW and/or Testing Procedures.

4) What ammunition types will be used?

This requirement will be further refined and clarified for the final Test Procedure document. Ammunition utilized for Phase I and III accuracy and velocity measurements will be specified at the time of publication; the USSS is currently validating the performance of a commercially-available ammunition to confirm it corresponds with our undisclosed duty ammunition. Relevant manufacturer point-of-contact and identifiable lot numbers will be published with the official solicitation.

5) What are the intended engagement distances?

This information will not be disclosed.

6) Will the rifle be suppressed and if so what suppressor(s) will be used?

At this time, the use or compatibility of a sound suppressor during operational and/or testing phases is not a requirement within the SOW.

7) Will an M203 be fielded in conjunction with the rifle in any way?

This information will not be disclosed.

8) What type of Flash Suppressors, Muzzle Brakes, and Compensators will be expected?

This requirement will be specified to reflect the USSS priority on flash suppression, but will not be limited to a specific make/model.

9) What type of Sling use and sling attachments?

Specific sling models vary within the USSS, the inclusion off a sling is not required at solicitation. All sling mounting/attachment points will be required to be rotation-limited (4-position) quick-detach cups, to allow interface with quick-detach push button swivels. This requirement will be clarified in the official solicitation

10) Will you require a Coated BCG of any kind?

No specific coatings are required or will be specified for the BCG other than rust/corrosion resistance.

11) Will you require any type IR Cerakote?

No additional requirement for color and/or IR-reduction other than the requirement for dark/subdued finish of all exterior parts/surfaces.

12) What type of barrel material will you want-Stainless Steel or Chrome Moly Barrel?

No additional material requirements have been identified at this time.

13) Will you consider alternate chambering-223 Wylde Chambering?

The USSS has no intention of revising this requirement.

14) Will you want Specific Agency Markings/engravings?

No specific agency markings/engravings (ie logos, agency name, etc) are anticipated at this time, but the USSS is currently pursuing technological upgrades in inventory/tracking. As such, the ability to embed/engrave optical machine readable data ("barcoding") is being considered. These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

15) What Trigger pull requirements are there for this requirement?

This requirement is specified in 2.11.9 of the SOW.

16) Will you require ambidextrous features?

Yes, these requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

17) Will you want a rifle that is coated and prepared for Maritime use?

No specific coatings are required or will be specified for the exterior finish other than rust/corrosion resistance.

18) What are your expectations for Magazine Material construction?

Current USSS-issued magazines are specified in 2.11.12 of the SOW. Any magazine submitted that is of other or proprietary design/make/model will be subject to Magazine Testing outlined in Testing Document, Phase I, Step 10. No additional requirements at this time.

19) Will you require a Secondary Grip / Vertical Grip?

No requirement has been identified.

20) What are your expectations for after sale service, gauging, maintenance, repairs, parts?

This requirement is specified in 2.10 of the SOW, and is subject to terms of final contract award.

21) What type of sights/Sight material are you requiring?

No additional requirement for material or design, other than the dimensional requirements outlined in 2.11.17 of the SOW.

22) Will optic be run with riser? If so, height?

As indicated in the SOW 2.11.17, iron sights need to be viewable through an Aimpoint T1/T2. No riser/mount is specified; in the absence of an offerer-supplied item at time of solicitation submission, the government will supply a LaRue Tactical Model 660 mount for testing and verification of conformance.

23) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.1, General: Only three (3) specific nomenclature firearms from each offeror shall be submitted for solicitation testing and considered for contract award.*

Question: Does this sentence mean that every vendor can submit up to three different types of weapons for testing or that only 3 bid samples are required?

See Question #1.

24) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.2.2, First Article Test (FAT): The specifications described in this SOW will serve as the FAT, and will be verified for First Article samples received under the contract. All FAT samples must meet the requirements set forth in the official solicitation and exhibit performance that is comparable to what was demonstrated during solicitation testing for all requirements during FAT. The Government reserves the right to decrease the amount of testing it performs under the FAT protocols.*

Question: Are all FAT samples expected to undergo a full 20,000 round test prior to submission to the USSS?

Yes, but – as implied - the Government reserves the right to waive any/all portions of the testing conducted during solicitation. These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

25) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.5.1: The offeror(s) shall warranty the firearm for at least ten (10) years from the date of delivery of the firearm to the Government and or the discharge of twenty thousand (20,000) rounds whichever comes first. The manufacturer shall replace any firearm that has a gross failure of the barrel, receiver, or operating system within the warranty period due to defects in material or workmanship.*

Question: What is considered poor material/workmanship versus fair wear and tear and how is round count maintained?

The USSS maintains detailed round counts of each rifle in inventory. Manufacturer warranties related to material/manufacturing defects vs 'wear and tear' should correlate with accepted/common industry standards. Specific/additional requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

26) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.5.3: The receiver shall be warranted for the life of the weapon.*

Question: What is "the life of the weapon" and to which receiver are we referring to, the upper or lower receiver?

Beyond minimum requirement of "service life" (see Question #3), overall "weapon life" will be determined by manufacturer, and shall be inclusive of barrel, upper receiver, and lower receiver.

27) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.6, Non-disclosure: Serial numbers provided for the weapons purchased by the U.S. Secret Service shall not be released without prior written approval of the Contracting Officer and the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR).*

Question: How will this non-disclosure clause effect our legal requirement to transfer the weapons per the BATFE NFA Branch?

This requirement will be clarified in the official solicitation, to reflect the USSS intent to restrict the release of relevant data to non-US Government entities (ie no release for media or marketing purposes).

28) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.7, Sample Size: NOTE: Samples shall be delivered to:*

Question: Can the vendor hand-deliver the bid samples to the Murray Lane location in Washington D.C.?

No, all deliveries must be shipped via commercial carrier. Additional detailed instructions will be provided in the official solicitation.

28) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.9.3: Two (2) Unique Identification Marking (UID) label readers compatible with the sample firearms UID labels (solicitation and FAT only). Any software and hardware needed for inventory, tracking, scanning or downloading shall be included in the procurement process. The software and hardware shall be compatible with Microsoft Windows operating systems.*

Question: Can the USSS supply us with the specifications for their UID system so we can make compatible labels?

See Question #14.

29) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.9.5: Each weapon shall be shipped with a cleaning kit equipped with the necessary components in a convenient carrying pouch to carry out recommended cleaning at the operator level. (i.e. NSN 1005-01-541-7228 ["Cleaning kit, Rifle"] or equivalent), with the addition of a bolt scraping tool and a brass-wired toothbrush) (solicitation, FAT and contract).*

Question: Does the USSS already use a bolt scraping tool that it likes? If so what is the type and manufacturer?

No specific make/model is required at this time.

30) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.9.8: Lot sizes for receiving firearms under the contract shall be a minimum of twenty (20) firearms and no more than two hundred (200) per shipment.*

Question: Does 200 firearms per lot constitute the maximum monthly delivery?

Unable to determine at this time.

31) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.9.9: Orders shall be delivered to the USSS within sixty (60) days and warranty returned items shall be returned to the USSS within thirty (30) days.*

Question: Can the Government adjust the delivery date of all orders?

This will be subject to negotiation of the delivery order at that time per modification, after award. Delivery times would be specified on the orders.

32) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.10.4.1: "manufacturer shall include detailed chamber drawings and Rockwell Hardness specifications"*

Question: Specifically, for which components does the Government want Rockwell Hardness specifications?

These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

33) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.3: The weapon shall be chambered in accordance with current U.S. Military specifications for 5.56 x 45mm, and function with assorted ammunition ranging in weight from 55 to 77 grains (to include all common SAAMI-spec and Mil-Spec ammunition) as well as frangible ammunition*

Question: What specific ammunition will the Government be testing the system with and what is the USSS's current duty round?

See Question #4. Information relevant to ammunition used during all phases of testing will be clearly specified in the official solicitation (Test Documents). Current duty ammunition information will not be disclosed.

34) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.14.1.2.3: Weight (no heavier than, w/o accessories)*

Question: What is the resolution of the scale the USSS expects to use to weigh the guns?

The USSS will utilize an Ohaus i-10 scale, measuring to 1/1000th lb. Weight will be measured on an empty weapon (no magazine). ** All dimensional requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

35) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.6.1: "The barrel shall have a minimum service life of 20,000 rounds."*

Question: What defines the service life of a barrel?

See Question #3.

36) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.6.1: "The barrel shall have a minimum service life of 20,000 rounds."*

Question: Why was 20,000 rounds selected as the minimum barrel service life?

Current USSS weapon systems meet/exceed this requirement; as such, USSS Armory staff has identified this as a regularly achievable benchmark weighted against current workload.

37) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.6.2: "The bore and chamber shall be chromium plated, or of equivalent corrosion resistance. The chromium plating in the chamber and bore shall be free of nodules, flaking, pits, stripping, anode burrs and evidence of etched base steel"*

Question: Should the second sentence begin with, "If chromium plated…," instead of "The chromium plating in…"?

This correction is noted. These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation to reflect acceptance of equivalent materials/finishes.

38) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.8.2.3: "When the selector is placed in the "AUTO" position, the weapon shall be capable of automatic fire (continuous firing until the trigger is released or all cartridges are expended) at a rate of 600-800 rounds-per-minute."*

Question: What ammunition type(s) will be required to meet this rate of fire requirement and how far into the service life of the gun does it extend?

This requirement will extend throughout the "service life" of the weapon (Question #3). Cycles and descriptions of firing sequence will be clarified in the official solicitation (Testing Document) (See Question #4)

39) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.9.5: While utilizing gloves, the trigger shall not pinch the trigger finger between the trigger and the side of the receiver or between the trigger and the inside bottom of the trigger guard.*

Question: Does the standard "drop-out" trigger guard as seen on most AR-type firearms meet this requirement?

No; no manipulation/modification of the trigger guard is acceptable to meet this requirement.

40) *SOW Draft 2.11.14: "The weapon shall have a modular free-floating handguard assembly measuring no less than 9.0 inches"*

Question: How will the hand guard be measured?

This requirement will be clarified in the official solicitation to reflect the requirement of 'no less than' 9.0 inches of functional/configurable railspace at the 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 o'clock positions.

41) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.14.1: "The handguard assembly shall have the ability to attach Mil-Std-1913 Picatinny rail segment along the length of the handguard at the 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 o'clock positions simultaneously. The manufacturer shall provide enough rail segments to cover the length of the handguard at the 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 o'clock positions simultaneously. Handguards with permanently attached Mil-Std 1913 Picatinny rails sections the length of the handguard at the 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 o'clock positions shall also be considered."*

Question: How will the rail segments be measured?

This requirement only specifies that rail segments be provided to cover the length of handguard (See Question #40). Length and quantity of individual rail segments is at the manufacturer's discretion.

42) Reference: *SOW Draft 2.11.18, Sling Mount: The weapon shall be supplied with means to mount a sling to the buttstock, the rear area of the receiver, and the handguard, via quick-detach sling swivel.*

Question: Does the USSS have an existing sling and sling swivels that that they wish to interface with the firearm?

All sling mounting points will be required to be rotation-limited (4-position) quick-detach cups, to allow interface with quick-detach push button swivels. This requirement will be clarified in the official solicitation

43) Reference: *Testing Draft, Overarching Comment Reference Ammunition across the breadth of this section: (part number to be specified upon official solicitation)*

Question: Can the USSS ensure that the RFP will have all the ammunition types listed it plans to use during its testing?

See Question #4

44) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 2, Section 3, Barrel: "The gauge shall be a Mil-Spec 5.56x45mm NATO "No-Go" headspace gauge, and be inserted in the cleaned chamber and only finger pressure shall be used to close the bolt. With this gauge inserted, the bolt must go into battery"*

Question: Would the Government like to say "With this gauge inserted, the bolt must <u>NOT</u> go into battery?"

This correction is noted. These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation to reflect that "…the bolt must <u>NOT</u> go into battery."

45) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 2, Section 5, Velocity Test Phase 1 – Sample Set A: "Velocity of the rounds fired will be measured through the use of an Oehler System 85 Ballistic Instrument and Model 57 Ballistic Screens. Results will be recorded and averaged. <u>This question also applies to the Velocity Testing in Phase III</u>.*

Question: Is this test informational or PASS/FAIL? If PASS/FAIL, then what are the criteria?

This testing is for information collection, and results will be used for comparative assessment at conclusion of Phase III. This will be clarified in the official solicitation.

46) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 3, Section 6, Accuracy: "The average extreme spread of the five (5), five (5)-shot groups shall be no greater than three (3) inches". Applies also to Page 9, Section 16 Accuracy Test Phase III.*

Questions: How will the performance of this ammunition be assessed before testing? Will all ammunition be from the same lot? Will LAT data be available for the test ammunition?

See Question #4. All ammunition utilized will be from the same lot, and LAT data will be made available at time of official solicitation.

47) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 4, Section 10: "All samples magazines submitted will be loaded (inert rounds), inserted into the corresponding sample firearm and dropped a total of six (25) times onto a concrete pad from a height of 48 inches"*

Question: Does the Government intend to drop the magazines six times or 25 times?

This correction is noted. These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation to reflect that magazines will be dropped 25 times.

48) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 3, Section 7: "This testing shall be conducted with the following accessories (supplied by the USSS) attached to the weapon: PEQ15 Laser, Aimpoint T1/T2 electronic sight mounted in a LaRue Tactical T1/T2 mount Part #LT660, and Insight Technologies M3x tactical flashlight"*

Question: Can the USSS provide us with the physical characteristics (i.e. weight and size) of these items?

The USSS will not provide manufacturers with this data; specifications of all listed items are widely available through open sources.

49) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 3, Section 8, Rifle Throw Test Section – Sample Set B: "The sample rifle will be thrown 15 feet a total of six (6) times from various orientations onto a concrete pad from a height of 36 inches:*

- *3x on right side*
- *3x on left side*

Question: How does the Government intend to conduct this test in a repeatable, consistent manner on all vendor bid samples so that all are tested and evaluated equally and fairly?

This requirement and the method of testing will be re-evaluated by the Government, and clarified in the official solicitation.

50) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 5, Section 11, Armorer Repair & Maintenance Assessment: For each Sample Set B sample proceeding to Phase II, USSS Armory personnel will complete and score a "SERVICE RIFLE 'ARMORER' ASSESSMENT FORM" to assess time and difficulty requirements associated with long-term preventative maintenance needs. < Attachment A>*

Question: Is there a time requirement for the Armorers assessment other than barrel change and field stripping? Do these timed events pose a disadvantage to bidders who have components that differ from the ubiquitous AR15/M16/M4 design, which has dominated law enforcement arms rooms for the past 20 years?

This portion of testing is for information collection, and results will be used for comparative assessment at conclusion of Phase II. All systems will be graded equitably, with Armory staff taking appropriate steps to familiarize themselves with all components and manufacturer-supplied tools and documentation prior to testing.

51) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 6, Section 12, User Evaluation: At the conclusion of all Phase II evaluations, the top THREE scoring submissions (based on cumulative scoring of all Phase I and Phase II assessments; total possible 100 points) will advance to Phase III evaluations.*

Question: Will the Vendors that advance to Phase III be notified upon advancement or soon thereafter?

Yes, notification will be made to those advancing to Phase III.

52) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 7, Section 13, Reliability and Endurance (R&E): "A two-person team, one shooting and one loading magazines, will fire 150 rounds through the weapon engaging targets at multiple ranges. Magazines 1-4 will be semi-auto, magazine 5 will be full auto. Shooter will fire 3-4 round bursts only – **no sustained 30 round bursts will be permitted.***

Question: Can the USSS clarify the firing cadence/timing of shots fired during their endurance testing?

This requirement and testing methodology will be clarified in the official solicitation.

53) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 7, Section 13, Reliability and Endurance (R&E): Accuracy testing will be conducted at 10,000- 15,000 and 20,000 round intervals. Results of these tests will be recorded.*

Question: Can the USSS provide more frequent assessments of accuracy throughout the course of testing?

The USSS has no intention of revising this requirement.

54) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 7, Section 13, Reliability and Endurance (R&E): The headspace of each firearm shall be monitored throughout reliability/durability testing using certified headspace gages and must be within SAMMI specifications throughout the duration of the entire testing process. Bore wear will be monitored throughout reliability/durability testing with the use of a bore scope.*

Question: Why is the USSS using a bore scope to monitor bore wear?

Use of the bore scope is to verify that any pertinent barrel coating/plating is not experiencing flaking or peeling, and to monitor erosion of the gas port (if present).

55) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 8, Section 13, Reliability and Endurance (R&E): The Reliability and Endurance testing will continue until 20,000 rounds have been fired through each PHASE III weapon. During this firing, all malfunctions will be evaluated and recorded by the Test Administrators.*

Question: What are the pass/fail criteria for the endurance testing, or is this a relative comparison of the submitted systems?

While weapons can 'fail' this phase of testing (by exhibiting catastrophic failure, wherein the weapon is rendered unsafe or non-operational), this portion of testing is primarily for information collection, and results will be used for comparative assessment at conclusion of Phase III

Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 8, Section 13, Reliability and Endurance (R&E): Ammunition utilized for Phase III reliability and endurance testing will represent a variety of ammunition used by the USSS in training and operational environments, as specified in the Statement of Work, to include M193, M855, frangible ammunition, and a commercially available 5.56x45mm ammunition (**part number to be specified upon official solicitation**), or ballistic equivalent ammunition, as designated for velocity and accuracy testing. All ammunition utilized will be provided by the USSS.*
Each sample exemplar shall fire the same amounts of each ammunition type, in the same sequence and cycle.

ROUND COUNT	***TYPE***	***TOTAL***
1 – 10,200	*M193*	*10,200*
10,201 – 11,400	*M855*	*1,200*
11,401 – 12,000	*Frangible Ammunition*	*600*
12,001 – 20,000	*M193*	*8,000*

56) Question: Where is this above-mentioned commercial ammunition tested during R&E? The included table has no provision for the commercial loads.

See Question #4.

57) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 10, Section 16, Accuracy Test Phase III: Firearms will be rated for accuracy at one-hundred (100) yards utilizing a 10x scope.*

Question: Would the USSS consider using higher magnification optics for this testing?

The USSS has no intention of revising this portion of testing.

58) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 10, Section 16, Accuracy Test Phase III: The average extreme spread of the five (5), five (5)-shot groups shall be recorded to determine the level and rate of degradation.*

Question: Would the USSS entertain using AMR (average mean radius) and RSD (radial standard deviation) as more meaningful metrics for assessing accuracy?

The USSS has no intention of revising this portion of testing.

59) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 10, Section 16, Accuracy Test Phase III: The average extreme spread of the five (5), five (5)-shot groups shall be recorded to determine the level and rate of degradation.*

Question: What is the criterion for pass/fail on accuracy testing?

Phase III Accuracy Testing will be subject to the same minimum requirements identified in Phase I Accuracy Testing (3MOA). This requirement will be clarified in the official solicitation.

60) Why are more complex gas systems rated more highly?

This item will be re-evaluated by the Government, and clarified in the official solicitation.

61) Reference: *Testing Draft, Page 11, Attachment A, USSS Service Rifle "Armorer" Assessment Form, Assessment Category 6, Buttstock Capability:*

Question: Why are potentially unsafe buttstock systems allowed?

This topic will be re-evaluated by the Government, and clarified and/or modified in the official solicitation. The USSS intends to evaluate options that allow for minimal storage and transport space, while still meeting all operational requirements.

62 How many option years beyond minimum 5 years?

The maximum length of the contract award is five (5) years, inclusive of all options.

63) Is 'discrete carry' carry in a bag or on the person?

This term is used to describe all methods of carry.

64) Define 'gross failure'.

This will be clarified in the official solicitation, to reflect common terminology reflective of a 'catastrophic' failure, wherein the weapon is rendered unsafe or non-operational.

65) Ref SOW 2.5.3 Is that for the upper, lower or both?

See Question #26

66) Ref SOW 2.9.3 What is the purpose for this during the solicitation testing? Is there a specific capability you would like to see from the associated software?

See Question #14.

67) Ref SOW 2.9.9 Penalties for late delivery? Type?

This will be evaluated and subject to inclusion in the official solicitation.

68) Ref SOW 2.11.2 Our bolt carriers are nickel plated....do they need to be black or will closing the ejection port door suffice?

See Question #11. Color requirements will pertain to exterior surfaces only (not parts such as BCGs, fire control groups, etc).

69) Ref SOW 2.11.3 What manufacturer and type of frangible?

See Question #4

70) Ref SOW 2.11.4.1.3 For discrete carry, what is the ideal length collapsed/folded?

This item will be re-evaluated by the Government, and clarified and/or modified in the official solicitation. The USSS intends to evaluate options that allow for minimal storage and transport space, while still meeting all operational requirements.

71) Ref SOW 2.11.6.4 What type of FH? A2 bird cage or alternative? If non-indexing FH utilized can crush washers be used?

See Question #8. The use of crush washers will be clarified in the official solicitation.

72) Ref 2.11.8.1 'Selector shall be ambidextrous in design and be a single paddle'...does that mean a reversible single lever or an ambidextrous selector with two paddles...one on each side?

At this time, both variants are acceptable.

73) Ref SOW 2.11.8.2.3 Is a ROF greater than 800 acceptable or a disqualifier? With what ammo type will the ROF be calculated?

A fully-automatic Rate of Fire less than 600, or greater than 800, will result in disqualification. Ammunition type and test-firing sequences will be clarified in the official solicitation.

74) Ref 2.11.16 Are more compact stock options a consideration? Will a lack of 5-positions be a disqualifier?

See Question #61. Other compact stock options will be considered, provided they meet the requirements described in 2.11.16. Minimal buttstock requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

75) Ref 2.11.17.1 Square in cross section or profile? Is a thin 'nipple' allowed for precision aiming?

This requirement is for "square in profile". Precision nipples are not acceptable.

76) Paragraph 2.1 states the weapon shall be commercially available and in serial production. Is that date based on the release of the procurement announcement, submission of weapons for testing, etc?

The weapon must be commercially available and in serial production at time of submission for testing.

77) The draft SOW makes no reference to the Buy American Act. Further, in paragraph 2.8.5 it requires the operator manual to be written in English. This begs several questions:

a. Are the non-US manufactured weapons eligible to compete in this tender?
b. If non-US manufactured weapons are acceptable will there be a requirement for production to eventually shift to US soil? If so, what is the desired timeline for US made firearms?

This topic will be evaluated, and will be addressed in the final solicitation.

78) What is the anticipated timeline for formal posting of the procurement, deadline for submission, testing period, contract award, and product delivery?

Anticipated time from official solicitation to award is 180 days, with award date expected by October 2017.

79) Please provide a definition of the term "modular" as used in 2.11.14. Further, please state where the 9" measurement begins and ends.

See Question #40.

80) **Question:**

Per 2.2.2(f), does production lapse of six (6) months or more refer to a complete lapse in rifle production or a lapse in production of the contracted SKU? In the event that the lapse refers to the contracted SKU, would the USSS consider being responsible for all expenses associated with FAT under this criterion in that the contractor has no control over order frequency?

If the vendor cannot provide the contracted SKU over a long period of time then the Government reserves the right to no longer order against this contract or terminate any open delivery orders. Once the minimum guarantee is achieved the Government is not obligated to purchase against this contract.

81) **Question:**

In reference to 2.2.2(g), in an effort to ensure competitive lead times and continual manufacturing it is routine practice to utilize secondary and redundant suppliers for purchased components (specifically small parts such as springs and pins). All parts are made in accordance with proprietary drawings and inspected for adherence to the specs upon delivery. Is it possible to provide a list of approved vendors for these parts and manufacture using approved parts and vendors for the life of the contract without conducting a FAT if small parts change?

The USSS will not provide a list of approved vendors/suppliers/sub-contractors.

82) **Question**:

Is it the USSS' intention to receive FAT samples as part of the solicitation submission process? Or when does the USSS require FAT samples?

First Article Test (FAT) samples are required after contract award, and are subject to the requirements specified in SOW 2.2.2.

83) Question:

In reference to 2.8, is the USSS looking for individual documentation for items 2.8.1-2.8.12, or can these documents be combined where applicable? For example, Manual 2.8.5 could include 2.8.6, 2.8.7, and 2.8.8 to satisfy multiple documentation requirements.

Required documentation can be combined where applicable and practical.

84) Question:

In reference to 2.9.3, does the USSS have a preferred UID label reader they recommend? Does the USSS have an existing software program that the UID reader must meet, or is it the USSS' intention that the offeror provide the software and requisite licensing for the reader?

See Question #14.

85) Question:

In reference to 2.9.4 and 2.10.3, is it the USSS' intention to have all parts provided to 20,000 for each contracted weapon, or the solicitation and FAT samples only?

These requirements will be re-evaluated, and are subject to inclusion in official solicitation

86) Question:

Could the USSS please provide name of the manufacturer for the intended training and duty ammunition?

See Question #4.

87) Question:

The contracted firearms will be fully automatic and require ATF Form 5 approval prior to shipment; approval lead times are typically 6-12 weeks after submission, which can only occur after the firearms are complete. In reference to the 60 day delivery requirement outlined in 2.9.9, we would recommend changing the delivery deadline to 120-150 days to allow for manufacturing and ATF approval. Or, is it the USSS' intention to intervene on the contractor's behalf to expedite the ATF process?

These requirements will be re-evaluated, and are subject to inclusion in official solicitation.

88) Question:

In reference to 2.10.2, would the armorers training manual as outlined 2.8.9 suffice? Or is the USSS looking for a separate document?

These training/documentation requirements should be handled separately.

89) Question:

In reference to 2.10.3, does the USSS intend to forecast what will be ordered the first year to facilitate the spare parts package? Or when does the USSS intend to take delivery of the spare parts based on the initial first year's purchase of rifles? Are the spare parts intended to be

purchased or supplied as a courtesy?

Lists and quantities of spare parts relevant to rifles purchases will be based on manufacturer defined maintenance schedules, as well as USSS data collected during solicitiation testing, required for each delivered weapon to meet the expected life-cycle. These parts should be supplied within approximately 60 days of delivery of first order of rifles, and will be subject to pricing determined at time of award.

90) **Question**:
In reference to 2.10.4.1, how many sets of five special tools are required? Are the tool sets intended to be on the spare parts pricing or provided as a courtesy?

The requirement is for the offerer to provide five (5) of any special/unique tools required for weapons servicing, and will be subject to pricing determined at time of award.

91) **Question**:
In reference to 2.10.4.1, for what parts are you looking for Rockwell Hardness specifications? Would a spreadsheet part and hardness suffice?

See Question #32.

92) **Question**
In reference to 2.10.4.1, does this requirement refer to the spare parts as listed in 2.10.3? What quantity of spare parts and which specific parts are to be delivered? Are these to be included with each gun to the 20,000 or in additional to the parts per gun? Will the USSS forecast the first year quantities? Is this as a courtesy or paid?

See Question #89.

93) **Question:**
Per 2.11.1, which parts need to be ambidextrous?

See Question #16.

94) **Question:**
In reference to 2.11.4.1.1, per the Testing Draft 4Mar2016, we assume a magazine is included in the height measurement for 2.11.4.1.1 and is not considered an accessory, please confirm.

Height measurement will not be inclusive of a magazine.

95) **Question:**
We assume a magazine is included in the weight for 2.11.4.1.2 and is not considered an accessory, the Testing Draft 4Mar2016 does not indicate either way, please confirm if a magazine is to be included in the weight, and if so, is it an empty magazine.

See Question #34. Weight measurement will not be inclusive of a magazine.

96) **Question:**
In reference to 2.11.6.1, could the USSS please define end of life? How will that be measured?

See Question #3

97) Question:
In reference to 2.11.8.2.3, it is our belief that the USSS could be boxing industry in with this requirement, if our submission meets all requirements set forth within the specifications, the rate of fire should be negligible. If the goal is to achieve less recoil and increase/maintain functionality/controllability, end user evaluation should dictate. 750-950 is recommended.

See Question #73

98) Question:
In reference to 2.11.8.2.3, does the rate of fire include when suppressed.

See Question #6

99) Question:
In reference to 2.11.15, is it the USSS intention to have a pistol grip that requires backstraps? Is there a grip circumference requirement or preference?

The USSS has no intention of revising this requirement. User preferences will be addressed in Testing Phase II User Evaluations.

100) Question:
In reference to 2.11.17.2, we assume a detent qualifies as a friction lock, could the USSS please confirm. Does the USSS require a push button lock?

For purposes of this SOW, a positive detent will meet the requirement.

101) **Question:**
Section 5 – Velocity The Testing Draft 4Mar2016 states: "Three (3) randomly selected sample exemplars of each model submitted will be subjected to initial velocity testing." Will this testing be informative only or will there be a requirement? No velocity requirement is specified.

See Question #45

102) **Question:**
Section 3 – Barrel, The Testing Draft 4Mar2016 states, "The interior of the bore will be examined initial, during, and post reliability/durability with the use of a bore scope" Will this testing be informative only or will there be a requirement? No requirement is specified.

See Question #54

103) **Question:**
Section 3 – Barrel, Which SAMMI headspace gage(s) will be used to measure the chamber initially and throughout endurance? Does the NOGO or GO gauge need to be chambered?

See Question #44.

104) **Question:**
Section 13 – Firing Procedures , The Testing Draft 4Mar2016 states "Bore wear will be monitored throughout reliability/durability testing with the use of a bore scope", Will this testing/measurement be informative only or will there be a requirement?

See Question #54

105) **Question:**
Section 15 of the The Testing Draft 4Mar2016 states "Velocity of the rounds fired will be measured through the use of an Oehler System 85 Ballistic Instrument and Model 57 Ballistic Screens. Results will be recorded and averaged." Will this testing be informative only or will there be a requirement? No requirement is specified.

See Question #45

REF SOW 2.9.3 Two (2) Unique Identification Marking (UID) label readers compatible with the sample firearms UID labels (solicitation and FAT only). Any software and hardware needed for inventory, tracking, scanning or downloading shall be included in the procurement process. The software and hardware shall be compatible with Microsoft Windows operating systems.

106) QUESTION: If an offeror submits multiple entries, may they share readers?
107) QUESTION: Is there a preferred or current UID label reader and associated software?
108) QUESTION: If there is a current UID label reader in service, and the offered entries have compatible UID marking, is it still necessary to submit two UID readers?

See Question #14

Ref SOW 2.11.2 All metal parts of the weapon shall have a dark subdued, rust/corrosion resistant finish.

109) Question Is there a preferred color or color range?

See Question #11

Ref SOW 2.11.8.1 The fire control selector shall be ambidextrous in design, and be a single lever paddle mounted on the side of the receiver, adjacent to the rear pistol grip, thereby not requiring the shooter to significantly break their firing grip when actuating.

110) QUESTION: Please clarify if this means that only a single lever may be present at any given time on the receiver in the stated position, or if levers can be present on both sides of the receiver simultaneously.

See Question #16 and #72

Ref SOW 2.11.14.1 The handguard assembly shall have the ability to attach Mil-Std-1913 Picatinny rail segment along the length of the handguard at the 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 o'clock positions simultaneously. The manufacturer shall provide enough rail segments to cover the length of the handguard at the 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 o'clock positions simultaneously.

111) QUESTION: If the intent is to provide modular mounting points on the handguard, would the users prefer to have single 9" rail sections, or rather multiple short sections for weight-efficient accessory/enabler mounting?

See Question #41

112) Question: If MIL-STD 1913 rail sections are inherent to the handguard design at certain points, is it a requirement that modular rail sections fully bridge the permanent sections, or are short add-on sections acceptable?

See Question #41

Reference PHASE 1 EVALUATION AND TESTING
3. STATEMENT OF WORK VERIFICATION
Physical Characteristics. [SOW 2.11]

Barrel. All samples submitted will have the barrel physically inspected. The interior of the bore will be examined initial, during, and post reliability/durability with the use of a bore scope. Barrel length will be measured from the face of the closed bolt to the barrel muzzle (without muzzle device installed). All samples submitted will have the chamber dimensions verified by physical inspection and the use of certified headspace gauges. Initial and post reliability /durability headspace shall be measured and recorded on all samples. The gauge shall be a Mil-Spec 5.56x45mm NATO "No-Go" headspace gauge, and be inserted in the cleaned chamber and only finger pressure shall be used to close the bolt. With this gauge inserted, the bolt must go into battery.

Question:

113) What headspace gauges will be used for these verifications?

These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.

Question:

114) Please confirm that is expected that a "Mil-Spec" "No-Go" gauge shall permit the bolt to go into battery.

See Question #44. Additionally, required/specific equipment will be clarified in the official solicitation.

REFERENCE TESTING SECTIONS BELOW:
7. RIFLE DROP TEST – Sample Set B
8. RIFLE THROW TEST – Sample Set B
12. USER EVALUATION
Part A: Basic User Live Fire Assessment
For each Sample Set B sample proceeding to Phase II, USSS 'Basic User' personnel will participate in a controlled series of shooting events to address seven (7) categories from the perspective of the "basic end user." Each shooter will then complete and score a "BASIC USER ASSESSMENT FORM" to assess sample weapon performance and mission compatibility.
Part B: SOD User Live Fire Assessment
For each Sample Set B sample proceeding to Phase II, USSS Special Operations Division (SOD) personnel will participate in a controlled series of shooting events to address seven (7) categories from the perspective of the "SOD end user." Each shooter will then complete and score a "SOD USER ASSESSMENT FORM" to assess sample weapon performance and mission compatibility.

Question:

115) Please confirm that it is intentional that the rifles subjected to the drop and throw test will be the same that are evaluated in the user assessments, which include a "finish and appearance" rating, following the drop and throw tests.

This correction is noted. Sample set utilized for drop and throw testing will not be the same samples utilized during User Evaluations. These procedures will be clarified in the official solicitation.

REFERENCE ATTACHMENT A
USSS SERVICE RIFLE "ARMORER" ASSESSMENT FORM
PHASE II / Step 11
Various steps:

Question:

116) What are the time thresholds for each rating value (1-5) with a time associated rating?

See Question #50.

Question:

117) Is it correct that these values will be determined prior to offeror training of armory personnel?

See Question #50.

Reference Gas system capability:

118) Question: Please confirm that a gas system that requires no adjustment through the life of the system is of less value that one that requires adjustment for proper function.

See Question #60.

Question:

119) What gas settings are desired to meet the rating values?

See Question #50.

Reference Buttstock Capability:

Question:

120) A folding stock is clearly preferred by armory personnel. Is there a desired maximum overall length when folded? If a fully collapsing telescopic stock meets this length requirement, will it be rated at a higher value?

See Question #61.

Question (SOW 2.11.1)

121) Does this requirement include an ambidextrous forward assist/charging handle or simply one that can be used by either hand?

No specific requirements have been identified pertaining to forward assist/charging handle utility.

Question (SOW 2.11.14.1):

122) Does the government intend to have all of the Modular fore-end covered in 1913 rail, or are there some accessories the government would like to direct mount to the modular rail? For instance a vertical grip or handstop, or Surefire Scout Light? Are Modular 1913 rail segments acceptable to allow the user to configure the weapon, or are full length rail additions required.

See Question #41.

Question (SOW 2.11.2):

123) What style of Simple Green is to be used? Standard Simple Green has identified issues when used with aluminum.

The USSS utilizes commercially-available Simple Green, diluted to approximately 1/8 with water, and weapons are subjected only to short (<15 min) durations.

Question (SOW 2.11.4.1)

124) Is this measurement taken with the sights in the stowed or deployed state?

Height measurement will be taken with the iron-sights in the lowered/stowed position.

Question (SOW 2.11.4.2)

125) Does this limit include magazine, ammunition and sights? If magazine, which style?

See Question #34. Weight will be inclusive of sights.

Question SOW (2.11.6.4.3)

126) What is the desired shoulder geometry for the barrel?

Shoulder geometry should be 90 degrees.

Question (SOW 2.11.18)

127) Will the QD sling stud be defined or standardized dimension given to ensure functionality of QD mounts?

See Question #9

Question (SOW 2.2.1.1)

128) Does the government desire a single reversible selector, or is a selector that has paddles on both sides desired?

See Question #72

Testing Questions

Height.	129) Are the sights to be in the deployed or stowed configuration for the height test? See Question #124
Overall Length.	130) Are the sights to be in the deployed or stowed configuration for the length test? Length measurement should not be effected by iron sight deployment.

Barrel.	131) Please supply NSN# or drawing for "Mil-Spec 5.56x45 NATO "NO-GO" headspace gauge. Should the requirement be for the "bolt must NOT go into battery" when using a "NO-GO" gauge? Does the manufacture have the option to define safe headspace? See Question #44.
LOADED MAGAZINE DROP TEST (if applicable*)	132) Is this test performed before or after Live Fire testing? What orientations are to be used for the drops. This testing, if required, will be performed as the final stage of Phase I testing. Magazines will be dropped in a floorplate downward orientation. 133) Does this test require six(6) or twenty five (25) drops? See Question #47. 134) Is this test limited to Sample Set B items? Will the magazines used for the magazine drop test be used for Phase II evaluations? These requirements will be clarified in the official solicitation.
Gas System Capability	For a properly designed Inline Piston system (usually called Direct Impingement), no requirement exists to have an adjustable gas system, as the delta from different ammunitions and suppressed/unsuppressed usage is well inside the operating envelope for carrier velocities for reliable function. 135) Is it the Governments intent to require a more complex, heavier and expensive system that reduces reliability for these? It appears from the grading scale that more points are awarded to a more complex and less reliable setup. See Question #60.
User Evaluation	136) Cleaning: Does the Government have a desired Lubricant, or is the Manufacture able to supply a recommended Lubricant in the cleaning kit? Inclusion of any specific lubricant is at the manufacturer's discretion. If none is provided, the USSS will utilize Militec-1.

137) IN 2.2 WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU WOULD USE AN OUTSIDE LABORATORY TO CONDUCT PERFORMANCE VERIFICATION?

In the event that operational demands impede/prohibit the ability for the USSS to complete or conduct testing, or validate manufacturer specifications, at the Rowley Training Center, the USSS reserves the right to contract with the Department of the Army at Aberdeen, Maryland, to conduct required testing at USSS expense.

138) CONFUSED AS TO WHEN THE FAT TESTING WOULD OCCUR? IS THAT AFTER CONTRACT AWARD AND WHY IF YOU'VE ALREADY TESTED DURING SOLCITATION PHASE?

See Questions #24 and #82. FAT ensures random sampling is eligible for testing to verify adherence to SOW, and ensure QA/QC specifications.

139) DON'T AGREE WITH MODIFYING THE RIFLES, WHY CAN'T YOU JUST STATE THAT THE GUNS CANNOT BE MODIFIED TO SAVE FROM TESTING AGAIN?

See Question #81. The USSS recognizes that offerers often sub-contract out the manufacturing of small parts/components, are thus subject to manufacturing variables beyond their immediate control.

140) CONFUSED BY SAMPLE SIZE. FIRST YOU SAY PROVIDE 3 GUNS BUT THEN YOU SAY SIX FIREARMS IN SOLIICTATION TESTING AND 3 IN FAT TESTING AND THEN YOU STATE 3 MORE EXEMPLARS IN PHASE II AND III? SO JUST HOW MANY ARE WE SUBMITTING?

See Questions #1 / #24 / #82.

141) IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE FOR COMPANIES TO PROVIDE 3 TYPES OF RIFLES?

Yes.

142) CAN ANY COMPANY MEET ALL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIER FIREARMS?

Yes. Current USSS weapons meet/exceed all minimum technical requirements, but no contract currently exists to procure additional units.

143) WHY IS TRAINING 30 DAYS BEFORE DELIVERY? SHOULDN'T BE AFTER?

Armory staff will need to be able to immediately take delivery, perform inspection (to ensure both adherence to SOW/contract, and established safety parameters) and prepare weapons for immediate deployment to USSS personnel.

144) WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY A VISUAL INSPECTION?

Adherence and verification of all physical requirements specified in the SOW.

145) WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF MEASURING TO FOR ALL OF PHASE I TESTING LIKE SAMPLE SIZE AND HEIGHT, ETC?

See Question #34; please specify additional

146) AT WHAT VELOCITY IS IT BEING TESTED TO?

See Question #45

147) AFTER THE GUNS HAVE BEEN DROPPED AND POTENTIALLY DAMAGED ITS GOING TO BE USED TO TEST IN PHASE II? HOW IS THAT FAIR?

See Question #115

148) Is there any way to better clarify the timeline?

Not at this time. Presently, timeline is being re-evaluated due to budgetary commitment and staffing availability.

149) Will the tool kits require any sort of gauges? If so, what type and how many?

Only requirement is for provision of any specific/unique tools required to address proprietary design features of the weapon. Reference SOW 2.10.4.1.

150) Are there any challenges or problems that the USSS is looking to solve through this procurement?

No, we have an existing rifle that meets all of these requirements (that we are currently using). We are simply trying to establish a new contract for a rifle that meets our requirements (as we currently do not have a contract in place), and affords us the best ability to meet evolving missions and threats.

151) Will components be evaluated individually or as a complete package?

See Question #1. All submitted components of a unique weapon 'system' will be evaluated as a complete package (ie a singular rifle).

152) Is a single stage trigger requirement a possibility at this time?

The USSS has no intention of revising this requirement, as specified in SOW 2.11.9.3.

153) Would the USSS like to be supplied of historic performance data of our "choices" ? This data would come from the rifle's performance in certain military branches (DoD).

No requirement exists for manufacturers to provide previous performance or testing data relative to the weapons submitted upon official solicitation. Past performance examples relative to government awards/contract will be subject to inclusion within the official SOW.