

SFRT Aircraft Modernization RFI (Notice ID 80JSC026SFRTAM)
Modification 2 - Questions & Answers

1. **Question:** The response criteria identifies a requirement to not provide any proprietary data. Is this accurate or was this intended to be classified, SAP, etc.? Any response submitted by [REDACTED] would be intended to include [REDACTED] proprietary data.

Answer: The intent of the “Do not provide any proprietary data.” instruction was to discourage the inclusion of sensitive information not required for early-stage market research. However, NASA understands that some meaningful capability information may inherently contain proprietary elements. Vendors may submit proprietary data as needed, provided that it is clearly marked in accordance with standard practice. Proprietary information will be treated appropriately.

2. **Question:** For purposes of [REDACTED] developing a ROM, the sources sought calls out “a small number of aircraft” several times. Is there a specific quantity or range that could be identified as desired?

Answer: The RFI intentionally used the term “small number of aircraft” to avoid constraining industry responses or biasing ROMs toward a specific quantity. Vendors are encouraged to make reasonable assumptions based on the information provided when developing their ROM. NASA is open to a range of approaches and does not want to limit innovative concepts or evaluation structures by identifying a fixed number.

3. **Question:** Evaluation Fleet Size & Footprint: To optimize initial flight hours and training frequency while minimizing upfront capital requirements, [REDACTED] Does NASA align with this scope or should the ROM account for alternative aircraft/simulator quantities during this evaluation period?

Answer: The purpose of this RFI is to evaluate potential future platforms and is not intended to modify or expand current SFRT training operations. A simulator may be included if it is necessary to enable pilots to safely operate and evaluate the proposed aircraft, which is within scope. However, a simulator included primarily to meet SFRT training requirements would fall outside the intent of this RFI.

You may proceed with the aircraft and simulator quantities you proposed, provided they support platform evaluation rather than existing SFRT training needs.

4. **Question:** Lease Terms & Asset Transition: The RFI requests information on short-term and long-term operating leases. To ensure data relevance, is it accurate for industry to define the initial short-term evaluation phase as a 12-to-24-month lease period with structured minimum flight hours per month? Furthermore, does NASA prefer that the ROM include a “lease-to-own” or equity-transfer mechanism where these initial evaluation aircraft ultimately transition into permanent NASA-owned capital assets?

Answer: NASA considers a 12- to-24-month lease period acceptable, though other durations may also be proposed. NASA is open to both standard operating leases and options that include lease-to-own or equity-transfer mechanisms; however, no follow-on commitment should be assumed.

5. **Question:** Technical Continuity and Long-Term Acquisition Strategy:

Does NASA require any specific cost-element categories or platform lifecycle metrics breakout beyond standard FAR pricing models to best support this long-term procurement planning? Is our assumption from previous conversations with the Center Director of 6 to 12 aircraft around 2030-2031 timeframe still accurate?

Answer: NASA does not have a definitive response at this time regarding long-term fleet size or any additional cost-element categories. Future planning will depend on astronaut training needs, reliability and performance data as it becomes available.

6. **Question:** Bed-Down & Logistics Flexibility: While we have heard that NASA desires to integrate this interim solution with existing JSC aviation operations at Ellington Field is the baseline, does NASA wish to evaluate alternative or hybrid bed-down concepts? Specifically, if there could be operational or cost efficacy value to NASA if initial training were hosted elsewhere, is NASA open to that? If the desire is to keep separate and standalone, is our assumption correct that JSC / Ellington Field is the desired baseline?

Answer: NASA has not provided a definitive position on alternative or hybrid bed-down concepts. Industry may propose options, but Ellington Field remains the assumed baseline unless NASA identifies a different preferred location.

7. **Question:** Could you please confirm whether this is considered a new requirement? If not, would it be possible to provide the incumbent contractor, contract number, and contract value?

Answer: This RFI represents a new market research effort. There is no incumbent contractor or predecessor contract associated with the SFRT Aircraft Modernization requirement.

8. **Question:** Given that NASA anticipates evaluating multiple aircraft types with potentially different OEM support, maintenance, training, and technical-data models, does NASA anticipate establishing a common Government-defined evaluation framework and/or using aircraft-independent contractor support to normalize evaluation criteria, operational data, readiness metrics, lifecycle assumptions, and lessons learned across candidate aircraft?

Answer: NASA has issued this Request for Information (RFI) as part of market research to understand what practicable aircraft options may be available. NASA does not have a standardized evaluation framework at this time. This RFI is for informational purposes only and is not a solicitation.

If NASA determines that any follow-on procurement is needed, it will be announced on SAM.gov. Vendors should continue to monitor SAM.gov and NASA's procurement website for any future opportunities.

9. **Question:** Does NASA anticipate that fleet-introduction and operational-integration activities (such as transition planning, operational-readiness planning, configuration management, technical-data integration, publications development, and sustainment-concept integration) will be included within each aircraft provider's scope, performed organically by NASA, or considered as a separate support workstream?

Answer: The purpose of this RFI is to gather information on practicable aircraft options and to understand suitability for evaluation, SFRT capabilities, and general maintenance and availability considerations. Any activities related to permanent fleet transition or formal operational integration would be addressed separately under a different procurement action, if pursued.

10. **Question:** For aircraft evaluated under the SFRT program, does NASA anticipate developing NASA-specific aircraft operating publications, procedures, and/or Aircraft Operations Procedures (AOP), and, if so, would NASA consider contractor support for developing and maintaining those Government-controlled products using OEM technical data, NASA requirements, and findings generated during the evaluation?

Answer: NASA historically develops its own aircraft operating publications and procedures for its platforms. NASA is open to considering contractor support for these products; however, any such effort would be required to meet NASA's strict documentation standards and requirements. This does not obligate the Government to use contractor-developed publications.

11. **Question:** Does NASA distinguish between aircraft-specific pilot qualification/training, which may appropriately be provided by the OEM or aircraft training provider, and integration of the aircraft into NASA's SFRT curriculum, mission profiles, qualification standards, and training objectives? If so, does NASA anticipate the latter being a separable integration activity?

Answer: NASA typically trains a small cadre of experienced aviators when introducing a new aircraft and then uses a phased approach to integrate additional aircrew based on experience levels. NASA generally conducts a trial syllabus, incorporates feedback, and then releases a final version for broader use. NASA does not anticipate this approach changing.

12. **Question:** In considering the Sources Sought request for industry recommendations regarding small-business participation and breaking the requirement into smaller components, is NASA receptive to industry identifying complete functional work packages (such as evaluation integration, fleet introduction/operational integration, publications development, training integration, sustainment planning, or aircraft acceptance/induction) that could be competed or subcontracted independently of aircraft provision?

Answer: NASA is receptive to industry feedback regarding potential small-business participation and the identification of functional work packages. Any recommendations for breaking requirements into smaller components will be reviewed in accordance with procurement scope and constraints. Vendors are encouraged to provide input through this RFI to help inform NASA's market research.