

PRE-SOLICITATION NON-COMPETITIVE (NOTICE OF INTENT) SYNOPSIS

INTRODUCTION

FSYNOPSIS TO AWARD A CONTRACT OR PURCHASE ORDER WITHOUT PROVIDING FOR FULL OR OPEN COMPETITION (INCLUDING BRAND-NAME).

The National Institute of Health (NIH), Office of Acquisitions and Logistics Management (OALM), Office of the Director (OD) on behalf of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) intends to negotiate and award a purchase order without providing for full and open competition to Nikon Instruments Inc., 1300 Walt Whitman Rd. Melville, NY 11747 to provide an AX-FN BPU Stimulation Back Port for FRAP Applications.

NORTH AMERICAN INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM (NAICS) CODE

The intended procurement is classified under NAICS code 333310 – Commercial and Service Industry Machinery Manufacturing, Small Business Size, 1000.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The resultant contract will include all applicable provisions and clauses in effect through the Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 2026-01 effective date 03-13-2026.

This acquisition is conducted under the procedures as prescribed in FAR subpart 13—Simplified Acquisition Procedures at an amount not exceeding the SAT.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

This acquisition is conducted under the authority of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 13—Simplified Acquisition Procedures, Subpart 13.106-1 (b) (1), Soliciting from a single source and is not expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold. Contracts awarded using FAR Part 13—Simplified Acquisition Procedures are exempt from the requirements of FAR Part 6—Competition Requirements.

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT

Background

The Laboratory of Cell Structure and Dynamics (LCSD), National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), National Institutes of Health (NIH), conducts research to advance understanding of the cellular, molecular, and structural mechanisms underlying hearing and auditory function.

The LCSD uses advanced microscopy and live-cell imaging approaches to investigate auditory and vestibular sensory hair cells and their specialized structures. The laboratory currently operates an upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system equipped with advanced optical components, cameras, imaging software, and a fluorescence recovery after photobleaching (FRAP) module and laser. The existing system requires an appropriate stimulation back-port interface to safely integrate the FRAP (Fluorescence Recovery After Photobleaching) laser into the microscope optical path. Acquisition of this component will extend and complete the configuration of the existing imaging platform and enable the laboratory to safely perform laser-based FRAP and photoactivation experiments on the existing high-performance upright microscope and confocal system.

Purpose and Objectives

The Laboratory of Cell Structure and Dynamics (LCSD), NIDCD, requires a stimulation back-port interface for its existing upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system. The component is required to provide the appropriate optical interface for safe integration and use of the existing FRAP module and laser with the microscope optical path. Without the appropriate interface, use of the laser presents avoidable safety, alignment, and operational risks and the system cannot be used for its intended FRAP and or photo-activation applications.

The completed configuration will enable LCSD and NIDCD researchers to perform advanced live-cell imaging experiments on cultured inner-ear auditory and vestibular sensory hair cells while preserving stereocilia structure and functionality. The system will support controlled fluid-jet stimulation or photo-activation together with confocal imaging and FRAP measurements to evaluate the turnover and dynamics of key mechanotransduction (MET) components and investigate sensory stereocilia mechanical properties and resilience.

These capabilities will support LCSD research directed toward understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying hearing and balance, important sensory modes within the mission areas of NIDCD.

Delivery Date

The required equipment shall be delivered within 60 days after award.

The final delivery date may vary depending on the contract award date and shall be coordinated with the Government Technical Point of Contact.

Project Description

Contractor Requirements:

The Contractor shall provide one (1) Nikon AX-FN BPU Stimulation Back Port, or equivalent, for integration with the Government's existing Nikon AX upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system.

The required component shall:

1. Be fully compatible with the existing Nikon AX upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system and its existing optical configuration.
2. Provide the appropriate optical interface necessary to safely integrate the existing FRAP stimulation module and laser with the microscope optical path.
3. Permit proper routing and alignment of FRAP laser illumination into the existing microscope and confocal imaging system.
4. Maintain compatibility with the existing microscope optical components, cameras, control hardware, imaging software, and associated FRAP equipment.
5. Support simultaneous confocal imaging and fluorescence recovery after photobleaching (FRAP) applications.
6. Support live-cell imaging experiments involving cultured auditory and vestibular sensory hair cells, including applications involving fluid-jet stimulation and FRAP measurements.
7. Permit use of the existing system for evaluation of the turnover and dynamics of mechanotransduction (MET) components and investigation of stereocilia mechanical properties and resilience.
8. Include all components and hardware necessary for proper integration of the stimulation back-port interface with the existing microscope configuration.

General Contractor Responsibilities:

The Contractor shall:

1. Provide one (1) Nikon AX-FN BPU Stimulation Back Port, or equivalent, and all components necessary for proper integration with the Government's existing Nikon AX upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system.
2. Ensure that the supplied component is fully compatible with the existing microscope optical path, FRAP stimulation module, laser, and associated imaging configuration.
3. Provide a component that enables safe and proper integration of the existing FRAP laser into the microscope optical path.
4. Ensure that the supplied equipment is new, free from defects, and suitable for its intended use.
5. Provide all manufacturer-standard hardware, accessories, and documentation necessary for proper installation and operation of the component.

6. Provide technical assistance, as necessary, to support proper integration and configuration of the component with the existing microscope and FRAP system.
7. Ensure that any installation or configuration performed under this requirement is completed by qualified personnel familiar with the applicable microscope, optical, and laser systems.

Inspection and Acceptance:

The Government Technical Point of Contact will inspect and accept the equipment upon delivery and installation, as applicable.

The equipment will be considered acceptable when:

- The required component and all necessary associated hardware have been delivered.
- The component is new and free from defects or shipping damage.
- The component is fully compatible with the Government's existing Nikon AX upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system.
- The component provides the required interface for proper integration of the existing FRAP stimulation module and laser with the microscope optical path.
- Any required installation and configuration have been satisfactorily completed.
- The completed configuration is operational and supports the intended FRAP functionality.

Government Furnished Property (GFP) and Government Furnished Information (GFI):

The Government will provide access to the existing Nikon AX upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system, FRAP stimulation module, laser, and associated optical and imaging components, as necessary for installation, integration, configuration, and compatibility verification of the stimulation back-port interface.

Government-furnished equipment shall remain Government property and shall be used only as necessary to perform the requirements of the Statement of Work (SOW).

Evaluation of the Contractor

Reports and performance evaluations may be requested from the Contractor to assess its overall qualifications and expertise.

Location of Delivery

The equipment shall be delivered to:

- Laboratory of Cell Structure and Dynamics (LCSD)
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
35 Convent Drive
Room 3D-824
Bethesda, MD 20892

- Any installation, integration, or configuration activities required under the SOW shall be performed at the Government location where the existing Nikon AX upright spinning-disk confocal microscope system is installed.

Other Important Considerations

None

**CONTRACTING WITHOUT PROVIDING FOR FULL OR OPEN COMPETITION
(INCLUDING BRAND-NAME) DETERMINATION**

It is recommended that this requirement be sole-sourced to Nikon Instruments Inc. because the vendor provided a sole-source vendor letter stating Nikon Instruments is the only manufacturer and sole vendor capable of providing and installing the AX-FN BPU Stimulation Back Port into the existing Nikon AX-FN system. Nikon Instruments is also the only entity capable of proving in-field support for the new component, and the microscope as a whole, while preserving the factory warranty.

CLOSING STATEMENT

This synopsis is not a request for competitive proposals. However, interested parties may identify their interest and capability to respond to this notice. Responses to this notice shall contain sufficient information to establish the interested parties' bona-fide capabilities for fulfilling the requirement and include: unit price, list price, shipping and handling costs, the delivery period after contract award, the prompt payment discount terms, the F.O.B. Point (Destination or Origin), the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), the Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), and the certification of business size. All offerors must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) www.sam.gov."

A determination by the Government not to compete this proposed contract based upon responses to this notice is solely within the discretion of the Government. The information received will normally be considered solely for the purposes of determining whether to proceed on a non-competitive basis or to conduct a competitive procurement.

All responses must be received by **09/18/2026 at 10:00am EDT**. Responses must be submitted via email to Kierre Person kierre.person@nih.gov and Roxane Burkett roxane.burkett@nih.gov.

All responsible sources may submit a capability statement, proposal, or quotation, which shall be considered by the agency.