

FAQs – Automated Airfield Pavement Inspections

Last updated October 9, 2026

May a small-business systems integrator serve as the prime offeror when a significant teaming partner/subcontractor is the manufacturer/developer of the automated pavement inspection technology, with the prime responsible for program management and system integration?

Yes. If your submission is selected, you would need to make sure it is clear in the full proposal that your organization, as the prime, is performing a 'significant' part of the work.

Can a nonprofit research university serve as the prime offeror for this Prototype OT without an industry partner, provided that the university performs a significant portion of the prototype development effort?

Yes.

For the field demonstration, is the offeror expected to demonstrate a fully automated end-to-end PCI calculation covering all applicable ASTM D5340 distress types, or may the prototype demonstrate automated PCI based on the distress types currently supported, with additional distress classes and capabilities developed during the 24-month prototype effort?

The vendor technology must have the ability to correctly identify and classify pavement distress types (e.g., longitudinal cracking, weathering, spalling) and their severity (low, medium, and high) in accordance with ASTM 5340.

What level of technology maturity is expected at the white paper and field demonstration stages? Is ERDC primarily seeking systems that are already close to operational deployment, or would a functioning research prototype that demonstrates the core capabilities but still requires further development, integration, and validation during the 24-month prototype project be considered responsive to this opportunity?

ERDC is looking for potential vendor's technology that is close to operational deployment with some minor adjustments with emphasis on currently having the ability to correctly identify and classify pavement distress types (e.g., longitudinal cracking, weathering, spalling) and their severity (low, medium, and high) in accordance with ASTM 5340.

In the response, it says the prime must perform a "significant" part of the work. What percentage is considered a "significant" part of the work? I know for some federal opportunities it is 51%, and others it is just a majority of the percentage among the entities/subs involved. More clarification would help a lot.

There are no established fixed dollar percentages or rigid formulas for defining "significant extent"; instead, the Agreements Officer (AO) determines significant participation based on the information provided in a full proposal.

If the solution is chosen, a full proposal would need to clearly state how the prime offeror is providing a key role in the prototype development (i.e., supplying crucial proprietary hardware, performing a substantive portion of the prototype design, managing a critical technical milestone, etc.).

Can ERDC clarify whether eligibility option (3) one-third non-federal funding requirement, may be satisfied through in-kind contributions (labor, equipment, software, etc.) or must be provided as direct funding?

That may be acceptable.

If selected, can the November 2026 demonstration in Vicksburg focus on the proven sensing technology platform and automated PCI workflow, or is an operational field data collection vehicle expected?

The offeror must have the capability to prove technology software capability and field data collection.

Will ERDC select the project demonstration sites and coordinate site access?

Yes.

Would ERDC consider a Government-furnished vehicle platform for system integration?

Yes.

Will ERDC provide the certified PCI expert inspection and baseline PCI/distress data for the November demonstration, or is each offeror expected to arrange for and provide its own certified PCI experts and baseline inspection?

ERDC will have the section requested for the offeror to evaluate previously manually inspected by certified PCI inspectors for data comparison.

For ERDCWERX26_OT02, Part IV of the announcement requires SAM.gov registration before award, while Attachment 1 requests a CAGE code with the October 15 white paper. May a foreign technology manufacturer submit the white paper and Entity Qualifications attachment with its NCAGE/SAM registration pending, then complete registration before award? If so, how should it complete the CAGE field and document its pending status? If not, what registration must a foreign manufacturer hold at the white-paper stage when it participates under a registered U.S. small-business prime?

Yes. Because the SAM.gov registration process can take several months, a submission may be made while registration is pending, provided the process has been initiated. Please note "Registration pending" in the CAGE code field.

Is a non-U.S. small business eligible to submit and be awarded as the prime, qualifying as a nontraditional defense contractor under 10 U.S.C. 4022?

If the offeror qualifies as a nontraditional defense contractor in accordance with 10 USC 4022, they may be awarded an OT agreement.

We are about to start NCAGE and SAM.gov registration. Is a white paper acceptable while registration is still in progress or not yet completed? If so, how should Attachment 1 reflect a pending NCAGE/CAGE code?

Yes. If the offeror's SAM.gov registration is pending, just notate that on the form.

UAS at the demonstration: Will unmanned aircraft be permitted for data collection at ERDC-Vicksburg? If so, must the platform be on the Blue UAS Cleared List? Will ERDC coordinate flight authorization for low-altitude (approx. 5-10 m AGL) survey flights over the test section?

Yes. ERDC will have approval from the local airport to use unmanned aircraft.

If an offeror uses the government-furnished vehicle, may it mount its own camera payload on it?

If the offeror needs access to a federal vehicle for use to support their technology. ERDC will work with the offeror to secure a vehicle for use.

Can you share the pavement type(s) (AC, PCC or both), the approximate size of the test section, and whether the expert baseline will follow ASTM D5340 sample-unit definitions?

The pavement type will be Asphalt and Concrete. Yes, the baseline expert will follow ASTM 5340. The length of the runway is 5,000 feet, and the width is 100'.

What documentation and lead time are required for EU citizens to access the demonstration site?

ERDC does not foresee an issue to access the airport for foreign visitors. If access is required to enter ERDC's campus, the offeror will need prior approval through ERDC's security office. ERDC will work with the offeror to gain clearance.

May offerors process the collected data on site, offline, on their own hardware? Are there restrictions on storing or processing the imagery outside the site (e.g., commercial cloud or outside the U.S.)? Will the imagery be treated as CUI?

If the offeror can process data onsite this will be the preferred method. However, offsite will be allowed for data processing with an agreed timeline for submitting to ERDC.

Does the Government anticipate that government-furnished information or the prototype deliverables will be subject to ITAR or EAR controls?

Not known at this time. That will be determined later in the process if the solution is chosen.

Are the dates and expected duration of the in-person demonstration in November known yet?

The dates have not been determined yet.

Will the certified-expert baseline include the distress-level inventory with type, severity, quantities, sample-unit boundaries, and PCI results, or only final PCI values?

Yes. It will have all the information provided per the question.

Will ERDC provide the GIS shapefile containing the section and sample-unit boundaries prior to the demonstration, so that we can spatially match our collected data to the same sample-units as the certified PCI baseline?

Yes. ERDC can provide the GIS shapefiles.

For ERDCWERX26_OT02, may an automated collection and processing workflow include documented analyst classification or correction, provided the final sample-unit report includes the required ASTM D5340 distress types, severities where applicable, quantities and PCI?

Yes.

Attachment 1: I am working with a PI from a university to prepare for the upcoming white paper submission under the Automated Airfield Pavement Inspections, I note that on PG 5 of the guidelines that Attachment 1 should be submitted with the White Paper. Our offices are wondering if this can happen after the white paper submission, we have several contracts/sub-contracts with DoD, but it would take some time to contact other departments to find out which ones are CAS covered.

Yes. Attachment 1 may be submitted after the white paper; however, submitting it with the white paper is recommended.

What defines the contingency scenario: bomb-damage features such as craters and spalls, an unimproved surface, night operations, GPS denial?

Airfields & Pavements damaged craters, spalls, and unimproved pavements typically fit in the contingency environment category. For this software and field demonstration, it will be non-contingency on a local airfield where offerors can display their technology's capabilities.

Is NDAA compliance sufficient, or is Blue UAS Cleared List status required at submission or at award?

Blue UAS clearance is sufficient for the submission.

Are environmental tests to a named standard (for example MIL-STD-810) required for the prototype, or are manufacturer ratings accepted?

Due to this is a software and field demonstration for your current technology, manufacturer ratings are sufficient for this demonstration.

How many prototype systems are to be delivered, and is a follow-on production path defined?

This will be based on the offeror's demonstration plan to showcase their technology's capabilities. No production plans have been defined at this initial stage.

What maximum runway closure or occupancy time would ERDC consider acceptable for inspecting a 5,000 ft × 100 ft runway?

The size of the local airport that will be used for the field demonstration is close the dimensions referenced, and will have very little traffic. This will be an optimum time for an offeror to display speed and accuracy for evaluating the pavement distresses.

Does ERDC want 100% runway surface coverage, or only ASTM D5340 sample units?

Yes. ERDC would prefer 100%, and distress detection using ASTM 5340.

Can the proposed system integrate proven commercial sensing technologies into a new autonomous platform, or must the complete integrated platform already be operational at the November demonstration?

ERDC would prefer an existing platform meeting the requirements outlined in the project details.

Can the proposed system integrate proven commercial sensing technologies into a new autonomous platform, or must the complete integrated platform already be operational at the November demonstration?

ERDC would prefer an existing, operational platform that meets the requirements outlined in the solicitation; however, the integration of proven commercial sensing technologies into a new autonomous platform may be considered, provided the proposed system can demonstrate the required capabilities and functionality within the established demonstration timeline.

Is repeatable geospatial baselining and comparison of the same pavement locations over time part of ERDC's desired end state?

Yes. ERDC's traditional pavement condition assessment methodology involves repeat evaluations of the same pavement sections and sample units to track and record changes in

pavement condition over time. This approach establishes a consistent baseline for evaluating pavement deterioration and performance trends; however, this methodology is generally not applicable to newly constructed or reconstructed pavement sections until a new baseline assessment has been established.

Would ERDC value complementary subsurface and structural measurements such as GPR, ultrasonic tomography, void detection, or pavement thickness?

No. ERDC performs its own structural evaluations, in accordance with Army Regulation (AR), which includes GPR, MIRA, void detection, pavement thickness. Upon special requests friction testing and coring are also other structural testing performed.

May the system condition the pavement surface by removing water, snow, or loose debris before scanning, provided the as-found condition is recorded first?

The condition of the airport runway and aprons should not have any issues with snow or loose debris. If it rains, the demonstration will not be performed until the pavement is dry.

Would ERDC accept a system that performs rapid full-area screening and deploys slower specialized sensors only to locations identified as anomalous?

If your technology meets the requirements in the solicitation, it should be fine.

Should the end-state system also inspect taxiways, aprons, and other airfield pavement areas?

Yes. Taxiways and aprons are also evaluated during traditional condition assessments. Other areas include wash racks, helipads, and shoulder pavements.

Does ERDC have requirements for emergency runway clearance, parked height, or stowage location for an autonomous inspection platform?

Not currently due to condition surveys are done manually. If an autonomous inspection platform is chosen for implementation for future pavement inspections. A location for storage will have to be selected at the installation.

Would modular sections that operate independently or combine into a full-width runway system be considered advantageous?

Yes, if your technology meets the requirements in the solicitation.

Do the general formatting requirements—including font, margins, and page numbering—apply to both the solutions brief and the pitch deck?

ERDC would prefer the formatting stays the same for submissions.

Is a cover page permitted with the white paper submission or should the first page of the document be the acronym page?

A cover page is permitted for submission.