TSA Gold+ Industry Day: Consolidated Questions and Answers

June 12, 2026

Overview

TSA received extensive feedback from industry following the Gold+ Industry Day, reflecting strong engagement with the program and detailed questions spanning financial modeling, technology scope, performance measurement, workforce transition, and contract structure. Given the volume and specificity of submissions, many of which address operational and technical details that are specific to individual airport contexts, TSA has organized its responses around six major thematic areas most relevant to the IDIQ level of this acquisition.

Questions and comments addressing airport-specific equipment inventories, staffing configurations, cost baselines, and operational details will be addressed through the task order development process for each participating airport. TSA remains committed to continued dialogue with industry as that process unfolds and anticipates that the representative task order will provide additional specificity on many of the questions raised.

1. Cost Baseline, Financial Model, and Escrow

Q1.1: Does the Federal Cost Estimate (FCE) cover labor only or does the full Gold+ scope include technology, maintenance, cyber/authority to operate (ATO), transition, and others?

The FCE or independent government cost estimate (IGCE) is U.S. Government's internal- estimate of the cost or price for a proposed acquisition. It is prepared before a solicitation is issued and is intended to be objective, procurement sensitive, and confidential between the contracting officer and the contracting officer's representative (COR). Each FCE provides an airport-level estimate that covers the full Gold+ scope of screening and associated services at that airport.

Q1.2: How will TSA handle price realism and the interaction of incentives and disincentives with a fixed "at or below federal cost" ceiling?

At the IDIQ level, TSA intends to describe the framework; price analysis is assessed against the airport specific FCE, ensuring that proposed prices are sustainable while remaining at or below the federal baseline. Performance incentives and disincentives will operate within this constraint, focusing on outcome-based metrics. Detailed evaluation methods, weights, and the exact interaction between realized costs and incentives or disincentives will be defined in the final RFP and at the task order level.

Q1.3: What is the expected Gold+ IDIQ ceiling value, and how many IDIQ awards does TSA plan to make?

The planned ceiling for the 10-year Gold+ IDIQ is $12,900,000,000. This will be confirmed in the final RFP and associated notices. Since Gold+ requires airports to opt-in to participate, TSA does not have a pre-determined number or size of airport-level task orders. Specific task order values will be airport-specific and based on the FCE for that airport.

Q1.4: How will TSA fund Gold+ beyond labor and which funding sources (for example, PC&I, maintenance, Aviation Passenger Security Fee) will be made available?

TSA has stated that Gold+ funding is intended to cover staffing, technology, and maintenance. TSA will provide the ceiling information at the task order level but not the specific mix of appropriations and fee sources used.

Q1.5: Will TSA adjust standard base plus option structures or address termination for convenience to improve investment profile for private investors?

The current concept is for one (1) base year plus nine (9) option years, consistent with federal practice. All previous Screening Partnership Program contracts have a base plus four option years structure. No changes to standard FAR termination for convenience clauses or a firm non-terminable 10-year contract have been approved in the materials provided.

Q1.6: What mechanisms satisfy the 180-day financial security requirement? Are associated costs allowable within the task order price?

TSA has accepted that an escrow account, irrevocable letter of credit, performance bond, or corporate guarantee are acceptable mechanisms to satisfy the 180-day financial security requirement. The size of this mechanism will be determined by airport task order based on local scope and value. Reasonable costs associated with these mechanisms are expected to be allowable within the task order price. The precise sizing formula and trigger conditions will be set at the task order level.

Q1.7: How will TSA treat other direct costs (ODCs) and support space (office, warehouse, admin) in the cost baseline and approvals?

TSA intends to handle decisions about airport-provided versus contractor provided space and the treatment of associated costs at the task order level. ODCs and support space will be addressed per airport, with approval processes following TSA and DHS acquisition policy. Specific ODC categories and approval timelines will be documented in each task order.

2. Technology Scope, Legacy Equipment, and Maintenance

Q2.1: What technology domains are in scope for Gold+ (checkpoint, checked baggage, related information technology and operational technology), and how are TSA programs of record treated?

Gold+ covers both checkpoint and checked baggage screening at participating airports. TSA-owned programs of record and equipment will remain government property, but Gold+ contractors may operate and maintain this equipment until their own TSA-approved solutions are deployed. Funding distinctions between TSA-initiated and airport-initiated projects will be clarified in each task order.

Q2.2: Who owns equipment under Gold+ and how will TSA mitigate concerns about vendor lock at recompete?

TSA retains ownership of existing equipment and programs of record while contractor purchased technology remains contractor property except where title transfer is explicitly provided, such as through existing Capability Acceptance Process (CAP).

Q2.3: Will Gold+ contractors be responsible for operating and maintaining TSA-owned legacy equipment and will there be a stabilization period before full penalties apply?

At the start of the contract, while modernization is underway, Gold+ contractors may operate existing TSA-owned equipment maintained to current TSA standards and will be responsible for its maintenance while in use. Detailed risk-sharing and equitable adjustment mechanisms will be defined in RFP attachments and further specified at the task order level. Maintenance transition timelines are determined at the task order level to account for orderly transition.

Q2.4: Will TSA provide a detailed inventory and condition assessment of TSA-owned equipment for each airport before proposals?

TSA expects to provide available inventory, age and condition information as part of the task order packet.

Q2.5: Who is responsible for maintenance and spare parts procurement, and can contractors use TSA's existing enterprise maintenance contracts?

Maintenance and repair parts are the prime contractor's responsibility, and pricing is per airport task order. The suggestion to allow Gold+ contractors to use TSA's existing enterprise maintenance contracts is outside of the scope of this initiative. TSA will evaluate proposed concepts and approaches for how Gold+ operators may interact with existing enterprise maintenance vehicles during the evaluation process.

Q2.6: Who pays for and manages decommissioning, relocation, and shipping of TSA-owned or contractor-owned equipment when airports transition in or out of Gold+?

Decommissioning, relocation, and shipping will be the responsibility of the contractor and details will be determined at the task order level.

3. Cybersecurity, ATO, IT Architecture

Q3.1: Will TSA require separate ATOs per airport or can a single authorization boundary cover multiple airports?

Authorization boundaries, whether enterprise wide, airport specific, or hybrid, will be determined for each solution and task order. Systems connecting to TSA networks or processing TSA Data require ATO and TSA will consider appropriate boundary models on a case-by-case basis. Exact boundary decisions and associated ATO strategies will be defined at the task order level.

Q3.2: Will TSA commit to specific ATO review timelines or a joint sponsorship process for Gold+ technologies?

TSA will coordinate closely with contractors to align potential ATO or potential joint sponsorship activities with transition schedules but will not commit to a fixed number of days.

Q3.3: What baseline architectural and cybersecurity expectations apply to Gold+?

Offerors should expect alignment with TSA's architecture and future interoperability with Threat Recognition System (TRS) and/or other authorized TSA systems. TSA expects Gold+ solutions to conform to TSA open architecture, cybersecurity standards, and relevant technical profiles. The timing and extent of sharing specific architecture documents remain TBD and will be defined in solicitations under appropriate Sensitive Security Information (SSI) or Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) handling. Requirements for FedR

AMP authorization levels and inherited controls will be detailed in the RFP and task orders.

Q3.4: Are non-Transportation Security Equipment (TSE) Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) platforms for workflows, dashboards, integration, and analytics acceptable, and what approval path applies?

Non-TSE COTS platforms used for workflow orchestration, dashboards, integration, and analytics may be proposed, provided they comply with TSA cybersecurity and authorization requirements when they connect to TSA networks or process TSA Data. TSA will identify the applicable approval path, which may include ATO, architecture review, and alignment with architecture. Specific approvals will be determined per system at the task order level.

Q3.5: Will TSA require Software Bills of Materials (SBOMs), Vulnerability Exploitability eXchange (VEX) statements, and detailed supply chain risk management artifacts, particularly for operational technology and TSE components?

TSA is expected to align Gold+ with DHS and CISA Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM) guidance and NIST SP 800 161 principles. The exact SBOM and VEX requirements remain TBD and will be determined through internal coordination and further guidance will be provided at the task order level.

Q3.6: Will Gold+ contractors be expected to assume TSA Security Technology Integrated Program (STIP)/Security Technology Information Exchange (STIX) capabilities or alter TSE cyber configurations without being part of TSA's Transportation Security Laboratory (TSL) certification and OEM contracts?

Gold+ contractors will **not** be expected to operate or maintain TSA's Security Technology Integrated Program (STIP)/Security Technology Information Exchange (STIX) program or alter TSE cyber configurations independently. Technology solutions will be expected to adhere to STIP and/or TSE connectivity data and security standards as applicable. Any changes to security technology interfaces, cyber configurations, or integration with TSA systems must comply with TSA's established change management standards and processes (to include cybersecurity and TSL certification approval as necessary). Contractor provided technology must be maintained to TSA's cybersecurity standards throughout the lifecycle of the technology.

Q3.7: How will TSA distinguish data rights and ownership between TSA Data, contractor-developed software, commercial software, and operational analytics outputs?

Under the Gold+ contract, all data produced by screening solution - including reports, performance data, configuration information, analytic outputs, and raw or processed imagery - will be subject to FAR 52.227-17, granting TSA defined government rights in that data. TSA Data that is government-furnished or government-owned remains the property of TSA; contractors may use it only for contract performance, must keep it confidential, and must comply with all privacy, data protection, and information security requirements. Contractors may use TSA data for development and analysis and may continue to use improvements to their own technologies developed during the contract but may not retain or reuse TSA Data itself except as expressly authorized by TSA.

Proprietary or commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software used under the contract must be approved by TSA and properly licensed to the Government for access and evaluation. TSA does not claim ownership of such software, but requires sufficient license rights for Gold+ operations. This framework ensures TSA retains ownership and rights to its data, receives appropriate rights in data first produced under Gold+, and that contractors can continue to innovate—while respecting TSA's data rights and software licensing terms. Implementation details, such as how analytic tools or dashboards are categorized, will be addressed at the contract and task order level.

Q3.8 How can Gold+ contractors use TSA screening data, and what mechanisms govern data ownership, innovation, and generation of additional revenue streams?

TSA owns all operational data generated during screening operations—including images, performance metrics, and analytics. Contractors may use this data for contract performance and to improve their technologies, subject to TSA approval and all applicable privacy and data protection laws. Contractors are encouraged to clearly articulate any specific use cases of interest for data utilization or potential new revenue streams in their submissions, so TSA can review and consider them on a case-by-case basis. Any proposal to use TSA data beyond contract performance must be submitted to TSA for review and approval before implementation. Contractors may retain and commercialize improvements to their own technologies developed during the contract but may not retain or reuse TSA data itself unless expressly authorized.

4. Performance Metrics, Incentives, and Attribution

Q4.1: What metric families will TSA use (security, wait times, Ao, customer experience, innovation), and how many metrics will be tracked and weighted?

TSA has organized metrics into several families as outlined in the draft PWS. The IDIQ describes this framework at a high level. Detailed metrics information with associated acceptable levels will be provided in the final RFP at a non-SSI level and further details will be shared at the task order level.

Q4.2: How will TSA measure wait times and other time-based metrics (actual vs predicted, real-time vs periodic) and roll them up into monthly incentive/disincentive calculations?

TSA requires the contractor to provide standardized and auditable methods for measuring wait times and related operational metrics, including validated wait time solutions and specified reporting frequencies. The exact measurement intervals (for example, twice-hourly vs real-time) will be in line with the need to validate that contractors meet or exceed the acceptable levels. The incentive/disincentive calculations will be processed monthly, in line with invoice payments and will be defined further at the task order level.

Q4.3: When and how will TSA share SSI protected numeric thresholds, AQLs, and covert testing benchmarks with industry?

Specific numeric thresholds, AQLs (Acceptable Quality Limits), and covert testing benchmarks are SSI and will not be included in public IDIQ documents. These values will be shared with cleared offerors at the task order stage under appropriate SSI controls.

Q4.4: How will TSA attribute performance issues between contractor-controlled factors and TSA-controlled factors (for example, TSA systems, government furnished equipment, TSA directed changes)?

TSA will consider attribution when applying incentives and disincentives, distinguishing to the extent practicable between contractor-driven and TSA-driven factors. TSA will retain flexibility to adjust performance objectives to address emerging security needs, with specific procedures for communicating and implementing changes to be defined in task orders and contract modifications. Detailed attribution rules, including how TSA directed changes and Government system issues are treated will be addressed in task order performance plans and surveillance regimes.

Q4.5: Will TSA include explicit maintenance metrics (for TSA-owned equipment) in the performance framework, given Gold+ maintenance responsibilities?

Yes. The specific maintenance thresholds will be defined in the IDIQ attachments and further in the performance requirements at task-order level.

Q4.6: Are some proposed metrics (for example, supervisory engagement, professionalism, innovation) too subjective, and will TSA emphasize more outcome-based measures?

TSA will provide additional details for each metric, including how they will be measured and enforced. For such measures, while being considerate of TSA's predefined metrics, the contractor can propose equivalent measures along with a thorough justification for TSA's consideration as part of their proposal.

Q4.7: Do incentives and disincentives apply at the airport level or across the entire IDIQ, and how are small airports weighted relative to large airports?

Performance metrics and incentives/disincentives are intended to be applied at the airport (task order) level. TSA may consider portfolio or bundled constructs in the future, but no specific cross-airport aggregation rules have been finalized. If applicable, relative weighting of performance at small versus large airports is expected to be defined at the task order level.

5. Staffing, Workforce, and Transition

Q5.1: Are contractors free to design their own staffing models, and will TSA set minimum staffing levels or ratios?

Gold+ contracts are outcome-based, creating incentives for screening providers to innovate and become more effective and efficient while improving customer experience. Accordingly, Gold+ contracts will not specify staffing levels or ratios at the airport level. Contractors are expected to design staffing models that meet performance requirements defined in the PWS and at the airport task-order level while remaining compliant with TSA Screening Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). TSA will review staffing plans and offerors' alternative screening process proposals as part of task order evaluations. Once an award is made, offerors are encouraged to continue to innovate throughout the contract lifecycle and may propose innovative approaches to meeting screening objectives at any time.

Q5.2: How will right of first refusal for incumbent TSOs be applied, and what are TSA's expectations for workforce transition (wages, benefits, coverage)?

Based on historical data, TSA expects that most TSOs will transition to the Gold+ contractor at each airport. In connection with conducting the transition, the Offeror shall report its compliance with FAR Clause 52.207-3 Right of First Refusal of Employment (May 2006).

Q5.3: What are TSA's expectations for vetting, suitability, and training for contractor personnel and subcontractors, and how will STA processing times be handled?

TSA will require that personnel (including subcontractors) who need access to TSA systems, facilities, or SSI meet applicable Security Threat Assessment (STA), suitability and training requirements. Further information will be made available in the RFP attachments that could be used to inform management's approach to account for factors such as vetting.

Q5.4: How will remote image review and centralized screening support be staffed and funded (for example, shared CLINs vs local task order costs)?

Remote and centralized image review capabilities will be addressed conceptually at the IDIQ-level, but detailed operating models, staffing assumptions, and funding structures will be defined in task orders. Offerors seeking to incorporate remote or centralized image review may detail this approach generally in their IDIQ-level proposals and airport-specific concepts of operation in their task order level proposals.

Q5.5: What transition-in periods does TSA expect for different airport types, and will TSA use a dedicated PMO or similar structure during transitions?

Transition-in timelines will be defined for each airport, with TSA coordinating closely with contractors throughout the process. For planning purposes, transition periods are estimated to be four to six months, with larger airports near the higher end of the range.

Q5.6: Who provides the official flight schedules used to define screening start and end times (for example, two hours before first flight)?

Information is coordinated at the local level and will be provided through coordination with TSA for each airport at the task order level.

6. Contract Structure, Airport Role, and Governance

Q6.1: How will TSA structure task orders (by airport, region, or portfolio), and is Gold+ participation voluntary (opt-in) for airports?

TSA has stated that, at least for the FY26 solicitation, task orders will be aligned by airport. Gold+ is a voluntary opt-in program alongside SPP, meaning airport participation is not mandatory. Specific airport opt-in decisions and timelines will be determined through TSA planning and task order issuance, and will not be fully defined in the IDIQ.

Q6.2: What is the relationship between Gold+ and SPP, and can airports move between Gold+ and other models or return to federal screening?

Gold+ is an optional program operating alongside SPP and federal screening. Participation in Gold+ will not be mandatory. The specific conditions and processes for an airport to transition between models will be discussed and addressed on case-by-case basis.

Q6.3: Who can be an offeror (prime), what is the airport's role, and how will governance and roles be structured (TSA, contractor, airport)?

TSA Gold+ aligns with the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) and subsequent legislation governing the Screening Partnership Program.

TSA retains regulatory authority, setting standards, certifying technologies, managing procurements, and overseeing performance through outcome-based metrics for security, efficiency, and passenger experience. TSA Gold+ operates under the Aviation and Transportation Security Act and 49 U.S.C. 44920, which provides liability protection information regarding an airport's decision to opt-into the Screening Partnership Program. Screening contractors may also be eligible for SAFETY Act protections, subject to DHS processes. These frameworks ensure that security responsibility and legal accountability remain clearly defined and appropriately allocated.

Airports that opt-in transition from federal screening services to a tailored, privatized model. They collaborate with TSA and industry partners to define requirements, support implementation, and help ensure that solutions meet local operational needs and community expectations.

TSA Gold+ Operator (screening providers) manage checkpoints and associated baggage screening under TSA standards and oversight. They are responsible for workforce management, equipment ownership and maintenance, implementing cybersecurity requirements, and adherence to federal privacy and security requirements.

Q6.4: Will TSA allow consortium prime or "mission integrator" models and will joint liability be required for consortium members?

Gold+ will use a single prime contractor model for each award. Teams and subcontractors are permitted.

Q6.5: How will local governance and coordination be structured, including FSD roles, K9/TSS-E coordination, and any premium services or non-screening technologies?

All local governance and coordination—including FSD roles, K9/Transportation Security Specialist – Explosives (TSS-E) coordination, and any premium services or non-screening technologies - will be managed through TSA leadership, specifically the Federal Security Director (FSD) staff and Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).