

**JUSTIFICATION
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY**

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition Operations (OAO)
Technology Acquisition Center (TAC)
23 Christopher Way
Eatontown, New Jersey 07724

2. Description of Action: The proposed action is for a firm fixed-price (FFP) Delivery Order (DO) issued under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise Wide Procurement (SEWP) IV Government Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) for Network Management Expansion Refresh System components. The period of performance for this action is four years, consisting of a 12-month base period for the software licenses inclusive of hardware delivery 30 days after DO award with three, 12-month option periods to be exercised at the Government's discretion for associated maintenance and upgrades.

3. Description of Supplies or Services: The proposed action is for Network Management Expansion Refresh Systems components in Hines, Illinois and Martinsburg, West Virginia. In addition to the aforementioned brand name components and licenses, Dell PowerEdge R720 servers shall be procured on a brand name or equal basis and are not part of this justification but are part of this procurement. The associated maintenance and upgrades in the option periods is for the following components: SolarWinds – SQL Network Topology Manager, SolarWinds - SQL Database Performance Analyzer; SolarWinds - Web Performance Manager, and Oracle MySQL enterprise licenses. The systems provide for: visibility; core fault reporting; network analytics performance metrics; and remediation processing for aggregated and correlated fault and status management of VA network systems throughout the enterprise. The aforementioned system core components and software are all required in order for the system to function properly and are part of an overall solution. The absence of any one component or software would render the expansion inoperable. Thus, all shall be procured via one procurement. The aforementioned components and software are all needed in order to expand the infrastructure of the Network Management System. The required brand name components and software are listed below:

Item	Units
SolarWinds - Network Topology Manager (Production) (SKU:3340)	3
SolarWinds - SQL Database Performance Analyzer(Production) (SKU: 19001)	3
SolarWinds - Web Performance Manager (Production) 50 (SKU: 2503)	3
MySQL Enterprise License (1-4 Socket Server)	2

TAC-14-15487 Network Management System Expansion

IBM eXFlash 8x 1.8" HS SAS SSD Backplane (PN # 60Y0360)	2
IBM ServeRAID M5014 SAS/SATA Controller (Battery not included) (PN # 46M0916)	2
IBM ServeRAID-M5000 Series Battery Assembly (PN # 46M0917)	2
IBM 400GB 1.8in SATA MLC Enterprise SSD (PN # 41Y8371)	16
Cisco 8GB DDR3-1333-MHz RDIMM/PC3-10600/2R/x4/dual voltage (PN # UCS-MR-1X082RX-A)	96
Cisco 8GB DDR3-1600-MHz RDIMM/PC3-12800/dual rank/1.35v (PN # UCS-MR-1X082RY-A)	64

The aforementioned system has experienced increased usage demands to the architecture since it was initially installed over three years ago. With the increased usage demands to the architecture, several issues have been brought forward indicating prudence in upgrading the core system to better serve the increasing complexity of requirements and number of devices and the number of users. The total estimated value of this acquisition is [REDACTED] inclusive of option periods.

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 16.505(b)(2)(i)(B), entitled "Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized."

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: Based on market research as described in paragraph eight of this document, it was determined that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for the aforementioned, brand name components/licenses. This is a brand name justification in support of FAR 11.105, Items Peculiar to One Manufacturer. The aforementioned brand name items are the only brand name items which will allow for upgrading the existing infrastructure at the identified locations. The aforementioned upgrades would enable the locations to be equipped to handle the increased usage demands and prevent the network infrastructure from failing and continue to remain operational. Any other brand name software/hardware would be unable to integrate with the currently fielded software and Cisco servers, Solarwinds platforms, Oracle MySQL licenses, and IBM products. Specifically, the current system communicates through source codes that are based on proprietary data. No other hardware/software can provide this communication capability without the source codes. The current Cisco, IBM, Solarwinds, and Oracle MySQL products all require brand name products to ensure interoperability and compatability. Any shortfall in interoperability and compatability will put the entire VA network and enterprise at risk of systematic failure and attack.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in the market research section of this document. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined, however, that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for these brand name items. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2), this action will be synopsisized on the Federal Business Opportunities Page (FBO) and

the justification will be made publicly available within 14 days of award. In addition, the Justification for an Exception to Fair Opportunity shall be posted to the NASA SEWP IV GWAC website at time the solicitation is posted.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: The Government will continue to conduct market research to ascertain if there are changes in the marketplace that would enable future actions to be fully competed.

8. Market Research: Market research was conducted in March 2014 and May 2014 by researching other hardware/software similar to the aforementioned brand names, Cisco, IBM, Oracle MySQL, and SolarWinds. However, no other products could satisfy all VA requirements. The usage of any other non-brand name products would render devices on the network inoperable. Market research was conducted by evaluating other brand names that could meet the Government's requirements for SolarWinds - SQL Network Topology Manager, SolarWinds - SQL Database Performance Analyzer, and SolarWinds - Web Performance Manager. For SolarWinds - SQL Network Topology Manager, Hewlett Packard (HP) and IPSWITCH and IBM were researched and all could interoperate seamlessly with Domain Name Services (DNS) to discover network elements and label them with fully qualified domain names. However, none of them are able to meet the Government's requirements by: integrating seamlessly with the existing SolarWinds Network monitoring and management platform; automatically discovering, diagramming, integrating network topologies; following discovery methods that are supported by Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) versions 1 through 3, Internet Control Message Protocol (ICMP), Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI), (Cisco Discovery Protocol (CDP), VMware and Microsoft Hyper-V; having exportable network maps in the necessary formats; having the ability to construct and deliver reports on router and switch ports, Virtual Local, Area Networks (VLAN), subnets, or other network nodes; and perform multi-level network discovery to produce an integrated Open Systems Interconnect (OSI) Layer 2 and Layer 3 network map that includes detailed device information. For SolarWinds - SQL Database Performance Analyzer HP, IPSWITCH and IBM were evaluated and it was determined that none of the aforementioned brand names are able to meet the Government's requirements by: having administration and configuration functionality that is able to integrate seamlessly with the existing SolarWinds software; extracting performance metrics from SQL instances; operate with the SolarWinds dashboard to display alerts and alarms and enable further drill downs via the dashboard to gather additional information gathered by the SolarWinds platform; analyze and report historical trends of response time according to wait type, program and execution plan; support the full set of features against virtualized SQL instances in the same manner as it does with non-virtualized instances; and provide full functionality without the need to download an agent to the SQL server. For SolarWinds - Web Performance Manager HP, IPSWITCH and IBM were evaluated and it was determined that none of the aforementioned brand names are able to meet the Government's requirements by: integrating seamlessly with the existing SolarWinds Network monitoring and management platform; detecting slow page load speed for each page in a transaction and identify by element the cause of any slowness; allow playback recording from multiple locations to accurately report

multi-location website performance; support the reporting of the heaviest page load elements and overall page load speeds; and have a user interface that is configurable.

Market research was conducted by evaluating other brand names that could meet the Government's requirements for Oracle MySQL enterprise licenses. Microsoft and IBM were evaluated and did not meet the Government's requirements by functioning as a backend database infrastructure for the existing RightITNow Event Correlation Manager (ECM) platform. RightITNow requires Oracle MySQL as the backend database for ECM platform. In addition, the current system communicates through a source code that is based on Oracle proprietary data. No other software can provide this communication capability without this source code.

Market research was conducted by evaluating other brand names that could meet the Government's requirements for IBM eXFlash Backplane, IBM ServeRAID Controller, IBM ServeRAID battery assembly. IBM eXFlash Backplane, in comparison to HP and IBM, were evaluated and did not meet the Government's requirements by: not being physically and electrically compatible with IBM System x3690 X5 platforms; unable to support for up to eight Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) 1.8 inch Solid State Drive (SSD) storage drives; and that cannot support for storage drive hot swap operations. For IBM ServeRAID Controller, in comparison to HP and IBM, were evaluated and did not meet the Government's requirements by: not being physically and electrically compatible with IBM System x3690 X5 platforms; unable to support connections to up to 32 SAS or SATA physical drives and up to 64 logical volumes; unable to support logical unit number (LUN) sizes of up to 64 terabytes (TB); unable to support compliance with disk data format (DDN) configurations on disks; incompatible with and unable to support IBM ServeRAID driver software and its associated features; unable to provide auto-resume functionality for an array rebuild or an array reconstruction after loss of system power; unable to support online capacity expansion and online RAID level mitigation; unable to support initialization for quick array setup; unable to support consistency checking for background data integrity; unable to provide monitoring and event notification configuration capabilities; unable to support Patrol Read for media scanning and repairing; and unable able to support global and dedicated hot spare with revertible hot spare support. IBM ServeRAID Battery Assembly, in comparison to HP and IBM, were evaluated and did not meet the Government's requirements by: not being physically and electrically compatible with IBM 46M0916 SAS/SATA controllers; unable to support local and remote mount options; unable to support battery status monitoring that ensures no data is lost; unable to support a charging gauge to ensure overcharging cannot happen; and unable to employ a thermistor on cell to ensure cell temperatures remain in a safe range. IBM 400 GB 1.8 inch SATA MLC Enterprise SSD, in comparison to HP and IBM, were evaluated and did not meet the Government's requirements by: not being physically and electrically compatible with IBM System X platforms; unable to provide data reliability of less than one error in 10^{17} bits read; unable to read latency, as to not to exceed 50 microseconds; unable to write latency, as to not to exceed 65 microseconds; and is unable to withstand an operating shock, operating vibrations, and non-operating vibrations within parameters.

TAC-14-15487 Network Management System Expansion

Finally, market research was conducted by evaluating other brand names that could meet the Government's requirements for Cisco 8GB DDR3-1333-MHz RDIMM/PC3-10600/2R/x4/dual voltage devices and Cisco 8GB DDR3-1600-MHz-RDIMM/PC3-12800 dual rank 1.35v devices. CDW, Crucial, and Kingston were evaluated and did not meet the Government's requirements due to their memory incompatibility with the currently fielded, brand name Cisco devices.

The usage of any other non-brand name products would result in missing proprietary information and would render devices on the network inoperable. Based on the above, only the brand names SolarWinds, Oracle, IBM and Cisco meets all of the Government's requirements.

Additional market research was conducted in June 2014 by posting a Request for Information (RFI) on the NASA SEWP IV GWAC website. The RFI was posted to all contract holders and closed on June 30, 2014, with four responses: two from Group A, Value Added Resellers (VAR) and Computer Systems Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM); one from Group B (Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB)); one from Group C, Small Businesses; and zero from Group D, VAR. Therefore, competition exists and is expected for this proposed action.

9. Other Facts: None.

TAC-14-15487 Network Management System Expansion

10. Technical and Requirements Certification: I certify that the supporting data under my cognizance, which are included in this justification, are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

JoLynn Zimmer Kolliker

Date: 7/21/2014

IT Specialist/ COR

Signature: [Signature]

11. Fair and Reasonable Cost Determination: I hereby determine that the anticipated price to the Government for this contract action will be fair and reasonable based on: contracts awarded on NASA SEWP IV GWAC contract have already been determined to be fair and reasonable. As there are four potential vendors on NASA SEWP IV GWAC contract, price competition is anticipated. Finally, the successful quote will be compared to the Independent Government Cost Estimate.

Iris Farrell

Date: 7/21/2014

Procuring Contracting Officer

Signature: [Signature]

12. Procuring Contracting Officer Certification: I certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. As this contract action does not exceed \$650,000, the certification below required by FAR 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(C)(1) serves as approval.

Iris Farrell

Date: 7/21/2014

Procuring Contracting Officer

Signature: [Signature]