

JUSTIFICATION
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

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

2. Description of Action: The proposed action is to acquire brand name Riverbed Technology, Inc. (Riverbed) software licenses, associated product updates, and maintenance under a delivery order awarded against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) IV Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC). As there are resellers for the Riverbed hardware, software, product updates, and associated maintenance services on the NASA SEWP IV GWAC, limited competition is anticipated.

3. Description of the Supplies or Services: The supplies and services to be acquired are Riverbed hardware, software licenses, associated product updates, and associated maintenance services to facilitate an Enterprise Exchange Active Directory (AD) upgrade to accomplish Wide Area Network (WAN) acceleration of the Exchange message traffic originating from the four VA hosting sites in San Jose, CA; Sterling, VA; Dallas, TX; and Chicago, IL. Riverbed hardware and software are required to make the new facilities for the Enterprise Exchange AD Upgrade project conform with VA Data Center standards. Riverbed hardware and software will optimize traffic flow from the Exchange hosted facilities and the VA Local Area Network/WAN environment for Exchange clients across the enterprise. Through the use of WAN Acceleration Exchange, clients will experience reduced response times in using the application and increased performance using multiple applications simultaneously through maximization of current network resources processing power. The equipment to be procured under this acquisition will include scaling and performance appliances, WAN appliances, interface back cards, central management consoles, mobile client management controllers, associated software, and all relevant licenses. Riverbed hardware technology warranty support ensures the following for all required products: advance hardware replacement, 24x7 access to Riverbed technical support staff, software support, and Federal Information Processing Standards compliance support. Additionally, Riverbed software warranty support ensures access to maintenance releases, software upgrades, and 24x7 access to Riverbed technical support staff. The required delivery date for hardware and software will be within 30 days after receipt of the order. The period of performance for maintenance services will be 12 months starting from the date of receipt of supplies. The total estimated price of the proposed procurement is [REDACTED]

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) 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: This is a brand name justification in accordance with FAR 11.105, Items Peculiar to One Manufacturer. Based on market research, it was determined that limited competition is available for the Riverbed software licenses, product updates, and maintenance. Approximately 668 Riverbed WAN acceleration systems consisting of various Riverbed hardware and software products have been successfully deployed across six VA regions and throughout VA Central Office for several years with no performance related problems. Riverbed owns the proprietary rights to its hardware and software. In order to achieve interoperability, compatibility, and optimization throughout VA sites, additional Riverbed WAN hardware and software must be procured to ensure interoperability with Riverbed hardware and software currently in use.

VA is currently involved in a major network transformation to support the national datacenter and cloud computing initiatives. This initiative will introduce an “any-to-any” type topology. That topology will require a completely interoperable WAN acceleration solution to function effectively and efficiently. Currently, no standard accounts for interoperability between different manufacturer’s proprietary solutions in the full-mesh network topology that VA is deploying. As a result, no other hardware and software can provide a WAN acceleration product that is capable of executing data reduction and protocol optimization of Exchange message traffic that is interoperable with the existing Riverbed WAN acceleration infrastructure. For this reason, connecting two dissimilar accelerators from two different vendors provides no optimization or acceleration benefit and would result in interoperability and compatibility issues with the currently fielded infrastructure, which comprises Riverbed hardware and software. Only Riverbed brand name hardware and software can meet all of the Government’s interoperability and compatibility requirements.

Finally, the proposed effort will procure twelve months of Riverbed maintenance support for all Riverbed hardware and software products being acquired for the four hosted sites. Only Riverbed or a Riverbed authorized reseller can provide support for this proprietary commercial-off-the-shelf hardware and software. Maintenance support performed by parties not authorized by Riverbed will invalidate product warranties and relieve liability for system performance from the manufacturer. The proposed action will provide Riverbed maintenance and support for hardware and software such as scaling and performance appliances, WAN appliances, interface back cards, central management consoles, and mobile client management controllers. Riverbed hardware, software, maintenance and support is required to improve WAN acceleration and prevent degraded application performance caused by significant reductions in available network bandwidth.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in section 8 of this justification, and this effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government’s requirements. Limited competition is anticipated among authorized resellers of Riverbed hardware, software, product upgrades, and

maintenance support. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), this action will be synopsisized and the justification will be made publicly available on the Federal Business Opportunities website within 14 days after award.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: In order to remove or overcome barriers to competition in future acquisitions for this requirement, the Government will continue to conduct market research to ascertain if there are changes in the marketplace that would enable future actions to be solicited without brand name specifications.

8. Market Research: Market research was conducted by the Office of Information and Technology Hines Field Office in February 2015. The Hines Field Office looked at Blue Coat WAN hardware and software and determined that Blue Coat cannot meet all of the Government's needs, specifically interoperability and compatibility requirements with the existing WAN Acceleration infrastructure. Blue Coat hardware and software is unable to interoperate and provide any WAN Acceleration benefit to VA without completely replacing the existing Riverbed infrastructure with Blue Coat WAN Acceleration hardware and software. The Field Office also reviewed Cisco WAN hardware and software and determined these products could not meet all of the Government's needs to include interoperability and compatibility requirements with the existing Riverbed infrastructure. Cisco products are unable to interoperate and provide any WAN Acceleration benefit to VA without completely replacing the existing Riverbed infrastructure for Cisco WAN Acceleration hardware and software. The cost of replacing the existing infrastructure with either Blue Coat or Cisco hardware and software would cost millions of dollars that would not be recovered through subsequent competition.

The Hines Field Office researched the availability of Riverbed hardware, software, product upgrades and maintenance support services. On February 11, 2015, they conducted market research utilizing the NASA SEWP IV GWAC Product Verification and Manufacturer Lookup Tool and it was determined that there are 31 authorized resellers of Riverbed hardware and software who hold current GWACs, including 5 resellers within Contract Group A (Value Added Resellers (VARs) and Computer System Original Equipment Manufacturers); 6 resellers within Contract Group B (Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business VARs); 12 resellers within Contract Group C (Small Business Set-Aside VARs); and 8 resellers within Contract Group D (VARs).

9. Other Facts: No additional facts.