

JUSTIFICATION  
FOR 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: This proposed action is for a brand name firm-fixed-price task order to be issued under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC).
3. Description of Supplies or Services: This proposed action is for BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance. BlueStripeFactFinder is a performance monitoring software currently in use in VA, Service Delivery and Engineering, Enterprise Operations (EO). It integrates into the operating system layer of each server and monitors all transactions between servers. It builds a live, dynamic topology of the entire server system and displays, in real time, the bottleneck path throughout a system of servers. It is also highly useful on systems that are poorly understood and poorly documented since all server communications are mapped and monitored without customization to system specifics. Unlike many other performance monitoring tools, this server license is focused on application performance management from the operations perspective and is not focused primarily on application code. The objective of the tool is to quickly isolate the cause of a performance problem to a specific cause or component but not to analyze the code level performance. The performance monitoring is not limited to any particular programming language, such as Java or .Net, and can monitor any and all communications in and out of a server or systems of servers without prior knowledge of the existence of the communications or any dependency on the communication source. The BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance will consist of software upgrades and updates to include major releases, point releases, service releases and security releases of applicable software on a quarterly basis, and/or within 48 hours in cases in which a high risk vulnerability fix becomes available. BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance is required to ensure the software remains operational. The period of performance is 12 months for server license software maintenance plus, one optional task. The total price of the proposed action is [REDACTED]
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting this exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by 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: Based on extensive market research, as described in section 8 of this justification, it was determined that limited competition is available among authorized resellers for BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance. Since BlueStripe FactFinder is the only server license

software that meets VA's unique functional requirements of performance monitoring for all transactions in and out of a server regardless of their association with an application and without respect to application code or application server type, the server license software maintenance must be obtained from BlueStripe. VA has a functional requirement to monitor all traffic in a server system regardless of its origin, protocol, or prior knowledge of its existence. BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance is the only server license software maintenance that will allow VA to continue to isolate performance issues at the operational layer without respect to specific application code issues or performance. In addition, a prior implementation of BlueStripe FactFinder server licenses already exists in EO. Acquisition of a different server license software maintenance, even if another one existed with qualifications that met VA's stated functional requirements, would require a completely separate infrastructure to support the different product along with completely separate EO staffing. Separate staffing would multiply the support costs for the monitoring and, if the BlueStripe FactFinder server licenses were abandoned in favor of this different product, EO would need to purchase new server licenses. No other server license software maintenance is compatible with or interoperable with the existing BlueStripe FactFinder server license due to BlueStripe's proprietary database structures, protocols and software application programming interfaces. This lack of interoperability, such as the ability of a different vendor's agent to communicate with another vendor's data collector, is standard throughout the performance monitoring industry. BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance is the only server license software maintenance that meets the Government's requirements.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in section 8 of this justification. This effort did not yield any other products that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined, however, that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for the required hardware/software. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), the action will be synopsized and this justification will be made publicly available on the Federal Business Opportunities Page within 14 days after award. In addition, this justification will be posted with the solicitation to notify all SEWP vendors.

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: BlueStripe FactFinder is a commercial off-the-shelf server license package currently in use at VA. When conducting market research in July 2015, the Government's technical experts reviewed similar performance monitoring software maintenance products to ascertain if these items could meet EO's requirements. Specifically, the Government's technical experts reviewed similar companies/organizations, such as Computer Associates (CA), BMC, Dell, and Arcturus Technologies, in the performance monitoring area. In addition, the Government's technical experts researched Forrester Research, Gartner Research, and conducted research on technical monitoring websites and web-based forums related to the performance monitoring requirements/needs stated in section 5 to identify potential

performance monitoring solutions that could meet the Government's requirements. All of the products researched (CA Application Performance Monitoring, BMC's Performance Monitoring, Arcturus Applicare and Dell Foglight plus other research firm cited products) were unable to meet the unique functional requirements of performance monitoring for all transactions in and out of a server regardless of their association with an application and without respect to application code or application server type. All of the similar software researched were either application focused and required application agents or network focused without visibility into specific server to server transactions. The ability to monitor all transactions (known and unknown) regardless of their source in and out of a server or system of servers is a mandatory requirement for this acquisition and no other product other than BlueStripe FactFinder was able to meet this unique, mandatory requirement. Additionally, none of these other server licenses' software maintenance could meet VA's interoperability and compatibility requirements as outlined in section 5 of this document, due to BlueStripe FactFinder's proprietary database structures, protocols and software programming interfaces. The lack of interoperability to communicate with another data collector is standard throughout the performance monitoring industry. Based on the above, only BlueStripe FactFinder server license software maintenance meets all of the Government's requirements.

In June 2015, additional market research was conducted on the NASA SEWP V GWAC which found numerous resellers of the BlueStripe FactFinder software maintenance were available.

9. Other Facts: None.