

IBM QRadar Software Maintenance

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, New Jersey 07724
2. Description of Action: This proposed action is for a brand name firm-fixed-price delivery order to be issued against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) for brand name International Business Machines (IBM) QRadar Software Maintenance.
3. Description of Supplies or Services: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Information and Technology, Service Delivery and Engineering, Enterprise Operations (EO) requires brand name IBM QRadar software maintenance. The 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. These software updates are necessary for EO to be able to operate successfully. The maintenance is required to ensure the software remains operational. The period of performance shall be from date of award through September 30, 2017. The total estimated price of the proposed action is \$431,490.00.
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: Based on market research, as described in paragraph 8 of this document, it was determined that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for the required brand name IBM QRadar software maintenance and update support as described in section 3 of this justification. The current EO infrastructure includes database structures, protocols, and software application programming interfaces which can only be supported by existing IBM QRadar software and VA requires software maintenance compatible with the existing infrastructure components to ensure continued operational availability. VA requires support compatible with the existing infrastructure protocols and functionality for continued operational availability. Specifically, the current infrastructure communicates through source code that is based on IBM proprietary data, and any alternate brand software will use its own proprietary code or open source code which would not be compatible with the existing infrastructure.

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Therefore, only IBM or an authorized reseller which has access to the proprietary source code have the ability to meet VA's requirements as no other brand product is compatible with or interoperable with the existing IBM QRadar software proprietary database structures, protocols, and application programming interfaces. Additionally, access to the proprietary source code is necessary to provide the required software upgrades and updates to include major releases, point releases, service releases and security releases. Failure to acquire compatible software maintenance could cause system failures, such as network flows which identifies malicious activity and real-time correlation employing sense analytics to identify high-risk threats, attacks, and security breaches.

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 additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for the required brand name IBM QRadar software maintenance. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), notice of award for this action will be synopsisized and this justification will be made publicly available on the Federal Business Opportunities Page within 14 days of award. In accordance with FAR 16.505(a)(4)(iii)(A), this justification will be posted with the request for quotation on the NASA SEWP V GWAC to notify interested parties.
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: The Government's technical experts conducted market research in October 2016 by reviewing similar brands of software maintenance to ascertain if these products could meet or be modified to meet VA's requirements. Specifically, the Government's technical experts conducted web-based research on vendor websites to include DB Networks, Application Security Inc., and Imperva Inc. Although these vendors offer similar software maintenance, only IBM or an authorized reseller are capable of providing software maintenance that meets the Government's compatibility and interoperability requirements as described in paragraph 5 above.

Additionally, market research was conducted in November 2016 by utilizing the NASA SEWP V Provider Lookup Tool to determine whether the required brand name Veritas Capacity Software Maintenance was available from NASA SEWP V GWAC holders. The results of the search found that there are 105 resellers of Veritas products that could possibly meet VA's needs. Of the resellers, 19 are Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses. Therefore, limited competition is anticipated.

9. Other Facts: N/A

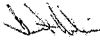
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10. Technical and Requirements Certification: certify that the supporting data under my cognizance, which are included in this justification, are accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Benito Urbina

Date: _____

Project Manager

Signature:  Date: 2016.11.15
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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 upon anticipated competition and discounts among NASA SEWP V GWAC holders who are authorized resellers of the required brand name IBM QRadar software maintenance described herein. Additionally, NASA SEWP determines that the catalog prices on its GWACs are fair and reasonable. Finally, price analysis shall be conducted by comparing the successful quote to the Independent Government Cost Estimate.

Debra G. Clayton

Date: 11/15/16

Procuring Contracting Officer

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 \$700,000.00, the certification below required by FAR 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(C)(1) serves as approval.

Debra G. Clayton

Date: 11/15/16

Procuring Contracting Officer

Signature: 