

JUSTIFICATION
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

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

2. Description of Action: The proposed action is for a firm-fixed price (FFP) delivery order issued under a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) for a FASS8040 modular unit to be added on to existing NetApp SAN and extended warranty for existing NetApp hybrid storage system for the Veterans Informatics and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI) environment.

3. Description of the Supplies or Services: The proposed action is to procure an upgrade and extended warranty of existing NetApp equipment for Veterans Informatic and Computing Infrastructure (VINCI). These add on units (FAS8040) will provide additional storage and performance capacity for our VINCI users. This unit is used primary for analytic analysis. The VINCI environment, located at the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) requires the delivery of the FAS8040 hardware in 30 days. The Government requires the three year extended warranty in order to continue providing the enhancement of our computing and security capability. The total estimated price of the proposed action is \$XX.

4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c) 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: This acquisition is to continue the upgrade of existing NetApp storage for the VINCI environment located within the AITC. It is critical that VINCI upgrade NetApp storage to meet researchers' growing needs for new and expanded storage. Not procuring the additional storage directly from NetApp would result in incompatible parts that would not support VINCI's need to expand storage capabilities for researchers. Not acquiring the additional storage would prevent our clinicians and researchers from conducting necessary analysis of patient data used to improve patient care.

In order to add capacity, performance, and data-at-rest encryption to our existing 3220 NetApp cluster without disrupting service and impacting end users, we require an additional NetApp FAS8040 HA-pair. By adding the NetApp FAS8040 HA-pair, we will be able to maintain our current operations without the service disruption that would occur if we were forced to migrate users to other platforms.

The NetApp system has proven to be invaluable in the VINCI environment. NetApp storage solutions are based on Data ONTAP, a highly optimized, scalable and flexible Operating System (OS), which focuses on maximizing storage efficiency to store the maximum amount of data while reducing the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). By utilizing storage-efficiency technologies designed into the NetApp Data ONTAP operating system, we can lower out capacity requirements without sacrificing performance or resiliency.

Additionally, NetApp provides a family of manageability software that enables database administrators to simplify, standardize, and automate data protection, and increase the frequency of backups for higher data protection - without impacting performance. This suite of software also provides the ability to recover and restore a failed database to full production in minutes, regardless of database size.

Specific requirements include:

- Seamless integration with the existing NetApp cluster. Data should be able to be expanded, compressed, migrated, and backed up under the same operating system (currently NetApp). VINCI must be able to extend the existing NetApp cluster, where current CPU usage often exceeds 85% sustained busy, to distribute load.
- The storage systems' User and Group limits must exceed 1024 each, for filesystem access control for NFSv4 support for Linux.
- In order to be FIPS 140-2 compliant, the array/cluster solution must be capable of encrypting and unencrypting data itself, inline, using self-encrypting drives, and it must store keys off array/cluster.
- Additional storage for this solution must support NetApp's RAID-DP capability, which safeguards data from double-disk failure.
- Storage must have integrated deduplication and thin provisioning.
- The solution must integrate with OnCommand Unified Manager, which is required for the existing SAS Grid solution to insure stability and monitor performance.
- Maximum file size must be 16 terabytes, or greater

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in the market research section of this document. Competitors including HP, DataDirect Networks, and Nimble, Tegile, and Panasas were compared. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements as detailed in paragraph 5. Although the Government is limiting competition, there are multiple authorized resellers of the required hardware and maintenance on the NASA SEWP V GWAC. 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 Page within 14 days after award. In addition, this justification shall be posted with the solicitation on the NASA SEWP V GWAC.

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 competed.

8. Market Research: Market research was completed in 1st quarter FY 17 by the VINCI project team who researched internet sites and contacted vendors (HP, DataDirect Networks, Nimble, Tegile, and Panasas) for information on storage upgrade solutions for the current VINCI environment. These web searches were performed using VINCI architecture specifications. Vendors researched included HP and DataDirect Networks. The results of the market research support the fact that no other vendors can supply a compatible equipment upgrade at a reasonable cost that meets the requirements necessary to satisfy the Government's needs as described in paragraph 5 above. In addition, VINCI technical personnel conducted market research from October 2016 – February 2017 to review existing NetApp hardware and hardware maintenance agreements (HWMA), as well as software maintenance agreements (SWMA). Although other vendors, such as Park Place Technologies, possess similar capabilities to provide the required HWMA, only NetApp, or its resellers, has access to the proprietary source code specific to the maintenance for this particular hardware, as well as the necessary SWMA collaborative support.

As a result of the market research, the technical experts confirmed that because the source code required to issue the updates is proprietary, and SWMA support is only available from NetApp, or its resellers, NetApp is the only source capable of providing the required maintenance and upgrades of the existing VINCI NetApp cluster as well as the proposed expansion of the NetApp cluster. No other contractor has the capability of providing the HWMA plus collaborative SWMA, including firmware, necessary to support existing VINCI requirements.

9. Other Facts: None.