

JUSTIFICATION FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition Operations
Technology Acquisition Center
1701 Director's Blvd., Suite 600
Austin, Texas 78744
2. Description of Action: The proposed action is for a firm-fixed-price delivery order to be issued under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Government Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) for Cisco equipment and warranty support.
3. Description of the Supplies or Services: VA, Office of Information Security, Network Security Operations Center (NSOC), located at Martinsburg, West Virginia, requires 13 Cisco servers, 6 Cisco switches, and one year of warranty support. This solution consists of servers, network switches, and maintenance; which is used to analyze network activity and make predictions about unknown cyber security weakness. The warranty support will ensure these items remain operational and will include standard support and parts replacement. The period of performance for this effort is 12 months from date of award. The total estimated price of the proposed action is [REDACTED], to be delivered within 30 days after receipt of order.
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 market research, as described in section 8 of this document, it was determined that limited competition is available among authorized resellers for the procurement of brand name Cisco equipment. This hardware will augment existing Cisco hardware that currently comprises the VA NSOC Security Incident Management System (SIEM) platform. It must integrate seamlessly with the current operation, administration and maintenance practices and procedures currently in place for that platform. These cover aspects including hardware availability monitoring, fault management, server performance monitoring, resource availability monitoring, configuration management and firmware management. No other brand name equipment can meet these integration requirements other than Cisco due to proprietary constraints of the equipment. Specifically, any other brand would not be able to communicate with the existing Cisco infrastructure and meet VA's form, fit, and function requirements. The existing infrastructure is all Cisco brand name and additional Cisco items are required to meet increased demands on the current system. The current SIEM platform can only work as a single platform with each server acting as a functional part of the entire system. The entire existing SIEM platform is managed by Cisco Integrated Management Controller (CIMC). It is critical to be able to manage the entire platform seamlessly so that operating system and application patch levels can be reliably maintained across all of the systems. This is

necessary so that reliable, repeatable results can be obtained from the SIEM applications, regardless of which of the distributed servers are utilized in the application activity. This additional equipment must integrate seamlessly into this same management platform. Only the Cisco equipment can be seamlessly integrated into, and are interoperable with, the CIMC management platform. If another vendor's equipment were to be used for this augmentation phase, all of the existing equipment would also have to be replaced with equipment from that same vendor so that the entire platform could be managed with their management application. This would result in extensive duplicated costs of approximately \$8,000,000.00 and delivery delays of more than a year that would not be recouperated through comeptiton. These estimates are based on pervious efforts to estabilsih this infrastructure. Further, VA has committed to adhere to the Data Integration Layer Design and Implementation Plan specified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as a part of the multi-agency Continuous Diagnostic and Mitigation (CDM) and Continuous Monitoring as a Service project. CDM Phase 1 has been implemented by DHS using Cisco server hardware in the SIEM solution Indexer, Search Head and Forwarder functions. The VA NSOC's SIEM platform will operate as a part of the DHS CDM project. Competing for a new hardware platform to replace the current investment in SIEM would not result in savings, and the purchase of Cisco brand name hardware is more advantageous to the Government.

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. However, it was determined that limited competition is viable among resellers for these brand name items. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2), this action will be synopsized at award on the Federal Business Opportunities Page (FBO) and the justification will be made publicly available. Additionally, the Justification will be posted on the NASA SEWP website to notify all 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. Specifically, the Government's technical experts will continue to research other brand name software and the potential ability to integrate with the existing log management tool in place and the costs associated with the configuration, integration and implementation.

8. Market Research: VA technical experts conducted market research in June through August 2017, to ascertain the ability of any other manufacturer being able to meet VA's requirements. The research consisted of the evaluation of virtualized solutions as well as solutions utilizing hardware sourced by other vendors, such as [REDACTED]. Based on the market research conducted by VA's technical experts, it has been determined that only Cisco items are able to meet the Government's needs. Only Cisco brand servers and switches are able to be interoperable with the existing Cisco hardware platform and the CIMC management platform.

The Contract Specialist (CS) conducted market research in August 2017, by using the NASA SEWP V GWAC Market Research tool to determine what vendors are capable of meeting the requirement. Based on this market research, the CS found multiple NASA SEWP V GWAC holders capable of meeting the full requirement. Therefore, limited competition is anticipated.

9. Other Facts: None.

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.

[REDACTED]

Date: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Professional Services

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 price analysis conducted via a comparison of the successful quote received with the Independent Government Cost Estimate. In addition, pricing for products awarded on NASA SEWP V GWAC have already been determined to be fair and reasonable and more competitive pricing may result from competition.

[REDACTED]

Date: 8/24/2017
Signature: [Signature]

Procuring Contracting Officer

12. Procuring Contracting Officer Certification: I certify that this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

[REDACTED]

Date: 8/24/2017
Signature: [Signature]

Procuring Contracting Officer

Approval

In my role as Advocate for Competition, based on the foregoing justification, I hereby approve the acquisition of Cisco equipment and warranty support, on an other than fair opportunity basis pursuant to the authority cited in section four above, subject to availability of funds, and provided that the property and services herein described have otherwise been authorized for acquisition.

Date: 8-24-17

Signature:



Advocate for Competition
Technology Acquisition Center
Office of Acquisition Operations

Predictive Analytics Hardware

Control Number:

Justification For Other Than Full and Open Competition
Coordination Matrix


Name

8/22/17
Date

Concur Non-Concur

For: 



Office of Acquisition Operation
Department of Veterans Affairs