

JUSTIFICATION AND APPROVAL  
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)  
Office of Acquisition Operations  
Technology Acquisition Center-Austin  
1701 Director's Blvd., Suite 600  
Austin, TX 78744
2. Description of Action: VA Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) requires StorageTek media tape cartridges to satisfy electronic Information Technology (IT) storage needs. The proposed action is for a firm-fixed-price delivery order issued under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) IV Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC). Delivery is required within 30 days after award.
3. Description of Supplies or Services: Currently, the AITC VSM5 StorageTek virtual storage platform is experiencing data storage shortages and requires additional storage capacity in order to accommodate for growing data demands. VA requires an initial purchase of 100 StorageTek cleaning cartridges, 1,000 StorageTek media tapes with barcodes, and 20,000 StorageTek media extended tapes. Additional optional quantities will be needed within the next 12 months, as additional storage is required. In order for the media tape cartridge to be compatible with the existing StorageTek virtual storage system, each tape cartridge must have the following specifications: initialization capability of 0.04 millimeters; a nonmagnetic back coating; a storage capability of 500 gigabytes that can be expanded up to 1 terabyte when compressed; be pre-labeled from the manufacturer; and be certified by StorageTek to operate within the virtual storage platform. The total estimated cost for this action is \$554,610 (inclusive of options).
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting this exception to fair opportunity is 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 is a brand name justification in support of FAR 11.105, Items Peculiar to One Manufacturer. StorageTek media tape cartridges are the only cartridges that meet the initialization capability, coating, storage capability, pre-labeling, and certification requirements. Without certification, any other brand media tape

cartridge installed in the existing StorageTek virtual storage platform would not be recognized.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in the market research section of this document. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined, however, that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for this brand name item. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and FAR 16.505(b)(2), this action will be synopsisized at award on the Federal Business Opportunity Page (FBO) and the justification will be made publicly available.
7. Actions to Increase competition: The Government will continue to conduct market research to ascertain if there are changes in the market place that would enable future actions to be competed.
8. Market Research: VA technical experts conducted market research in December 2012, by reviewing the technical documentation of the VSM5 StorageTek virtual storage platform. The technical requirements for the media tape cartridges included initialization capability of 0.04 millimeters, nonmagnetic back coating, storage capability of 500 gigabytes, expandable to one terabyte when compressed, pre-labeling from the manufacturer, and certification by StorageTek that the cartridges will operate within the virtual storage platform. The documentation also indicated that if other media tape cartridges were installed, the platform would not recognize the device. VA technical experts confirmed with a StorageTek representative that StorageTek brand media tape cartridges meet these requirements, and that currently no other brands are certified by StorageTek to operate in the VSM5 virtual storage platform. VA technical experts also reviewed technical documentation presented on the websites of other media tape cartridge brands, including Imation, Hewlett Packard, and IBM. According to the websites, none of the brands had certifications from StorageTek validating that they are compatible in the VSM5 StorageTek virtual storage platform. Through the market research obtained, the Government's technical experts determined that only StorageTek brand media tape cartridges are compatible with the existing AITC VSM5 virtual storage platform.
9. Other Facts: None.