

Selection Statement for the Marshall Engineering Technicians and Trade Support Services (METTS)

RFP NNM08125357R

On January 28, 2008, I along with other senior officials of the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) met with the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) appointed to evaluate proposals in connection with the Marshall Engineering Technicians and Trade Support Services.

I. PROCUREMENT DESCRIPTION

As the Director of MSFC, I appointed members of the SEB, which included representation from the Procurement Office and various departments within the Engineering Directorate including the Space Systems Department, the Material and Processes Laboratory, and the Test Laboratory. To aid in the evaluation, the SEB appointed technical evaluators with expertise in appropriate disciplines in order to provide assessments of proposal strengths and weaknesses. The SEB utilized this information in conjunction with the predetermined evaluation factors and subfactors in formulating its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses for each Offeror.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Marshall Engineering Technicians and Trade Support Services (METTS) procurement was released on August 2, 2007. The RFP required the Offerors to provide the necessary management and personnel to perform the technical and business tasks across three important areas, each of which comprise an independently controlled and operated facility. These areas are: (1) Mechanical Testing, (2) Materials Testing, and (3) Fabrication and Assembly.

The successful Offeror shall perform all of the tests housed within the Materials Combustion Research Facility, including the flammability assessment of material and acceptability for the material usage in an oxygen-enriched environment. At the Environmental Test Facility, the successful Offeror shall test flight hardware to determine if the hardware can withstand space vacuum conditions and maintain its ability to function in vacuum and heat. Moreover, the successful Offeror shall conduct fluid dynamics developmental testing to advance the technology of flight hardware at the Experimental Fluid Dynamics Facility and use the Structural Test Facility to conduct structural testing to ensure the structural integrity of space and test hardware. In addition, the successful Offeror is responsible for the fabrication and assembly of various electrical components, and test/flight hardware that requires maintenance of strict manufacturing procedures and high levels of quality control for the assembly of flight hardware before flight on NASA missions.

This effort will be performed under a cost reimbursement, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) type contract; fee will be evaluated for award fee (CPAF/IDIQ). Under the resulting contract, the successful Offeror's work on these activities is controlled by means of a Mission Services portion for the work that the Government intends to remain

on the contract for its duration, and by an IDIQ portion implemented through the issuance of Task Orders for the remaining undefined work. The contract consists of a one-year base period with four one-year options.

One amendment was issued to the RFP:

Amendment No. 1 was released on August 31, 2007, and provided Offerors with answers to written questions received in response to the RFP as well as revisions to the RFP. These revisions included (1) the removal of soil moisture testing from the METTS procurement, (2) clarification of various authority to proceed dates after contract start, (3) removal of the NASA and MSFC Policy and Guidelines as applicable documents to the METTS procurement, (4) correction of applicable Safety, Health, and Environmental guideline references, (5) reduced the number of copies of Volumes I, II, and III required for submittal to the SEB, (6) clarified that “forms” were excluded from the proposal page limitations, (7) more clearly defined “management” to be “overall management” in the subfactor Management and Technical Approach (MTA1), and (8) corrected erroneous staffing levels in the Historical Skill Mix.

The Government designated this procurement as an 8(a) set-aside under Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 19.8, entitled “Contracting with the Small Business Administration (The 8(a) Program).” The procurement was conducted in accordance with FAR Part 15, entitled “Contracting by Negotiation.” On September 17, 2007, proposals were received from the following companies:

Alabama Technical Alliance, LLC (ATA)
290 Cochran Road, Suite 4
Huntsville, AL 35824

Applied Geo Technology, Inc. (AGT)
5151 Research Drive, Suite D
Huntsville, AL 35805

Arctic Slope Research Corporation Management Services (ASRC-MS)
6303 Ivy Lane, Suite 130
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Chickasaw Nation Industries Aviation, LLC (CNIIV)
6810 South Denning Avenue, Room C
Oklahoma City, OK 73169

Info Pro Corporation (IPC)
202 Exchange Place
Huntsville, AL 35806

McConnell, Jones, Lanier, and Murphy, LLP (MJLM)
4825 University Square, Suite 12
Huntsville, AL 35816

Tin-Mar, Inc. (TMI)
70 Shields Road
Huntsville, AL 35811

II. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The proposals were evaluated in accordance with the procedures prescribed by FAR Part 15 and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) Part 1815. The Government evaluated the proposals in two general steps:

Step One – An initial evaluation was performed to determine if all information had been provided and that the Offeror had made a reasonable attempt to present an acceptable proposal. No proposal was determined to be unacceptable.

Step Two – All acceptable proposals were evaluated against the three evaluation factors contained in the RFP. Based on this evaluation, the Government had the option to utilize one of the following methods: (1) Make selection and award without discussions; or (2) cut a competitive range of the most highly rated proposals, conduct discussions with these remaining Offerors, afford each of them an opportunity to revise its proposal, and then make selection.

Selection and award is in accordance with the “Best Value Selection” (BVS) technique delineated in the RFP and FAR Part 15.101-1, entitled “Trade-off Process.” A best value selection seeks to select a proposal based upon the best combination of cost and qualitative effort, which includes Mission Suitability and Past Performance. The BVS evaluation is based upon the premise that, if all proposals are of approximately equal qualitative merit, award will be made to the Offeror with the lowest evaluated Cost. However, the Government will consider awarding to an Offeror with the higher qualitative merit if the difference in Cost is commensurate with added value. Conversely, the Government will consider making award to an Offeror whose proposal has lower qualitative merit if the Cost differential between it and other proposals warrants doing so.

The RFP prescribed three evaluation factors considered essential in an offer: Mission Suitability, Cost, and Past Performance. Offerors were advised that the three factors were essentially equal in importance. However, Qualitative Merit, which includes Mission Suitability and Past Performance, would be considered significantly more important than Cost when combined.

The three evaluation factors were described as follows:

Mission Suitability: The proposals were analyzed for the excellence of the work to be performed, including management and technical subfactors, as well as proposal risk.

Mission Suitability consisted of three subfactors, and each subfactor received both an adjectival rating and a numerical score:

- A. Management and Technical Approach (575 points)
- B. Staffing and Total Compensation (325 points)
- C. Safety, Health, and Environmental (100 points)

Overall, each Offeror could receive a total of 1,000 points and a commensurate adjectival rating in Mission Suitability. The applicable adjective ratings were “Excellent,” “Very Good,” “Good,” “Fair,” and “Poor.” The definitions for the adjective ratings and percentile ranges are contained in the Evaluation Plan.

Cost: The proposed costs were evaluated for reasonableness and completeness of all cost components for the base period and all option periods. The cost factor was evaluated to determine whether the proposed cost was reasonable and/or complete/realistic, and to ensure all Performance Work Statement (PWS) requirements are reflected in the cost proposal. The evaluation addressed the sum of the resources, skill mix, and labor categories required to realistically conduct the METTS contract, as proposed by the Offeror. Unrealistic or unreasonable costs and inconsistencies between the Mission Suitability volume and the Cost volume were assessed as a proposal risk.

Past Performance: Includes the overall corporate past performance of the Offeror and any proposed subcontractors or teaming partners, on comparable or related procurement or project efforts. Emphasis was given to the extent of the direct experience and quality of past performance on previous contracts that were highly relevant in size, type, and scope to the effort defined in the PWS. Past Performance is not numerically scored; however, an adjectival rating was assigned. The applicable adjective ratings were “Excellent,” “Very Good,” “Good,” “Fair,” and “Poor.” In order to not discourage the formation of new firms that fit these criteria, firms with no relevant past performance received an adjectival rating of “Neutral” consistent with RFP Section M.4(E)(2)(iii).

III. DISPOSITION AND EVALUATION OF INITIAL PROPOSALS

All offers received were determined to be acceptable and were evaluated consistent with the criteria identified in the RFP. The initial findings of the SEB were presented to me, the Source Selection Authority (SSA), on November 26, 2007. I established a competitive range of the most highly rated proposals. The Offerors determined to be within the competitive range included Chickasaw Nation Industries, LLC (CNIIV) and Info Pro Corporation. (IPC).

Alabama Technical Alliance, LLC (ATA) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. It was determined that ATA was outside the competitive range based upon a combination of their overall Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating along with their Past Performance adjectival rating. Although ATA received two significant strengths and six strengths overall in Mission Suitability, the discriminators included numerous significant weaknesses and weaknesses in each of the three subfactors in their proposal.

As a result, ATA's overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating was Fair and lower than those firms included in the competitive range. It should be noted that ATA's cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEB, was deemed competitive, and ATA's Most Probable Cost was competitive with those proposals remaining in the competitive range. However, in the Past Performance factor, ATA received an adjectival rating of Good, which was lower than the scores of the Offerors in the competitive range. Therefore, I determined that ATA offered no advantage over any of the Offerors included in the competitive range.

Applied Geo Technology, Inc. (AGT) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. It was determined that AGT was outside the competitive range based primarily on their overall Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating. Although AGT received three significant strengths and nine strengths overall in Mission Suitability, the discriminators included numerous significant weaknesses and weaknesses found in both the Management and Technical Approach and the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactors in their proposal. As a result, AGT's Mission Suitability rating was Fair and lower than those firms included in the competitive range. AGT's cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEB, was deemed to be competitive, and AGT's Most Probable Cost was competitive with those proposals remaining in the competitive range. In the Past Performance factor, AGT received an adjectival rating of Very Good, which was lower than one of the Offerors in the competitive range. Therefore, I determined that AGT offered no advantage over any of the Offerors included in the competitive range.

Arctic Slope Research Corporation Management Services (ASRC-MS) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. It was determined that ASRC-MS was outside the competitive range based primarily upon their overall Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating. Although ASRC-MS received three significant strengths and thirteen strengths overall in Mission Suitability, the discriminators included numerous significant weaknesses and weakness found in each of the three subfactors in their proposal. As a result, ASRC-MS received an overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating of Fair which was lower than those firms included in the competitive range. It should be noted that ASRC-MS' cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEB, was deemed competitive, and ASRC-MS' Most Probable Cost was competitive with those proposals remaining in the competitive range. In the Past Performance factor, ASRC-MS received an adjectival rating of Very Good, which was lower than the rating of one Offerors in the competitive range. Therefore, I determined that ASRC-MS offered no advantage over any of the Offerors included in the competitive range.

McConnell, Jones, Lanier, and Murphy, LLP (MJLM) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. It was determined that MJLM was outside the competitive range based upon a combination of all three factors including their overall Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating, their Past Performance adjectival rating, and Cost. Although MJLM received two significant strengths and fifteen strengths overall in Mission

Suitability, the discriminators included numerous significant weaknesses and weaknesses found in both the Management and Technical Approach and the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactors in their proposal. As a result, MJLM's overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating was Poor and lower than those firms included in the competitive range. It should be noted that MJLM's cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEB, was deemed not competitive with those firms in the competitive range, and MJLM's Most Probable Cost was not competitive with those proposals remaining in the competitive range. Moreover, in the Past Performance factor, MJLM received an adjectival rating of Good, which was lower than the ratings of the Offerors in the competitive range. Therefore, I determined that MJLM offered no advantage over any of the Offerors included in the competitive range.

Tin-Mar, Inc. (TMI) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. It was determined that TMI was outside the competitive range based upon a combination of their overall Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating along with their Past Performance adjectival rating. Although TMI received two significant strengths and eight strengths overall in Mission Suitability, the discriminators included numerous significant weaknesses and weaknesses in both the Management and Technical Approach and the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactors in their proposal. As a result, TMI's overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating was Poor and lower than those firms included in the competitive range. It should be noted that TMI's cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEB, was deemed competitive, and TMI's Most Probable Cost was competitive with those proposals remaining in the competitive range. However, in the Past Performance factor, TMI received an adjectival rating of Fair, which was lower than the scores of the Offerors in the competitive range. Therefore, I determined that TMI offered no advantage over any of the Offerors included in the competitive range.

By letters dated November 30, 2007, all Offerors were advised of their status. In a letter dated December 4, 2007, the SEB opened discussions and provided both Offerors in the competitive range with their weaknesses and clarification issues as identified by the SEB during the evaluation of their proposals. The letters established December 11, 2007, as the due date for the receipt of all written responses. Furthermore, December 17 and 19, 2007, were scheduled as the dates for oral discussions with CNIIV, and December 18 and 20, 2007, were the dates scheduled for oral discussions with IPC.

On January 3, 2008, draft Final Proposal Revision (FPR) instructions were sent to both Offerors. Both Offerors were advised to submit questions concerning the draft FPR instructions by 2 p.m. local time the following day. On January 4, 2008, a letter requesting FPRs was sent to CNIIV and IPC with a due date for receipt of Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs) on January 9, 2008. On January 7, 2008, an amendment to the request for FPRs was sent to both Offerors; the amendment increased the page limit from 80 pages to 100 pages total for the Mission Suitability and Past Performance volumes. Revisions were received on January 9, 2008, and were subsequently evaluated consistent with the criteria identified in the RFP.

IV. EVALUATION OF FINAL PROPOSAL REVISIONS

As a result of the discussion process and the Final Proposal Revisions, both Offerors, determined to be finalists, increased their Mission Suitability numerical scores and adjectival ratings. In addition, both Offerors eliminated all of their Mission Suitability weaknesses. The Past Performance adjective rating for both Offerors did not change; however, CNIIV mitigated the severity of one Past Performance weakness and eliminated one Past Performance weakness based upon clarification by the SEB of an erroneous customer survey; IPC mitigated the severity of two Past Performance weaknesses. In addition, both Offerors revised their Cost Proposals based upon discussions. The final evaluation results of the FPRs are summarized below.

Chickasaw Nation Industries Aviation, LLC

In the Mission Suitability factor, CNIIV received an overall adjective rating of Very Good. CNIIV had no deficiencies, significant weaknesses, or weaknesses.

Under the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, CNIIV received an adjective rating of Very Good. CNIIV received four significant strengths, five strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 4

- CNIIV proposes to effectively manage the overall scope of work by cross-training and cross-utilizing employees while incorporating a plan that maximizes the opportunities for efficient workforce utilization through all PWS areas. This cross-training plan should provide the contractor with the ability to transfer employees from one PWS area to another for short-term work surges, thus reducing the cost to the Government and eliminating the requirement to hire employees specifically for each PWS area.
- CNIIV proposes to track and manage work through expanded use of the Government-furnished Visual Enterprise software by adding a Visual module, thereby enabling the Offeror to integrate work management across all PWS areas in order to quickly implement and efficiently track task orders.
- CNIIV teamed with a subcontractor (23 percent of the work) that currently owns a welding certificate, which meets the requirements for the Environmental Test Facility, thereby eliminating a delay in achieving the certification after contract award.
- CNIIV proposes “performance award fee sharing” with its subcontractors which will provide incentive for high performance and cooperation.

Strengths: 5

- CNIAV proposes an effective management approach that clearly demonstrates their understanding of the differences in the work culture among the PWS elements as evidenced by the Offeror's proposal to (1) implement a contract-wide plan for workforce/resource forecasting and tracking, (2) assign an employee to the task of surveying and analyzing workloads across all PWS areas, (3) move jobs to other sites if available and qualified, and (4) report down to the 3rd level PWS on a monthly and quarterly basis.
- CNIAV proposes to monitor, track, and report costs by conducting monthly Teammate Management Reviews. These meetings include a review of Form 533 financial data against their Form 533 financial metrics to compare and determine, if acceptable, the Estimate to Completion. This method provides a more comprehensive and thorough 533 report with less errors.
- CNIAV proposes to create and utilize a high-level advisory council, consisting of members who are experienced in Government services contracts, at no cost to the Government. The council will be beneficial in providing guidance in the operation of this contract for PWS 1.0.
- CNIAV proposes to combine or consolidate all tool cribs into one centralized location and manage it using CribMaster software to streamline operations, reduce inventory, and increase square footage efficiency.
- CNIAV proposes cost reimbursement for employee travel by reimbursing actual receipts, with a maximum reimbursement of the per diem rate, instead of routinely providing the full per diem rates which will result in cost savings to the Government.

Under the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor, CNIAV received an adjective rating of Very Good. CNIAV received four significant strengths, nine strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 4

- CNIAV proposes a key person for General Manager who has 12 years of directly-related supervisory and management experience, a Master of Science degree in Systems Management, good references, some relevant specialized training, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- CNIAV proposes a key person for Safety and Mission Assurance Manager who has 15 years of safety/quality experience at MSFC, good references, extensive relevant training classes, and commitment proposed at 100 percent; however, the proposed Safety and Mission Assurance Manager does not have a college degree.

- CNIAV proposes a key person for Project Support Office Manager who has 10 years of MSFC business experience, accounting classes while currently pursuing an accounting degree, good references, extensive relevant training classes, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- CNIAV and its subcontractors propose to motivate and retain a qualified work force as evidenced by proposing the same base labor rates for Mission Services and IDIQ, a practice which will enhance employee morale.

Strengths: 9

- CNIAV's approach for a contract phase-in includes recruiting and reclassifying, as necessary, the required workforce with no wage decreases. This strategy will allow the staffing levels to become normalized without unduly burdening the incumbent employees.
- CNIAV proposes a key person for Manufacturing Manager who has 13 years of directly-related experience, a Bachelor of Science degree in Engine Power Technology, good references, extensive relevant training classes, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- CNIAV proposes a key person for Technical Services Manager who has 6 years of directly-related experience, adequate supervisory and management experience, a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, extensive relevant training classes, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- CNIAV proposes a key person for Materials Testing Task Lead who has 5 years of MSFC testing experience, a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, good references, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- CNIAV's Phase-in approach for recruiting the required workforce requires the incumbent employees to apply for jobs under the METTS contract, and not simply transition 100 percent of the incumbent employees. This strategy should ensure the selection of the best candidates for each position.
- CNIAV proposes to recruit and retain multidiscipline personnel by employing a philosophy of promoting from within which is a practice that will enhance employee morale.
- CNIAV proposes to motivate and retain a qualified workforce by providing an Employee Assistance Program, which sustains employee morale, thereby maintaining employee productivity.

- CNIAV proposes a 30-day Key Personnel Transition/Replacement Plan which contains a backfill roster that identifies alternate Key Personnel and ensures a smooth transition by immediately filling vacated Key Personnel positions.
- CNIAV proposes to handle workload increases by use of an advisory council consisting of Alabama A&M and Tuskegee Universities while leveraging Calhoun Community College's Apprentice and Co-op Programs to quickly hire individuals who specialize in manufacturing, test, and technical services to mitigate both short-term and long-term work surges.

In the Safety, Health, and Environmental subfactor, CNIAV received an adjective rating of Good. CNIAV received no significant strengths, three strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Strength: 3

- CNIAV demonstrates knowledge of the Center's Environmental Management System (EMS) and Headquarters tri-annual Environmental Compliance (also called the Environmental Functional Review) Audits. This knowledge should help ensure the Offeror's ability to adequately control safety, health, and environment compliance/issue resolution and support MSFC in successfully completing future Headquarters audits.
- CNIAV listed, and has an understanding of, the SHE training classes required by MSFC for personnel who work with hazardous chemicals, waste, and operations while ensuring the Offeror's ability to adequately control safety, health, and environment compliance and issue resolution.
- CNIAV proposes a SHE Plan that is thorough and comprehensive while addressing each Core Program Requirement (CPR). Additional initiatives proposed by the Offeror include (1) awards, commendations, and monetary rewards for beneficial suggestions that prevent unsafe acts, (2) detailed descriptions of employee participation in SHE programs, and (3) detailed description of hazard identification processes.

In the Past Performance factor, CNIAV received an adjective rating of Very Good. CNIAV received two significant strengths, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, and three weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 2

- CNIAV's subcontractor (23 percent of the work) received excellent to excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Incentive Fee contract of overall high relevance in size, type, and scope. The areas of technical relevance include structural test support, mechanical fabrication and assembly work, thermal vacuum and wind tunnel testing, and

CAD operations. (The significance of this strength is tempered based on the proposed percentage of the work on the METTS procurement.)

- CNIAB's subcontractor (23 percent of the work) received excellent to excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys on a MSFC Cost Plus Incentive Fee contract of overall high relevance in size, type, and scope; in addition, on this contract the subcontractor performed with a 5.35 percent cost under run. The areas of technical relevance include electrical and mechanical fabrication and assembly work under MSFC quality processes. (The significance of this strength is tempered based on the proposed percentage of the work on the METTS procurement.)

Strengths: 4

- CNIAB's subcontractor (23 percent of the work) received excellent performance ratings per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Incentive Fee subcontract with moderate overall relevancy in size and type and highly relevant scope. The areas of technical relevance include materials testing, thermal and thermal vacuum testing, fluids testing, structural testing, CAD drawing and drawing management, and familiarity with the CERTRAK system.
- CNIAB's subcontractor (23 percent of the work) received excellent to excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Award Fee/Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity subcontract of highly relevant type and moderate relevance in size and scope. Technical requirements included structural testing.
- CNIAB (54 percent of the work) received an excellent plus performance rating per their customer survey on a Cost Plus Incentive Fee contract of moderately relevant type and overall low relevance in cost and scope. The areas of technical relevance include planning and control and MAPTIS.
- CNIAB's subcontractors (each with 23 percent of the work) have a 3-year Lost Time Case (LTC) rate average less than 50 percent of the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics national average for the given North American Industry Classification Code (NAICS).

Weaknesses: 3

- CNIAB's subcontractor (23 percent of the work) has exhibited reluctance to adequately address matters involving those senior employees with personnel issues as opposed to those employees with less seniority.

- CNIAB's subcontractor's (23 percent of the work) self-evaluation is not fully corroborated by the customer's survey evaluations creating a concern they do not adequately recognize and address weaknesses.
- CNIAB's subcontractor (23 percent of the work) has a 2-year Lost Time Case (LTC) rate average greater than the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics national average for the given North American Industry Classification Code (NAICS).

In the Cost factor, CNIAB's proposed cost was \$112.5M with a most probable cost of \$112.6M. The only area of adjustment for most probable cost was the application of the General and Administrative ceiling rates for CNIAB's subcontractor (23 percent of the work). The SEB determined the proposed cost was reasonable, complete, and ensured that all PWS requirements were reflected in the cost. After completing a most probable cost adjustment, the SEB gave CNIAB a "high" cost confidence.

Info Pro Corporation

In the Mission Suitability factor, IPC received an overall adjective rating of Very Good. IPC had no deficiencies, significant weaknesses, or weaknesses.

Under the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, IPC received an adjective rating of Very Good. IPC received four significant strengths, five strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 4

- IPC proposes to effectively manage the overall scope of work by cross-training the workforce to maximize the opportunities for efficient workforce utilization for all PWS areas. This cross-training plan should provide the contractor the ability to transfer employees from one PWS area to another for short-term work surges, thus reducing the cost to the Government and eliminating the requirement to hire employees specifically for each PWS area.
- IPC proposes a contract-wide, work tracking system that will be used to monitor and forecast work and will accept exports of all currently used electronic data systems (specifically PWS 2.4). In addition, the Offeror proposes to use this system for travel, training and procurement requests while interfacing with Deltek to ensure funding levels are approved prior to granting the requests. In addition, the system will enable the integration of work management across all PWS areas and the reduction of the probability of cost overruns for travel, training, and procurement.
- IPC proposes to effectively manage the overall scope of work by creating a culture where the employees are highly encouraged to immediately provide unfiltered information and concerns to the Government Point of Contact (POC).

In fact, the Offeror emphasizes the importance of communication through inclusion of this requirement in the Job Description/Qualifications (JD/Qs).

- IPC proposes to effectively manage the overall scope of the work by using the "walk through method" by the General Manager which is an effective and well-recognized, management practice that historically leads to better understanding of the work and maintenance of good employee morale.

Strengths: 5

- IPC proposes an ISO quality management system to initiate and maintain ISO compliance using three separate review processes for effectivity measurement. The three separate reviews are more than typically required and include empowering employees to take ownership while strengthening the overall quality assurance across the whole contract down to the employee level.
- IPC's subcontractor (49 percent of the work) offered to assign CAD work from its local Army contracts during slack times to maintain a productive workforce. During these times, the Offeror will provide an Army contract charge number, thereby reducing operational costs to MSFC.
- IPC's organizational structure provides the Safety, Health, and Environmental/Quality Assurance (SHE/QA) Manager with a reporting path around the General Manager to the corporate Chief Operating Officer, thereby allowing the SHE/QA Manager to elevate any issues that are not addressed on-site. This strategy should ensure openness in all safety and quality issues.
- IPC proposes to create an Advisory Council consisting of senior managers from both team members. The council will be beneficial in providing guidance in the operation of this contract in PWS 1.0.
- IPC's teaming arrangement with its subcontractor (49 percent of the work) leverages a pre-existing, 1-year Mentor-Protégé relationship that provides knowledge to the Offeror which will be beneficial when assigning tasks to their subcontractor based on their qualifications and performance.

Under the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor, IPC received an adjective rating of Very Good. IPC received three significant strengths, eight strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 3

- IPC proposes to completely, thoroughly, and systematically analyze the historical data to determine staffing levels and skill mix resulting in numerous, well-supported efficiencies in most PWS areas. The continued use of this methodology and appropriate cross training could result in eliminating the need to

replace personnel who voluntarily leave the mission portion of the contract and minimize the amount of IDIQ workforce required for increased testing.

- IPC proposes a key person for Materials Test and Test Support Site Manager who has more than 10 years of supervisory and management experience, 10 years of experience directly-related to the METTS effort, a Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering, extensive specialized training, membership in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, good references, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- IPC and its subcontractor propose to motivate and retain a qualified work force as evidenced by proposing the same base labor rates for Mission Services and IDIQ, a practice which will enhance employee morale.

Strengths: 8

- IPC proposes to recruit the required workforce as evidenced by requiring the incumbent employees to apply for jobs under the METTS contract, and not simply transitioning 100 percent of the incumbent employees. This strategy should ensure the selection of the best candidates for each position.
- IPC proposes a key person for General Manager who has four years supervisory experience over a group of 60 employees, a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering, related specialized training, outstanding references, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- IPC proposes a key person for Business Administrator who has 12 years of business experience and commitment proposed at 100 percent. The proposed individual was scheduled to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting in December 2007.
- IPC proposes a key person for Technical Lead for the mechanical, fabrication, and assembly facility who has 9 years of manufacturing experience (4 years at MSFC), good references, relevant training, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- IPC proposes a key person for Technical Lead/Operations Manager for ETF/EFDTF who has 17 years of related vacuum testing experience, a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics, good references, and commitment proposed at 100 percent; however, the proposed Technical Lead/Operations manager lacks experience in fluid dynamics testing.
- IPC proposes a key person for Technical Lead for the Materials Test Group who has 8 years of experience related to materials testing, a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry, good references, and commitment proposed at 100 percent.

- IPC proposes a contract phase-in with minimal impact and an independent Phase-In team which allows for parallel efforts with the new contract management staff during Phase-In and allows the key personnel proposed for this contract to concentrate on performing the technical requirements of the METTS contract.
- IPC proposes to handle workload increases through a co-op/intern agreement with Oakwood College, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), for developing student career planning and training to help meet METTS future technical needs.

In the Safety, Health, and Environmental subfactor, IPC received an adjective rating of Good. IPC received no significant strengths, one strength, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses. This finding is summarized as follows:

Strengths: 1

- IPC's SHE Plan is thorough and comprehensive while addressing each Core Program Requirement (CPR). Additional initiatives proposed by the Offeror include seeking OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) certification and the requirement for a pre-placement medical examination.

In the Past Performance factor, IPC received an adjective rating of Excellent. IPC received two significant strengths, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, and two weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 2

- IPC (51 percent of the work) received excellent performance ratings per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Award Fee subcontract that required phase-in of overall highly relevant size, type, and scope. Technical requirements include materials testing, structural test facility maintenance and repair, electrical/mechanical fabrication and assembly, hazardous materials operations, test scheduling, calibration, providing technicians for test support, and the use of alternate work schedules to meet fluctuations in testing.
- IPC's subcontractor (49 percent of the work) received excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys for technical and management performance on a Cost Plus Award Fee subcontract of overall highly relevant size, type, and scope. The areas of relevance include managing a technician workforce, supporting testing at MSFC, maintaining certifications, performing mechanical and electrical fabrication and assembly, materials testing, oxygen compatibility testing, electrical and mechanical fabrication and assembly, tool crib operations, calibration oversight, and vacuum chamber maintenance.

Strengths: 4

- IPC was the prime contractor on a Firm Fixed Price contract of moderate relevance in scope and low relevance in size and type. Technical requirements included training of military personnel, electrical fabrication, and explosives testing. Although the Offeror provided a self-assessment of excellent to excellent plus performance, no customer-based performance ratings were received.
- IPC's subcontractor (49 percent of the work) received excellent plus performance ratings for technical content per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Award Fee subcontract of moderate relevancy in size and technical requirements which included engineering support with some involvement in many of the PWS 2.0 elements.
- IPC and its subcontractor had relatively low turnover rates as demonstrated by the companies' 3-year voluntary turnover ratios.
- IPC's subcontractor (49 percent of the work) has a Lost Time Case (LTC) rate less than 50 percent of the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics LTC national average for the given North American Industry Classification Code (NAICS).

Weaknesses: 2

- IPC's subcontractor (49 percent of the work) received a "Good to Fair" past performance rating per their customer survey in estimating and controlling costs.
- IPC's Lost Time Case (LTC) rate is twice the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics LTC national average for the given North American Industry Classification Code (NAICS).

In the Cost factor, IPC's proposed cost was \$99.3M with a most probable cost of \$101.0M. The only areas of adjustment for most probable cost were the application of the General and Administrative ceiling rate and the correction of their direct materials and incidental services subcontracting costs to coincide with the RFP specified amount. The SEB determined the proposed cost was reasonable, complete, and ensured that all PWS requirements were reflected in the cost. After completing a most probable cost adjustment, the SEB gave IPC a "high" cost confidence.

V. DECISION

Immediately following the SEB presentation on January 28, 2008, I met in executive session with the key senior advisors, all of whom heard the presentation and were familiar with the RFP. These advisors included representatives from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Office of Chief Counsel, Office of Procurement, Safety and Mission Assurance Directorate, and Engineering

Directorate. I solicited and considered their views in reaching my decision. With respect to the process and findings, we concluded that the evaluation plan was followed, and the evaluation of the proposals was comprehensive, thorough, and well-documented.

During the presentation, the senior advisors and I thoroughly questioned the SEB on a number of points. We noted that the discussion process was well utilized because both CNIIV and IPC increased their Mission Suitability numerical scores and adjectival ratings while eliminating all of their Mission Suitability weaknesses; moreover, both Offerors generated at least one new strength in the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor of Mission Suitability. In the Past Performance factor, both CNIIV and IPC mitigated the severity of various weaknesses, and CNIIV eliminated a weakness that was based upon erroneous documentation. In addition, both Offerors satisfactorily resolved labor rate and skill mix issues during the discussion process.

We noted that distinct discriminators existed in two of the three evaluation factors, with the remaining factor (i.e., overall Mission Suitability) being only a slight discriminator based upon a mere 3.9 percent differential in numerical scores out of 1,000 total points available. In probing the SEB during its presentation and taking into consideration its evaluation of the proposals against the prescribed evaluation criteria contained in the RFP, I concluded the successful Offeror is Info Pro Corporation. The rationale for my decision follows.

Although CNIIV had the highest overall Mission Suitability numerical score of the two Offerors, both companies received an adjectival rating of Very Good with only a 3.9 percent differential in numerical scores between CNIIV and IPC. A comparison of the two Offerors in Mission Suitability revealed that both companies received the same adjectival ratings across each of the three subfactors although CNIIV received slightly higher numerical scores in each of the three subfactors. In total, CNIIV received eight significant strengths, seventeen strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses in the overall Mission Suitability factor. IPC received seven significant strengths, fourteen strengths, and no significant weaknesses or weaknesses.

In the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, both Offerors received an adjectival rating of Very Good; however, CNIIV received a slightly higher numerical score than IPC. In comparison, both Offerors received four significant strengths and five strengths. We noted that CNIIV proposed a detailed approach to effectively manage the overall scope of work by cross-training and cross-utilizing employees through incorporation of a plan that maximizes the opportunities for efficient workforce utilization in all PWS areas. In addition, the firm proposed to track and manage work through an expanded use of the Visual Enterprise software by adding a Visual module that will enable integration of work management across all PWS areas. Moreover, CNIIV's subcontractor currently owns a welding certificate that meets the requirements for the Environmental Test Facility and eliminates a six-month delay or required work-around to achieve certification after contract award. Finally, CNIIV proposed "performance award fee sharing" with its subcontractors to provide an incentive for high performance.

In contrast, we noted that IPC proposed a similar approach to effectively manage the overall scope of work by cross-training the workforce to maximize opportunities for efficient workforce utilization for all PWS areas; however, the SEB noted that IPC did not provide the same level of detail in its discussion of their management approach. Similar to CNIIV, IPC proposed the use of an electronic database for contract-wide, work tracking system to monitor and forecast work, accept exports of all currently-used electronic data systems, and enable travel, training, and procurement requests to interface with Deltek in order to reduce cost overruns for travel, training, and procurement. Moreover, the firm proposed to create a culture where employees are encouraged to immediately provide unfiltered information and concerns about testing anomalies, chamber concerns, and operational concerns to the Government Point of Contact through inclusion of this requirement in the Job Description/Qualifications. Finally, IPC proposed the use of the “walk through method” of management by the General Manager to establish a better understanding of the work and maintenance of good employee morale.

Based on my review and analysis of the other strengths for both Offerors in addition to the two similar significant strengths for cross training/cross utilization of employees and the use of an electronic database work tracking system, I determined that both Offerors were well-suited to perform these efforts. However, CNIIV demonstrated a slight advantage in numerical score (i.e., approximately 4 percent out of 575 available points) in the Management and Technical Approach subfactor.

In the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor, both Offerors received adjectival ratings of Very Good; however, CNIIV received a slightly higher numerical score than IPC. Under this subfactor, CNIIV received four significant strengths and nine strengths. IPC received three significant strengths and eight strengths. We noted that CNIIV received significant strengths for three of its proposed key personnel. For example, CNIIV’s General Manager has twelve years of directly-related supervisory and management experience, a Masters of Science degree in Systems Management, good references, specialized training, and commitment proposed at 100 percent. The Safety and Mission Assurance Manager has fifteen years of safety/quality experience at MSFC, good references, relevant training, and commitment proposed at 100 percent. In addition, CNIIV’s Project Support Office Manager has ten years of MSFC business experience, accounting classes, good references, relevant training, and commitment proposed at 100 percent. Furthermore, the firm proposed to motivate and retain a qualified workforce by offering the same base labor rates for the Mission Services and IDIQ portions in order to enhance employee morale.

Conversely, IPC proposed to completely, thoroughly, and systematically analyze the historical data to determine the appropriate staffing levels and skill mix resulting in numerous, well-supported efficiencies in most PWS areas; the continued use of this methodology along with cross training should eliminate the need to replace personnel who voluntarily leave the mission portion of the contract and minimize the amount of IDIQ workforce required for increased testing. In addition, we noted that IPC received

one significant strength for its proposed key personnel. The Materials Test and Test Support Site Manager has more than ten years of supervisory and management experience, ten years of experience directly-related to the METTS effort, a Masters of Science degree in Industrial Engineering, specialized training, membership to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, good references, and commitment proposed at 100 percent. Similar to CNIIV, IPC also proposed to motivate and retain a qualified workforce by offering the same base labor rates for Mission Services and IDIQ portions to enhance employee morale.

Based on my review and analysis of the other strengths for both Offerors, the similar significant strength for both Offerors to retain employees through use of the same base labor rates, and the lack of a significant strength for the General Manager as a key person for IPC, I determined that CNIIV demonstrated a slight advantage in numerical score (i.e., approximately 3 percent out of 325 available points) in the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor.

In the Safety, Health, and Environmental subfactor, both Offerors received adjectival ratings of Good; however, CNIIV had a slightly higher numerical score than IPC. Neither Offeror received any significant strengths; however, CNIIV had three strengths, and IPC had one strength. Based on my review and the analysis of the strengths for both Offerors, I determined that CNIIV demonstrated a slight advantage in numerical score (i.e., approximately 6 percent out of 100 available points) in the Safety, Health, and Environmental subfactor.

Based on the above information, I concluded that CNIIV demonstrated a slight advantage (i.e., approximately 3.9 percent out of 1,000 total points available) in the overall Mission Suitability numerical score when compared to IPC.

We next considered the Cost factor. Both Offerors adjusted their cost proposals in response to discussions, and the SEB assigned a “high” cost confidence to the Government’s most probable cost of both firms. However, for the Mission Services and IDIQ efforts, IPC’s evaluated proposed cost (i.e., \$99,271,012) was less than CNIIV’s evaluated proposed cost (i.e., \$112,493,623). It is important to note that IPC proposed an innovative approach that reduced its overall staffing levels or Work Year Equivalents across the life of the contract. As a result, IPC proposed a lower cost than CNIIV across the (1) Core Mission Direct Labor Hours and Direct Labor Costs, (2) Fringe and Overhead, (3) General and Administrative (G&A) expenses, (4) Award Fee, and (5) IDIQ. These lower cost elements established a notable cost advantage for IPC of \$13,267,444, as proposed, over the base and four option years of the contract. As adjusted by the Government, IPC’s most probable cost was \$101,031,456, and CNIIV’s most probable cost was \$112,579,841 for the base year and four one-year option periods. As a result, selection of IPC would result in savings to the Government of \$11,548,385 or approximately 10 percent over the life of the contract. From this information, I determined that IPC demonstrated a clear advantage over CNIIV in the Cost factor.

In the Past Performance factor, IPC received an adjectival rating of Excellent, and CNIAV received a lower adjectival rating of Very Good. IPC received two significant strengths, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, and two weaknesses. CNIAV received two significant strengths, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, and three weaknesses. We noted that both IPC and its subcontractor (i.e., 100 percent of the proposed METTS work) received a significant strength for their past performance. IPC, as the prime contractor, received excellent performance ratings per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Award Fee subcontract that required phase-in and was highly relevant in size, type and scope with technical requirements including materials testing, structural test facility maintenance and repair, electrical/mechanical fabrication and assembly, hazardous materials operations, test scheduling, calibration, provision of technicians for test support, and the use of alternate work schedules to meet fluctuations in testing. In addition, IPC's subcontractor received excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys for technical and management performance on a Cost Plus Award Fee subcontract that was highly relevant in size, type, and scope for management of a technician workforce, support of testing at MSFC, maintenance of certifications, performance of mechanical/electrical fabrication and assembly, materials testing, oxygen compatibility testing, tool crib operations, calibration oversight, and vacuum chamber maintenance.

In contrast, CNIAV's subcontractor (i.e., comprising one-third of the proposed Mission Services team) received the only two significant strengths in Past Performance for the Offeror. The subcontractor received excellent to excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys on a Cost Plus Incentive Fee contract of high relevance in size, type, and scope with technical relevance in structural test support, mechanical fabrication and assembly work, thermal vacuum and wind tunnel testing, and CAD operations. In addition, the subcontractor received excellent to excellent plus performance ratings per their customer surveys on a MSFC Cost Plus Incentive Fee contract of high relevance in size, type, and scope with a 5.35 percent cost under run; the areas of technical relevance include electrical/mechanical fabrication and assembly work under MSFC quality processes. We noted that these two significant strengths are tempered in importance based upon the proposed percentage of the work for this subcontractor; the subcontractor is proposed to perform 23 percent of the overall Mission Services portion of the METTS effort. Unlike IPC, CNIAV as the prime contractor received only a strength because its past performance was moderately relevant to the METTS effort.

Following discussions, both Offerors retained at least two Past Performance weaknesses; however, CNIAV and IPC mitigated the severity of these weaknesses by presentation of additional information. I probed the SEB, and I am very comfortable that these remaining weaknesses will not affect this procurement. From this information noted above, I concluded that IPC demonstrated an advantage over CNIAV in the Past Performance factor.

After polling all of my advisors and obtaining their inputs, I concluded that Info Pro Corporation provided the best value selection for the Government based on their clear advantage in the Cost factor coupled with their advantage in the Past Performance factor.

The slight advantage in numerical score (i.e., approximately 3.9 percent) gained by CNI/V for the overall Mission Suitability factor did not offset the 10 percent Cost advantage and difference in Past Performance adjectival ratings for IPC. Consequently, I select Info Pro Corporation for award of the Marshall Engineering Technicians and Trade Support Services contract.

/s/ Original Signed by David A. King

02/12/2008

David A. King
Source Selection Authority

Date