

**SOURCE SELECTION STATEMENT FOR THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND OPERATIONS (ECO) CONTRACT  
AT THE WHITE SANDS TEST FACILITY (WSTF)**

On March 1, 2013, I, along with other key officials of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Johnson Space Center (JSC) and White Sands Test Facility (WSTF), met with the members of the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) appointed to evaluate proposals for the WSTF Environmental Compliance and Operations (ECO) Solicitation, NNN10336475R. The ECO Contract is to be awarded as a Cost-Plus-Fixed-Fee Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Contract with Cost Reimbursable and Fixed Price Task Orders. The basic period of performance for this acquisition is 2 years, from June 1, 2013, through May 31, 2015. There are three 1-year options. The IDIQ minimum base contract value is \$100,000 and the Not-To-Exceed (NTE) contract value is \$80 million. This acquisition is a follow-on contract to the WSTF ECO Bridge Contract and is a competitive small business set-aside contract.

NASA conducted this procurement as a full and open competition in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 15, Contracting by Negotiation, under North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code 562910, Remediation Services - Environmental with a size standard of 500 employees, and FAR Subpart 19.5, Set-Asides for Small Business. This procurement provides for NASA requirements for services to maintain site-wide multi-media environmental compliance, manage the large-scale groundwater monitoring program, and successfully initiate and complete environmental clean-up projects (restoration) at WSTF.

**I. Procurement History**

In accordance with FAR Subpart 5.2, Synopses of Proposed Contract Actions, this proposed contract action was synopsisized on April 9, 2010, at the FedBizOps website and thereafter placed on the NASA Acquisition Internet Service business opportunities website. A draft Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued on May 21, 2010 and a pre-proposal conference and facility tour were conducted June 15-17, 2010. On July 27, 2010, the final RFP was posted on the Internet.

Amendment 001 to the RFP was posted on August 3, 2010, to post answers to the questions received in response to the solicitation and to update Section J-15, "U.S. Department of Labor Wage Determination and Collective Bargaining Economic Terms", and Section J-16, "Organizational Conflict of Interest Plan".

Amendment 002 to the RFP was posted on August 17, 2010, to post answers to the questions received in response to the solicitation and to provide revisions and replacement pages to the RFP.

Amendment 003 to the RFP was posted on August 26, 2010, to update Section H.13, "Contractor Purchasing" and a cost template, Attachment L-5, "Other Templates" and to post answers to the questions received in response to the solicitation.

Amendment 004 to the RFP was posted on September 3, 2010, to change the proposal due date

from September 13, 2010 to September 16, 2010 and to update Section L accordingly.

NASA received proposals from the following six companies.

Earth Resources Technology, Inc.  
Enercon-Cornerstone Government Services, LLC  
Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc. (Navarro)  
North Wind, Inc. (North Wind)  
SpecPro, Inc.  
Zia Engineering and Environmental consultants, LLC (Zia)

On February 28, 2011, the ECO contract was awarded to Navarro and was subsequently protested. On June 9, 2011, Amendment 005 to the RFP was issued to extend the “Offer Acceptance Period” under Section L.16 and under Block 12 of the Standard Form 33 for an additional 90 calendar days beyond the original offer acceptance period of 240 days due to the protests.

On November 4, 2011, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) sustained the protests and recommended NASA take corrective actions. On January 20, 2012, NASA provided the GAO a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that included assigning a new SEB and Source Selection Authority (SSA). The NASA CAP also stated that an amendment would be issued to the existing RFP to revise the RFP, as required, and to obtain revised proposals only from those Offerors that had not been eliminated from the competition (in accordance with FAR Subpart 15.206(c), Amending the solicitation, and FAR Subpart 15.507, Protests against award).

The new SEB released Amendment 006 to the RFP on June 26, 2012. Amendment 006 modified the RFP to minimize redundancy, clarify requirements, update information, and organize the information requested more efficiently. An Amendment 006 Pre-Proposal WebEx was conducted on July 3, 2012. The original six companies were deemed to have submitted timely proposals and were afforded the opportunity to submit revised proposals in accordance with Amendment 006 of the RFP.

Amendment 007 to the RFP was posted on July 16, 2012, to post answers to the questions received in response to the solicitation and to provide revisions and replacement pages to the RFP.

Amendment 008 to the RFP was posted on July 19, 2012, to post answers to the questions received in response to the solicitation and to update Section H.13, “Contractor Purchasing”.

On July 23, 2013, Earth Resources Technology, Inc., filed an agency level protest. This offeror alleged defects in Amendment 006.

On July 25, 2013, North Wind filed a bid protest before the GAO, alleging that NASA failed to meaningfully investigate an alleged unequal access to information organizational conflict of interest.

Amendment 009 to the RFP was posted on July 31, 2012, to change the proposal due date from August 3, 2012 to August 10, 2012 and to update Section L accordingly, and to clarify the Model Contract “Offeror Fill-Ins” and the IDIQ Summary Cost Template worksheet in Attachment L-4, IDIQ Pricing Templates.

Amendment 010 to the RFP was posted on August 3, 2012, to clarify information provided in Amendment 009 regarding the IDIQ Summary Cost Template worksheet.

On August 15, 2012, NASA issued a response to the Agency Level Protest, denying Earth Resource Technology’s request. On August 27, 2012, Earth Resource Technology, filed a bid protest with the GAO.

Amendment 011 to the RFP was posted on August 31, 2012, to change the Contracting Officer for the ECO solicitation and to update contact information in the RFP.

On September 19, 2012, the GAO dismissed Earth Resource Technology, Inc.’s bid protest as untimely.

On November 5, 2012, the GAO dismissed North Wind’s bid protest, finding that NASA conducted a thorough investigation of the alleged organizational conflict of interest. The GAO upheld the Agency determination that there was no unequal access to information organizational conflict of interest.

Amendment 012 to the RFP was issued on December 5, 2012 to Offerors within the competitive range. Amendment 012 provided revisions and replacement pages to the RFP including updating the phase-in period and the contract years for the Base and Option Periods and revising the triple asterisk note (\*\*\*) on page L-14, Section L.19.2, “Proposal Arrangement, Page Limitations, Copies, And Due Dates”, to clarify that official transcripts are required to be submitted in order to meet the Degree Verification requirement for each degree.

The RFP divided the proposal into five volumes with separate due dates. NASA requested Volume II, related to past performance, on July 20, 2012. Volume I, related to Mission Suitability, Volume III, related to Cost/Price, Volume IV, related to Other Data, and Volume V, related to the Model Contract, were all due on August 10, 2012. NASA received timely proposals from the following three Offerors.

Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc. (Navarro)  
North Wind, Inc. (North Wind)  
Zia Engineering and Environmental consultants, LLC (Zia)

## **II. Evaluation Procedures**

The SEB conducted the evaluation of the proposals submitted in response to Amendment 006 in accordance with the RFP, FAR Part 15, Contracting by Negotiation, and NASA FAR

Supplement (NFS) Part 1815, Contracting by Negotiation. The RFP delineated three primary evaluation factors – Mission Suitability, Past Performance, and Cost/Price. Of the evaluation factors identified in the RFP, Mission Suitability is more important than Past Performance and Cost/Price when combined. Past Performance is more important than Cost/Price. And Mission Suitability and Past Performance, when combined, are significantly more important than Cost/Price. Each proposal received a Mission Suitability score based on the following subfactors and associated numerical weights.

Subfactor 1 – Technical Approach (TA)	450
Subfactor 2 – Management Approach (MA)	400
Subfactor 3 – Safety and Health (SH)	<u>150</u>
Total	1000

The SEB evaluated and rated Mission Suitability using the following adjectival ratings for the subfactors: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor.

Since Past Performance is a significant predictor of likely performance under the proposed contract, the SEB evaluated the Past Performance of each Offeror. The overall rating for Past Performance was related to the relevancy and quality of performance on referenced contracts provided by the Offeror. The SEB based its evaluation on information submitted by the Offeror, on the Past Performance Questionnaires, and on communications with listed references, as well as on any other information obtained independently by the SEB. The SEB evaluated and rated Past Performance using the following scale: Very High Level of Confidence, High Level of Confidence, Moderate Level of Confidence, Low Level of Confidence, Very Low Level of Confidence, and Neutral.

To ensure that the final negotiated prices are fair and reasonable, the SEB performed price and cost analysis in accordance with Section M.5.3, “Factor 3 - Cost/Price Proposal Evaluation” of the ECO Solicitation.

### **III. Evaluation of Initial Proposals**

The SEB performed a preliminary review of each proposal in accordance with NFS Subpart 1815.305-70, Identification of unacceptable proposals, and determined that none of the three proposals were considered “unacceptable”. The SEB then performed a thorough evaluation of the proposals. The results of the initial proposal evaluations were presented to me, the Source Selection Authority (SSA), on November 30, 2012, and are summarized below:

#### **Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc.**

**Under the Mission Suitability Factor**, Navarro received four significant strengths, three strengths, four weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses across the three subfactors.

Under the Technical Approach Subfactor, Navarro received an adjectival rating of “very good”. Navarro received one significant strength, one strength, three weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Management Approach Subfactor, Navarro received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. Navarro received two significant strengths, two strengths, one weakness, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Safety and Health Subfactor, Navarro received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. Navarro received one significant strength, zero strengths, zero weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

**Under the Past Performance Factor**, Navarro received a “Very High Confidence” rating. This was based on its outstanding safety record and review of its submitted projects for review. Of the projects attributed to Navarro, one “very relevant” and two “relevant” contracts were evaluated as “excellent” and the third “relevant” contract was evaluated as mostly “very good” to some “excellent.” The two “very relevant” submissions for evaluation of the Navarro proposed Program Manager showed “excellent” and “very good” to mostly “excellent” ratings.

**Under the Cost/Price Factor**, Navarro’s proposed costs were adjusted because Navarro did not fully support its proposed labor resources and did not demonstrate that the proposed non-labor resources addressed the scope of the given task orders.

#### **North Wind, Inc.**

**Under the Mission Suitability Factor**, North Wind received three significant strengths, six strengths, five weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses across the three subfactors.

Under the Technical Approach Subfactor, North Wind received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. North Wind received one significant strength, one strength, one weakness, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Management Approach Subfactor, North Wind received an adjectival rating of “very good”. North Wind received one significant strength, five strengths, three weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Safety and Health Subfactor, North Wind received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. North Wind received one significant strength, zero strengths, one weakness, and zero significant weaknesses.

**Under the Past Performance Factor**, North Wind received a “Very High Confidence” rating. This was based on its safety record and review of its submitted projects for review. Of the projects attributed to North Wind, two “very relevant” contracts were rated as “very good” to some “excellent.” One “relevant” contract was evaluated as “excellent” and one “relevant” contract was evaluated as “very good” to mostly “excellent.” The “very relevant” submission for evaluation of the North Wind proposed Program Manager showed “very good” to some “excellent” ratings.

**Under the Cost/Price Factor**, North Wind’s proposed costs were adjusted because North Wind did not apply escalation to Union Personnel in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

### **Zia Engineering and Environmental consultants, LLC**

**Under the Mission Suitability Factor**, Zia received one significant strength, seven strengths, six weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses across the three subfactors.

Under the Technical Approach Subfactor, Zia received an adjectival rating of “good”. Zia received zero significant strengths, one strength, two weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Management Approach Subfactor, Zia received an adjectival rating of “very good”. Zia received one significant strength, five strengths, three weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Safety and Health Subfactor, Zia received an adjectival rating of “good”. Zia received zero significant strength, one strength, one weakness, and zero significant weaknesses.

**Under the Past Performance Factor**, Zia received a “High Confidence” rating based on its very good safety performance, its “excellent” ratings for the “very relevant” contract and its “very good” to “excellent” ratings for the “relevant” contracts. Also applicable to the rating is Zia’s proposed subcontractor’s “very relevant” and “relevant” contracts. Ratings of “excellent” ratings were received for the proposed subcontractor’s performance on the contract. Also, Zia presented no information indicating its experience performing cost reimbursable (CR) type contracts. All of these factors resulted in Zia’s “High Confidence” rating.

**Under the Cost/Price Factor**, Zia’s proposed costs were adjusted due to errors identified in its cost volume.

Based on these findings from the SEB, I determined that award on proposals submitted in accordance with Amendment 006 was not appropriate, and I concurred on the establishment of a competitive range of the most highly rated proposals. The Offerors determined to be within the competitive range included Navarro and North Wind. Zia was notified that its proposal was not one of the most highly rated proposals and its proposal was outside of the competitive range.

With the Zia’s lower Mission Suitability points and “High Confidence” rating in past performance, I concurred with the Contracting Officer’s Determination that Zia’s proposal was not competitive and did not place them as one of the most highly rated proposals in accordance with FAR 15.306(c). Specifically, Zia did not have a significant strength in the Technical or Safety & Health Subfactors, which are respectively allocated 450 and 150 points of the 1,000 available Mission Suitability points. It was highly unlikely that Zia would end up with a significant strength in either of these categories after discussions and the evaluation of the Final Proposal Revision. As a significant strength is required to be in the “very good” or “excellent”

range for a Mission Suitability Subfactor, it was highly improbable that Zia could overtake the Mission Suitability scores of North Wind or Navarro. This reasoning, coupled with Zia's "High Confidence" Past Performance rating, which was lower than the remaining offerors' Past Performance ratings, led me to concur with the Contracting Officer in excluding Zia from the competitive range. Zia was notified by letter on December 5, 2012. Consequently, I authorized the SEB to proceed with discussions leading to the submission of Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs).

#### **IV. Discussions and Evaluation of Final Proposal Revisions**

Navarro and North Wind were informed of their inclusion in the competitive range via letters dated December 5, 2012. Discussions were held with both Offerors on December 18, 2012 and concluded on January 25, 2013 in an effort to maximize the government's ability to obtain the best value. FPRs were received on January 31, 2013. The results of the final evaluation were presented to me on March 1, 2013, and are summarized below.

##### **Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc.**

**Under the Mission Suitability Factor**, three weaknesses were adequately addressed in the FPR. A portion of one weakness remained. Navarro received five significant strengths (which included one strength that was upgraded to a significant strength), two strengths, one weakness, and zero significant weaknesses across the three subfactors.

Under the Technical Approach Subfactor, Navarro received a final adjectival rating of "excellent". Navarro received two significant strength, zero strengths, one weakness, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Management Approach Subfactor, Navarro received an adjectival rating of "excellent". Navarro received two significant strengths, two strengths, zero weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Safety and Health Subfactor, Navarro received an adjectival rating of "excellent". Navarro received one significant strength, zero strengths, zero weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

**Under the Past Performance Factor**, Navarro's "Very High Confidence" rating remained the same and did not change as a result of the FPR.

**Under the Cost/Price Factor**, Navarro's proposed costs were adjusted because Navarro did not fully demonstrate that the proposed non-labor resources addressed the scope of Task Order 2.

##### **North Wind, Inc.**

**Under the Mission Suitability Factor**, all of the weaknesses were adequately addressed in the FPR. North Wind received three significant strengths, six strengths, zero weaknesses, and zero

significant weaknesses across the three subfactors.

Under the Technical Approach Subfactor, North Wind received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. North Wind received one significant strength, one strength, zero weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Management Approach Subfactor, North Wind received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. North Wind received one significant strength, five strengths, zero weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

Under the Safety and Health Subfactor, North Wind received an adjectival rating of “excellent”. North Wind received one significant strength, zero strengths, zero weaknesses, and zero significant weaknesses.

**Under the Past Performance Factor**, North Wind’s “Very High Confidence” rating remained the same and did not change as a result of the FPR.

**Under the Cost/Price Factor**, North Wind’s proposed costs were adjusted slightly upward. The upward adjustment resulted from the direct labor incumbency assumptions of paying current incumbent direct labor rates proposed by North Wind.

### **V. Decision**

On March 1, 2013, I presided over the SEB presentation of their evaluation findings and engaged the SEB in a detailed discussion of the findings. I was satisfied with the level of detail presented and the responses to the vigorous questioning of the SEB by me and my advisors. I fully considered the findings the SEB presented to me. I commended the SEB on their comprehensive evaluation of the two proposals. I requested and received the opinions of the advisors present, and asked for their comments, objections, or concerns with the materials presented to us. Following this discussion, I made a comparative assessment of the proposals based upon the evaluation factors in the solicitation – Mission Suitability, Past Performance, and Cost/Price.

I first considered the two proposals under the Mission Suitability factor. In comparing qualitatively the relative Mission Suitability factor strengths and weaknesses of the two proposals, both proposals attained adjectival ratings of “excellent” in the Technical, Management, and Safety & Health subfactors. However, there were distinguishing characteristics between these proposals. I considered how each subfactor score was built from detailed SEB findings that articulated the distinguishing differences between the two proposals. It was here that point and adjectival difference signaled to me that discriminators between the proposals likely existed.

I noted that although both proposals set forth a sound Technical Approach that would present a high likelihood of successful performance of the work under the contract, there were measurable qualitative differences between the two proposals in the Technical Approach subfactor.

I was particularly impressed with the nature of Navarro's two significant strengths. Navarro proposed specific innovative approaches that are likely to improve the WSTF Environmental Restoration Program and offered unique concepts for dealing with existing environmental issues. Navarro's proposal expressed an understanding of the requirement for routine backwashing in order to prevent clogging of the injection well for the Plume Front Treatment System. Navarro proposed a potential adjustment, along with other mitigation strategies, that increases the likelihood that the injection well will perform at a higher capacity and allow for more effective treatment of the contaminated groundwater. Navarro also proposed innovative use of information technology in the field to reduce duplication of field data and increase reporting accuracy. I was likewise impressed with Navarro's detailed mitigation strategies to counter risks associated with the Environmental Compliance Program. Navarro's plan regarding proposed regulatory changes, and its intent to implement best practices and lessons learned, will increase the likelihood that work will proactively address changes in applicable regulations. I was also influenced by Navarro's proposal to create a database that may identify possible root causes of spills and thus increase the possibility that future spills could be avoided. I value such innovations that will keep WSTF ahead of potential problems, as this mitigates government risk and increases the likelihood of cost savings. While I generally accept the findings of the SEB as they were presented to me, I place less emphasis on the Technical Approach weakness given to Navarro. The SEB finding regarding the non-labor resource allocation reflects a cost issue that the SEB appropriately addressed in the probable cost findings, and does not represent a significant technical risk. The resource allocation would be corrected during contract administration as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation is in accordance with an approved Investigation Work Plan and thus presents little risk to contract performance. My review of the findings credits more of an advantage in the Navarro Technical Approach than reflected in the SEB's numerical score.

I was impressed with the significant strength attributed to North Wind's Technical Approach. I feel that the proposed approach for communicating with regulators will increase the likelihood of cost savings through reduced numbers of sampling locations. I fully concur with that SEB that North Wind demonstrated a thorough understanding of Remediation Task Order 2. North Wind also presented a well organized approach to Environmental Compliance Task Order 3. I was influenced by the strong understanding of Evaporation Tank Unit closure requirements. I also appreciated the community outreach program for recycling and North Wind's "Green Team" initiatives.

While both proposals present a solid Management Approach, there were measurable quantitative and qualitative differences between the two proposals in this subfactor.

Navarro presented a particularly strong Program Manager with an extensive work history and an impressive educational background that aligns with the type of work the awardee will do under this contract. The proposed Program Manager has thirty years of environmental remediation and compliance experience, which includes over twenty years of management experience. This work history includes the management of up to 140 employees and the ownership of a remediation company. Furthermore, the proposed Program Manager is a registered Professional Engineer in two states and holds a BS and MS degree in Civil Engineering, as well as a BS in Geology. This relevant and extensive history brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, which I feel

increases the potential of efficient contract management. Navarro's Management Approach also proposes an effective communications plan, a highly developed project management process, and specific benchmarking goals to reduce the generation of contaminated debris in the machine shop.

I was impressed with North Wind's effective local autonomy in contract management, its resources for corporate reach back, its employee rewards program, its approach to incorporate the use of new information technology methods for waste accumulation and tracking, and its master schedule. North Wind's proposed Program Manager has twenty years of technical experience in environmental remediation and compliance, which includes twelve years of management experience. The proposed Program Manager's work history includes the management of over 40 employees. The educational credentials for this individual meet the requirements set forth in the RFP. While the work and educational history of the North Wind proposed Program Manager provide reassurance that the contract would be effectively managed, I do not find these credentials as impressive and compelling as those presented by Navarro's proposed Program Manager.

While both proposals present a solid Health and Safety Approach, there were differences that distinguish the two proposals in this subfactor.

I was impressed with the very mature Safety and Health Plan presented by Navarro as it demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements. I was influenced by the proposed plans to manage work and identify hazards. I feel that the Navarro proposal to generate lessons learned and disseminate such information to the greater WSTF community is a benefit that will reduce risk.

I was impressed with the North Wind Safety and Health Plan as it proposes a full-time Engineer as the Safety Representative to assist with routine safety activities. I appreciated the proposal's comprehensive set of core training requirements and felt the Plan demonstrated an understanding of the WSTF safety processes.

Overall, when reviewing the Mission Suitability evaluations, I concur with the SEB findings that Navarro scored higher than North Wind in the Management and Safety & Health subfactors. However, I do not fully concur with the point spread differential between North Wind and Navarro on the Technical Approach subfactor. I feel that the Navarro weakness received too much emphasis in the SEB analysis as this non-labor resource allocation simply created a cost impact that was fully adjusted in probable cost findings and that the issue represented a minimal technical risk to the government, as specific contract work would be in accordance with the approved Investigation Work Plan. Therefore, I would have scored Navarro higher on the Technical Approach subfactor. This is reflected in my giving the qualitative edge to Navarro in Technical Approach.

Turning to Past Performance evaluations, I considered that the SEB rated both offerors as having a "Very High Confidence" level. Both Navarro and North Wind have a suitable complement of past performance that reflects work of relevant size, complexity, and scope. However, I found a measurable difference in performance. Navarro had one "very relevant" and two "relevant"

contracts that were evaluated as “excellent,” and a third “relevant” contract being evaluated as mostly “very good” to some “excellent.” When reviewing past performance submitted for the proposed Program Manager, Navarro had one “very relevant” contract with all “excellent” performance indicators and one “very relevant” contract showing “very good” with mostly “excellent” ratings. In reviewing North Wind’s past performance, I noted that North Wind had two “very relevant” contracts that were evaluated as mostly “very good” to some “excellent.” North Wind also had one “relevant” contract evaluated as “very good” to mostly “excellent.” While North Wind had another “relevant” contract evaluated as “excellent” in every area, I note that this time and materials contract was valued at only \$4.5 million and represented a much smaller effort than the work required on the WSTF ECO contract. When considering the past performance submitted on behalf of North Wind’s proposed Program Manager, I find mostly “very good” to some “excellent” feedback.

I find it influential that with regard to the “very relevant” contracts for the two companies, Navarro obtained “excellent” ratings and North Wind obtained mostly “very good” to some “excellent” ratings. In addition, evaluations of the proposed Program Managers showed higher ratings for Navarro. While the overall results clearly establish a laudatory reputation for both companies’ past performance, I find that Navarro has a slightly stronger past performance. Accordingly, notwithstanding the fact that the SEB evaluated both as overall “very high” confidences without further differentiation, my relative confidence in Navarro’s past performance is slightly higher than in North Wind’s.

In looking at the Cost/Price factor, Navarro had a lower probable cost in contrast to North Wind. The delta represents a difference of several percentage points, which I find material and significant.

As provided for in the RFP, the Government will award a contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible offeror whose proposal represents the best value to the Government. The provisions of the RFP dictated my approach to making the necessary trade-off between the proposals. In evaluating the relative importance of the evaluation factors: Mission Suitability is more important than Past Performance and Cost/Price combined; Past Performance is more important than Cost/Price; and Mission Suitability and Past Performance, when combined, are significantly more important than Cost/Price.

In Mission Suitability, the SEB score separated the two offeror’s proposals by only 4 out of 1000 points, a difference that I do not find significant or meaningful. I concur with the SEB findings that indicate Navarro’s proposal scored higher in the areas of Management Approach and Health & Safety Approach. Furthermore, I find that the SEB gave undue weight in its assignment of points to the Technical Approach weakness identified in the Navarro proposal. As I observed qualitative, beneficial features of the Navarro proposal, I do not feel that the Navarro Technical Approach subfactor score was an appropriate reflection of the merits of Navarro’s proposal. While I decline to quantify the specific point adjustment that I would have made, it would clearly have resulted in an upward adjustment of more than four points. This analysis is further supported by the fact that Navarro’s Technical Approach garnered two significant strengths and the aforementioned weakness, while North Wind’s Technical Approach garnered only one significant strength and one strength. Upon review of the SEB findings, I find that Navarro’s

two significant strengths and one minor weakness should not have resulted in a score that is 18-points lower than the North Wind proposal with its one significant strength and one strength. In assessing Mission Suitability, I find Navarro to have a slight edge over the North Wind proposal in each of the subfactors, and overall as well. The measure of this advantage was not as mechanical as weighing a weakness or counting the significant strengths, but I looked at the importance of innovative approaches that serve to reduce risk and potentially increase cost savings, the significance of the Program Manager's role in the successful administration of a contract, and the overall value to the government.

In Past Performance, I noted that Navarro had a slight advantage over North Wind based on its past performance experience evaluations. Finally, I noted that Navarro was slightly lower than North Wind in terms of the probable Cost/Price factor.

Both Offerors submitted very sound proposals, and I do not doubt that either of them would do a capable job in performing the ECO contract. Facially, the competition resulted in exemplary offerings in all three of the evaluation factors. However, in conducting my in-depth review of all the findings, I am confident that there are true discriminators, as discussed above, which give Navarro the advantage across the board in Mission Suitability, Past Performance, and Cost/Price.

Based on my assessment of both excellent proposals in accordance with the specified evaluation criteria, it is my decision that the Navarro proposal represents a slightly superior technical approach, and a measurably better past performance, with the lower level of risk that experience difference represents. In addition, Navarro also presents a measurable advantage in Cost/Price. My decision is that the proposal submitted by Navarro represents the best value to the Government to fulfill the needs for the WSTF ECO contract.

I, therefore, select Navarro for award.



Melanie Saunders  
Source Selection Authority



Date