

**SELECTION STATEMENT
FOR
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ENGINEERING
& TECHNOLOGY SERVICES II
NNG09269474R**

On June 29, 2010, I along with senior officials from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) met with members of the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) to hear their findings based on the evaluation of proposals for the Multi-Disciplinary Engineering & Technology Services II (METS II) contract.

PROCUREMENT DESCRIPTION

This requirement was issued as a small disadvantaged business competitive procurement for continued METS services to be performed at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. Under this effort the METS II contractor will provide on-site/off-site/manufacturing site multidisciplinary engineering services, pursuant to task orders issued by the Contracting Officer to perform services in all aspects of mission and instrument development and implementation for components, subsystems, systems, science instruments, observatories, launch, ground system, spacecraft, and suborbital craft (e.g., aircraft, sounding rockets, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), balloons), including attached shuttle or Space Station, payloads, free-flying spacecraft, suborbital craft payloads, and Space Station payloads as well as ground support equipment, simulators, non-flight models, prototypes and flight hardware; candidate, feasibility, and systems definition studies; project management; systems engineering; analysis; preliminary design; detailed design; fabrication; assembly; integration; test and verification; test instrumentation; data systems management; launch and post-launch operations; research and technology unique to system development; documentation; maintenance; sustaining engineering; configuration management; mission assurance; architectural trades, performance, cost, risk assessment, and systems safety.

These services shall include the personnel, facilities, and materials (unless otherwise provided by the Government) to accomplish the tasks. In addition, security clearances may be required for some tasks ranging from Secret to Top Secret and Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI), specifically in the rf systems discipline.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The Request for Proposals (RFP) defined the evaluation factors as Mission Suitability, Cost/Price and Past Performance. The RFP specified the relative order of importance of the evaluation factors as follows:

"The Cost Factor is significantly less important than the combined importance of the Mission Suitability Factor and the Past Performance Factor. As individual factors, the

Cost Factor is less important than the Mission Suitability factor but more important than the Past Performance Factor."

The RFP established that only the Mission Suitability factor would be point scored in the evaluation process. The Mission Suitability factor consisted of the following four sub-factors with assigned points as indicated:

SUB-FACTOR		POINTS
A	Understanding the Requirement of the Statement of Work	250
B	Technical Approach to Representative Task Orders	350
C	Management Plan	350
D	Safety & Health	50
TOTAL		1000

Prior to the issuance of the RFP, the SEB developed detailed evaluation criteria and the numerical scoring system for Mission Suitability as delineated above. In explaining the detailed evaluation procedures, the RFP described the evaluation factor and subfactors, provided the Mission Suitability numerical scoring scheme, and specified the criteria to be used in the evaluation.

Regarding the Cost/Price Factor, the RFP stated that the proposed cost/price evaluation would be conducted in accordance with FAR 15.305(a) (1) and NFS 1815.305(a) (1)(B). Offerors were referred to FAR 2.101(b) for a definition of "cost realism" and to FAR 15.404-1(d) for a discussion of "cost realism analysis" and "probable cost". The Government contract non-management direct labor and the Offeror administrative costs proposed in Exhibits 1A and 1B (Government Pricing Model) were assessed for cost reasonableness and cost realism. Upward or downward adjustments were made to the proposed cost as represented in the Government Pricing Model to determine a probable cost as a result of the assessment of cost realism. The probable cost was then assigned a confidence rating of "High", "Moderate" or "Low".

The Past Performance evaluation was conducted in accordance with FAR 15.305(a)(2) and NFS 1815.305(a)(2). Each offeror, including 8(a) Joint Venture Partners and significant subcontractor(s) (defined as any subcontract that is likely to be the lower of 5% or more of the Government Pricing Model or 10% of the RTO proposed value), was evaluated based on recent contracts or subcontracts that were similar in size, content, and/or complexity. In evaluating Past Performance, the SEB relied on telephone and written responses received on recent Past Performance questionnaires, the NASA Past Performance and the government-wide Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) databases, in addition to the narrative on relevant past/current contracts provided by the offerors. The Past Performance factor was not point scored, but was assigned an adjectival rating of "Very High Level of Confidence", "High Level of Confidence", "Moderate Level of Confidence", "Low Level of Confidence", or "Very Low Level of Confidence".

EVALUATION PROCESS

NASA's Source Selection authority for this procurement appointed the SEB which included a team of technical and business members and consultants from appropriate disciplines, to assist in proposal evaluation. The SEB developed a set of detailed criteria for evaluation and incorporated it into the RFP. NASA issued the RFP on September 18, 2009. Amendments were issued on September 29, 2009, and October 8, 2009 to change the font size to be used in diagrams, charts, tables, artwork, and photographs; re-define the term "significant subcontract"; clarify several cost exhibit requirements; clarify instructions for developing non-management direct labor categories; clarify assumptions for Representative Task Orders 3 and 5; and extend the proposal submission date by 1 week.

The following companies submitted initial proposals by the October 26, 2009 due date:

AASKI, Inc., Ocean, New Jersey¹
ASRC Management Services, Greenbelt, MD
Sigma Space Partners, Greenbelt, MD
(An 8(a) Joint Venture between Sigma Space Corporation and SGT, Inc.)
Vantage Engineering & Technology Services, Greenbelt, MD
(An 8(a) Joint Venture between Vantage Systems, Inc. and Ares Corporation)

Following discussions, the Government issued a third Amendment to the RFP on May 4, 2010, to all offerors in the competitive range, providing instructions for submitting Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs).

All offerors in the competitive range submitted FPRs by the due date of May 13, 2010, including:

ASRC Management Services, Greenbelt, MD
Sigma Space Partners, Greenbelt, MD
Vantage Engineering & Technology Services, Greenbelt, MD

MISSION SUITABILITY EVALUATION

After scoring each subfactor in accordance with the weights delineated in the RFP, the SEB initially ranked the proposals in the following order for Mission Suitability:

1. ASRC Management Services
2. Vantage Engineering & Technology Services
3. Sigma Space Partners

¹ The proposal submitted by AASKI, Inc., was determined unacceptable. A letter dated November 19, 2009, delineating the weaknesses and deficiencies that led the SEB to make this determination was faxed to the Offeror. No further communications were received from AASKI.

The SEB presented its initial findings to the Source Selection Authority (SSA) on April 1, 2010. At this meeting, the Contracting Officer recommended that a competitive range be established and discussions be held with all Offerors in the competitive range.

With the SSA's concurrence, the Contracting Officer established a competitive range that included all three Offerors and discussions were conducted from April 27 – 29, 2010.

Requests for FPRs were issued on May 4, 2010, and FPRs from all three offerors were received by the due date of May 13, 2010 established in Amendment 3 to the solicitation.

After rescoring each subfactor in accordance with the weights delineated in the RFP, the SEB ranked the FPRs in the following order for Mission Suitability:

1. ASRC Management Services
2. Vantage Engineering & Technology Services
3. Sigma Space Partners

The table below provides the adjectival ratings assigned in each Mission Suitability sub-factor for the three METS II proposals.

Sub-factor Adjectival Ratings			
Sub-factor	ASRC MS	Sigma Space Partners	Vantage
A – SOW	Good	Good	Good
B – RTOs	Very Good	Good	Good
C – Mngt Plan	Excellent	Very Good	Excellent
D- S&H Plan	Good	Good	Good

Numerical scoring was based on the above assigned adjectival ratings, as prescribed in the RFP. The total Mission Suitability score for each offeror is shown below, from the highest to the lowest.

Mission Suitability Scoring	
Offeror	Total Points Awarded
ASRC Management Services	804.5
Vantage Engineering & Technology Services	746.5
Sigma Space Partners	721.5

The substance of the SEB's evaluation of Mission Suitability for the Offeror's FPR is presented below.

ASRC Management Services (ASRC MS)

The ASRC MS proposal received the highest overall Mission Suitability score of 804.5.

Under Sub-factor A, ASRC MS received an adjectival rating of “Good” with no significant strengths, three strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

ASRC MS received one strength for its integration of NASA and GSFC policies and procedures into its technical approach;

A second strength for its demonstrated knowledge of Mission, Instrument, and GN&C systems engineering practices; and

A third strength for its risk management processes which included risk analysis of the Offeror’s capability to fulfill the requirements of the METS II contract that evaluated the consequence and likelihood of each risk and showed reasonable mitigation.

Under Sub-factor B, ASRC MS received an adjectival rating of “Very Good” with one significant strength, three strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

ASRC MS received one significant strength for its comprehensive response to Representative Task Order (RTO) #1, Mission Systems Engineering for Accommodation of New Launch Vehicle, which demonstrated a complete understanding of the inherent design challenges and thorough knowledge of analyses required to successfully complete the RTO. Of particular note was the Offeror’s discussion of the mission critical issue of “darkening” effects due to radiation to the optics and optical films of the coronagraph instrument.

ASRC MS received two strengths for its response to RTO #3, Development of Quad Thruster Modules and Driver Electronics: one strength for demonstrated understanding of the work required to design and fabricate the valve driver box; and the second strength for its demonstrated understanding of the difficulty and necessity of modeling the thermal characteristics of a thruster module.

ASRC MS received a third strength for its response to RTO #5, RF Systems Engineering for Expendable Launch Vehicle Support, which demonstrated insight into field of view issues and bandwidth limitations of first generation TDRS.

Under Sub-factor C, ASRC MS received an adjectival rating of “Excellent” with two significant strengths, three strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

ASRC MS received one significant strength for its capability for flight-system development and fabrication; and

One significant strength for its comprehensive phase-in plan which provided for an efficient transition and focused particular attention on attracting and retaining incumbents.

ASRC MS received one strength for its proposed management tools.

A second strength was received for the Offeror's proposed Corporate Resource Board. This board to be made up of senior executive management will meet on a monthly basis to review performance, identify issues, and evaluate and satisfy additional requirements to improve performance and resolve issues.

ASRC MS received a third strength for its proposed team and robust plan for continuous monitoring and evaluation of subcontractor performance against established baselines and performance metrics.

Under Sub-factor D, ASRC MS received an adjectival rating of "Good" with no significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

ASRC MS received one strength for its plan for identifying, analyzing, reporting and mitigating new or modified emissions that may occur during contract performance.

Vantage Engineering & Technology Services (Vantage)

The Vantage proposal received the second highest overall Mission Suitability score of 746.5.

Under Sub-factor A, Vantage received an adjectival rating of "Good" with no significant strengths, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

Vantage received one strength for its integration of NASA and GSFC policies and procedures into its technical approach;

A second strength for demonstrating a sound understanding of NASA risk management process and NASA Lessons Learned;

A third strength for demonstrating its understanding and application of the Test-As-You-Fly philosophy; and

A fourth strength for proposing to provide a NASA 8739-certified instructor as the manager of the Electronics Prototype Laboratory.

Under Sub-factor B, Vantage received an adjectival rating of "Good" with no significant strengths, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

Vantage received a strength for its comprehensive response to RTO #1, Mission Systems Engineering for Accommodation of New Launch Vehicle, which reflected a sound understanding of the inherent design challenges and knowledge of the type of analyses required to successfully complete the task;

A second strength for its response to RTO #2 which reflected a full understanding of the design challenges and analyses required to successfully complete the task;

A third strength for its approach to the Quad Thruster Module development and system testing in response to RTO #3, Development of Quad Thruster Modules and Driver Electronics; and

A fourth strength for its proposed plan to evaluate the design drivers related to the stated requirements in response to RTO #5, RF Systems Engineering for Expendable Launch Vehicle Support.

Under Sub-factor C, Vantage received an adjectival rating of “Excellent” with two significant strengths, three strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

Vantage received a significant strength for its comprehensive phase-in plan which provided for an efficient transition and focused on attracting and retaining incumbent staff; and

A second significant strength for its comprehensive discussion and application of management tools which clearly described the inter-relationship of the tools and provided a plan to assess the tools required for each job and provide training to the individuals using those tools within 30 days of contract award.

Vantage received a strength for its flight system development and fabrication capabilities;

A second strength for its plan to establish an Innovations and Efficiencies Best Practices Council (IEBP) to bring together top management team members on a quarterly basis to discuss issues related to the METS II contract, focusing on innovations and efficiencies that could be brought into the METS II contract; and

A third strength for its proposed team and robust plan for continuous monitoring and evaluation of subcontractor performance which features monthly performance reviews by Group Leads and a semi-annual formal evaluation to be conducted by the Program Manager covering technical, cost, and schedule performance and a review of safety metrics. Vantage also proposes to establish a mentor/protégé relationship with two of its subcontractors.

Under Sub-factor D, Vantage received an adjectival rating of “Good” with no significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

Vantage received one strength for its proposal to implement a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) and plans to incorporate a similar approach in the proposed Health and Safety Plan.

Sigma Space Partners (SSP)

SSP received the lowest overall Mission Suitability score of 721.5.

Under Sub-factor A, SSP received an adjectival rating of “Good” with no significant strengths, three strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

SSP received one strength for its integration of NASA and GSFC policies and procedures into its technical approach;

A second strength for its demonstrated knowledge of Mission, Instrument, and GN&C systems engineering practices; and

A third strength for its recognition of the criticality of ITAR compliance and proposed full-time staff dedicated to ensuring ITAR compliance on technical activities.

Under Sub-factor B, SSP received an adjectival rating of “Good” with no significant strengths, five strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

SSP received one strength for its response to RTO #1 entitled, “Mission Systems Engineering for Accommodation of New Launch Vehicle”, which reflected a comprehensive understanding of the inherent design challenges and knowledge of analyses required to successfully complete the task;

A second strength for its demonstrated detailed knowledge of mass spectrometers in response to RTO #2 entitled, “Instrument Systems Engineering Support for Mission Concept Review”;

A third strength for leveraging the vendor’s expertise in integration and thruster testing as part of the problem solution response to RTO # 3, Development of Quad Thruster Modules and Driver Electronics;

A fourth strength for its comprehensive understanding of the programmatic and technical issues involved with RTO #4, Post Launch Disposal of an Earth Orbiting Satellite; and

A fifth strength for its comprehensive response to the RF Communication problem presented in RTO #5 entitled, “RF Systems Engineering for Expendable Launch

Vehicle (ELV) Support”, which clearly identified the RF communications issues including ground system issues.

Under Sub-factor C, SSP received an adjectival rating of “Very Good” with one significant strength, two strengths, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

SSP received one significant strength for its comprehensive phase-in plan which provided for an efficient transition and focused on incumbent capture and retention.

SSP received one strength for its proposed integrated set of tools for managing performance; and

A second strength for its flight system development and fabrication capability.

Under Sub-factor D, SSP received an adjectival rating of “Good” with no significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, no weaknesses, and no deficiencies.

SSP received a strength for its plan to implement a Voluntary Personal Protection (VPP) in its Health and Safety.

COST EVALUATION

The offerors’ proposed costs were assessed to determine reasonableness and cost realism. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with FAR 15.305(a)(1) and NFS 1815.305(a)(1)(B). The cost realism analysis was the basis of the determination of the probable cost for each offeror to perform the effort. (FAR 2.101(b) refers to the definition of “cost realism” and FAR 15.404-1(d) refers to a discussion of “cost realism” analysis” and “probable cost”).

In conducting its assessment, the SEB evaluated the extent to which each offeror proposed labor rates using the Government-provided incumbent labor rates for labor categories to be filled by incumbent staff (if proposed). The SEB had the direct and indirect rates verified by DCAA and verified that the proposed indirect rates were correctly applied to the Government Pricing Model. After the SEB’s initial evaluation, calculation anomalies and other probable cost adjustments were conveyed to the Offerors through requests for clarification and discussions. In their FPRs all offerors either corrected or justified all costs for which a probable cost adjustment had been made. The SEB identified several additional minor discrepancies in SSP’s FPR cost proposal which resulted in a minor probable cost adjustment to SSP’s proposed cost. No cost adjustments were made to ASRC MS’ or Vantage’s FPR cost estimates. ASRC MS was evaluated as the lowest probable cost, which was slightly lower than the Vantage probable cost and moderately lower than the SSP probable cost.

Because no significant probable cost adjustments were made to any of the offerors' cost proposals based on FPRs, the SEB assigned a "High" level of confidence to all three cost proposals.

PAST PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

In evaluating Past Performance, the SEB gave all offerors in the competitive range an overall rating of "Very High Level of Confidence". All offerors demonstrated significantly relevant experience in content, complexity and size and received very high levels of confidence ratings from most of their customers.

DECISION

In addition to the presentation materials, I carefully reviewed the SEB's detailed report of its deliberations and findings. I also reviewed the evaluation criteria, which stated that the Cost Factor is significantly less important than the combined importance of the Mission Suitability Factor and the Past Performance Factor. As individual factors, the Cost Factor is less important than Mission Suitability Factor but more important than the Past Performance Factor.

Regarding the cost evaluation, the SEB found the ASRC MS proposal to be slightly lower in probable cost (less than 1%) than the probable cost for the Vantage proposal; and moderately lower (approximately 5%) than the probable cost for the Sigma Space Partners proposal. I find the cost difference between Vantage and ASRC MS to be too small to be a meaningful discriminator in the selection.

Regarding the Mission Suitability evaluation, all offerors received overall adjectival ratings of "Good" for sub-factors A and D and I did not find any significant advantages between the offerors in these subfactors. ASRC MS and Vantage each received adjectival ratings of "Excellent" for sub-factor C. Both ASRC and Vantage responded with Management Plan approaches that were detailed, thorough, and responsive, including multiple significant strengths and no weaknesses. Sigma Space received a Very Good rating for Subfactor C, which included a Management Plan that was not rated quite as strong as the other two offerors. Therefore, one of the primary discriminators between all three offerors was ASRC MS' adjectival rating of "Very Good" for Sub-factor B. In addition to strengths in multiple RTOs and evaluation areas in Subfactor B, ASRC MS also received a Significant Strength for its response to RTO #1. While both other offerors received a strength for their comprehensive understanding of RTO #1 (among other strengths in this Subfactor), ASRC MS received a Significant Strength based on its thorough understanding of the design challenges and detailed analysis associated with the new launch vehicle task (RTO #1). ASRC MS demonstrated a strong understanding of the critical spacecraft and instrument design elements associated with the proposed harsh radiation orbit and included a valuable discussion of the mission critical issue of "darkening" effects due to radiation to the optics and optical films of the coronagraph instrument. This type of discussion, understanding, and detail associated with RTO1, which surpassed the other two offerors, would contribute greatly toward

mission success and was a meaningful discriminator in the overall Mission Suitability evaluation.

I noted that all three offerors received a "Very High Level of Confidence" rating for Past Performance for their significantly relevant experience and high level of performance in the past; therefore, the Past Performance factor provided no meaningful discriminator in the selection decision.

In view of the preceding discussion, I conclude that the ASRC MS proposal presents the best Mission Suitability proposal, and in particular, its proposed solutions to the RTOs provide advantages in comparison to the other offerors. Although not a meaningful discriminator, ASRC MS also offered the lowest proposed and probable cost, while receiving a Very High level of confidence rating in Past Performance. Consequently, I selected ASRC MS for the award of the Multi-disciplinary Engineering and Technology Support II (METS II) contract.



Arthur F. Obenschain
Deputy Center Director



Date