On June 4, 2015, I, along with other senior officials from the Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) met with the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) appointed to evaluate proposals in connection with the Systems Engineering Advanced Services (SEAS) acquisition.

Procurement Description

The purpose of the SEAS Contract is to provide Mission and Instrument Systems Engineering (M&ISE) services to the Mission Engineering & Systems Analysis Division (MESAD) and related Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate (AETD) organizations, for the formulation and implementation of flight and ground systems, and development and validation of new technologies. The contractor shall provide M&ISE services in all aspects of mission and instrument formulation and implementation for systems, science instruments, observatories, launch, ground systems, spacecraft, and suborbital craft (e.g. aircraft, sounding rockets, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), balloons), including services for free-flying spacecraft, suborbital craft payloads, and Space Station payloads. The contractor shall provide on/off-site M&ISE services that include the personnel, facilities, and materials (unless otherwise provided by the Government) to accomplish the task.

The SEAS Request for Proposal (RFP) was released on December 5, 2014. One amendment was issued. Among other things, the amendment provided the following:

- ❑ Amendment 1 revised Section L.14 Mission Suitability Volume Instructions to update instructions in the Management Approach section, revised Section L.15 Cost Volume Instructions to update the instructions, revised Section M.3 Mission Suitability Factor to update the evaluation section of Management Approach, and revised the titles of some of the Exhibits.

The contract is a Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF), Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract with an effective ordering period of 5 years from the effective date of the contract with no options. A separate contractual vehicle for a 45 day phase-in period is anticipated.

This procurement was conducted as an 8(a) Set-Aside under NAICS Code 541712: Research and Development in the Physical Engineering, and Life Sciences. Small business size standard is 500 employees.

Proposals Submitted

On January 12, 2015, NASA received timely proposals from the following four companies:

Aerie Aerospace, LLC (Aerie)
Trident Vantage Systems (TVS)
Alcyon Technical Services (ATS)
Systems Engineering Partners, LLC (SEP)

Evaluation Procedures

The SEB evaluated proposals in accordance with the source selection procedures identified in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) part 15.3 "Source Selection," and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) 1815.3. The Source Evaluation Board procedures at NFS 1815.370, NASA Source Evaluation Boards, were applied.

The RFP listed three evaluation factors, Mission Suitability, Cost, and Past Performance. The RFP specified the relative order of importance of these 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.

Mission Suitability has three Subfactors as follows:

- Subfactor A, Representative Task Order 1
- Subfactor B, Representative Task Order 2
- Subfactor C, Management Approach

The available points for each Subfactor are set forth below:

Subfactor	Points
A - Representative Task Order 1	250
B - Representative Task Order 2	250
C - Management Approach	500
Total Points	**1,000**

The Mission Suitability subfactors and the total Mission Suitability factor were evaluated using the adjectival ratings, definitions and percentile ranges in NFS 1815.305(a)(3)(A). The maximum point value available for each Subfactor was multiplied by the assessed percent for each Subfactor to derive the score for the particular Subfactor.

The proposed costs of the Government Pricing Model and the rates proposed in Attachment B, Direct Labor Rates, Indirect Rates and Award Matrices, were assessed to determine reasonableness and cost realism. The cost evaluation was 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." Both the "proposed and probable cost" reflected the offeror's proposed fee amount. Proposed fee was not adjusted in the probable cost assessment.

Past Performance evaluations were based on FAR Part 15 and were conducted in accordance with provision M.5 of the solicitation. As stated in provision M.5 all past performance references must meet the "recent" and minimum average annual cost/fee expenditures criteria provided in the RFP for both prime contractor references and significant subcontractor references in order to be evaluated. An Offeror's past performance record indicates the relevant quantitative and qualitative aspects of performing services or delivering products similar in size and content to the requirements of this acquisition.

An Offeror's Past Performance was assigned an overall confidence rating that reflects a subjective evaluation of the information contained in the written narrative; past performance evaluation input provided through customer questionnaires; and other references. As set forth and described in Section M.5 of the RFP, the applicable level of confidence ratings were: Very High, High, Moderate, Low, Very Low, and Neutral.

For purposes of past performance, the term "Offeror" refers to a prime contractor and its significant subcontractors. Accordingly, the past performance of significant subcontractor(s) was also evaluated and attributed to the offeror. The past performance of a significant subcontractor was compared to the work proposed to be performed by that subcontractor, and weighted accordingly in assigning the overall past performance adjectival rating to the offeror. The past performance of the prime contractor was weighted more heavily than any significant subcontractor or combination of significant subcontractors in the overall past performance evaluation.

Detailed Results of the Evaluation

As a result of the evaluation process, the Mission Suitability Subcontractor ratings and Total Score are summarized below:

	Ratings/Score by Subfactor			
Offerors	**Subfactor A**	**Subfactor B**	**Subfactor C**	**Total Score**
Aerie	Fair	Fair	Good	501
TVS	Good	Good	Good	581
ATS	Very Good	Excellent	Excellent	923
SEP	Good	Fair	Good	628

Mission Suitability Factor

AERIE AEROSPACE, LLC

Subfactor A: Representative Task Order 1

Aerie received 0 Significant Strengths, 0 Strengths, 0 Weaknesses, 2 Significant Weakness, and 0 Deficiencies, resulting in an adjectival rating of Fair for this Subfactor.

Significant Weakness #1

Aerie's proposed approach to Representative Task Order (RTO) 1 demonstrates a lack of understanding of the objectives and technical problems. Areas the offeror failed to adequately demonstrate understanding include: telescope and science instrument architecture definition, spacecraft and resources definition, technologies and design trade studies for telescope and instrument, and ground operations formulation. The offeror's overall lack of understanding of the objectives and technical issues on RTO 1 demonstrate a significant risk to the Government which appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Significant Weakness #2

Aerie's proposed skill mix and labor hours are inadequate to perform the tasks associated with Representative Task Order (RTO) 1. The offeror's response under subtask 1 fails to include the discipline support that would be required to perform the necessary trade studies. Overall, the offeror fails to demonstrate they understand the required skill mix and hours to accomplish the requirements. The proposed skill mix and labor hours proposed by the offeror appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor B: Representative Task Order 2

Aerie received 0 Significant Strengths, 0 Strengths, 0 Weaknesses, 2 Significant Weaknesses, and 0 Deficiencies, resulting in an adjectival rating of Fair for this Subfactor.

Significant Weakness #1

Aerie Aerospace demonstrates a lack of understanding of the objectives and technical problems under Representative Task Order (RTO) 2. Areas the offeror failed to adequately demonstrate understanding include: mass, power, and software resources; verification of payload mechanical and electrical interfaces; observatory environmental test planning, and the verification matrix. The offeror's overall lack of understanding of the objectives and technical problems on RTO 2 demonstrate a significant risk to the Government which appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Significant Weakness #2

Aerie's proposed skill mix and labor hours are inadequate to perform the tasks associated with this RTO, resulting in the inability to perform the work within the allotted time and budget. Overall, the offeror's proposed manpower skill and level of effort would result in failure to perform this task within cost and schedule, which appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor C: Management Approach

Aerie received 0 Significant Strengths, 6 Strengths, 2 Weaknesses, 0 Significant Weaknesses, and 0 Deficiencies, resulting in an adjectival rating of Good for this Subfactor.

Strength #1

The Offeror's approach to subcontractor management allows them to reduce/eliminate subcontractor pass-through costs, provide a single point of management, and have a common pay and benefit structure for all SEAS employees. This unique strategy benefits the Government by simplifying the resources and manpower that would be required to maintain and manage subcontractor activities and reduces pass-through costs.

Strength #2

Aerie's proposed management structure provides clear and precise lines of communication with GSFC personnel. This approach increases the chance for successful contract performance by creating a relationship with one particular individual, opening up clear lines of communication between the GSFC organization and the offeror's project management team.

Strength #3

Aerie proposes a number of management approaches that would benefit the government by providing the required skill mix during periods of high work volume or special need requirements. By proposing these approaches, the offeror increases the potential for successful contract performance by assuring the availability of individuals with specialized skills above and beyond their normal work force.

Strength #4

In the proposed Total Compensation Plan (TCP), the offeror proposes to provide performance based fixed fee sharing and reimbursable education expenses to their employees, increasing the probability of high employee retention. Aerie's proposed total compensation plan will increase the probability of higher incumbent capture and employee retention. This increases the potential for successful contract performance.

Strength #5

Aerie proposes a real time task order cost insight system to manage multiple tasks and track the costs. This system allows the contractor along with the Government to have real time access to cost information in order to monitor task and subtask expenditures. This approach enhances the potential for successful performance because it provides project managers and task monitors with on-demand access to funds expended.

Strength #6

Aerie proposes an approach to provide technically relevant courses to SEAS and Government personnel over the life of the contract which increases the potential for successful contract performance by providing ongoing and job relevant training to its employees. The offeror's dedication to providing high quality training and reserving seats for Government personnel increases the potential for successful contract performance.

Weakness #1

Aerie proposes that the Quality and Safety Manager (Q&SM) will report directly to the Systems Engineering and Advanced Systems (SEAS) Program Manager. This approach to have the Q&SM report directly to the SEAS PM increases the risk of not complying with quality, safety, health, and environmental policies/regulations as they do not have independent authority and autonomy outside of the SEAS program. This increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Weakness #2

Aerie's proposed Safety and Health Plan fails to include detailed information explaining how they intend to comply with GSFC safety requirements. The offeror's proposed Safety and Health plan presents a risk to the Government that the offeror does not understand the safety and health requirements as defined in the NPR 8715.3, increasing the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

TRIDENT VANTAGE SYSTEMS, LLC

Subfactor A: Representative Task Order 1

TVS received 0 Significant Strengths, 3 Strengths, 0 Weaknesses, 1 Significant Weakness, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Good for this Subfactor.

Strength #1

TVS soundly demonstrates their understanding of the added complexity of an extended Class B mission by identifying driving requirements and the affected subsystems, resulting in the likelihood of successful contract performance.

Strength #2

TVS's response to Subtask 2, Task 11, proposes a sound approach to evaluating whether or not to add the existing Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) Instrument to the Mission. This approach benefits the Government by enabling an early decision to be made and allowing an early start, minimizing the impact to the Program both in cost and schedule which increases the chance for successfully integrating this Instrument into the Observatory.

Strength #3

TVS demonstrates a sound understanding of the overall systems engineering process required to complete the tasks that are part of this RTO. The offeror's proposed approach to accomplishing this

task would result in robust Mission Concept Review and Preliminary Design Review packages, which increases the potential for successful contract performance.

Significant Weakness #1

TVS's manpower approach to accomplishing the work for RTO 1, Subtask 2 is significantly overstated resulting in the potential for serious cost expenditures for the Government. The proposed manpower for this task is extremely overstated resulting in unnecessary expenditures for the task which appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor B: Representative Task Order 2

TVS received 0 Significant Strengths, 0 Strengths, 1 Weakness, 0 Significant Weakness, and 0 deficiencies, resulting in an adjectival rating of Good for this Subfactor.

Weakness #1

TVS's approach to RTO 2 assumes that its systems engineering team will manage, execute, and perform all or most Observatory final implementation and Integration &Test (I&T) activities rather than providing just Science Engineering (SE) support for the process. The excessive staffing proposed, arising from an inaccurate assumption that the SE team plays a leading role in planning, directing and executing the I&T program, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the SE team and increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor C: Management Approach

TVS received 0 Significant Strengths, 4 Strengths, 0 Weakness, 1 Significant Weakness, and 0 deficiencies, resulting in an adjectival rating of Good for this Subfactor.

Strength #1

TVS proposes to utilize an end-to-end business intelligence system (EBIS) that provides on-demand staff resource utilization and a desirable knowledge continuity program that captures critical skills. By providing an on-demand task order management system along with a knowledge continuity program, the offeror provides the government with the ability to review and analyze critical project information in an efficient and effective manner and capture critical knowledge.

Strength #2

TVS proposes to utilize a notable corporate reach back program which includes access to a vast array of aerospace subject matter experts from its teammates and associated subcontractors. By proposing a favorable corporate reach back program, the offer is enhancing the potential for successful contract performance.

Strength #3

TVS proposes a noteworthy approach to managing task order costs. By utilizing the proposed approach, the offeror demonstrates their commitment to cost control, enhancing the potential for successful performance.

Strength #4

TVS proposes a robust phase-in plan that demonstrates their understanding of the necessary steps to ensure a successful transition during the 45-day phase-in period. By proposing a sound phase-in plan, the offeror demonstrates a thorough understanding of the activities necessary to ensure a smooth transition which enhances the potential for successful contract performance.

Significant Weakness #1

TVS's Total Compensation Plan represents a significant weakness which will make it less likely for the offeror to achieve a high level of incumbent capture and retention. The offeror's approach to incumbent salaries and the ambiguity of employer subsidized family coverage for medical benefits make it significantly less likely the offeror will achieve a high incumbent capture rate, resulting in the loss of valuable experience which appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Alcyon Technical Services, LLC (ATS)

Subfactor A: Representative Task Order 1

ATS received 1 Significant Strength, 0 Strengths, 1 Weakness, 0 Significant Weaknesses, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Very Good for this Subfactor.

Significant Strength #1

ATS exhibits exceptional understanding of the NASA Systems Engineering process, as reflected in the level of detail in their response. The offeror provides an excellent list of trades, excellent summary of the issues facing the design of the mission, and provides insightful assumptions. Additionally, the offeror identifies critical issues and challenges associated with the accommodation

of the science instrument and how this will drive the requirements and trades for both the instrument development as well as the spacecraft. The offeror's insightful and thorough understanding of the RTO 1 issues and outstanding knowledge of the NASA systems engineering process greatly enhances the chance of successful contract performance, providing additional value to the Government.

Weakness #1

ATS demonstrates a lack of understanding of the type of staffing to be provided under the SEAS contract during the formulation phase of a project and has made an incorrect assumption that discipline engineering support is to be provided by the Government. This increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor B: Representative Task Order 2

ATS received 1 Significant Strength, 0 Strengths, 1 Weakness, 0 Significant Weaknesses, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Excellent for this Subfactor.

Significant Strength #1

ATS exhibits excellent understanding of implementation phase activities, flow and processes, as indicated by their highly relevant assumptions and detailed knowledge reflected in their responses. Additionally, the offeror's response to environmental testing is exceptionally detailed and demonstrates a very sound technical approach capable of dealing with the challenges associated with integrating many organizations and numbers pieces of equipment while ensuring hardware and personnel safety. The offeror's comprehensive knowledge and insightful grasp of the implementation phase requirements and processes greatly enhances the chance of successful contract execution.

Weakness #1

ATS demonstrates a lack of understanding of the type of staffing support that is to be provided under the SEAS contract during the implementation phase of a project and has made an incorrect assumption that discipline engineering support is to be provided under the SEAS contract during this phase. Excessive staffing increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor C: Management Approach

ATS received 2 Significant Strengths, 2 Strengths, 1 Weakness, 0 Significant Weaknesses, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Excellent for this Subfactor.

Significant Strength #1

ATS proposes an excellent management approach for efficiently and effectively managing the SEAS contract. The offeror's management approach includes the following: a low risk approach to incumbent capture, an on-call pool of subject matter experts for unique/specialty activities, a process to review and manage ideas/improvements, an effective task order management system available to group and task leads, and the Government, and a strong recruiting and referral approach. Also, the offeror does a noteworthy job of identifying and mitigating the proposed top five programmatic risks. The offeror's proposed management approach demonstrates its exceptional knowledge of the SEAS contract requirements. This approach greatly enhances the potential for successful contract performance.

Significant Strength #2

ATS proposes an excellent phase-in plan that demonstrates their understanding of the necessary steps to ensure a successful transition during the 45-day phase-in period. The offeror's phase-in approach follows its AS9100-certified phase-in processes and procedures and includes: a phase-in work breakdown structure, a detailed schedule with key milestones, and metrics tracking and reporting. Additionally, the offeror proposed to complete all phase-in activities early allowing a margin of safety to address any issues that may arise during the transition. By proposing an outstanding phase-in plan, the offeror demonstrates a thorough understanding of the activities necessary to ensure a smooth transition which greatly enhances the potential for successful contract performance.

Strength #1

In ATS's proposed Total Compensation Plan, they plan on providing performance based awards, reimbursable education expenses, and reimbursable professional society fees to their employees, increasing the probability of high employee retention. The offeror's proposed total compensation plan will enhance the probability of higher employee retention and productivity which enhances the potential for successful contract performance.

Strength #2

ATS's approach to staff the Mission Assurance and Safety Manager (MASM), will result in complete and independent autonomy from the program office increasing the chance of successful contract performance.

Weakness #1

ATS failed to provide adequate Position Descriptions (PDs) for their management team, resulting in the inability to fully evaluate whether or not the management team will have the sufficient experience to manage the contract. This increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Systems Engineering Partner, LLC (SEP)

Subfactor A: Representative Task Order 1

SEP received 1 Significant Strength, 0 Strengths, 0 Weaknesses, 1 Significant Weakness, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Good for this Subfactor.

Significant Strength #1

SEP provides a comprehensive and thorough description of their approach to RTO 1, demonstrating an excellent grasp of the requirements. The offeror provides an excellent breakdown of how they would organize the Systems Engineering effort, describing how the different major elements interact and how the choices on each drive aspects of the other elements, and excellent summary of the issues facing the design of the mission, and how these affect the various subsystems. Additionally, the offeror has an excellent grasp of the development of the ground system and the driving requirements. This approach greatly enhances the potential for successful contract performance which provides additional value to the Government.

Significant Weakness #1

SEP's staffing plan fails to provide sufficient support that is critical to accomplishing the task objectives. The offeror's failure to include critical staffing in their staffing plan to accomplish the RTO1 objectives greatly increases the risk of mission failure and appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor B: Representative Task Order 2

SEP received 0 Significant Strengths, 0 Strengths, 1 Weakness, 1 Significant Weakness, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Fair for this Subfactor.

Significant Weakness #1

SEP's staffing plan includes discipline engineering support that is not intended to be provided under the SEAS contract during implementation phase activities. The offeror also fails to provide sufficient information to determine if some of the proposed staffing is adequate. The offeror's failure to understand that only mission and instrument systems engineering support is to be provided for implementation phase activities and their failure to understand that the MSE is part of the offeror systems engineering team which appreciably increases the potential for unsuccessful contract performance.

Weakness #1

SEP fails to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the flight system I&T and verification process. The offeror's failure to adhere to best practices for the order in which environmental tests are conducted and their failure to understand the use and capabilities of the Mass Properties Measurement Facility (MPMF) indicate a lack of understanding of the I&T process and facilities, increasing the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

Subfactor C: Management Approach

SEP received 0 Significant Strengths, 5 Strengths, 0 Weaknesses, 0 Significant Weaknesses, and 0 Deficiencies resulting in an adjectival rating of Good for this Subfactor.

Strength #1

SEP's proposed use of their in-house management system tools to plan, execute, monitor and control, and closeout task orders enhances the potential for successful contract performance. By proposing to utilize these management system tools the offeror increases the potential of successful contract performance by giving the Government access to near real time task status.

Strength #2

SEP's well developed total compensation plan will increase the probability of higher incumbent capture, and employee retention and performance. This approach enhances the potential for successful contract performance which provides additional value to the Government.

Strength #3

SEP proposes to provide formal SEAS contract relevant training in systems engineering, risk management, process improvement, and Project Management Institute (PMI) approved Project

Management Professional (PMP) training. This approach increases the potential for successful contract performance by providing ongoing and job relevant training to its employees.

Strength #4

SEP proposes to establish an awards program in order to foster an environment that cultivates innovation under the SEAS contract. By proposing this continuous improvement process, the contractor is fostering a culture that recognizes and rewards innovation which enhances the potential for successful contract performance.

Strength #5

SEP demonstrates a sound understanding of OSHA and NASA safety program requirements. They provide detailed information with well-defined safety objectives, action items and goals on how to comply with NASA and GSFC requirements. These characteristics of the S&H plan will enhance the potential for successful contract performance.

Cost Factor

TVS had the lowest total proposed cost, followed by ATS, Aerie, and SEP accordingly. The evaluation team made an upward probable cost adjustment due to an adjustment to Aerie's indirect rate. The evaluation team made an upward adjustment in TVS's escalation rate, direct labor rates, and the blending percentage of the incumbent rate and market salary survey rate. Additionally, the evaluation team made an upward probable cost adjustment in TVS's Management and Administration (M&A) rate. The evaluation team made an upward probable cost adjustment to ATS's escalation rate, direct labor rates, and the blending percentage of the incumbent rate and market salary survey rate. Finally, the evaluation team made an upward probable cost adjustment to SEP's escalation rate and adjusted the level of support for its management team. After the adjustments were made, TVS had the lowest probable cost which was moderately lower than Aerie's probable cost, which was in turn slightly lower than ATS's probable cost. The three lowest offerors (TVS, Aerie, and ATS) were within approximately 6% for total probable cost. SEP's probable cost was the highest which was moderately higher than ATS's probable cost.

Past Performance Factor

As a result of the evaluation process, the SEAS Source Evaluation Board ratings are summarized below:

Offeror	Level of Confidence Rating
Aerie	Moderate
TVS	High
ATS	Very High
SEP	High

Aerie

Aerie was assigned an overall confidence level rating of Moderate which is reflective of the SEAS Source Evaluation Board's subjective evaluation of information contained in the written narrative; past performance evaluation input provided through customer questionnaires; and other references. The overall relevance of Aerie's reference contracts were rated low to moderate with overall performance rated as primarily very high. There were no significant subcontractors proposed. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a Moderate level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort.

TVS

TVS was assigned an overall confidence level rating of High which is reflective of the SEAS Source Evaluation Board's subjective evaluation of information contained in the written narrative; past performance evaluation input provided through customer questionnaires; and other references. The overall relevance of TVS's reference contracts were rated moderate to high with overall performance rated as very high. The significant subcontractor demonstrated high to very high relevance with performance ratings of very high. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a High Level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort.

ATS

ATS was assigned an overall confidence level rating of Very High which is reflective of the SEAS Source Evaluation Board's subjective evaluation of the information contained in the written narrative; past performance evaluation input provided through customer questionnaires; and other references. The overall relevance of ATS's reference contracts were rated low to very high relevance with overall performance rated very high. The significant subcontractor demonstrated very high relevance with performance ratings of very high. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a Very High level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort.

SEP

SEP was assigned an overall confidence level rating of High which is reflective of the SEAS Source Evaluation Board's subjective evaluation of the information contained in the written narrative; past performance evaluation input provided through customer questionnaires; and other references. The overall relevance of SEP's reference contracts were rated low to high with overall performance rated very high. The significant subcontractors demonstrated moderate to high relevance with performance ratings of high to very high. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a High Level of confidence that the Offeror will successfully perform the required effort.

Source Selection Decision

On June 4, 2015, I, the Source Selection Authority, along with several ex-officios, met with the Source Evaluation Board to hear the SEB's findings and evaluation conclusions. Prior to that meeting I carefully reviewed the Source Evaluation Board's documentation entitled "Systems Engineering Advanced Services (SEAS) Contract Presentation to Source Selection Authority." I determined that the findings presented by the SEB, as documented in its presentation and the accompanying "SEAS Cost Evaluation Report" were detailed, consistent with the evaluation criteria in the SEAS RFP, and provided a clear description of the merits of each proposal. I questioned the SEB with regard to its rationale for the findings and the adjectival ratings and scores for the mission suitability subfactors, and also questioned the rationale for the evaluation of cost and past performance. Further, I solicited the views of my ex-officio advisors in their areas of expertise. I determined that the findings were reasonable and valid for the purpose of making a selection decision. I accept the findings from the Source Evaluation Board and concur with the Contracting Officer that a competitive range and discussions are not necessary. In determining which proposal offered the best value to NASA, I referred to the relative order of importance of the three evaluation factors as specified in the RFP:

> *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.*

Regarding the Mission Suitability Factor, I noted that the proposal submitted by ATS was technically superior to the proposal submitted by SEP, TVS, and Aerie based on the content of the findings. I also found that ATS's proposal received the highest overall total point score, which was significantly higher than SEP, TVS, and Aerie.

Regarding Subfactor A, I noted that ATS was the only offeror who received a Very Good rating. SEP and TVS received a Good rating and Aerie received a Fair rating. Aerie's two significant

weaknesses in Subfactor A and its Fair rating make it uncompetitive in Subfactor A. I then closely examined the evaluation findings for ATS, SEP and TVS. Although TVS and SEP offered a solid approach, ultimately warranting a Good overall rating in Subfactor A, each of these Offerors received a significant weakness; whereas, ATS had no significant weaknesses. TVS did not receive any significant strengths in Subfactor A which was a discriminator when compared with ATS and SEP. I noted that ATS and SEP each received a similar significant strength in Subfactor A for their thorough understanding of the RTO 1 requirements particularly in the areas of design challenges and system engineering. However, SEP received a significant weakness for their overall staffing approach which included failing to provide sufficient information to determine staffing adequacy and a failure to provide critical staffing whereas ATS's staffing weakness was limited to the formulation phase. Therefore, in my review of Subfactor A, I did find a discriminator between the overall Very Good rating received by ATS compared to the Good rating received by SEP.

Regarding Subfactor B, I noted that ATS was the only offeror who received an overall Excellent rating, due to its significant strength balanced against only one minor weakness. TVS received a Good rating and SEP and Aerie received Fair ratings. I noted that both Aerie and SEP each had at least one significant weakness with no significant strengths or strengths. Therefore, I did not consider their respective proposals to be competitive in this Subfactor. Although TVS received a Good rating, they did not have any significant strengths or strengths. I was particularly impressed with ATS's significant strength for their excellent understanding of implementation phase activities and exceptionally detailed environmental testing response. I found ATS's significant strength to be a unique discriminator as ATS was the only Offeror to fully understand the required systems engineering support during the implementation phase of a program.

Regarding Subfactor C, the most heavily weighted subfactor, I noted that ATS was the only offeror who received an overall Excellent rating, due to its two significant strengths. SEP, Aerie and TVS received ratings of Good. Although SEP, Aerie, and TVS had strengths in their management approach none of them had any significant strengths. I noted this to be a significant discriminator, as ATS had an excellent proposed management approach for efficiently and effectively managing the SEAS contract, as well as a thorough phase-in plan to ensure a smooth transition. Although ATS received a weakness for not providing adequate Position Descriptions for their management team, I found this to be a relatively minor weakness that did not significantly detract from their overall management approach. ATS's excellent overall management approach will increase the likelihood of effective management of the SEAS contract.

Regarding the cost evaluation, I noted TVS had the lowest probable cost which was moderately lower than Aerie's, which in turn was slightly lower than ATS. ATS's probable cost was moderately lower than SEP. I noted a cost discriminator with TVS offering the lowest probable cost by a moderate margin over the next lowest offeror's probable cost.

Regarding the past performance evaluation, I noted that ATS was the only Offeror to receive a Very High level of confidence. TVS and SEP received a High level of confidence rating while Aerie received a Moderate level of confidence rating. I found there was a discriminator between ATS and SEP, TVS, and Aerie as ATS was the only Offeror to receive a Very High level of confidence rating.

Finally, I carefully considered the findings in relation to the evaluation criteria in the RFP, and exercised my independent judgment regarding the significance of the findings as discriminators between the proposals in accordance with evaluation criteria in the RFP.

Based on the foregoing evaluations and upon consideration of the relative importance of the three evaluation factors under the RFP, I determined that one Offeror, ATS, presented an overall superior proposal that offered the best value to the government. Specifically, under the most important factor, Mission Suitability, I concluded that ATS's Mission Suitability proposal had a very significant advantage over the other offerors, particularly in Subfactors B and C. Additionally, ATS was the only Offeror to receive a Very High level of confidence rating in past performance. I have concluded that the substantial technical and management advantages offered by ATS's Mission Suitability proposal, as noted above, coupled with their Very High past performance rating, outweigh TVS's edge in probable cost of approximately 6%. Therefore, I select ATS for award of the Systems Engineering Advanced Services (SEAS) contract.

Colleen Hartman

Colleen Hartman
Source Selection Authority

8/24/15
Date