



**JUSTIFICATION FOR OTHER THAN FULL AND OPEN COMPETITION
41 U.S.C. 3304**

J&A-23-00205

Pursuant to the requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) in accordance with the requirements of FAR 6.303-1. The justification for the use of the statutory authority under FAR Subpart 6.3 is based on the following facts and rationale required under FAR 6.303-2 as follows:

1. Agency and Contracting Activity.

Agency: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/
United States (US) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)/
Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)

Contracting
Activity: Office of Acquisition Management (OAQ)

Program: Office of the Chief Information Officer
(OCIO)/ Solutions Delivery Division (SDD)

DHS/ICE/OAQ on behalf of OCIO/SDD intends to award a sole source contract to Applied Research Associates, Inc. (ARA) on behalf of HSI as set forth in FAR 6.303-1, "Only one responsible source and no other supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements."

2. Nature and/or description of the action being approved.

(a) Type of action: Firm-Fixed Price (FFP) contract.

(b) Amount the current Justification & Approval (J&A) is justifying: [REDACTED]

(c) Brief Description: OAQ intends to procure, on a sole source basis, ongoing development and enhancements of the Images Document and Exemplars Library Software (IDEAL) 2.0 online database. IDEAL 2.0 is the digital repository and backup for the HSI Forensic Laboratory's (HSI-FL) travel and identity document library of over 350,000 physical records which include genuine, altered, and counterfeit samples as well as intelligence and reference documents. OAQ will procure IDEAL 2.0 development and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) from the following company:

Applied Research Associates, Inc. (ARA)
4300 San Mateo Blvd. NE, Suite A220
Albuquerque, NM 87110

3. Description of Supplies/Services.

The purpose of this DHS/ICE acquisition is to expand the development of a major information technology (IT) system known as IDEAL 2.0.



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HSI-FL is now seeking continued support to complete the development and enhancements of IDEAL 2.0 and Operations and Maintenance (O&M). This contract, which will be managed by OCIO/SDD and HSI, will further expand the initial operating capabilities under the contract originally managed by DoD. The fully operating system is anticipated to be launched in the Fall of 2023, with a phased approach to include additional capabilities such as, investigative tools, increase search functionality, and enhancements for the mobile application.

Description	Period of Performance	Total
Base (Task 1)	09/30/2023 – 09/29/2024	
Base (Task 2)	09/30/2023 – 09/29/2024	

4. Identification of statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition.

The statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition is 41 U.S.C. §3304(a)(1) as implemented by:

- ☒ FAR Subsection 6.302-1: Only one responsible source and no other supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements.
- ☐ 6.302-2: Unusual and compelling urgency.
- ☐ 6.302-3: Industrial mobilization; engineering, development, or research capability; or expert services.
- ☐ 6.302-4: International agreement.
- ☐ 6.302-5: Authorized or required by statute.
- ☐ 6.302-6: National security.
- ☐ 6.302-7: Public interest.

5. Demonstration that the nature of the acquisition requires use of the authority cited.

Rationale:

ICE requires the IDEAL 2.0 online database for the digital repository and backup for the HSI-FL travel and identity document library. This database is an invaluable and irreplaceable investigative tool that consists of over 350,000 physical records, including genuine, altered, and counterfeit samples and intelligence and reference documents.

In the late 1990's the very first IDEAL IT system was developed as a basic digital card catalog system managing thousands of physical passports, visa and other travel documents used for forensic comparison at the HSI-FL. This IT system was limited in its functionality



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and is now obsolete. To replace this 20-year-old system, the HSI-FL formalized an initiative to develop a modernized web-based IT system that could replace the card catalog functionalities, implement a continuity of operations plan (COOP), and share this critical data across the Government.

The IDEAL 2.0 system will be responsible for housing millions of high-resolution images (some more than 10 gigabytes in size) of more than 350,000 travel documents being stored. This repository is a culmination of collecting genuine standards, altered and counterfeit documents, and intelligence gathering efforts for more than 40 years from around the world. This is a one-of-a-kind repository allows forensic examiners at the HSI-FL a means to authenticate counterfeit passports, visa, and identification documents used in the commission of various criminal activities. The loss of these documents and the reference materials associated with them would result in a significant gap in capabilities to the U.S. Government. Improvements in technology will allow the forensic laboratory a means to capture forensic details of the various aspects of genuine documents such as its security features, chemistry properties of the materials, and methods being used by counterfeits to simulate them. This major IT system will consist of a customized application and database with both internet and mobile accessibility.

To obtain prior funding to support this initiative, the HSI-FL proposed the development plan and capabilities to numerous Government agencies including the Combatting Terrorism Technical Support Office (CTTSO) of the Department of Defense (DoD). In December 2020, CTTSO committed research and development grant funds to assist the initial base development of this 5-year development project. In May 2021, DoD launched the "Travel and Identity Document Reference Database project" and posted it within the Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) Information Delivery System (BIDS) for open bid. The project received four (4) white paper proposals that would assist in the initial development of the application and database. The white papers were reviewed by members of the CTTSO committee, and a vendor was selected. On January 5, 2022, Applied Research Associates (ARA) was officially awarded a contract by DoD. On January 20th, DoD hosted a kickoff meeting with ARA and the HSI-FL to begin the project.

Applied Research Associates (ARA) was selected by DoD as a result of a competitive solicitation to begin the development of the new IDEAL 2.0 software and database for the HSI-FL. ARA is currently developing under the direction of the HSI-FL a custom proprietary software and database that will meet the mission needs of the laboratory. This is a logical follow-on for the continued development of the IDEAL 2.0 major system.

IDEAL 2.0 is still in the development and testing phase. There are no other vendors that could satisfy the minimum needs of the HSI-FL or meet this requirement without impacting the completion of a fully operating system. ARA is the only vendor with the unique capabilities and knowledge to continue the ongoing development of this system without significantly impacting the overall timeline of this project. Given the number of forensic laboratory staff and IT expert hours already invested with ARA to deploy this system, it would be a substantial cost to the Government to duplicate this effort with a different vendor.



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6. Description of efforts made to ensure that offers are solicited from as many potential sources as is practicable.

☒ OAQ intends to publicize this requirement, **prior to award**, as required by subpart 5.2 by posting a notice on sam.gov on August 15, 2023.

☐ OAQ does not intend to publicize this requirement, **prior to award**, based on the following 5.202(a)(11) exception.

7. Determination by the contracting officer that the anticipated cost to the Government will be fair and reasonable.

The contracting officer will compare historical pricing to determine that the anticipated price will be fair and reasonable, based on a comparison of a contract managed by DoD under the R&D grant Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate (IWTSD) for the Travel and Identity Document Reference Database (TIDRD) and a purchase order (PO) that was awarded by ICE in Fiscal Year 2022 (see table below).

Relevant Contracts	Description	Award No.	Period of Performance	Total Value
Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate (IWTSD)	Development and deployment of IDEAL 2.0	IWTSD Task FE-FI-4995	June 20, 2022 thru December 31, 2023	██████████
ICE PO	Enhancements of mobile application	70CMSD22P00000101	September 1, 2022 thru August 31, 2023	██████████

8. Description of market research.

Market research was conducted as part of the original development of the IDEAL 2.0 to identify a vendor with an alternative software. The initial IWTSD's requirements were publicized in a broad agency announcement which is posted on the IWTSD website. Additionally, the announcement and link were posted on SAM.gov. The HSI Forensic Laboratory has spent more than four (4) years developing the IDEAL 2.0 and has been involved in extensive research on the development of various capabilities to be implemented within the IDEAL 2.0. ICE conducted market research to identify other companies that could perform similar work. While there are companies that may be capable of creating similar databases, ARA is the only source with the needed knowledge and capability to continue development.



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9. Any other facts supporting the use of other than full and open competition.

Utilizing a different company would critically impact the timeline and delay the completion of the fully operating capability of IDEAL 2.0. This would increase the risk of inoperability and access to library materials, such as travel and identity documents. A new vendor would cause interruption to the development of the fully operating capability. HSI-FL personnel would need to train a new vendor on the software and database, which would cause significant delays. Additionally, this would substantially increase the cost to the Government as thousands of hours have been spent between Government Information Technology (IT) specialists, forensic laboratory personnel and ARA to understand the workflow and capabilities required by the laboratory.

ARA is the only source capable of performing the continued services required by the laboratory without causing unacceptable delays and significant duplication of cost.

10. A listing of the sources, if any that expressed, in writing, an interest in the acquisition.

None.

11. A statement of the actions, if any, the agency may take to remove or overcome any barriers to competition before any subsequent acquisition for supplies or services required.


ICE does not anticipate future non-competitive procurements following the successful deployment of IDEAL 2.0. Once the fully functional IDEAL 2.0 application is fully delivered and performing as intended, the ongoing O&M and further development request will be competed. OAQ will work with the Program Office to perform market research to identify other companies capable of providing O&M.

☒ **After award** of this action, DHS intends to post the approved/signed justification pursuant to 6.305.

☐ **After award** of this action, DHS does not intend to post the approved/signed justification in accordance with 6.305(f).

12. Contracting Officer's Certification.

I certify that the data supporting the recommended use of other than full and open competition is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.


Contracting Officer





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13. Technical/Requirements Personnel Certification.

I certify this requirement meets the Government's minimum need and that the supporting data, which forms a basis for this justification, is complete and accurate.

Technical Representative/COR

14. Approval.

Competition Advocate
