



**United States Department of Agriculture
Limited Sources Justification for an Order/BPA
Exceeding the Simplified Acquisition Threshold**

**Federal Supply Schedules/Multiple Award Schedule Program
FAR 8.405
Control No. (if applicable)**

1. Identification of the agency and the contracting activity.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Business Center, Financial Management Division, serviced by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department Administration (DA), Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP), Procurement Operations Division (POD)

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

The USDA Office of Contracting and Procurement is requesting a sole source, short-term bridge task order to provide USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Agile Software Delivery on the Olympia Agile Release Train call order continuity of services and transition to a new competitively awarded contract. The bridge will be a firm fixed-price task order to TSPi for a 6-week base period with no option periods for support services required to sustain the current NRCS Conservation Agile Software Delivery contract activities. Total length of performance is January 17, 2023 through February 27, 2023.

This bridge replaces the services provided under the current call order, 12314421F0779, that expires on January 16, 2023. FPAC IT Acquisition (ITAS) team along with Procurement Operations Division competitively awarded a call order on July 22, 2022 containing a base year and 2 option years. A bid protest was filed in October 2022, and GAO upheld the award decision on December 15, 2022. Performance for the competitively awarded call order will begin on January 17, 2023, and transition from the incumbent will complete on February 27, 2023. This bridge contract will be a new task order against TSPi's GSA Schedule GS-35F-0128Y to provide NRCS contract continuity of services. These services are critical to the FPAC mission.

3. Description of the supplies or services required to meet the agency's needs (including the estimated value).

This new task order will provide NRCS the following Conservation Software Delivery Services:

- Development, modernization, and enhancements (DME) of multiple Conservation development backlog components.
- Operations and maintenance (O&M) of existing Conservation applications and components.
- Knowledge transfer and transition to Koniag, the incoming vendor on competitively awarded call order 12314422F0385.

TSPi will be responsible to maintain continuity of services for major mission area initiatives including, but not limited to the following (these are critical mission areas requiring continued, uninterrupted, support):

- Continued stabilization and support of FPAC Human Resources Department (HRD) and USDA Improved delivery and quality of soils data (tabular and geospatial), products and services by modernizing the National Soils Information System (NASIS) and its related and supporting components, systems and databases (e.g. Soils Interpretations Generator, Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO), NASIS Local Client, Soil Data Access (SDA), Web Soil Survey (WSS) and Soil Data Viewer (SDV).
- Improved effectiveness of conservation practice implementation and contribute to an existing soils knowledge base through the collection of detailed, site-specific soil properties and soil health data by creating a Dynamic Soil Properties and Soil Health Database (DSP-SH) along with a data entry/access application and linkages to other existing systems.
- Improved delivery of geospatial data and services through the modernization of the following components of NRCS’ authoritative Geospatial Services Platform: Geospatial Archive, Remote Sensing Product Delivery, Geospatial Services (GeoPortal), and High-Resolution Elevation Product Delivery.
- Improved delivery of water and climate data, products and services through the modernization of systems, databases and services that support automated data collection, validation, forecasting and quality control/assurance of snow, water, soil and climate-related data.
- Modernized ability to inventory, monitor and manage NRCS-assisted dams. This includes providing real-time monitoring of rainfall, snowmelt, stream flow, and seismic events that could pose potential threats to dam safety.
- Operational support for all IT applications in the Olympia value streams to continue providing excellent service for natural resource information, water and climate information, natural resource document management, and operational management and supporting systems

TSPi will be responsible to provide the following tasking and associated deliverables in support of FPAC Service Now contract:

- Requirements Definition
- Development of Conservation IT Applications
- Operations and Maintenance of Conservation IT Applications
- Knowledge Transfer and Transition Out

This bridge task order will be a new, short-term task order issued to the current incumbent to avoid a lapse in service caused by a bid protest to the competitively awarded follow-on call order. GAO upheld the award decision on December 15, 2022. This bridge award is critical to NRCS mission success. The bridge contract period of performance will be for a total possible length of 1.5-months, which will consist of a 6-week base period an no option periods and has a total potential value of \$1,228,656.00.

	Period of Performance	Amount
Base	01/17/2023 – 02/27/2023	\$1,228,656.00
Total Contract Value		\$1,228,656.00

4. The authority and supporting rationale.

The following circumstance justifies limiting the source under FAR 8.405-6:

FAR 8.405-6(a)(1)(i)(C) – In the interest of economy and efficiency, the new work is a logical follow-on to an original Federal Supply Schedule.

5. A statement demonstrating the unique qualifications of the proposed contractor or the nature of the action requiring the use of the authority.

The current order was awarded competitively under a multiple award BPA which was also awarded competitively under GSA Multiple Award Schedule. No limits to competition have been used in any of the previous orders for this requirement.

This bridge will replace services for current task order 12314421F0779 which will expire on January 17, 2023. USDA/POD competitively awarded a Conservation Software Delivery BPA call order to Koniag on July 22, 2022. It was FPAC's intention to complete transition prior to the expiration of the existing contract until performance was stopped following a bid protest filed on September 19, 2022. GAO upheld the award decision on December 15, 2022. USDA NRCS Conservation Software Delivery now requires a bridge task order to provide continuity of critical services and complete a transition between vendors from January 17, 2023 through February 27, 2023. USDA/FPAC has an on-going need for the continuation of the current service level. POD plans to issue a sole source follow on task order to the incumbent contractor, TSPi.

USDA FPAC has an on-going need for the continuation of Conservation mission delivery automation and tools. The bridge is necessary to continue the development, modernization, enhancement, and maintaining of NRCS's complex IT applications. This bridge will provide the Government with the ability to conduct a thorough and thoughtful contract transition. A break in service will directly impact the nation's farmers and ranchers, agriculture community including private forest lands and would adversely place them at risk. The bridge is necessary to provide the Government sufficient time to transition critical knowledge of NRCS IT applications and software delivery practices to the incoming vendor. Given the current circumstances, TSPi is the only capable source to provide the required highly specialized expertise for the bridge contract.

The following factors were considered in the determining the need for a short-term bridge task order. These factors were instrumental in identifying and targeting the potential for failures and exposing significant risks to NRCS's Conservation mission delivery if a bridge task order is not issued.

The first six weeks of the competitively awarded call order is for resource background checks and onboarding, knowledge transfer from the incumbent, and transition. The current expected time for USDA/FPAC to complete onboarding of new contract staff of a new vendor is estimated at 6-8 weeks. NRCS IT applications are complex and multi-layered, requiring a coordinated and robust transition to avoid disruptions to critical service delivery to the public. The incumbent vendor, TSPi, has in-depth knowledge of existing NRCS IT applications and software delivery practices. A seamless transition, along with continued software delivery during the transition-in period for the new vendor, is critical to the following NRCS mission delivery objectives:

- Provide and improved National Office Information System (NOIS) (ID: 1001):

- Impact: NRCS' current Office Information Profile System (OIP) does not support the needs associated with a remote workforce. In addition, there was a security vulnerability in the last 12 months that was temporarily patched by the current vendor. The current vendor has worked up new requirements to incorporate the changes needed to permanently address the security vulnerability and support a remote workforce. Recently, the data model has been rebuilt by the current vendor and everything is in place to start code development for this modernization. Without sufficient time for knowledge transfer to a new vendor, the government will miss the April 2023 deadline for a complete and secure modernization resulting in the government having to turn off the current application. Taking this application offline means that new employees Agency wide cannot be onboarded. The OIP application is integrated with and supplies critical data to many other NRCS systems including NRCS' current HR system.
- Integrate mission delivery applications with the Digital Records Management System (ID: 1188):
 - Impact: Many of NRCS' current mission delivery applications use electronic documents, however; these applications are not currently able to use digital records management (DRMS) capabilities. According to OMB Memorandum M-19-21, all government agencies need to be managing permanent electronic records. NRCS will miss the official OMB deadline if the current vendor isn't able to continue with their time sensitive work connecting NRCS systems to the DRMS. The DRMS deployment date is April 2023 leaving inadequate time for knowledge transfer to successfully meet the OMB and National Archives and Records Administration deadline.
- Provide a system for general operations and budget support (1008):
 - Impact: NRCS' currently does not have a system to efficiently support administrative automation and management of operational data (e.g. data calls, allocations, memos, MOUs, etc.). Without sufficient time for knowledge transfer to a new vendor, NRCS will be vulnerable for audit findings and there will be significant operational inefficiencies. Operational inefficiencies include things such as inability to locate signed documents and inability to find internal operational guidelines and procedures. The impact is significant rework and confusion, costing the government money and time with the potential of missing critical timelines.

This bridge task order to TSPi is necessary as a stopgap measure to ensure there is not a disruption in the services providing mission essential functions to NRCS. This sole source solution guarantees NRCS will receive the required support services and will have the ability to exceed the needs of their external customers, specifically the agricultural community. The Government has identified and determined that only one source (TSPi) can provide the unique services paramount for the continued success of NRCS's Olympia Agile Release Train at the same service level and required quality to fully support this effort. The impact on the mission for these highly specialized services provided by TSPi for the Conservation IT applications solely justifies the need for a bridge contract to secure continuity of existing services during this critical period between contract expiration and completion of the planned transition period.

6. Description of the market research conducted among schedule holders and the results or a statement of the reason market research was not conducted.

Market research was conducted in accordance with FAR 10. A review of GSA Advantage and other sources of information for the required services and support indicated that no other firms could provide this type of service with the same level of unique environmental knowledge and institutional expertise of this contractor without a lapse in support.

7. Any other facts supporting the justification.

The initial Olympia Agile Release Train call order was competed on the Conservation Software Delivery blanket purchase agreement and awarded to TSPi on September 29, 2020.

8. Statement of actions the agency may take to remove or overcome any barriers to competition if subsequent acquisitions are anticipated.

The Government competed this requirement and awarded a call order on July 22, 2022. Following a bid protest, GAO upheld the award decision on December 15, 2022. The transition-in period for the competitively awarded call order began on January 17, 2023.

9. Determination by the ordering activity Contracting Officer (CO) that the order represents the best value consistent with FAR 8.404(d).

Placing this order represents the best value to the government in accordance with FAR 8.404(d). Award will be made based on the receipt of a technically acceptable quote in response to the provided PWS containing a fair and reasonable price. GSA has already determined the prices of supplies and fixed-price services, and rates for services offered at hourly rates, under schedule contracts to be fair and reasonable. It is anticipated that the rates proposed for the Bridge Task Order will reflect either a close similarity or the same rates as currently being paid to TSPi, under the existing Call Order. The Government will seek additional discounts. The ordering activity contracting officer will determine, after considering the level of effort and the mix of skills available for the tasks needed, that the proposed order represents a reasonable total price and will be the best value for the Government, price, and other factors considered. The resulting order will be firm-fixed-price.

Certifications & Approval

The information provided for this justification has been reviewed and certified accurate and complete by:

DOUGLAS JONES Digitally signed by DOUGLAS JONES
Date: 2023.01.12 09:42:56 -06'00'

Doug Jones
Chief, Information Solutions Service Delivery and Operations Branch

Contracting Officer (not exceeding \$750,000). I have reviewed this justification and certify it to be accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

- Approved.
 Reviewed and forwarding to the Procuring Activity Advocate (MASCO or Delegate).

**JOHN
FLORES** Digitally signed by
JOHN FLORES
Date: 2023.01.12
09:00:15 -07'00'

John Paul Flores
Contracting Officer

Additional Reviews & Approvals

Signatures are required at each threshold up to the total estimated dollar value of the acquisition

Advocate for competition for the procuring activity (MASCO or Delegate approved by HCA for USDA) (if over \$750,000, but not exceeding \$15 million). I have reviewed this justification and certify it to be accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

- Approved.
 Reviewed and forwarding to the Head of the Procuring Activity/HCA.

Rick Jiron
Mission Area Advocate for Competition