

Source Selection Statement  
Safety and Mission Assurance Engineering Contract III  
Solicitation 80JSC023R0008  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

On January 31, 2023, I met with members of the Safety and Mission Assurance Engineering Contract (SMAEC) III team and spoke with them about the final evaluation for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on the SMAEC III contract, under Solicitation 80JSC023R0008, dated February 24, 2022. A briefing was made to me in my capacity as the Source Selection Authority (SSA) which detailed the final evaluation findings. Prior to the briefing, I was provided the final evaluation findings to review, which I did before attending the briefing. In addition to myself, the briefing was attended by members of the Evaluation Team and key management officials. During the briefing, the Evaluation Team reported its final evaluation results and I provided the Evaluation Team with my independent judgment relative to the final evaluation results and asked several questions regarding the information presented. This award decision results from the information presented in the evaluation results briefing.

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this contract is to acquire Safety and Mission Assurance Engineering products and related services for the Johnson Space Center (JSC) Safety and Mission Assurance (SMA) Directorate as well as for other NASA Centers, as required. JSC is defined herein to include locations at the White Sands Test Facility (WSTF), Ellington Field, and the Sonny Carter Training Facility. The contractor shall provide SMA products and services for spaceflight development and operations, JSC institutional operations, and technical services for the JSC SMA Directorate.

SMAEC III is a single-award, 100% Indefinite-Delivery, Indefinite-Quantity (IDIQ) contract with Cost-Plus-Award-Fee and Firm Fixed Priced Task Orders. The contract has the option to transition from CPAF to CPFF Task Orders and the option to transition back to CPAF Task Orders. The stated Period of Performance (POP) for this acquisition is 7-years and 8-months. The contract guaranteed minimum amount to be ordered under this contract is \$150,000 and the not-to-exceed ceiling value is \$494.2 million. This acquisition is a follow-on to the current SMAEC II contract.

## **CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS**

### Request for Information (RFI)/Sources Sought Synopsis (SSS)

On November 16, 2022, NASA issued an RFI/SSS to solicit capability statements from Industry through sam.gov under notice ID 80JSC024SMAECIII. The draft SMAEC III Statement of Work (SOW) was posted to provide Industry with the anticipated requirements of the SMAEC III contract.

### Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI)/RFI

On November 16, 2022, NASA issued an OCI/RFI for SMAEC III. The Government provided the SMAEC III SOW for Industry to consider when identifying any potential OCI.

### Industry Day

On February 1, 2023, NASA held a virtual Industry Day. Virtual one-on-one meetings with interested parties for the SMAEC III acquisition were held the following day on February 2, 2023.

### Posting of Industry Day Questions and Answers

On February 17, 2023, NASA provided official responses to questions received during the SMAEC III Industry Day. All offerors were made aware of all questions asked during Industry Day and apprised of NASA's answers thereto.

### Draft Request for Proposal (DRFP)

On June 29, 2023, NASA posted the SMAEC III DRFP and solicited questions and feedback from potential offerors.

### DRFP Question and Answers Posted

Industry Questions and Answers for SMAEC III DRFP were posted on August 4, 2023.

### Pre-solicitation Synopsis

On August 3, 2023, NASA posted a pre-solicitation synopsis.

### Request for Proposal (RFP)

On August 16, 2023, NASA released the SMAEC III RFP and associated documents on sam.gov. The RFP responses were due on September 15, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. Central Time. The following SMAEC III RFP amendments were issued:

- Amendment 1 – September 7, 2023
- Amendment 2 – September 12, 2023
- Amendment 3 – September 14, 2023

The proposal due date was extended by Amendment 2 from September 15, 2023 to September 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Central Time.

### Pre-Proposal Conference

On August 18, 2023, NASA posted Pre-Proposal Bulletin Charts to discuss and highlight the RFP requirements. The virtual pre-proposal conference was originally scheduled for August 21, 2023 and was rescheduled and held August 22, 2023. In addition, NASA held a virtual pre-proposal pricing conference on August 22, 2023, to review the Excel Pricing Model (EPM) workbook with Industry.

### RFP Questions and Answers

On September 7, 2023, NASA posted RFP Questions and Answers as part of the RFP, Amendment 1. On September 14, 2023, NASA posted additional RFP Questions and Answers as part of the RFP, Amendment 3.

### Receipt of Proposals

Proposals were received by the due date of September 25, 2023. No proposals were received late. The following Offerors submitted proposals in response to the SMAEC III RFP (listed in order of evaluation):

- ARES Technical Services Corporation (ARES)
- Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)

### Presentation of Competitive Range to SSA

On January 31, 2024, the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) presented its evaluation briefing to the SSA.

## **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The proposals were evaluated in strict accordance with the *Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 15*, *NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) Part 1815*, and the SMAEC III RFP. The RFP details the SEB Evaluation factors and criteria contained in Section M of the RFP.

Upon receipt of the proposals, the SEB conducted an initial review of the proposals to determine acceptability in accordance with *NASA FAR NFS 1815.305-70, Identification of Unacceptable Proposals*. The SEB determined all proposals were acceptable in accordance with the solicitation.

Proposals were evaluated by the SEB in accordance with applicable regulations which include the FAR and the NFS. Subfactors were evaluated in accordance with *NFS 1815.305(a)(3)(A)*. The SEB carried out the evaluation activities in order to report its findings to the SSA, who is responsible for making the final source selection decision.

The Government will award a contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible Offeror whose proposal represents the best value to the Government. This procurement is being conducted utilizing a combination of Mission Suitability, Past Performance, and Cost/Price evaluation factors. The lowest price proposals may not necessarily receive an award. Likewise, the highest technically rated proposal(s) may not necessarily receive an award. The evaluation factors were weighed in accordance with the criterion in the RFP:

- The Cost/Price factor is significantly less important than the combined importance of the Mission Suitability factor and Past Performance factor.
- As individual factors, the Mission Suitability factor is more important than Past Performance factor, which is approximately equal to Cost/Price factor.

The Government evaluated each Offeror's proposal using the factors and subfactors below. Although proposals are organized by factors and subfactors, the Government evaluated the proposals for consistency among proposals information.

## MISSION SUITABILITY FACTOR

<b>Mission Suitability Subfactors</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Technical Approach	450 Points
Management Approach	350 Points
Small Business Utilization	200 Points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 Points</b>

The Government evaluated Mission Suitability as required by Sections L.22.1 through L.22.3 and Sections M.3.1 through M.3.3. The Mission Suitability Subfactors below were rated with an adjective and numerically weighted. Overall, only Mission Suitability was numerically scored.

Mission Suitability Subfactor 1, Technical Approach, evaluated each Offeror's response to the technical requirements, two Sample Task Orders (STOs), one technical scenario, and the Safety and Health Plan for demonstrated understanding, reasonability, feasibility, and completeness. In addition, Subfactor 1 evaluated the Offeror's Continual Improvement Plan.

Mission Suitability Subfactor 2, Management Approach, evaluated each Offeror's management requirements (including Contract Management Plan and Continual Improvement Plan), Staffing and Critical Skills Plan and Total Compensation Approach, and Contract Phase-In Plan for overall demonstrated understanding, reasonability, feasibility, and completeness.

Mission Suitability Subfactor 3, Small Business Utilization, evaluated each Offeror's Small Business Subcontracting for overall reasonability and soundness. Subfactor 3 also evaluated the Offeror's commitment to the Small Business Program.

## PAST PERFORMANCE FACTOR

The Government evaluated Past Performance as required by Sections L.23 and M.4 of the SMAEC III RFP.

Recency, relevancy, and performance, as described in RFP Section M.4, were the aspects taken into consideration by the SEB when determining each Offeror's Past Performance confidence rating.

## COST AND PRICE FACTOR

The Government evaluated proposed costs and established the probable cost of doing business with each Offeror as required by Section L.24 and M.5 of the SMAEC III RFP. The cost and price evaluation considered the pricing for CPAF and CPFF IDIQ RFP Level of Specified Resources (SR), Firm Fixed Price SOW Section 1.0 Proposed Resources and Phase-in Price.

The Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity ("IDIQ") NTE value is distinct from the RFP pricing methodology, which was established for evaluation purposes only.

The RFP established this as an IDIQ contract (Section B.6 of RFP) with a guaranteed minimum of \$150,000 and an NTE of \$494,200,000 (Section B.6 of RFP). The contract awardee is only assured of work up to the minimum ordering value and is not guaranteed work up to the full

value of the NTE ceiling. The pricing methodology is established in RFP Section L.24. This provision states that because “of the uncertainties involved with IDIQ work, Offerors are cautioned that this estimate is not a guarantee of future work.” To understand binding contractual values, the RFP directed Offerors to the minimum and maximum ordering limits established in Section B.6. The RFP Section M.5 outlined these cost and price factors and articulates that the standards are “for purposes of proposal evaluation and source selection” and specifically explains that the probable cost analysis will be used for purposes of evaluation and selection. Furthermore, the RFP at Section M.5 described the evaluation of the Cost and Price Factor and identified the Government’s probable cost evaluation of the Offeror’s proposed cost. The RFP directed Offerors to rely on the government specified resources, including labor hour profile and non-labor resources, associated with the IDIQ guaranteed minimum and NTE ceiling for future task order work, but the RFP language did not indicate that such limits were placed on the RFP’s proposal pricing methodology. Given that the IDIQ component of the proposal pricing methodology relies on government specified resources, any potential cost adjustments would arise from exceptions taken to the proposed rates. These rates include direct labor rates, rates of escalation, indirect rates, and profit/fee. Adjustments could also stem from the misapplication of these rates or corrections to any mathematical errors identified during the evaluation.

In contrast, the FFP SOW 1.0 component of the proposal pricing methodology relies on the Offerors to provide their individualized estimate of the resources required to accomplish the associated effort. Given the FFP nature of this component, any concerns or exceptions identified regarding the price, or its specific elements, would be acknowledged and monetized in a risk assessment, without resulting in a direct price adjustment. Grounds for these exceptions include mathematical errors, resource adjustments stemming from technical findings as a function of cost realism analyses, misapplication of proposed rates, or the use of conflicting rate data.

## EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

In making my decision, I considered the Mission Suitability score, Past Performance level of confidence, and Cost/Price, as well as the proposal in its entirety. I also considered the content of the SEB findings. This determination is made on the basis of the evaluation criteria specified in the solicitation.

With regard to each proposal, I concluded the following:

### **ARES Proposal Evaluation**

#### *ARES Mission Suitability*

The ARES proposal was evaluated in accordance with the RFP and resulted in the following findings.

	<b>MS Mission Suitability  1000 Points</b>	<b>MS Subfactor I</b>	<b>MS Subfactor II</b>	<b>MS Subfactor III</b>
<b>Offeror</b>		<b>TA Technical Approach*</b>  <b>450 Points</b>	<b>MA Management Approach</b>  <b>350 Points</b>	<b>SBU Small Business Utilization</b>  <b>200 Points</b>
ARES	683	270 Good	238 Good	175 Very Good

\*Includes Safety and Health Approach

ARES' proposal received a total of 683 points for the overall Mission Suitability Factor Score.

**Subfactor I:** In Mission Suitability Subfactor I (Technical Approach), the SEB found two Significant Strengths, two Strengths, three Significant Weaknesses and three Weaknesses. The first Significant Strength was related to ARES' International Space Station (ISS) Visiting Vehicle Docking Anomaly scenario. The solution proposed would greatly reduce risk to the ISS program by providing Safety and Mission Assurance capabilities which gave the technical evaluators confidence that the ARES team would be an effective and responsive partner during any real-world spacecraft anomaly situations. The second Significant Strength in ARES' proposal involved modernizing the SMA Information Technology (IT) environment. This approach would significantly reduce the risk to NASA by ensuring highly effective management of the SMA Directorate's IT system and data integrity that is used in support of the Human Space Flight (HSF) programs and missions.

The first Strength in ARES' proposal was related to ARES plan to help demonstrate available products and services and to help communicate these SMA products and services to external stakeholders. This approach would lower the risk to the Government by reducing the potential for non-compliance with HSF SMA requirements. The second Strength in ARES' proposal was committing to obtain OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) status and having a Star Award program. This commitment to the VPP shows ARES' commitment to having a strong safety and health environment. The Star Award program is a Safety Behavior Incentive Program that rewards individuals for recognizing and removing a hazard or for maintaining a safe work environment.

ARES' first Significant Weakness under this subfactor was that ARES' approach for performing Quality Assurance (QA) requirements was unreasonable, incomplete, and did not demonstrate that the Offeror understood the requirements that govern QA in support of HSF programs and projects. Quality Assurance requirements represent one of the core disciplines of SMA. The incompleteness of ARES' approach throughout their proposal to QA requirements poses a significant risk to NASA's ability to provide effective QA services, which could result in delays to program/project schedules and or hazards to the crew, vehicle and/or the mission. The second Significant Weakness in ARES' proposal is their approach for implementing Software



Assurance. The proposed approach was neither feasible nor complete and demonstrated that ARES did not completely understand the Software Assurance/Computer Safety support requirements of the RFP. Software Assurance/Computer Safety requirements represent another core disciplines of SMA. This lack of a complete approach throughout the ARES proposal poses a significant risk to NASA's ability to provide effective software assurance services, which could result in delays to program/project schedules and/or hazards to the crew, vehicle and/or the mission. The final Significant Weakness in ARES' proposal is their proposed approach for implementing Pressure Vessels/Systems (PV/S) requirements is incomplete, unfeasible, and does not demonstrate that they understand the technical requirements governing the pressure systems at JSC and White Sands Test Facility. ARES proposed using a Risk-Based Inspection program, but this approach was unfeasible and in addition their proposed approach for implementing PV/S tasks lacked detail. These factors significantly increases the risk to the Government's ability to provide effective PV/S services. This uncertainty of ARES' approach to the PV/S could result in delays to program/project schedules and/or increased hazard exposure for employees and facilities.

ARES' proposal also contained three Weaknesses for Mission Suitability TA Subfactor I. The first Weakness in ARES' proposal is that the safety and health plan is incomplete and does not demonstrate that ARES understands fundamental safety and health program elements, resulting in a stagnant health and safety program. The second Weakness in ARES' proposal is that the proposal failed to demonstrate an understanding for providing the products and services identified in the System Safety, Reliability, and Knowledge Management technical requirements. The proposal re-states the SOW requirements without detailing an approach identifying how they intend on fulfilling implementation of the requirements. The third Weakness in ARES' proposal is regarding its operational scope for the JSC SMA Receiving, Inspection and Test Facility (RITF). ARES' approach regarding determination for toxicity/outgassing/flame characteristics and for the proposed training services is incomplete, infeasible, and unreasonable. The proposed approach does not demonstrate understanding of the facility's capabilities and training services and would result in interruptions in testing services and training of JSC hardware fabricators and inspectors, which would increase the hardware production schedules for HSF hardware.

**Subfactor II:** For Mission Suitability Subfactor 2 (Management Approach), the SEB found one Strength and two Weaknesses in ARES' proposal.

ARES proposed Staffing and Critical Skills plan was determined to be a complete and reasonable approach to recruit, train, and retain a qualified workforce, including an emphasis on incumbent capture. ARES' approach recognized and addressed the risk of needing to recruit and develop SMA professionals and demonstrated a risk-reduction approach for retaining critical skills, which would ensure successful contract phase-in and minimize service interruption to the HSF mission during the SMAEC III contract transition.

ARES' proposal had two Weaknesses under Mission Suitability Subfactor 2. The first Weakness was that ARES proposed an organizational structure that did not have a management counterpart for the JSC Safety and Test Operations Division/NS division between customers or the institutional support workforce. Without a defined management counterpart between the NS

division and its customers and no defined management counterpart to lead the institutional support resources, ARES approach was determined to be incomplete and unreasonable. The second Weakness in ARES' proposal was ARES' failure to map its proposed labor categories to the Government-provided Standard Labor Categories (SLCs), which resulted in an incomplete Staffing and Critical Skills Plan Data Requirements Description (DRD) submittal in response to the RFP. The risk that this failure to crosswalk labor categories to the SLCs presents is that the Government's ability to accurately track labor costs and ensure that the contract is properly staffed could be negatively impacted.

**Subfactor III:** For Mission Suitability Subfactor 3 (Small Business Utilization), ARES' proposal received one Significant Strength and one Strength. ARES earned the Significant Strength for proposing a sound and reasonable approach by exceeding all small business utilization goals. ARES proposed exceeding their overall small business goals by 5% and their Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOSB) goal by 3%. ARES proposed exceeding the remaining small business category goals by 0.5% over the SMAEC III RFP goals. This small business utilization approach greatly increases the probability that ARES will successfully meet its small business subcontracting goals. The Strength cited in ARES' proposal was for ARES' commitment to utilizing small businesses for high technology work. This approach affords opportunities for small businesses to perform high technology tasks and requirements as part of SMAEC III.

#### *ARES Past Performance*

As outlined in RFP M.4, the SEB evaluated the past performance of ARES, its major subcontractors, and its proposed Program Manager as defined in RFP L.23 (Past Performance – Volume II). The SEB examined multiple resources in evaluating ARES' and APT's Past Performance records. The SEB used the narrative provided by ARES in its Volume II, Past Performance, the Past Performance Questionnaires submitted by customers of ARES and APT on prior contracts similar to SMAEC III, interviews with Contracting Officers and Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), past performance reports from the Contract Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) and the Enhanced Data Warehouse (EPDW), Safety Assessments, to include OSHA logs, and the Award Fee Evaluation System (AFES) module of the NASA Acquisition Internet Service (NAIS).

The SEB reviewed a total of five (5) past performance samples from ARES and its major subcontractor, APT, submitted in the Past Performance Volume II and found independently in CPARS by SEB members. Of the five past performance samples, three (3) were determined to be Relevant and two (2) were determined to be Somewhat Relevant. Each contract had some period of performance that qualified as Recent. The overall ratings for the samples were four (4) ratings of Excellent and one rating of Very Good, for an overall Past Performance Confidence Rating of High. The Program Manager proposed currently serves as the JSC Human Spaceflight Program Manager and Chief Growth Officer for ARES Technical Services. The proposed PM also serves as the current Human Space Flight Technical Integration Contract (HSFTIC) Program Manager. The experience of the proposed PM was determined to be Relevant. The overall performance rating for the PM was Excellent. In addition to the past performance samples, ARES' Team safety and health performance was determined to be Excellent.



The Safety and Mission Assurance Services (SMAS) contract at Goddard Space Flight Center and the NASA Kennedy EGS Program (LX) Support Services (KLX III) were both submitted by ARES in their Volume II, Past Performance submission. ARES was or is currently performing as the Prime for both contracts; SMAS was complete as of November 2019. Both contracts were determined to be Relevant past performance submissions. While the work on SMAS was very similar to the SMAEC III work, the magnitude of the contract, \$28M/year, is less than half the size dollar-wise of SMAEC III. SMAS employs approximately 150 WYEs, less than 40% of SMAEC III's projected WYEs. SMAEC III is valued at approximately \$66M/year and is projected to employ 400 WYEs. Additionally, SMAS, while involving spaceflight, does not include *human* spaceflight like SMAEC III. The difference in dollar value and WYEs, coupled with the distinction between crewed and uncrewed spaceflight work, is enough to distinguish SMAS as Relevant to SMAEC III rather than warranting a higher rating, even though the past performance garnered an Excellent rating.

The KLX III contract at KSC was roughly 27% of the size of SMAEC III at \$17.5M/year and 130 WYEs. KLX III is for management, integration, and assurance services for the Exploration Ground Systems (EGS) Program at KSC. In this role, ARES manages the ground systems in support of development, assembly, integration, test, launch, and recovery of Space Launch Systems (SLS) and Orion elements. While much of the scope of KLX III encompasses assurance tasks that align with SMAEC III tasks, such as assurance of hardware/software requirements development, tailoring and verification, reliability analysis, risk management, milestone review support, technical program forum support, IT support, knowledge management meeting services, training, strategic communications and outreach. What KLX III lacks in its scope is the support of the Technical Authority, Quality Assurance, and pressure vessel support activities. While the work performed is similar with many overlapping tasks, the size, scope and dollar value of KLX III are about one-third the size of SMAEC III, and given this disparity in magnitude, KLX III was determined to be Relevant for purposes of past performance.

ARES is currently performing as a sub-contractor on the HSFTIC at JSC. The purpose of this contract is to provide products and services to support mission and program integration and operations for NASA's HSF programs (International Space Station (ISS), Commercial Crew, Orion, Gateway, Extravehicular Activities (EVA), Human Mobility Systems Program (EHP) and Commercial Low Earth Orbit). ARES' portion of the performance is approximately \$87M of the total \$366M contract ceiling. In its role as a sub, ARES provides delivery of some SMA products and services for the ISS Program and provides IT and institutional technical services to additional NASA HSF programs. Some of the content of the SMAEC III SOW is present in HSFTIC, like developing Probabilistic Risk Assessments (PRA), mission planning, risk management, and programmatic risk integration tasks in support of SMA's Certification of Flight Readiness (CoFR). However, HSFTIC does not perform many of the SMAEC III SOW's institutional tasks for JSC and WSTF relating to pressure vessels, the RITF, flight program system safety, software assurance or Quality Assurance tasks at the level of complexity required by the SMAEC III SOW. While both contracts support high risk, high consequence multiple human spaceflight projects, programs, and customers, HSFTIC does not provide SMA for the remaining HSF programs/projects planned for SMAEC III, except for the ISS. While there is some overlap in the type and kind of work performed under HSFTIC, the portion of work being

performed by ARES is only Somewhat Relevant to the size, scope and magnitude of SMAEC III. ARES' annual contract value under HSFTIC is \$17.4M/year and they provide 115 WYEs to the effort. SMAEC III is projected to be approximately \$66M/year with 400 WYEs. The magnitude and dollar value of ARES' effort under HSFTIC is about 25% of SMAEC III's magnitude and dollar value. HSFTIC's scope has some similarities, in that they each serve similar programs but with different functions. Given these factors, this past performance submission was determined to be Somewhat Relevant, despite ARES earning an overall Excellent performance rating.

ARES' major sub-contractor, APT, performed as the Prime contractor on the Safety and Mission Assurance Support Services III (SMASS III) contract at Kennedy Space Center. The SMASS III contract performance is complete. This past performance submission was determined to be Relevant. SMASS III had a contract value of \$44M and employed 65 WYEs, making it about 14% of the dollar value of SMAEC III and 16% of the number of WYEs. The work performed under SMASS III was to deliver SMA, engineering and risk management services for KSC and its launch sites. Tasks included contract management, safety and reliability assessments, hazard analysis/reports, Quality Assurance, SMA risk assessments, inspections, independent assessments and SMA analyses. In addition to supporting all SMA disciplines at KSC, APT was responsible for Exploration Ground Services (ESG) for processing and launch of Artemis/Orion and SLS; Commercial Crew Program (CCP) working with SpaceX and Boeing, and the Launch Services Program (LSP) for launching uncrewed rockets and ISS payload quality/integration. The work performed under SMASS III was essentially the same as what will be performed under SMAEC III by APT; performing SMA services for both crewed and uncrewed spaceflight programs. The SEB used the ARES Team proposed SMAEC III contract functions, as well as the percentage of work proposed on SMAEC III, as the basis to determine if the APT's past performance is relevant. While SMASS III did not include pressure vessel requirements and IT support, APT was not proposed as being responsible for those tasks as the major sub to ARES on SMAEC III. The complexity of both SMASS III and SMAEC III are similar, both supporting the same high risk, high consequence environments for both crewed and uncrewed spaceflight vehicle development, launch vehicle integration, launch operations and spaceflight operations for NASA programs/projects. The size and magnitude of SMASS III was smaller in size and magnitude of SMAEC III, with APT performing a smaller dollar value of work aligning with the type of work APT is proposed to do under SMAEC III. Although APT earned a past performance rating of Excellent for SMASS III, the smaller size and magnitude of SMASS III work makes this past performance submission Relevant.

APT served as the Prime on the Technical, Engineering, Advisory, and Management Support (TEAMS) Safety contract for the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). Contract performance was complete in January 2021 and APT received a past performance rating of Very Good for this contract. The dollar value was \$8.5M/year and represents about 13% of the SMAEC III size and dollar value. The SEB team members found this contract on CPARS. The TEAMS Safety contract was an Advisory and Assistance Services (A&AS) contract for safety support to the MDA in support of the development, implementation, sustainment, and execution of both Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) and program-level safety policies, requirements, and programs. While some of the tasks performed under the TEAMS Safety contract were similar to the system safety and risk management requirements of SMAEC III, the TEAMS Safety contract primarily addressed the systems safety but not the other aspects of the SMAEC III SOW.

Additionally, the TEAMS Safety contract was performed in a military/defense context, whereas SMAEC III will be performed in a human spaceflight context. Because the type of work APT is proposed to do on SMAEC III will be proportionally larger than the analogous work done under the TEAMS Safety contract, the TEAMS Safety contract was more of an A&AS contract than a touch-labor contract, and the work performed only has some similarities to SMAEC III, this past performance sample is determined to be only Somewhat Relevant.

Overall, ARES Past Performance Confidence Rating was High. While ARES and its major subcontractor APT earned excellent marks for their performance of their contracts, the line of demarcation lies in the scope and magnitude of those contracts and the reduced breadth of HSF, on-orbit programmatic SMA experience throughout the past performance submission. After evaluating ARES' Past Performance, the SEB determined that ARES' Past Performance is highly pertinent to this acquisition, demonstrating very effective performance that would be fully responsive to contract requirements. ARES' past performance indicates that contract requirements were accomplished in a timely, efficient, and economical manner for the most part, with only minor problems that had little identifiable effect on overall performance. Based on the Offeror's performance record, there is a High Level of Confidence that ARES will successfully perform the SMAEC III required effort.

#### *ARES Cost*

NASA reviewed ARES' proposed costs. ARES proposed a total IDIQ cost approximately 8.3% lower than the SAIC proposed cost. The SEB calculated a probable cost approximately 0.1% lower than the ARES proposed total IDIQ cost. ARES also proposed a phase-in price, however the SEB found this value to be a cost risk due to unsuitable labor resources allocated to the phase-in. The SEB estimates that an additional 13.3% in value would be required for additional Management resources. Additionally, the SEB found risk of cost growth in the major subcontractor's historical escalation rates. APT's historical escalation rates exceed those proposed by ARES by a range of 24.6% to 68.7%.

### **SAIC Proposal Evaluation**

#### *SAIC Mission Suitability*

The SAIC proposal was evaluated in accordance with the RFP and resulted in the following findings.

	<b>MS Mission Suitability  1000 Points</b>	<b>MS Subfactor I</b>	<b>MS Subfactor II</b>	<b>MS Subfactor III</b>
<b>Offeror</b>		<b>TA Technical Approach*</b>  <b>450 Points</b>	<b>MA Management Approach</b>  <b>350 Points</b>	<b>SBU Small Business Utilization</b>  <b>200 Points</b>
SAIC	816	396 Very Good	245 Good	175 Very Good

\*Includes Safety and Health Approach

SAIC's proposal received 816 points for the overall Mission Suitability Factor score.

**Subfactor I:** For Mission Suitability Factor 1 (Technical Approach), the SEB found two Significant Strengths, two Strengths, and three Weaknesses. The first Significant Strength was SAIC's approach to Technical Scenario L-2-1. The response to this technical scenario was complete and demonstrated SAIC's understanding and application of the SMA requirements, processes, and assessments necessary to recommend options to Mission Managers as an integral part of the Anomaly Resolution Team. SAIC demonstrated that they have the skills, processes, and expertise to provide the necessary risk informed decisions that ensure maximum crew and vehicle safety while successfully resolving a complex anomaly thereby reducing the risk to the Government. The second Significant Strength proposed by SAIC is a complete, feasible and reasonable Safety and Health Program that is evidenced by many examples that include continued participation in the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) and maintaining their status as a Star site. In addition, SAIC is committed to a proactive ergonomics program, strong accountability for safety issues throughout the management structure, specialized certification for their contract safety representative, and provides an organized identification of hazards. This proposed approach will significantly reduce the risk of hazard exposure and significantly increase Safety and Health awareness under the SMAEC III contract.

SAIC's proposal also contained two Strengths. The first Strength was SAIC's proposal for the Software Assurance and Software Safety technical requirements in support of HSF Programs and Projects. SAIC's approach demonstrated a complete and feasible approach for providing assurance and software safety design compliance of space flight systems, which reduces the risk to the Government by ensuring that software related hazards are successfully mitigated to preclude injury or loss of crew and/or vehicle. The second Strength was demonstrated in SAIC's response to Task Order 1, EVA SMA Support. In their response, SAIC demonstrated a reasonable and complete approach to performance of the requisite SMA processes and requirements of EVA. The proposed approach reduces the risk to the Government because it demonstrated SAIC's capability to successfully perform the SMA products and services for one of the highest risk activities in HSF.

SAIC's proposal had three Weaknesses for Mission Suitability Subfactor 1. The first Weakness was an approach proposed by SAIC for a software tool. The approach was unreasonable and infeasible to achieve because of an unrealistic timeframe. This proposed approach increases the risk to the realization of potential resource savings. The second Weakness in SAIC's proposal is that SAIC did not provide for any in-house Pressure Vessel/System (PV/S) training classes. This training is important to the PV/S workforce to maintain understanding of the PV/S requirements among the user community. Lack of such training increases the risk to the Government of unsafe PV/S conditions for personnel on-site across JSC. The third Weakness in SAIC's proposal is that the proposal is incomplete and demonstrates an unreasonable approach for providing the products and services identified in the Statement of Work (SOW) for System Safety and Reliability Assurance (SOW 2.1.1) and Quality Assurance (SOW 2.1.2). SAIC's proposal merely re-states the technical requirements, and focuses on innovations and efficiencies rather than providing technical approaches as required per the RFP.

**Subfactor II:** For Mission Suitability Subfactor 2 (Management Approach), SAIC had one Strength and one Weakness. The strength under this Subfactor was SAIC's proposed workflow and data management approach that may potentially result in a time savings of up to 40%. This proposed efficiency could reduce the risk to the Government by improving timeliness of critical analyses for real-time risk decisions for HSF programs, having a direct impact on the safety of the crew, vehicle and/or mission.

The Weakness in SAIC's proposal under Mission Suitability Subfactor 2 (Management Approach) is the incomplete and unreasonable organizational structure proposed. The organizational structure proposed does not provide for a management counterpart for the JSC Safety and Test Operations Division/NS or a dedicated management counterpart for the institutional technical workforce which increases the risk to the Government for ineffective contract resource management for critical institutional tasks.

**Subfactor III:** For Mission Suitability Subfactor 3 (Small Business Utilization) the SEB found one Significant Strength and one Strength in SAIC's proposed approach to Small Business Utilization. The Significant Strength in SAIC's proposal was their subcontracting plan's sound and reasonable approach to meet and exceed small business goals for this contract. SAIC proposed to exceed overall Small Disadvantaged Businesses goal by 10%, Women Owned Small Business goal by 1%, and exceed Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business goal by approximately 1.4%. SAIC proposed to Small Business and HBCU goals slightly above the RFP and proposed to meet the remaining two RFP recommended small business subcontracting goals. The Strength identified by the SEB in SAIC's proposal regarding small business utilization is SAIC's commitment to ensure that high technology work will be performed by small businesses. This approach will allow opportunities for small businesses to perform high technology requirements as part of SMAEC III.

### SAIC Past Performance

As outlined in RFP M.4, the SEB evaluated the past performance of SAIC and its proposed Program Manager as defined in RFP L.23 (Past Performance – Volume II). SAIC did not propose any major subcontractors. The SEB examined multiple resources in evaluating SAIC's Past Performance record. The SEB used the narrative provided by SAIC in its Volume II, Past



Performance, the Past Performance Questionnaires submitted by customers of SAIC on prior contracts similar to SMAEC III, interviews with Contracting Officers and Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), past performance reports from the Contract Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) and the Enhanced Data Warehouse (EPDW), Safety Assessments, to include OSHA logs, and the Award Fee Evaluation System (AFES) module of the NASA Acquisition Internet Service (NAIS).

The SEB reviewed a total of four (4) Past Performance samples from SAIC. Three (3) were submitted as part of SAIC's Volume II, Past Performance Volume and the fourth was found in CPARS. Of the four contracts, one (1) was found to be Very Relevant and three (3) were found to be Relevant. All four contracts had some period of performance that qualified as Recent. Of the four contracts, SAIC's overall performance was rated Excellent on three and rated Very Good on the fourth. SAIC was the Prime contractor on all contracts considered. SAIC was given an overall Past Performance Confidence Rating of Very High by the SEB. The Program Manager proposed by SAIC had Very Relevant experience and an Overall Performance rating of Very Good.

SAIC's past performance in safety and health was determined to be Satisfactory. The SEB examined SAIC's safety record holistically, taking into account all relevant factors across SAIC's corporate and contract safety record. This Satisfactory rating is due to a couple of OSHA violations, one of which was a record keeping violation and the other was on a contract unrelated to the work being performed under SMAEC III. SAIC's safety record at JSC, under both SMAEC I and SMAEC II was Very Good. SAIC's Experience Modification Rates (EMRs) are excellent, and they are members of VPP. Their CPARS and PPQ comments regarding safety were all positive. Each of these mitigating factors indicated to the SEB that, despite this Satisfactory rating, SAIC has demonstrated the ability to perform SMAEC III in a safe manner.

SAIC served as the Prime contractor and is the incumbent on both SMAEC II and SMAEC I at JSC. SMAEC II was found to be Very Relevant to SMAEC III because the work performed is essentially the same as that to be performed on SMAEC III. SMAEC II's contract size is \$40.6M/year, which is approximately 62% of the size SMAEC III is projected to become with the addition of new missions. The number of WYEs on SMAEC II is 360, which is approximately 90% of what SMAEC III is projected to require. SMAEC I was determined to be Relevant. The purpose of SMAEC I was to provide SMA products and services for spaceflight development and operations, JSC institutional operations, and technical services for the JSC SMA Directorate. SMAEC I supported HSF programs/projects, including ISS, Orion, Commercial Crew, EVA and lunar exploration feasibility activities. The distinction to be drawn between SMAEC I and SMAEC III is in the size of the contract. SMAEC I was valued at \$40.5M/year, which is about 61% of the value of SMAEC III and required 240 WYEs, which is about 60% of the 400 WYEs that SMAEC III is projected to require. SAIC earned Overall Performance scores of Excellent for both efforts.

SAIC served as the Prime contractor on Goddard Space Flight Center's Systems and Software Assurance (SAS) contract, which was completed in May 2022. It earned an Overall Performance score of Very Good. Under the SAS contract, SAIC performed Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) analysis and SMA analysis of high-risk software for key NASA missions



including ISS, Commercial Crew, Artemis and SLS. In addition to supporting HSF missions, SAIC performed program and project analysis, review and assurance services, contract management and some institutional support tasks similar to the requirements of SMAEC III. The SAS effort did not require support for pressure systems, nor did it require support for a facility akin to the Receiving, Inspection, and Test Facility (RTIF) at JSC. Additionally, the size of SAS was approximately half of the projected size of SMAEC III. SAS' annual dollar value was \$34.1M/year versus \$66M/year for SMAEC III and SAS required 210 WYEs as compared to the 400 WYEs projected for SMAEC III. While SAS has much of the same scope and complexity and supported high risk, high consequence missions, the size and some key functional performance areas that are missing from the SAS SOW make it Relevant to SMAEC III.

The final past performance sample reviewed by the SEB was the Rocket Systems Launch Program (RSLP) that SAIC performed for the United States Air Force (USAF). This contract was completed in November 2019 and SAIC earned an Overall Performance score of Excellent for this contract according to CPARS. The purpose of this contract was to support the Rocket Systems Launch Program with Sustainment Engineering for the Minuteman and Peacekeeper Excess Ballistic Missile solid rocket motors and provide IV&V for small and medium space launch and ballistic test target and sounding rocket missions for various Government agencies. SAIC also provided launch vehicle mission assurance for space payload and target launches for USAF and commercial customers, as well as providing IV&V for the Falcon Heavy Launch System. The work performed under this contract that is comparable to the SMAEC III work includes contract management, spaceflight certification of flight readiness, real-time mission support, independent assessment support, Quality Assurance, analytics, special projects, mishap reporting, risk management support, and knowledge management. The scope of work for the RSLP contract did not include supporting the SMA Technical Authority (or the USAF equivalent organization) and supporting pressure vessel certification compliance oversight. While this contract did involve similar high risk, high consequence activity as SMAEC III, the size was a fraction of what SMAEC III is projected to be. RSLP's annual dollar value was \$9.4M/year, which is approximately 14% of the \$66M/year SMAEC III is projected to cost. Additionally, RSLP employed 71 WYEs, which is approximately 18% of the projected number of WYEs on SMAEC III. While much of the work was similar and SAIC operated in a high risk, high consequence environment, the size and magnitude of this contract effort make it Relevant as compared to the size, magnitude, and scope of SMAEC III.

The Program Manager proposed by SAIC for SMAEC III is the current Program Manager on SMAEC II and previously served as the Program Manager for SMAEC I. This individual has served in these roles since 2015 and currently oversees the SMAEC II contract that has an annual value of \$40.6M/year. The Overall Performance of the proposed Program Manager has been Very Good.

Overall, SAIC's Past Performance Confidence Rating was Very High. As the incumbent contractor on both SMAEC I and SMAEC II, SAIC demonstrated that they are highly capable of performing the scope of work required by SMAEC III. SAIC's past performance includes both Relevant and Very Relevant samples for which SAIC earned mostly Excellent performance ratings. SAIC's past performance indicates exemplary performance in a timely, efficient, and economical manner with very minor (if any) problems with no adverse effect on overall

performance. While SAIC's health and safety rating is Satisfactory, the SEB believes, in looking at both the underlying data and SAIC's commitment to the OSHA VPP, that SAIC is committed to a culture of safety and will perform SMAEC III in a safe manner. Based on the totality of SAIC's performance record, there is a Very High level of confidence that SAIC will successfully perform the SMAEC III required effort.

#### SAIC Cost

The SEB reviewed SAIC's proposal cost. SAIC proposed a total IDIQ cost of \$395.6M. In accordance with the information gathered from the proposal, the SMAEC III RFP, and associated documents, the SEB did not make any probable cost adjustments. A risk assessment of \$16,253 was acknowledged for Non-Labor Resources associated with FFP SOW 1.0, however this assessment was de minimus in the overall price. SAIC proposed to perform phase-in at no price to the government.

#### **DETERMINATION**

The RFP included the appropriate FAR provision and was published with its cover letter, which stated in bold text that

**Offerors are encouraged to refer to Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) provision 52.215-1, INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFERORS–COMPETITIVE ACQUISITION, in particular paragraph (f)(4) which discusses the Government's right to award a contract without discussions.**

The FAR states that the "Government intends to evaluate proposals and award a contract without discussions with offerors" and that "initial proposal should contain the offeror's best terms from a cost or price and technical standpoint." FAR 52.215-1(f)(4).

Based upon the evaluation of the proposals received in response to the SMAEC III solicitation, the Contracting Officer and I concur that it is in the best interest of the Government to award without discussions. SAIC's proposals did not have any Significant Weaknesses. Moreover, one weakness identified within SAIC's proposal was an innovation and efficiency proposed by SAIC that the SEB did not find to be viable as proposed. If this proposed innovation is not implemented in the manner proposed, contractual requirements can still be successfully completed. The absence of this innovation does not create a risk to contract performance. The remaining weaknesses in SAIC's proposal do not risk successful contract performance in that the issues are appropriate topics to be addressed during contract phase-in and contract administration. This is particularly true for this IDIQ contract as requirements will be addressed at the task order level and can be clarified and fully detailed during task order negotiations. During routine phase-in discussions or contract administration procedures, the Contracting Officer can resolve issues related to the in-house training classes for Pressure Vessel Systems (PV/S) and the incomplete organizational structure. While both proposals showed both Strengths and Significant Strengths, ARES' proposal had three Significant Weaknesses which would require establishing a competitive range and entering discussions to resolve. However, I do not believe that establishing a competitive range and commencing discussions would result in any appreciable differences in the ranking of the proposals, nor would it create an appreciably better

value for NASA. Both proposals came in well below the IGCE and I am cognizant of the time and expense incurred by contractors entering into discussions and submitting revised proposals. With these factors in mind, it is appropriate to award without discussions.

## **SELECTION DECISION**

During its presentation on January 31, 2024, I questioned the SEB on its evaluation, and I carefully considered the material presented. I also requested and considered the comments of the senior officials and SEB advisors who attended the briefing. The charts presented appropriately summarized the SEB's evaluation of the proposals. As the SSA, I examined the SEB's evaluation of each factor and subfactor and I considered the evaluations of each of the proposals. I found that the evaluations were done in accordance with the SMAEC III RFP and its evaluation criteria. As the SSA, it is my responsibility to make an independent judgment of the SEB's evaluation results and to determine whether I agree with the evaluation results or not. I determined that the SEB systematically evaluated each proposal in accordance with the RFP, documented its evaluations, explained its findings of strengths and weaknesses appropriately, documented its rationale for its past performance ratings and cost/price analysis. The SEB provided detailed answers to follow-up questions I had during the meeting. As the Source Selection Official, I understand the merits, technical and otherwise, and the qualitative aspects of each proposal. I am confident that the SEB did their due diligence in conducting its review in a fair and impartial manner and I take no exception to the SEB's evaluation.

## **CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS**

### **ARES Technical Services Corp.**

In considering each proposal individually, I find that ARES' Mission Suitability has been evaluated as having three Significant Strengths, four Strengths, three Significant Weaknesses and five Weaknesses. In addition, ARES has past performance that is pertinent to this acquisition, demonstrating effective performance. ARES' overall performance was determined to be Excellent. Based on the relevancy of ARES' past performance, I concur with the SEB that there is a High Level of Confidence that ARES can successfully perform the SMAEC III required effort. In evaluating ARES' cost proposal, NASA's probable cost adjustment decreased ARES' overall cost by approximately 0.1%. The SEB noted a cost risk associated with this proposal due to its major subcontractor's historical escalation rates being in excess of the proposed escalation rates by a range of 24.6% to 68.7%. I concur with the SEB that ARES' appropriately adjusted proposal represents the lowest probable cost of the two offerors.

I note that ARES' proposal had a Significant Strength in its approach to the ISS Visiting Vehicle Docking Anomaly technical scenario, which demonstrates a proposed approach that could greatly reduce risk during a real-world anomaly. ARES also received a Significant Strength for its innovative approach to modernizing SMA IT services, hardware and software. Finally, ARES' approach to small business utilization was seen as a Significant Strength. ARES proposed to exceed all small business utilization goals by 5% and exceed SDVOSB goals by 3%. The remaining categories of small businesses were proposed to be exceeded by 0.5% above the SMAEC RFP's recommended goals.

While ARES' proposal did have three Significant Strengths, it also had three Significant Weaknesses and five Weaknesses. The three Significant Weaknesses were in the Technical Approach subfactor of Mission Suitability. These Significant Weaknesses included issues with ARES' understanding of Quality Assurance, ARES' proposed approach for Software Assurance, and ARES' proposed approach for Pressure Vessels/Systems requirements. Each of these mission areas could affect program/project schedules, pose hazards to the crew, vehicle, or the mission, or cause increased hazard exposure for employees and facilities. I have particular concerns regarding ARES' approach for implementing Pressure Vessels/Systems requirements. ARES' Risk-Based Inspection program demonstrates that ARES does not understand the technical requirements governing the pressure systems at JSC and White Sands Test Facility. The pressure systems are crucial for testing in support of NASA human space flight program/project development and operations and for essential site operations at both JSC and WSTF.

### **Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)**

I find that SAIC's Mission Suitability has been evaluated as having three Significant Strengths, four Strengths, four Weaknesses and zero Significant Weaknesses. In addition, SAIC has past performance that is highly pertinent to this acquisition, demonstrating very effective performance. SAIC's overall performance was determined to be Excellent. Based on this Offeror's performance record, I concur with the SEB that there is a Very High Level of Confidence that SAIC could successfully perform the SMAEC III required effort. In evaluating SAIC's cost, NASA did not make any probable cost adjustments. SAIC's proposal represents the highest probable cost of the two Offerors.

I note that SAIC's proposal demonstrated three Significant Strengths. One of these Significant Strengths was in response to Technical Scenario L-2-1 which demonstrated SAIC's understanding and application of the SMA requirements, processes, and assessments necessary to recommend options to Mission Managers as part of the Anomaly Resolution Team. Another Significant Strength was SAIC's commitment to continue participation in the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), which is a Safety and Health program, and other measures that may significantly reduce the risk of hazard exposure and significantly increase Safety and Health awareness under the SMAEC III contract. Finally, SAIC's approach to Small Business Utilization was a Significant Strength. SAIC proposed to meet or exceed all small business goals set forth in the SMAEC RFP. SAIC proposed to exceed the Small Disadvantaged Business utilization goal by 10%, the Woman Owned Small Business utilization goal by 1% and the Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business utilization by 1.4%. Targets for Historically Black Colleges and Universities was slightly above the RFP targeted rate and all other small business categories were either met or slightly exceeded.

While I have explored the basis for SAIC's health and safety rating of Satisfactory, as discussed above, looking at the entirety of SAIC's health and safety record, I have confidence that SAIC can perform the requirements of SMAEC III in a safe manner. One of the OSHA violations was due to a paperwork oversight and the other was for a construction contract unrelated to activities performed on SMAEC III. SAIC's safety record at JSC has been excellent and the CPARS and PPQs do not indicate that SAIC has had safety issues with other Government contracts.

Additionally, SAIC's EMRs are excellent, and it is a member of the VPP, which shows that SAIC is considered to be a company that fosters and is committed to a safe work environment. I understand the SEB's logic in rating SAIC past performance as Very High and do not necessarily disagree with this rating, as it was in accordance with the listed definitions. However, I do not see the distinction between SAIC and ARES' past performance as clearly as the SEB sees it. There is some area for discretion, and I could also have supported an SEB finding that SAIC was rated as having a High past performance. However, even if the SEB were to rate SAIC as High, within that High category of past performance, SAIC would still reflect a slight edge over ARES for all the reasons identified by the SEB.

### COMPARISON OF PROPOSALS

I appreciate both ARES and SAIC for their time and effort spent in preparing their proposals for the SMAEC III contract. It is so important that NASA has a robust contractor community to support our important mission directives because we all benefit from the services offered and I am confident that this competitive procurement process has challenged both Offerors to expand their capabilities for the next generation of Human Space Flight and Exploration.

I have considered the SEB's evaluation of each proposal and base my decision on the entirety of the written documentation and data provided to me. In my independent evaluation of the SEB's evaluation results, I determined that the proposals were evaluated, and I have weighed my decision, in accordance with the criterion of the RFP:

The Cost/Price factor is significantly less important than the combined importance of the Mission Suitability factor and Past Performance factor.

As individual factors, the Mission Suitability factor is more important than Past Performance factor, which is approximately equal to Cost/Price factor.

I have considered the three evaluation factors of Mission Suitability, Past Performance and Cost with respect to the evaluations of both proposals.

For Mission Suitability, I commend both Offerors for their utilization of small businesses in their respective proposals. While ARES proposed to exceed all goals and SAIC proposed to meet or exceed all goals for small business utilization, ARES exceeding of the small business goals by a small percentage for a couple of categories, SAIC was equally as ambitious in proposing to exceed SDB goals by 10%, SDVOSB goals by 1.4% and WOSB goals by 1%. I appreciate both approaches and do not see one as a competitive advantage over the other.

Under Mission Suitability Subfactor I (Technical Approach), ARES had three Significant Weaknesses. SAIC did not have any Significant Weaknesses. The Significant Weaknesses identified in ARES' proposal touched on vital areas of contract performance: Quality Assurance, Software Assurance/Computer Safety support requirements, and Pressure Vessels/Systems requirements. Performance in these areas could impact mission schedules and may pose hazards to personnel or property. I particularly note that ARES' approach for implementing Pressure Vessels/Systems requirements does not reflect an understanding of the technical requirements governing the essential pressure systems at JSC and White Sands Test Facility. Given the



evaluated weight of Mission Suitability under the RFP, these Significant Weaknesses are a discriminator in this award.

Likewise, the Significant Strengths in Subfactor I (Technical Approach) were also meaningful in this decision. ARES had two Significant Strengths, one related to the ISS Visiting Vehicle Docking Anomaly scenario with solutions that would greatly reduce risk to the ISS program by providing Safety and Mission Assurance capabilities that reduce risk in real-world spacecraft anomaly situations and another that help modernize the SMA Information Technology (IT) environment to support of the Human Space Flight (HSF) programs and missions. SAIC had two Significant Strengths. The first Significant Strength was also related to the ISS Visiting Vehicle Docking Anomaly scenario and reduced risk to NASA and demonstrated the skills, processes, and expertise needed to ensure maximum crew and vehicle safety while resolving a complex anomaly. The second SAIC Significant Strength involves its multifaceted approach to significantly reduce the risk of hazard exposure and significantly increase Safety and Health awareness under the SMAEC III contract.

In considering all aspects of the Mission Suitability findings for both Offerors, weighing all the benefits and the risks presented, I find that SAIC has a measurable advantage over ARES.

The cost/price for each Offeror was fair and reasonable and both proposed costs were well below the IGCE. Cost is not a strong discriminator in this award decision. The number of WYEs proposed was consistent between both proposals, with the biggest cost delta being in profit rate and contract phase-in costs.

Past Performance was a smaller discriminating factor, with the size/magnitude differentials between ARES' past performance and the projected size/magnitude of SMAEC III informing my evaluation and giving SAIC a slight advantage over ARES. While ARES had Excellent Overall Performance ratings on their Past Performance, the size/magnitude of the contracts performed were not quite on par with the size of SMAEC III, whereas SAIC's past performance showed better alignment with the projected size/magnitude of SMAEC III.

I have reviewed all the evaluations and find that:

- ARES has the lowest Mission Suitability score, the lowest Past Performance Rating, the lowest price, and the lowest Probable Cost.
- SAIC has the highest Mission Suitability score, the highest Past Performance Rating, the highest price, and highest Probable Cost.

While both Offerors had Significant Strengths, Strengths, and Weaknesses in their proposals, only ARES had Significant Weaknesses in its proposal. The Weaknesses identified in SAIC's proposal were mainly attributed to innovations and efficiencies that the SEB did not find to be of value to NASA and a couple of matters that can be addressed and resolved during contract administration. In this evaluation, Mission Suitability and Past Performance, when combined, are more important than Cost. I have examined and concur with the SEB's evaluation of proposals and recommendations. My independent analysis finds value to NASA when comparing SAIC's superior technical proposal and past performance, and its associated price premium, with the



ARES' lower-rated, lower cost proposal. The value of SAIC's multiple strengths and slight advantage in past performance offset the additional associated costs anticipated with its proposal. I am aware of the merits of ARES' proposal but find that the strength of SAIC's proposal under Mission Suitability, its past performance, and its demonstrated understanding of human spaceflight will improve NASA's mission and warrant the price premium.

The importance of the technical aspects of this contract are apparent throughout the RFP. The SAIC proposal meets and exceeds the proposal requirements and SAIC's past performance history shows that it has the technical expertise to complete all SMA tasks under SMAEC III. The SAIC proposal demonstrates that it thoroughly understands the technical challenges and intricate requirements of SMAEC III through its responses to the Sample Tasks. SAIC also proposed multiple innovations and efficiencies that will help streamline some of the SMA processes, leading to improved timeliness of critical analyses for real-time risk decision making for Human Space Flight Programs.

The SEB explained its rationale for giving SAIC a Very High Level of Confidence rating for its Past Performance. I concur that SAIC has a slight advantage over ARES in past performance and that the evaluated rating of Very High is appropriate. SAIC's past performance demonstrates that they have the technical expertise and the management bandwidth to perform the SMAEC III requirements.

I also discussed the area of cost/price with the SEB. Although SAIC's proposed price was higher than the other Offeror's proposed and probable price, it was still far below the IGCE. Price analysis was performed in accordance with FAR §15.404 to determine if the Offeror's price is fair and reasonable. Since both Offerors' pricing was below the IGCE, the price was determined to be fair and reasonable. Additionally, there was adequate price competition. SAIC's proposed price is fair and reasonable and the approximately 8% increased cost over the ARES proposal represents the best value to the government.

The amount of detail provided in SAIC's proposal clearly demonstrates that SAIC has an appropriate understanding of the SMAEC III requirement, the workforce needed to perform the work, and the technical expertise required to accomplish the NASA SMA mission. I have full confidence that SAIC can perform the requirements of SMAEC III efficiently, effectively, and in a safe manner. I considered the relative value and impact of the evaluation factors in the context of their relative importance in accordance with the solicitation and determine that award to SAIC without discussions is in the best interest of the Government for the Safety and Mission Assurance Engineering Contract III (SMAEC III) under Solicitation 80JSC023R0008.

**DONNA  
SHAHER**

Donna M. Shafer  
Source Selection Authority

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