

**JUSTIFICATION FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY
FOR AN ORDER EXCEEDING THE SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION THRESHOLD
(AUTHORITY: FAR 16.505(b)(2)(i))**

Requisition No.: GAO2310130001

- 1. Agency and contracting activity.** Government Accountability Office, Acquisition Management Procurement Office (AMPO).
- 2. Nature and/or description of the action being approved.**

This is a justification for an exception to fair opportunity for a new order. This document provides the rationale to place an order under National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) via Group A on a sole-source basis to Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company (HPE) Company. Notably, HPE's NASA SEWP V contract is: NNG15SC14B.

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

GAO has a need to acquire hardware to support the many varied and evolving requirements of the Agency regarding updating and replacing the existing Plexxi switch fabric, with an expected one year period of performance.

The total estimated value of this procurement effort is: \$REDACTED.

- 4. Authority and supporting rationale.** The contracting officer has determined the circumstances of the acquisition meet the following statutory exception under FAR 16.505(b)(2)(i) as supported below:

Only one awardee is capable - FAR 16.505(b)(2)(i)(B) – Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized.

By way of background, GAO's Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) runs all of the applications needed by GAO employees, as well as giving the user access to the GAO network for use of enterprise applications such as email, the document management system, and the Intranet. The GAO employee accesses the virtual desktop through a browser running on a physical piece of hardware such as a laptop. VDI ensures no data can be stored on the physical device and thus helps to prevent data breaches. VDI must be running 24 hours a day and seven days a week in order for GAO to complete its mission. The VDI architecture was designed as a complete system, including the switch fabric. In order to address VDI performance issues, GAO needs to expand the bandwidth of the system, including the switch fabric. More frequently, there have been Nutanix system capacity related performance issues in the past 6-12 months. The only option is replacement of existing fabric.

The current switch fabric is Plexxi, which was manufactured and installed by Plexxi. The current Plexxi network hardware is no longer being manufactured, and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) has acquired and replaced it with Aruba network hardware. Due to the complexity of integrating all of the components of the VDI architecture, with the least amount

of risk of interruption of VDI's 24/7 running and security requirements, HPE is the only source capable of providing updated and replacement network hardware for the current system, Aruba, as the successor to Plexxi, with similar configuration that is uniquely situated to replace the current Plexxi hardware support system at the level required for these specialized supplies and services in the most timely, risk free and economical manner.

Plexxi is now part of HPE/Aruba. Since the Plexxi changeover by HPE/Aruba, HPE/Aruba has been fully supporting Plexxi system since the procurement and install of Plexxi system. Therefore, a replacement solution provided by HPE/Aruba ensures compatibility and continuity of service because their complete knowledge of existing switch fabric and their proven replacement solution for other customers that face the same product discontinuation problem as GAO does.

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

NASA has already determined the prices of supplies and services under the NASA SEWP V GWAC to be fair and reasonable. A price analysis was conducted in accordance with FAR 15.305(a)(1) to ensure prices are fair and reasonable prior to making an award with the contract holders.

The GAO Contracting Office will seek additional discounts prior to placing the delivery order.

6. Any other facts supporting the justification.

None

7. Actions, if any, the agency may take to remove or overcome any barriers that led to the exception to fair opportunity before any subsequent acquisition for the supplies or services is made.

GAO is in the process of research and planning to move the VDI architecture to a Cloud-based solution.

8. Technical/Requirements Representative Certification.

I certify that this requirement constitutes the Government's minimum needs and the supporting data provided herein is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

REDACTED

REDACTED
Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)

Date

9. Approving Official Determination of Circumstance Applicability.

In accordance with FAR 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(B)(10), the undersigned approving official for this justification hereby determines the circumstance cited above at #4, Authority and supporting rationale, applies to this order.

10. Contracting Officer's Certification and Approval

I certify this justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Digitally signed by Cedric MT

Cedric MT Mitchener Mitchener

Date: 2023.02.02 18:36:50 -05'00'

Cedric Mitchener

Date

11. Office of General Counsel Concur.

Concur

Procurement Counsel

Date

12. Concurrence and Approval for Justifications

Concur

REDACTED

Date

Director of Acquisition Procurement Management Office

Approve

REDACTED

REDACTED

Date

Controller