

SOURCE SELECTION STATEMENT
FOR THE
SAFETY AND MISSION ASSURANCE ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES
(SETS) CONTRACT
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

PROCUREMENT HISTORY/DESCRIPTION

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), through the NASA Safety Center (NSC) and the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance (OSMA) at NASA Headquarters (HQ), has a requirement for support services. This requirement is a follow-on to and consolidation of two existing contracts: NSC Technical Services Support 2 (NSCTSS2) and OSMA Engineering Support Services (ESS). The purpose of this contract is to acquire Safety and Mission Assurance Engineering and Technical Services (SETS) support. The contractor shall provide the following scope of work requirements segregated as:

Core (base work) Statement of Work (SOW) requirements:

- Administrative Support Services
- Communication and Professional Development Services
- Information Technology Services
- Technical Knowledge Services

Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quality (IDIQ) SOW requirements:

- Survey Support
- OSMA Technical Reach-back and “Surge” Capability Support

To accomplish this requirement, the Government intends to award a single, Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) /IDIQ contract. The five-year period of performance includes a three-year base period with two one-year options.

A Sources Sought Notice was issued on May 21, 2021. A Draft Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued on November 4, 2021. An Industry Day was conducted on November 17, 2021. All questions and recommendations submitted by industry were reviewed and, as appropriate, incorporated into the RFP. A Notification to the public of consolidation of contract requirements was posted on March 15, 2022. The Final RFP was released as a Woman Owned Small Business set aside, NAICS code 611430, via SAM.gov on March 23, 2022. Amendments were issued on April 15, 2022, April 18, 2022, April 19, 2022, and April 22, 2022. Proposals were due no later than April 29, 2022.

Three proposals were timely submitted in response to the solicitation. All proposals were considered initially acceptable and included in the evaluation.

Proposals were submitted by the following Prime Offerors (listed in order received):

- Offeror 1: Nexus Solutions, LLC (Nexus)
- Offeror 2: Banner Quality Management Inc. (BQMI)

- Offeror 3: Bay Systems Consulting, Inc. (BSC)

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE

The three proposals were evaluated by a designated Source Evaluation Board (SEB) in accordance with the evaluation procedures set forth in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.3, NASA FAR Supplement 1815.3, and Section M of the Final RFP.

The Final RFP notified offerors that the Government “intends to evaluate proposals and award a contract based on initial proposals” but reserved the Government’s right to conduct discussions if it deemed that discussions were in the Government’s best interest. Additionally, the Final RFP provided that award would be made to the responsible Offeror whose proposal meets the requirements of the solicitation and provides the best value to the Government based on the weighting of the evaluation factors detailed in the Final RFP.

The Final RFP detailed the following three evaluation factors:

Factor 1: Mission Suitability with the following Subfactors:

- A. Overall Understanding of Requirements (UR) (450 Points)
- B. Management Plan (MP) (300 Points)
- C. Technical Approach to Sample Work Requirements (SWR) (250 Points)

The SEB evaluated each of the three proposals under each of these Mission Suitability subfactors. In accordance with section M.2 of the Final RFP, the SEB classified its findings as significant strengths, strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies, using definitions set forth in FAR Part 15.001 and the NASA Source Selection Guide. The SEB then rated and scored each proposal under each subfactor using the adjectival ratings and numerical scores set forth in the Final RFP. The SEB then consolidated the subfactor numerical scores into an overall Mission Suitability numerical score.

Factor 2: Cost/Price

In accordance with section M.3 of the Final RFP, a cost realism analysis was conducted to ensure that a fair and reasonable price is paid by the Government and to assess the reasonableness and realism of the proposed costs. The cost realism analysis consisted of independently reviewing and evaluating specific elements of each Offeror’s proposed cost estimate to determine whether the estimated proposed cost elements are realistic for the work to be performed; reflect a clear understanding of the requirements; and are consistent with the unique methods of performance and materials described in the Offeror’s technical proposal.

Factor 3: Relevant Experience and Past Performance

In accordance with section M.4 of the Final RFP, the SEB evaluated each Offeror’s relevant experience and past performance using a level of confidence rating scale as defined in NASA FAR Supplement 1815.305(a)(2)(A). The SEB evaluated relevant experience and past performance, including that of any Major Subcontractors/Teaming Partners, by utilizing information in Past Performance Narratives (PPN), Past Performance Questionnaires (PPQ), and Past Performance Databases (PPD), each of which received equal weighting in determining the level of confidence ratings.

Relative Importance of Evaluation Factors

As stated in section M.5 of the Final RFP, the Mission Suitability factor is more important than the Cost/Price factor, which is approximately equal to the Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor. The Mission Suitability factor and Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor, when combined, are significantly more important than the Cost/Price factor alone.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The overall evaluation results as presented at the Source Selection Briefing are summarized below:

	NEXUS	BQMI	BSC
Mission Suitability	523	858	427
Proposed Cost/Price	Lowest	Highest	Second Lowest
Probable Cost/Price	Lowest	Highest	Second Lowest
Relevant Experience and Past Performance	Very High Level of Confidence	Very High Level of Confidence	Moderate Level of Confidence

Nexus

In the Mission Suitability factor, Nexus received 523 out of 1,000 points.

In Subfactor A, UR, Nexus’s proposal was rated “Fair” with one (1) weakness and one (1) significant weakness. Nexus’s proposal contained a Weakness for omitting or demonstrating an inadequate understanding of many of the SOW requirements throughout its proposal and a Significant Weakness for an inadequate approach to administering two major programs: the NASA Safety Reporting System (NSRS) and the Safety and Mission Assurance (SMA) Technical Excellence Program (STEP).

In Subfactor B, MP, Nexus’s proposal was rated “Good” with two (2) strengths and one (1) weakness. Nexus’s proposal contained a Strength for MP1 for presenting a thorough response in its Task Management Approach and Approach to Managing Fluctuating Workloads and a Strength for MP4 for a comprehensive Phase-In Plan. The proposal contained a Weakness for MP3 for including insufficient rationale for personnel proposed to complete the SETS requirements.

In Subfactor C, SWR, Nexus’s proposal was rated “Fair” with one (1) significant weakness and two (2) weaknesses. Nexus’s proposal received a Significant Weakness for presenting an inadequate technical approach to the three courses requested in SWR1 – SMA Training Course Development. Nexus’s proposal received Weaknesses for: (1) insufficiently meeting SWR2 – Information Dissemination requirements in multiple areas and (2) insufficiently meeting SWR3 – Application Development requirements in multiple areas.

Nexus’s proposed cost was lowest of the three offers and lower than the IGCE. A cost realism analysis of Nexus’s proposed costs was performed, and Nexus’s proposed cost received a ~5% upward adjustment. Specifically, an upward adjustment was made to hours, labor dollars, and subcontractor costs due to an increase of 4 WYE and productive work hours in Contract Year 3. Nexus’s probable cost was lowest of the three offers and lower than the IGCE.

In Relevant Experience and Past Performance, Nexus’s proposal received a Very High Level of Confidence. The SEB found six Team Nexus contracts and orders to be relevant. This included five contracts in the proposal’s PPN and one order identified in CPARS. Of these six contracts and orders, three were performed by Manufacturing Technical Solutions (MTS), which is one of the partners in the Nexus Solutions LLC Joint Venture. Three were performed by Bastion Technologies, Team Nexus’s

Major Subcontractor. Considering these six contracts and orders, the SEB found Team Nexus's Past Performance to be very highly pertinent to this acquisition. Team Nexus received 80% Exceptional ratings, 3% Very Good ratings, 1% Satisfactory ratings, and 15% Neutral ratings in the PPQs received. Team Nexus received 75% Exceptional ratings, 4% Very Good ratings, 4% Satisfactory ratings, and 17% N/A ratings in the PPD data evaluated. Overall, the SETS SEB determined that Team Nexus's relevant performance record is of exceptional merit and indicated exemplary performance in a timely, efficient, and economical manner; very minor (if any) problems with no adverse effect on overall performance.

BQMI

In the Mission Suitability factor, BQMI received 858 out of 1,000 points.

In Subfactor A, UR, BQMI's proposal was rated "Excellent" with four (4) significant strengths and two (2) strengths. The BQMI proposal received Significant Strengths for presenting an exceptional understanding of the requirements for Administrative Support Services (SOW 3.1), Event Support (SOW 3.2.2), Training and Professional Development (SOW 3.2.3), and Information Technology Services (SOW 3.3). It also received Strengths for (1) presenting multiple innovative and efficient methods, techniques, and technologies throughout the proposal that will effectively fulfill SOW requirements and (2) displaying a thorough understanding of the requirements of Writing (SOW 3.2.1.2).

In Subfactor B, MP, BQMI's proposal was rated "Good" with three (3) strengths. The proposal received a Strength for MP1 for a thorough management plan, for MP2 for a detailed risk management plan, and for MP4 for a comprehensive Phase-in Plan.

In Subfactor C, SWR, BQMI's proposal was rated "Very Good" with one (1) significant strength and two (2) strengths. The proposal received a Significant Strength for presenting an exceptional understanding of the requirements of SWR2 – Information Dissemination and Outreach, a Strength for displaying a comprehensive understanding of the SWR3 Application Development requirements, and a Strength for proposing a detailed approach to SWR4 – Data Analysis.

BQMI's proposed cost was \$43,939,862, which was the highest of the three offers and lower than the IGCE. A cost realism analysis of BQMI's proposed costs was performed and no adjustments were made. BQMI's probable cost was \$43,939,862, which was the highest of the three offers and lower than the IGCE.

In Relevant Experience and Past Performance, BQMI's proposal received a Very High Level of Confidence. The SEB identified one contract in the proposal's PPN and no contracts in CPARS as relevant. This contract was performed by BQMI. Considering this one contract, the SEB determined BQMI's relevant past performance to be very highly pertinent to this acquisition. BQMI received 31% Exceptional ratings and 69% Very Good ratings in the PPQs received. BQMI received 33% Exceptional ratings, 47% Very Good ratings, and 20% N/A ratings in the PPD data evaluated. Overall, the SETS SEB determined that BQMI's performance record is of exceptional merit and indicated exemplary performance in a timely, efficient, and economical manner; very minor (if any) problems with no adverse effect on overall performance.

BSC

In the Mission Suitability factor, BSC received 427 out of 1,000 points.

In Subfactor A, UR, BSC's proposal was rated "Fair" with two (2) strengths, four (4) weaknesses, and two (2) significant weaknesses. BSC's proposal received Strengths for presenting multiple innovative and efficient methods, techniques, and technologies throughout its proposal that will effectively fulfill SOW requirements (SOW 3.0) and for presenting a detailed approach to fulfilling the requirements of NASA SETS Task Management (SOW 4.0). The proposal received Weaknesses for (1) omitting or demonstrating an inadequate understanding of several Administrative Support Services (SOW 3.1) requirements (IT Purchasing, Property Management and Working Group and Meeting Support), (2) for demonstrating an incomplete understanding of independently administering the anonymous reporting mechanism of NSRS (SOW 3.1.1.4 and Attachment J.1-B, Appendix C), (3) for not sufficiently addressing multiple requirements under Data Analysis (SOW 3.3.2) including NASA Mishap Information System (SOW 3.3.2.1) and (4) for not sufficiently addressing multiple requirements under Technical Knowledge Services (SOW 3.4). BSC's proposal contained Significant Weaknesses for not displaying an overall understanding of requirements of SOW 3.2 – Communications and Professional Development Services and SOW 3.2.3.4 – STEP Management.

In Subfactor B, MP, BSC's proposal was rated "Good" with two (2) strengths and one (1) weakness. The proposal contained a Strength for presenting a strong approach to meeting the requirements of MP1.F – Managing Fluctuating Workloads and a Strength for presenting a detailed and comprehensive Phase-In Plan. The proposal contained a Weakness for MP3 Key Personnel, Staffing and Total Compensation Plan (TCP) for not submitting a TCP for their major subcontractor, Systems Planning and Analysis (SPA).

In Subfactor C, SWR, BSC's proposal was rated "Fair" with two (2) weaknesses and one (1) significant weakness. The proposal received a Weakness for an inadequate and incomplete approach to SWR1 – SMA Training Course Development and a Weakness for an insufficient approach to SWR3 – Application Development. The proposal contained a Significant Weakness for an inadequate technical approach to SWR2 – Information Dissemination and Outreach.

BSC's proposed cost was second lowest of the three offers and lower than the IGCE. A cost realism analysis was performed and BSC's proposed cost was adjusted a total of ~1% upward. Specifically, BSC's proposed cost received an upward adjustment to labor dollars and major contractor costs and a downward adjustment for the proposed project manager rate. BSC's probable cost was the second lowest of the three offers and lower than the IGCE.

In Relevant Experience and Past Performance, BSC's proposal received a Moderate Level of Confidence. The SEB determined two of Team BSC's contracts to be relevant. This included two contracts in the proposal's PPN, one of which was performed by BSC and one was performed by SPA, BSC's Major Subcontractor. Considering these two contracts, the SEB found Team BSC's Past Performance to be Pertinent. Team BSC received 81% Exceptional ratings and 16% Very Good ratings and 3% Neutral ratings in the PPQs received. Team BSC received 16.7% Exceptional, 50% Very Good, 16.7% Satisfactory, and 16.7% N/A ratings in the PPD data evaluated. Overall, the SETS SEB determined that Team BSC's performance record demonstrated effective performance; fully responsive to contract requirements; reportable problems, but with little identifiable effect on the overall contractor performance.

Source Selection Briefing

On October 26, 2022, a briefing of the SEB's findings and evaluation was made to me in my capacity as the Source Selection Authority (SSA). I was provided with a copy of the SEB's findings and evaluation to review prior to the briefing, which I did. The SEB Voting Members, SEB Committee Members, SEB Ex-officio Members, and key management officials also attended the briefing. During the briefing, the overall evaluation process and findings on Mission Suitability, Cost/Price, and Relevant Experience and Past Performance were presented and discussed. Based on the information presented at the Source Selection Briefing, I fully understand the evaluation process and the SEB findings and concur with the overall SEB evaluation and findings. I have reviewed the SEB findings and take no exception to the actions, process, or findings of the SEB. Additionally, during the briefing, I asked questions regarding the information presented and provided the SEB with my independent judgment. At the conclusion of the meeting, I informed the attendees of my decision and my reasons for selection. This selection decision results from the briefing.

Selection Decision

In making my selection decision, I understand that the Mission Suitability factor is more important than the Cost/Price factor, which is approximately equal to the Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor. Further, I understand that Mission Suitability and Relevant Experience and Past Performance, when combined, are significantly more important than Cost/Price. I also understand that award should be made to the responsible Offeror whose proposal meets the requirements of the RFP and provides the best value to the Government based on the weighting of the evaluation factors detailed in the Final RFP. With this weighting in mind, I offer the following rationale to support my selection.

Mission Suitability

In the Mission Suitability Factor, BQMI's proposal stands out and presents a distinct advantage. All three offerors submitted proposals with technical merit, especially with respect to the Management Plan (MP) subfactor, where each proposal was rated "Good" and received multiple strengths. BQMI's proposal, however, which received 858 out of a possible 1,000 Mission Suitability points and was the only proposal without a single weakness or significant weakness, outshines the other two proposals in the Understanding the Requirements (UR) and Technical Approach to Sample Work Requirements (SWR) subfactors, where BQMI's proposal was rated "Excellent" and "Very Good", respectively. Nexus's proposal, which received 523 out of 1,000 points, and BSC's proposal, which received 427 out of 1,000 points, did not rise to the level of BQMI's proposal in these subfactors, in each of which both proposals were rated "Fair". While Nexus and BSC are to be commended for submitting proposals with technical merit, BQMI's proposal stands out and presents a distinct advantage in the Mission Suitability factor.

The superior technical advantage of BQMI's proposal is very evident in the UR subfactor, where BQMI's proposal received four significant strengths and two strengths without any weaknesses or significant weaknesses. BQMI's proposal is the only proposal to receive any significant strengths and I am impressed by each of the Significant Strengths BQMI's proposal received for presenting an exceptional understanding of the requirements for Administrative Support Services (SOW 3.1), Event Support (SOW 3.2.2), Training and Professional Development (SOW 3.2.3), and Information Technology Services (SOW 3.3), respectively. Not only am I impressed by these significant strengths on their own, but also by them being found in three of the four different areas of the SOW's substantive requirements. I am also impressed with the Strengths that BQMI's proposal received for presenting multiple innovative and efficient methods, techniques, and technologies throughout the proposal that will effectively fulfill SOW requirements and displaying a thorough understanding of the requirements of Writing (SOW 3.2.1.2). With significant strengths and strengths in multiple areas dispersed broadly across the SOW's requirements, and no weaknesses or significant weaknesses in any area, BQMI's proposal solidly

demonstrates a thorough understanding of the SOW requirements. I agree with the “Excellent” rating that the SEB assigned to this proposal.

The proposals of Nexus and BSC, which were both rated “Fair”, do not rise to the level of BQMI’s proposal in this subfactor. Nexus’s proposal received a Significant Weakness for an inadequate approach to administering two major programs: the NASA Safety Reporting System (NSRS) and the Safety and Mission Assurance (SMA) Technical Excellence Program (STEP) and a Weakness for omitting or demonstrating an inadequate understanding of many of the SOW requirements throughout its proposal. I note that both of these findings indicate that the proposal omitted or insufficiently addressed certain requirements and do not suggest that Nexus addressed those requirements incorrectly. At the same time, I agree with the SEB that the proposal does not affirmatively demonstrate as thorough an understanding of the SOW requirements as BQMI’s. BSC’s proposal is not quite as strong as Nexus’s under this subfactor. Like BQMI’s proposal, BSC’s proposal also received a Strength for presenting multiple innovative and efficient methods, techniques, and technologies throughout its proposal that will effectively fulfill SOW requirements. It received a second Strength for presenting a detailed approach to fulfilling the requirements of NASA SETS Task Management (SOW 4.0). On the other hand, BSC’s proposal received Significant Weaknesses for not displaying an overall understanding of the requirements of SOW 3.2 – Communications and Professional Development Services and SOW 3.2.3.4 – STEP Management. It also received Weaknesses for omitting or demonstrating an inadequate understanding of several Administrative Support Services requirements (SOW 3.1), demonstrating an incomplete understanding of independently administering the anonymous reporting mechanism of NSRS (SOW 3.1.1.4 and Attachment J.1-B, Appendix C), not sufficiently addressing multiple requirements under Data Analysis (SOW 3.3.2) including NASA Mishap Information System (SOW 3.3.2.1), and not sufficiently addressing multiple requirements under Technical Knowledge Services (SOW 3.4). I agree with the SEB that these significant weaknesses and weaknesses outbalance the proposal’s strengths. I agree with the “Fair” ratings that the SEB assigned to Nexus’s and BSC’s proposals and, while they do demonstrate some understanding of the SOW’s requirements, they do not rise to the level of BQMI’s proposal, which presents a very strong, substantial advantage under this subfactor.

The three proposals are much closer under the MP subfactor, where each was rated “Good” and had at least two strengths, although here, again, BQMI’s proposal presents some advantage. All three proposals received a Strength for presenting solid phase-in plans, which will help ensure continuity and a smooth transition of current services to the new contract. All three proposals also received a Strength for their management plans, or at least certain aspects thereof. BQMI’s proposal received a Strength for presenting a thorough Management Plan. Nexus’s proposal received a Strength for presenting a thorough response in its Task Management Approach and its Approach for Managing Fluctuating Workloads. BSC’s proposal also received a Strength for presenting a strong Approach for Managing Fluctuating Workloads. All three proposals present at least some aspects of a plan to effectively manage the work effort to meet contract requirements. BQMI’s proposal received a third Strength, for presenting a detailed Risk Management Plan, and did not receive a weakness or significant weakness. Nexus’s and BSC’s proposals did not receive a third strength and they each received one weakness. Nexus’s proposal received a Weakness for including insufficient rationale for certain personnel proposed to complete the SETS requirements, which gives rise to some risk that the proposed staffing could be inadequate. BSC’s proposal received a Weakness because its major subcontractor did not submit a Total Compensation Plan as required by the Final RFP, which prevents the Government from evaluating whether BSC will be able to adequately and realistically recruit and retain staff necessary to meet the SETS requirements. Thus, while I agree with the “Good” rating that the SEB assigned to each of these proposals, BQMI’s proposal presents some advantage under the MP subfactor.

Under the SWR subfactor, BQMI’s proposal, which was rated “Very Good,” again stands out and presents a distinct advantage over Nexus’s and BSC’s proposals, each of which were rated “Fair”. BQMI’s proposal, which received a significant strength and two strengths, is the only proposal to receive

any strengths in this subfactor. Nexus's and BSC's proposals, which each received one significant weakness and two weaknesses, are not as strong as BQMI's. I am impressed by the Significant Strength BQMI's proposal received for presenting an exceptional understanding of the requirements of SWR2 – Information Dissemination and Outreach. I also note the Strengths that it received for displaying a comprehensive understanding of the SWR3 Application Development requirements and proposing a detailed approach to SWR4 – Data Analysis. I note that neither Nexus's nor BSC's proposal received any strengths in this subfactor. To the contrary, Nexus's proposal received a Significant Weakness for presenting an inadequate technical approach to the three courses requested in SWR1 – SMA Training Course Development, as well as Weaknesses for insufficiently meeting SWR2 – Information Dissemination requirements in multiple areas and insufficiently meeting SWR3 – Application Development requirements in multiple areas. BSC's proposal received a Significant Weakness for an inadequate technical approach to SWR2 – Information Dissemination and Outreach, as well as Weaknesses for an inadequate and incomplete approach to SWR1 – SMA Training Course Development and an insufficient approach to SWR3 – Application Development. I agree with the "Very Good" rating assigned to BQMI's proposal and the "Fair" rating assigned to Nexus's and BSC's proposals and that BQMI demonstrated a distinct advantage in this subfactor.

While Nexus and BSC are to be commended for submitting proposals with technical merit, BQMI's proposal stands out and presents a materially significant advantage in the Mission Suitability factor. I find it significant that BQMI's proposal is the only proposal that, not only received strengths under each of the three subfactors, but also received multiple strengths under each subfactor and was the only proposal without a single weakness or significant weakness. I am particularly impressed by the thorough and complete understanding of the requirements BQMI's proposal demonstrated under both the UR and SWR subfactors. It is an exceptional technical proposal that presents superior technical value and a materially significant advantage over both Nexus's and BSC's proposals.

Cost/Price

In reviewing the SEB's assessment of each Offeror's cost proposal, I understand that Nexus had the lowest proposed cost, followed by BSC, followed by BQMI. I further understand that each offeror's proposed cost was lower than the IGCE.

As this procurement involves award of a cost, and not a fixed price, contract, the Government bears the risk of any actual costs being greater than what the offerors proposed and, therefore, the SEB, in accordance with Section M of the RFP, performed a cost realism analysis. Based on this analysis, the SEB made upward adjustments to both Nexus's and BSC's proposed costs, which resulted in differences between their proposed costs and probable costs. After discussions with the SEB, I understand the basis for the analysis and agree with the rationale for these adjustments. Specifically, with respect to Nexus's proposal, I understand and agree with the upward adjustment consistent with the SEB's finding that Nexus's proposal included insufficient rationale for certain personnel proposed to complete the SETS requirements, as well as the adjustment to account for an unexplained decrease in productive hours during the third year of the contract. With respect to BSC's proposal, I understand and agree with the SEB's upward adjustment to the proposed labor escalation rate, which was partially offset by a downward adjustment to a particular labor rate, with which I also agree. I further understand that the SEB noted that BSC did not provide indirect rate data as required by the RFP and proposed a certain labor category as non-exempt employees, who could be entitled to overtime pay, both of which present some risk of increased costs even though they did not result in a probable cost adjustment. I agree with these risks and the SEB's determination to identify them without making probable cost adjustments. I also agree with the SEB's analysis of BQMI's proposed cost and rationale for not adjusting it.

After the adjustments to Nexus's and BSC's proposed costs, Nexus's proposal has the lowest probable cost, BSC's proposal has the second lowest probable cost, and BQMI's proposal has the highest probable cost. I further note that the SEB found each proposal's probable cost, which was lower than the IGCE, to be fair and reasonable for the proposed technical approach to meeting the contract requirements.

Based on the information presented, Nexus has a distinct cost advantage over BSC's proposal, which has a much less distinct advantage over BQMI's proposal. Further, the risks the SEB identified in BSC's probable cost, which did not result in probable cost adjustments, make me less confident in the relatively modest advantage that BSC's probable cost might otherwise present over BQMI's probable cost. The probable cost advantage of Nexus's proposal over both BSC's and BQMI's proposals, however, is distinct and somewhat significant.

Relevant Experience and Past Performance

In the Relevant Experience and Past Performance Factor, I understand the rationale for and agree with the SEB's determinations that both Nexus's and BQMI's proposals merit a Very High Level of Confidence and BSC's proposal a Moderate Level of Confidence. All three offerors have a record of relevant past performance that is at least pertinent to the acquisition and demonstrates at least effective performance, fully responsive to contract requirements. All three offerors have a relevant track record providing some confidence that they would successfully perform the required effort. The proposals of Nexus and BQMI, however, stand out under this evaluation factor.

With respect to relevancy, Nexus's and BQMI's proposals are strong, both evidencing past performance that is very highly pertinent to this acquisition. Team Nexus has six relevant contracts and orders, which cumulatively cover all four substantive areas of the SOW's requirements, although there was no record of performance for the joint venture entity itself or MB Solutions, which is one of the two members of the joint venture. BQMI was found to have one contract relevant to this acquisition, with support for relevancy in every area the Final RFP identified for consideration, and on its own covering all four substantive areas of the SOW's requirements. I agree with the SEB that both Nexus and BQMI have records of relevant past performance that is very highly pertinent to this acquisition.

While Team BSC also has a record of relevant past performance that is pertinent to this acquisition, it is not as pertinent as Nexus's and BQMI's relevant past performance. Team BSC has two relevant contracts, which cumulatively cover most, but not all, of the four substantive areas of the SOW's requirements. I agree with the SEB that BSC has a record of relevant past performance that is pertinent to this acquisition.

With respect to performance, all three proposals are relatively strong, but Nexus's and BQMI's stand out. In PPQ ratings, a very high percentage of the ratings for each offeror were either Exceptional or Very Good, with comments and ratings consistent throughout the information. 100% of BQMI's ratings were either Exceptional or Very Good. 97% of BSC's ratings were either Exceptional or Very Good. 83% of Nexus's ratings were Exceptional or Very Good. For each offeror, all ratings that were not Exceptional or Very Good are Neutral, defined in the PPQ as indicating "[n]o record of past performance of for whom information on past performance is not available." In the PPD ratings, 80% of BQMI's ratings were either Excellent or Very Good, with the remaining 20% being "N/A". 79% of Nexus's ratings were Excellent or Very Good, with 4% being Satisfactory, and the remainder being "N/A". For BSC, 67% of ratings were Excellent or Very Good, with 16.7% being Satisfactory, and the remainder being "N/A". For all three offerors, comments and ratings were consistent throughout the PPD data considered. I am impressed that BQMI did not receive a single substantive rating, in either PPQ or PPD, lower than Very Good. Although 4% of Nexus's PPD ratings were Satisfactory, I am impressed that the vast majority of its substantive (non-Neutral or N/A) PPQ and PPD ratings were the highest rating, Exceptional or Very Good. The vast majority of BSC's substantive PPQ ratings were also the highest rating, Exceptional,

although in its PPD ratings BSC received fewer Excellent and more Satisfactory ratings than either of the two other offerors. While all three offerors scored very highly in the PPQ evaluation, BSC's proposal did not rise to the level of BQMI's and Nexus's in the PPD evaluation. All three proposals evidence relatively strong records of relevant performance, but Nexus's and BQMI's stand out over BSC's.

I am impressed by each of the offerors having a record of relevant past performance that is at least pertinent to the acquisition and demonstrates at least effective performance, fully responsive to contract requirements. I agree, with the SEB's determinations that both Nexus's and BQMI's proposals merit a Very High Level of Confidence and BSC's proposal a Moderate Level of Confidence. In the Relevant Experience and Past Performance Factor, Nexus's and BQMI's proposals, which are approximately equal, present an advantage over BSC's.

Best Value

Per the Final RFP, award is to be made to the responsible Offeror whose proposal meets the requirements of the solicitation and provides the best value to the Government based on the weighting of the evaluation factors detailed in the Final RFP. Accordingly, in making my selection decision, I remain mindful that , per the Final RFP, Mission Suitability is more important than Cost/Price, which is approximately equal to Relevant Experience and Past Performance. Further, per the Final RFP, I consider Mission Suitability and Relevant Experience and Past Performance, when combined, significantly more important than Cost/Price.

Under the most important Mission Suitability factor, BQMI's proposal presents a clear and materially significant advantage over Nexus's and BSC's proposals. While all three proposals were solid under the MP subfactor, BQMI's proposal significantly outshined the other in two in both the UR and SWR subfactors, where it compellingly demonstrated that BQMI thoroughly understands the SOW requirements. I am particularly impressed with BQMI's proposal, under the UR subfactor, receiving Significant Strengths and Strengths in multiple areas of the SOW's requirements, without any Weaknesses or Significant Weaknesses in any area. I am also impressed by BQMI's proposal similarly receiving a Significant Strength and Strengths, without any Weaknesses or Significant Weaknesses, for three of the four sample work requirements in the SWR subfactor. BQMI's proposal is outstandingly thorough and complete across the entire factor. While Nexus's and BSC's proposals both present some technical merit, BQMI's technical proposal is exceptional and presents superior technical value and a materially significant advantage over both Nexus's and BSC's proposals.

Under the less important Cost/Price factor, Nexus's proposal presents a distinct advantage over BSC's proposal, which has a much less distinct advantage over BQMI's proposal. At the same time, I note that the probable cost of each of the three proposals is lower than the IGCE and presents a fair and reasonable cost for the technical approach proposed. Thus, while Nexus's probable cost presents a material and distinct advantage over BSC's and BQMI's proposals, that advantage is modest and, when compared to the IGCE, not substantially material.

Under the Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor, which is approximately equal in value to the Cost/Price factor, Nexus's and BQMI's proposals, which are approximately equal, present an advantage over BSC's. I agree with the SEB's determinations that both Nexus's and BQMI's proposals merit a Very High Level of Confidence and BSC's proposal a Moderate Level of Confidence. I am impressed by BQMI's outstanding record of performance on a contract with support for relevancy in every area of consideration and covering all four substantive areas of the SOW's requirements, affirmative evidence that instills great confidence that it could successfully perform the contract being acquired. At the same time, I am also impressed by Team Nexus's outstanding performance across its team members' cumulative record of relevant contracts, which also instills confidence that Nexus could successfully perform the contract. BSC's performance, while commendable, does not rise to the level of Nexus's or BQMI's in either relevance or performance. Under the Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor, Nexus's and BQMI's proposals, which are approximately equal, present an advantage over BSC's.

With Mission Suitability being more important than Cost/Price, which is approximately equal to Relevant Experience and Past Performance and Mission Suitability and Relevant Experience and Past Performance, when combined, being significantly more important than Cost/Price, Nexus's or BSC's proposal would need to present a substantial Cost/Price advantage to merit selection over BQMI's proposal, which was the most highly rated proposal under the Mission Suitability factor and essentially tied for highest under the Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor.

The relatively modest cost savings BSC's proposal presents over BQMI's proposal does not justify foregoing the substantially superior technical value and superior record of relevant experience and past performance presented by BQMI's proposal. While BSC's proposal presents some cost advantage over BQMI's, this advantage is relatively modest, especially when considering the risks that the SEB identified in BSC's probable costs. At the same time, the thorough and complete understanding of the requirements BQMI's proposal demonstrated under the Mission Suitability factor, particularly with the Significant Strengths it received in the UR and SWR subfactors, fully justifies the relatively modest cost premium that BQMI's proposal presents. When this technical advantage is combined with the advantage BQMI's proposal also presents in the Relevant Experience and Past Performance factor, the qualitative superiority of BQMI's proposal substantially outweighs the relatively modest cost savings BSC's proposal presents.

I reach a similar conclusion with respect to the more significant cost savings that Nexus's proposal presents. Again, BQMI's proposal is technically exceptional and significantly and substantially outshines Nexus's proposal in its across-the-board demonstration of BQMI's thorough understanding of the requirements. While Nexus's proposal scored well in the MP subfactor, it did not receive a single Strength in either the UR or SWR subfactors, and a Significant Weakness in each. BQMI's proposal did not receive a single Weakness, let alone any Significant Weaknesses. Moreover, it received Significant Strengths, under the UR subfactor, in three of the four substantive areas of SOW requirements. It is also received a Significant Strength and two Strengths, respectively, in three of the four Sample Work Requirements under the SWR subfactor. It is an outstanding technical proposal with a substantial qualitative advantage over Nexus's proposal. While Nexus's probable cost presents a material and distinct advantage over BQMI's proposal, BQMI's proposal is nonetheless lower than the IGCE and a fair and reasonable cost for the proposed technical approach. Thus, Nexus's cost advantage is not substantially material. Under the Relative Experience and Past Performance factor, Nexus's and BQMI's proposals are essentially equal. With Mission Suitability being the most important factor and, when combined, Mission Suitability and Relevant Experience and Past Performance being significantly more important than Cost, the thorough and complete understanding of the requirements BQMI's proposal demonstrated under the Mission Suitability factor, particularly with the Significant Strengths it received in the UR and SWR subfactors, fully justifies the higher probable cost that BQMI's proposal presents.

Accordingly, I find that BQMI's proposal, which meets the requirements of the solicitation, presents the best value to the Government. Therefore, I hereby select BQMI to perform the SETS contract as outlined in the Final RFP.

**HARMONY
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Harmony R. Myers
Director, NASA Safety Center

Concurrence:

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Kurt A. Straub
Procurement Officer, NASA Glenn Research Center