

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Ames Research Center  
Moffett Field, CA 94035-1000**

**Selection of Contractors  
for  
Programs and Projects (P&P) Services  
and Research and Technology (R&T) Development Services  
for Astrobiology and Space Science Directorate  
RFP2-36482 (PBH-ROB)**

**APRIL 4, 2003**

On June 6, 2002, I, along with other NASA Source Evaluation Board (SEB) Ex-Officio members, met with the SEB members appointed to evaluate the proposals for the procurement of Programs and Projects (P&P) Services and Research and Technology (R&T) Development Services for the Astrobiology and Space Research Directorate. During the meeting the SEB presented the findings from its Final Evaluation report, which I had reviewed prior to the meeting. We discussed the relative merits of the proposals and I solicited additional information from the SEB to assure that I had a full understanding of its evaluation.

My initial Source Selection Statement was issued on July 19, 2002. On August 15, 2002, I issued a revised Source Selection Statement addressing the Mission Suitability point adjustment required by RFP paragraph M.3 (g), Weighting and Scoring.

A protest was received by the Procurement Officer on August 27, 2002. The protest was dismissed on October 2, 2002, based on the determination that NASA would take corrective action by issuing a new source selection statement after I reassessed the SEB's findings and evaluation of proposals herein. This second revised Source Selection Statement provides my assessment of the SEB's findings and my reevaluation of all strengths and weaknesses.

**Procurement Description**

This procurement is to provide Astrobiology and Space Research Services through two contracts that are entitled Programs and Projects Services, and Research and Technology Development Services. The contractors shall furnish all necessary management, services, and material, other than those identified as Government furnished, to perform the work specified in the two respective statements of work (SOWs). This requirement is a realignment of two existing contracts: NAS2-14263 with Lockheed Martin Space Operations Corporation (LMSOC), and NAS2-97068 with Orbital Science Corporation. The requirement includes, but is not limited to, services for support of life sciences research, manned and unmanned missions, advanced life support research and technology development, human factors research, space life sciences projects, research in atmospheric and ecosystem science; planning, design, development, and operation of

space and airborne systems and missions; basic and applied research in astrophysics, planetary systems, exobiology, and astrobiology; project management and administration; and infrared sensors and cryogenic systems development.

The procurement for P&P services was conducted as a full and open competition and will result in a Cost-Plus-Award-Fee contract. The period of performance is eight years with a three-year base period, one two-year priced option, and one three-year priced option.

The procurement for R&T services was conducted as a 100% small business set-aside and will result in a Cost-Plus-Award-Fee contract. The period of performance is five years with a two-year base period of performance, one one-year priced option and one two-year priced option.

### Evaluation Procedure

Proposals were evaluated in accordance with the requirements of FAR Subpart 15.3, "Source Selection," as supplemented by NFS Subpart 1815.3, "Source Selection." Section M of the solicitation, paragraph M.2, "Evaluation Approach" advised offerors that the Government intended to award a contract without discussions.

The RFP identified three evaluation Factors that were defined as Mission Suitability, Past Performance, and Cost. Mission Suitability and Past Performance are each significantly more important than Cost. Mission Suitability is somewhat more important than Past Performance. Of these evaluation Factors, the RFP stipulated that only Mission Suitability would receive points in the evaluation process.

The Mission Suitability Factor consists of five Sub-factors for the P&P award, and four Sub-factors for the R&T award. The Sub-factors are shown below with their respective point allocation, which signifies their importance.

	<u>P&amp;P</u>	<u>R&amp;T</u>
Technical Understanding	400	400
Management Approach	375	400
Key Personnel	125	150
Safety and Health Plan	50	50
Small Disadvantaged Business Participation	50	NA
Total Possible Points	1000	1000

Adjectival ratings are: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor.

The RFP provided for the evaluation, but not the numerical scoring, of Past Performance and Cost.

With regard to the Past Performance Factor, the RFP provided for evaluation by the use of adjectival ratings of "Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," "Neutral," "Weak," "Poor,"

and "Fails," depending on the SEB's assessment of each proposal in this area. For each offeror and its major subcontractors, the SEB evaluated overall Past Performance with respect to Relevant Technical Performance, Contract Management, Corporate Structure, and Other Information. The Past Performance evaluation was based on an assessment of customer questionnaires submitted on behalf of each offeror and of its major subcontractors, and other information submitted and collected pursuant to Section M of the solicitation. For the Cost Factor, the SEB performed a cost realism analysis on the proposed cost, which included an assessment of probable cost and business methods as they affect cost. The SEB assigned a level of confidence of high, medium, or low in the probable cost assessment for each proposal.

### **Solicitation and Receipt of Proposals**

Prior to issuance of the formal RFP, in an effort to better inform industry of NASA's requirements and improve communications, Ames Research Center issued a draft Acquisition Plan and draft RFP requesting industry comments and recommendations on all aspects of the Government's proposed approach to satisfy these requirements. The comments and recommendations received were carefully evaluated and incorporated in the formal RFP as appropriate. A Government response to each comment/recommendation was prepared as an amendment to the RFP. The amendment was then placed on the World Wide Web (WWW) for the benefit of all respondents. The formal RFP was issued electronically on the WWW on October 5, 2001.

For the P&P procurement, only one proposal was received in response to the RFP by the specified closing time and date. The offeror submitted a team that included one subcontractor. The offeror's name and address is as follows:

Lockheed Martin Space Operations  
2625 Bay Area Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77258

For the R&T procurement, three proposals were received in response to the RFP by the specified closing time and date. The following offerors submitted proposals (listed alphabetically). Each offeror submitted a team that included one or more subcontractors.

Enterprise Advisory Services, Inc.  
16903 Buccaneer, Suite 250  
Houston, TX 77058-2058

RECOM Technologies, Inc.  
2412 Professional Drive  
Roseville, CA 95661

Science and Technology Corporation  
10 Basil Sawyer Drive  
Hampton, VA 23666

Written proposals were received for Mission Suitability in the form of the presentation charts for Oral Presentations plus additional required information, in accordance with Section L of the Solicitation and FAR Parts 15.102 and 15.306. Oral Presentations on Mission Suitability only were given by each offeror to the SEB on separate dates for both P&P and R&T. After each presentation, a clarification session was held with each offeror. Offerors provided oral responses to questions pertaining to their presentation. Each session was video taped. Written Past Performance and Cost volumes were also submitted at the same time as the Mission Suitability volume. A copy of each proposal was issued to each of the seven voting members of the SEB.

### **Evaluation Process**

After receipt of proposals and oral presentations, the SEB members individually reviewed each proposal and met to discuss individual findings. None of the proposals were initially determined to be unacceptable and an evaluation of all proposals was conducted.

The SEB identified strengths, weaknesses and questions for clarification for Mission Suitability and Past Performance for each proposal. No deficiencies (defined in FAR 15.001) were found in the proposals. In Mission Suitability, the identified strengths and weaknesses were categorized either as "Significant" or, if not significant, as "Other". The strength and weakness findings were used to establish adjectival ratings and numerical scores for each Mission Suitability Sub-factor. The SEB identified strengths and weaknesses for the Past Performance Factor, based on the teams' proposals and surveys completed by past and current customers. During its evaluation, the SEB established adjectival ratings for this Factor. The SEB also evaluated cost realism of each proposal and assigned an adjectival cost confidence rating and developed cost questions.

For the P&P procurement, the initial evaluation findings were presented on April 25, 2002. No deficiencies were found. Although the RFP stated the Government's intent was to award a contract without discussions, I determined that discussions should be held on the Cost Factor. Since only one proposal was received, I determined that the SEB could consider the initial report as its final report, pending answers to the cost questions and any revised proposal submission. Discussions were then held and a final revised proposal received.

For the R&T procurement, the initial evaluation findings were presented on May 2, 2002. No deficiencies were found. It is noted that a minority report for the R&T portion only was presented to me for review by one of the SEB members. I read the minority report after the initial findings presentation. Based on the initial findings, presentation, and minority report, I formulated a few questions in addition to those already identified. On May 7, 2002, I determined that although the RFP stated the Government's intent was to award a contract without discussions, selection and award based on initial evaluation were not appropriate. I therefore directed the SEB to hold discussions.

All three proposals were determined to be in the competitive range. On May 10, 2002, the offerors were advised of all aspects of their proposals that required additional clarification and given an opportunity to offer an explanation or clarification. In addition, all offerors were notified of adverse past performance information identified in the past performance surveys and were given an opportunity to comment. At the conclusion of written discussions, for which responses were due by the common cut-off date of May 17, 2002, evaluation of responses was completed on May 29, 2002. Final proposal revisions were requested from all offerors, due on June 3, 2002. Final evaluations were completed on June 5, 2002. The SEB Chair presented the final evaluation findings for the R&T procurement to the SSA on June 6, 2002.

I reviewed the SEB's final findings of strengths and weaknesses for Mission Suitability and the resultant adjectival ratings and numerical scores for Mission Suitability. I reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, and the adjectival ratings for Past Performance. I reviewed the Cost Factor with respect to proposed costs and the adjustments resulting in probable costs, assessing cost realism. I fully considered all of this information prior to making my final decision.

## **EVALUATION FINDINGS OF THE SEB**

### **Programs and Projects (P & P) Services**

#### **Mission Suitability Factor**

##### **Lockheed Martin/Orbital**

The Lockheed Martin Team's Mission Suitability proposal received a Very Good (VG) score.

In the Technical Understanding Sub-factor, four Significant strengths were noted by the SEB, and there were no weaknesses identified. The four Significant strengths were identified as: an excellent approach to meeting the requirements for Space Station tasks, an innovative Bioengineering Database, an excellent approach to meeting the requirements for Space Shuttle tasks, and an excellent approach to meeting the requirements for Unmanned Research Missions tasks.

In the Management Approach Sub-factor, one Significant strength was identified: the proposed innovative computer based management information system. No weaknesses were identified.

In the Key Personnel, Small Disadvantaged Business, and Safety and Health Plan Sub-factors, no strengths or weaknesses were noted.

### **Past Performance Factor**

The Lockheed Martin Team's Past Performance was rated by the SEB as Very Good. Several strengths were noted in the areas of: consistent "Excellent" to "Good" past and current customer evaluations, relevant technical performance, and contract management. One weakness was cited in the area of relevant technical performance, but the strengths far outweighed the cited weakness.

### **Cost Factor**

The Lockheed Martin Team's Cost proposal received a High Confidence Level based on reasonable and consistent rates. After written discussions, the most probable cost was consistent with the revised proposed cost.

### **SELECTION DECISION OF THE SOURCE SELECTION AUTHORITY FOR P&P SERVICES**

The Lockheed Martin Team's revised proposal for the P & P Services is selected for contract award.

### **EVALUATION FINDINGS OF THE SEB**

#### **Research and Technology Development (R&T) Services**

#### **Mission Suitability Factor**

#### **EASI/SAIC/Wyle**

EASI's Team proposal originally received an overall Mission Suitability rating of "Very Good." Appropriate points were deducted from the score in accordance with RFP paragraph M.3 (g), "Weighting and Scoring", due to probable cost adjustments. The amount of the required point adjustment is based on the amount of percentage difference between proposed and probable cost. EASI's proposed cost exceeded its probable cost within the 5% to 6% range. Section M prescribes a 50 point adjustment when the percentage difference between proposed and probable cost is greater than 5% but equal to or less than 10%. The resulting 50 point deduction changed the overall adjectival rating of EASI from "Very Good" to near the very top of "Good."

In the Technical Understanding Sub-factor, EASI's proposal had two "Other" strengths and no weaknesses. The first Other strength was for EASI's ability to demonstrate: a) a very good technical understanding of laboratory research processes, b) highly relevant (life sciences) technical expertise, and c) its understanding of its possible intermittent role throughout the life cycle of the research process. For the second Other strength, EASI also demonstrated its ability to obtain the College of American Pathology certification for microbiology laboratories; the successful experience of obtaining lab

certification itself provides additional value to the Government, although this specific certification is not here applicable.

In the Management Approach Sub-factor, EASI's proposal had two strengths -- one "Significant" and one "Other" -- and two "Other" weaknesses. The Significant strength was for a proposed innovative web-based management information system that provides task and project information with broad functionality. The Other strength was for a proposed benefit package that is expected to enhance employee recruitment and retention. The two Other weaknesses were for, respectively: inappropriate proposed formal lines of communication between the Contractor and the Government; and inappropriate proposed hiring procedures.

In the Key Personnel Sub-factor, EASI's proposal had one "Other" strength and one "Other" weakness. The Other strength recognized the proposed site manager's demonstration of leadership, management, and communication skills throughout the Oral Presentations. The proposed site manager took full responsibility and command of the offeror's responses during the clarification period of the oral presentations. These demonstrated skills, coupled with his technical experience, provided a high level of confidence that the proposed site manager would be able to provide the necessary oversight and management of the proposed effort. The Other weakness was for the limited knowledge of contract administration possessed by another of EASI's proposed key personnel.

In the Safety and Health Plan Sub-factor, EASI's proposal had one "Significant" strength and no weaknesses. The Significant strength was for a proposed on-site, highly qualified, certified safety and health professional to lead the safety and health effort. This specialist has extensive relevant experience at Ames, and was an instrumental participant in Ames' achievement of a STAR certification under the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

### **RECOM/Bionetics/TechnoScience/Atlas Scientific**

RECOM's Team proposal received an overall Mission Suitability rating of "Very Good."

In the Technical Understanding Sub-factor, RECOM had three strengths -- one "Significant" and two "Others" -- and no weaknesses. The SEB found a Significant strength in the area of proposed expertise in performing high-performance computing meshed with strong collaborations with Ames Information Technology Directorate. The two Other strengths were for, respectively: the proposed innovative and well-coordinated support of the Center for Gravitational Biological Research (CGBR) Facilities; and a proposed method to centralize and expand the recruitment of human subjects.

In the Management Approach Sub-factor, RECOM's proposal received from the SEB seven strengths -- one "Significant" and six "Others" -- and one "Other" weakness. The Significant strength was for an innovative web-based on-line cost/project data reporting system. The six Other strengths were for, respectively: (1) a good subcontracting plan; (2) proposed relationships with an external network of research associations, companies and universities that could readily support the contract; (3) a proposed "partnering" process for phase-in which could help resolve workforce issues during the transition; (4) a proposed method to reduce facilities costs; and (5) and (6) were both for different aspects of a proposed benefit package which would enhance employee recruiting and retention. The Other weakness was inappropriate proposed formal lines of communication between the Contractor and the Government.

In the Key Personnel Sub-factor, RECOM's proposal received from the SEB one "Other" strength and two "Other" weaknesses. The Other strength was for the proposed Site Manager's Ames PBC contract experience, which would expedite the phase-in and contract start process. The Other weaknesses were assigned because: (1) RECOM's team did not provide a Letter of Commitment for the proposed designated Key Personnel for the Space Project's Integrated Team Leader Position as directed in the RFP, p. 91, Section L.10 (a); and (2) one of RECOM's proposed key personnel has limited managerial experience necessary for fulfilling the subject position (based on resume and oral presentation clarification period).

RECOM's Team did not receive any strengths or weaknesses for its safety and health plan.

### **Science and Technology Corporation (STC) and Lockheed Martin Space Operations (LM)**

STC's Team proposal received an overall Mission Suitability rating of "Fair." Appropriate points were deducted from the score in accordance with RFP paragraph M.3 (g), "Weighting and Scoring", due to probable cost adjustments. The amount of the required point adjustment is based on the amount of percentage difference between proposed and probable cost. STC's proposed cost exceeded its probable cost within the 10% to 15% range. Section M prescribes a 100 point adjustment when the percentage difference between proposed and probable cost is greater than 10% but equal to or less than 15%. The resulting 100 point deduction did not change the adjectival rating.

In the Technical Understanding Sub-factor, STC's proposal had one "Other" strength and one "Other" weakness cited by the SEB. The Other strength was for STC's proposed promotion of the CGBR Facilities. The Other weakness was for the omission of a critical step (Quality Assurance and Quality Control) required for operating and testing in the Central Clinical Lab (CCL).

In the Management Approach Sub-factor, STC's proposal had one "Other" strength and three weaknesses -- two "Significant" and one "Other" -- assigned by the SEB. The Other strength was for the proposed benefit package that would enhance employee

recruitment and retention. The two Significant weaknesses were for, respectively: (1) inappropriate and unrealistic proposed staffing of certain Key positions; and (2) insufficient and unrealistic proposed non-Key staffing and skill mix to perform the tasks described in the RFP. The Other weakness was the proposed plan to use junior personnel to fill certain senior positions.

In the Key Personnel Sub-factor, STC's proposal received from the SEB no strengths and four weaknesses -- one "Significant" and three "Other". The Significant weakness was assigned because the offeror did not provide letters of commitment for any of its proposed designated key personnel as directed in the RFP. The three Other weaknesses were assigned because: (1) one of the proposed Key Personnel has limited overall experience in assigned work areas, which is a risk to contract performance; (2) another proposed Key Personnel demonstrated a lack of contract management experience, in-depth knowledge of the RFP, the proposal, and the required tasks (based on oral presentation and clarification); and (3) one proposed "Key" position in the research area was determined by the SEB not to be "Key".

In the Safety and Health Plan Sub-factor, STC's team received one "Other" strength and no weaknesses. The Other strength was a proposed as-needed, on-site certified safety professional to assist in safety and health.

### **Past Performance Factor**

The SEB's evaluation of the Past Performance Factor gave an overall "Very Good" rating to EASI's team, an overall "Very Good" rating for RECOM's team, and an overall "Weak" rating for STC's team.

### **EASI/SAIC/Wyle**

EASI's team received consistent and highly rated customer survey responses from "Excellent" to "Very Good" for the prime and the two subcontractors, based on responses from previous and current customers. For the team there were 13 strengths and no weaknesses. Of the 13 strengths, nine were from customer surveys, and four were from the proposal's Past Performance section. The strengths were for, respectively: (1) overall Excellent to Very Good survey responses for all three companies individually; (2) EASI and Wyle mastered and applied the new requirements of ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and EVM (Earned Value Management) at a Government installation; (3) EASI exceeded the technical requirements on a contract at a Government installation by implementing a new environmental system that resulted in significant cost savings; (4) SAIC has been very successful in carrying out projects for which there is no precedent, has been very responsive to changing needs, possesses a history of accurate budget estimating and staying within budget, and getting to the root cause of a problem and fixing it; (5) Wyle Lab was commended by a previous customer for being adaptable to a widely varying program requirement; (6) previous and current customers cited EASI's management as being committed to success, providing excellent customer service and providing a high

quality of service, having access to diverse technical and administrative skills, providing effective communications early in the contract, and demonstrating considerable initiative in supporting educational outreach activities; (7) SAIC was cited for having the management skills and focus to meet all goals and requirements; (8) SAIC was cited as being very professional when representing NASA, and putting forth whatever effort is required to produce a quality product in a timely and safe manner; (9) previous and current customers cite Wyle's ability to manage diverse scientific and medical work, and praise their responsiveness, reliability, and integrity; (10) SAIC was cited for having a responsive corporate office that draws from corporate resources as needed to meet project requirements; (11) EASI received 4 awards in the last five years related to Government contract management/contract performance; (12) SAIC received 4 awards in the last five years related to Government contract management/contract performance, is ISO certified and has received the OSHA VPP STAR certification; and (13) Wyle received 1 award in the last five years related to Government contract management/contract performance, is ISO certified, and has received numerous NASA technical awards.

Each of the firms on the EASI team received strengths under "relevant technical performance" from customer evaluations. Each of these firms received strengths under "contract management" from customer evaluations. Each of these firms has received numerous recognition awards within the last five years for Government contract business practices.

#### **RECOM/Bionetics/TechnoScience/Atlas Scientific**

RECOM's team received consistent customer survey responses of "Excellent" to "Good" for the prime and one subcontractor, based on responses from both previous and current customers. No surveys were received for two of RECOM's other subcontractors. No surveys were received from TechnoScience and Atlas because in the RFP, we asked for past performance surveys from the proposed prime and major subcontractor(s). Neither company was identified as a major subcontractor in Recom's proposal. Only Bionetics was addressed as a "Major Subcontractor" in RECOM's past performance volume.

For the team, there were nine strengths and no weaknesses. Of the nine strengths, five were from customer surveys, and three were from the proposal's Past Performance section, and one was from the oral presentation. The strengths were for, respectively: (1) overall Excellent to Good survey responses for the two companies; (2) Bionetics was cited for keeping projects below projected costs and providing excellent support for R & D activities; (3) Techno Science has a strong knowledge base and experience in the field of infrared systems and detectors; (4) RECOM enhanced its cost accounting system with a project management tool; (5) RECOM was cited for its ability to hire technically skilled staff that meets requirements and has good interactions with the Contracting Officer when resolving issues, having a strong positive relationship with their employees and having accessible managers, and in responding to many changes and unclear requirements; (6) Bionetics was cited for being responsive in meeting contract and research requirements, treating their employees with great respect, and having high

retention of a very qualified and motivated staff; (7) RECOM was cited for having many senior managers who rose from the ranks of contract management; (8) Bionetics' corporate office was cited for being responsive to the customer's needs; and (9) RECOM received one NASA technical award in the last five years for technical performance.

### **Science and Technology Corporation (STC)/Lockheed Martin Space Operations (LM)**

STC's team received "Excellent" to "Good" customer survey responses for the prime and subcontractor based on responses from previous and current customers. For the team, there were five strengths and three weaknesses. Of the five strengths, all were from customer surveys. The strengths were for, respectively: (1) customer surveys in the excellent to good ranges; (2) previous and current customers cited STC as being knowledgeable about NASA's commercialization process; (3) previous and current customers cited LM as being technically competent and flexible; (4) previous and current customers cited STC as having effective managers, providing quality technical people, and being able to understand the science community's needs and meet them; and (5) previous and current customers cited LM's management as being outstanding, competent and effectively able to manage a diverse set of tasks.

The three weaknesses covered problems in contract management, arising from, respectively, (1) inappropriate staffing of positions relating to an inadequate level of experience; (2) working at risk, which generates cost risk for the Government; and (3) slow responses to customer requests.

### **Cost Factor**

The SEB assessed each offeror's cost proposal. This included verifying that each offeror is in compliance with the RFP requirements; correcting offerors' computational errors; evaluating the reasonableness of the proposed rates for fringe benefits, overhead, and G&A; and ascertaining that proposed labor rates are reasonable for the labor market in which the contract will be performed. The cost elements were analyzed, including subcontractors' costs, proposed labor rates and skill mix, indirect rates and fee. All offerors received probable cost adjustments.

The EASI team had the highest proposed and probable cost with a high probable cost confidence. The RECOM team had the second highest proposed and probable cost with a high probable cost confidence. EASI's proposed cost is less than one and one-half percentage (0.015) higher than RECOM and EASI's probable cost is less than one-half of one percentage (0.005) higher than RECOM. The STC team had the lowest proposed and probable cost with a medium probable cost confidence. The confidence level indicates the Government's confidence that the offeror's probable costs are realistic for the work to be performed, and indicates that the costs are consistent with the various elements of the offeror's technical proposal.

## SELECTION DECISION OF THE SOURCE SELECTION AUTHORITY FOR R&T SERVICES

Introduction: FAR Part 15.308 "Source Selection Decision" states: "The Source Selection Authority's (SSA) decision shall be based on a comparative assessment of proposals against all source selection criteria in the solicitation. While the SSA may use reports and analyses prepared by others, the source selection decision shall represent the SSA's independent judgment. The source selection decision shall be documented and the documentation shall include rationale for any business judgments and trade-offs made or relied on by the SSA, including benefits associated with additional costs. Although the rationale for the selection decision must be documented, that documentation need not quantify the trade-offs that led to the decision."

At the conclusion of the SEB's presentation, I met with senior SEB ex-officio members to discuss the relative merits of the proposals. This meeting discussed an integrated assessment among the evaluation Factors. My selection is based on a comparative assessment of all three proposals against all source selection criteria in the RFP and represents my independent judgment. It is important to note the relative merit of the three Factors: Mission Suitability and Past Performance are each significantly more important than Cost. Mission Suitability is somewhat more important than Past Performance.

I carefully reviewed all of the SEB's findings to ensure a full understanding. I did not simply count and compare the numbers of strengths and weaknesses, but I considered the potential impact of a strength or weakness. I also considered the relevance of the strengths and weaknesses to this proposed effort. Using my own independent judgment, pursuant to FAR Part 15.308, I also reassessed the findings of the SEB, including the validity of the assigned strengths and weaknesses, and then repeated this process, pursuant to NASA's corrective action referenced above.

### Reassessment of the SEB's findings:

Only my disagreements with the SEB's findings are addressed below. If a particular strength or weakness is not addressed below, I concur with the SEB's findings relating to that strength or weakness.

#### -- Regarding EASI:

First, I concur with all of the strengths assigned by the SEB for EASI under the Mission Suitability Factor. Further, although I also concur with the three weaknesses assigned by the SEB for EASI under the Mission Suitability Factor, in my judgment these three weaknesses will have minimal impact on the offeror's ability to perform the requirements, because the opportunity for these weaknesses ultimately to impair contract performance will be eliminated through education on Center policies and contract management, and through the assistance of its own corporate office staff and contract

management training. Second, I concur with all of the SEB's specific findings for EASI under the Past Performance Factor, described above. However, in my judgment, those findings support an overall Past Performance rating of "Excellent", as opposed to the overall "Very Good" rating that was assigned by the SEB. The RFP defines an "Excellent" rating as follows: "Consistent record of exceptional past performance by the offeror and any proposed major subcontractors on work identical or very similar to the work requirements of the proposed contract. Many strengths and no weaknesses." In light of the content and number of EASI's various strengths under this Factor, and the absence of any weaknesses, in my judgment EASI's Past Performance fully qualifies herein as "Excellent". Indeed, it is my opinion that the clear merit, value and relevance of the thirteen strengths assigned to EASI under Past Performance, as described above, compel me to assign an "Excellent" rating. I was most impressed with the customer surveys received for EASI (as reflected, for example, in strengths (1), (6), and (11)). As the proposed prime contractor, EASI's customer surveys, in my opinion, provided sufficient, relevant technical performance information, as it relates to research and development. Based on this, I have a high level of confidence in EASI's technical ability.

-- Regarding RECOM:

First, regarding Mission Suitability, I disagree with many of the strengths assigned by the SEB to RECOM under the two most highly weighted, and thus most important, Sub-Factors. Namely:

*Technical Understanding:*

I disagree with the one Significant strength assigned by the SEB to RECOM under this Sub-Factor for RECOM's proposed expertise in performing high-performance computing meshed with strong collaborations with Ames Information Technology Directorate. In my judgment, this attribute simply is not within the broad scope of the R&T to be performed under this Contract, as specified in the RFP. Moreover, this capability is already available at Ames. The Astrobiology and Space Research Directorate already has strong collaborations with the Information Technology Directorate on an "as needed" basis. This proposed expertise and these proposed collaborations thus would not bring any new or unique features to this contract, and therefore adds no new value for the Government.

Further, although I agree with the two Other strengths assigned by the SEB to RECOM under this Sub-Factor -- namely, RECOM's proposed innovative support of the CBGR Facilities, and its proposed method to centralize and expand the recruitment of human subjects -- in my judgment, these Other strengths address a very narrow scope of activities within the purview of this contract, contribute only minimally to the overall efforts to be performed under this contract, and thus will provide little added value to the Government.

*Management Approach:*

The SEB assigned RECOM one Significant strength and six Other strengths under this Sub-Factor (which are described, in order, above). I agree with the one Significant strength and two of the Other strengths, but disagree with four of the Other strengths. I agree with Other strengths (3) and (5) assigned by the SEB, namely for RECOM's "partnering" process for phase-in and for RECOM's benefit package. These strengths, I agree, do add value for the Government.

However, I disagree with Other strengths (1), (2), (4), and (6). In my judgment, these proposed attributes were of marginal value. "Strength" (1), for RECOM's good subcontracting plan, was not required because this R&T portion of the procurement is a small business set-aside (which does not require a subcontracting plan) and, therefore, RECOM's subcontracting plan adds no value for the Government. "Strength" (2), for RECOM's proposed relationships with an external network of research associations, companies and universities, while an interesting and innovative idea, would likely have a very small impact on the overall work to be performed under this Contract, in my judgment. "Strength" (4), for RECOM's proposed method to reduce facilities costs, offered a marginal total cost impact due to the limited number of staff that would be involved. "Strength" (6), for a certain employee benefit offered by RECOM, in my judgment will provide dubious ultimate value to the Government in this circumstance of a limited term support service contract.

In my judgment, the one weakness assigned by the SEB to RECOM under the Management Approach Sub-Factor would have minimal impact on the offeror's ability to perform the requirements, because the opportunity for this weakness ultimately to impair contract performance would be eliminated through education on Center policies and contract management, and through the assistance of its own corporate office staff and contract management training.

I do, however, fully concur with the two Other weaknesses assigned by the SEB to RECOM under the Key Personnel Sub-Factor, and I also agree with the one Other strength assigned to RECOM under this Sub-Factor.

Second, regarding the Past Performance Factor, I disagree with the SEB that RECOM qualifies for an overall rating of "Very Good". First, I do not agree that RECOM's past performance encompasses "work identical or very similar to the work requirements of the proposed contract," as required by the definition of "Very Good" stated in the RFP. In my opinion, although its past performance was successful, RECOM's past work is only somewhat similar to the work requirements of this Contract. For a specific example, the high-performance computing which has been RECOM's hallmark is not "identical or very similar to" the work requirements of the proposed contract. The prior infrared detector work of subcontractor TechnoScience is completely relevant. However, as the proposed prime contractor, in my opinion the customer surveys submitted for RECOM lacked sufficient, relevant technical performance information regarding research and development. This lowered my level of confidence in RECOM's technical ability. Further, I note that the customer survey responses for the RECOM team ranged from

Excellent to Good. The RFP defines a "Good" rating for Past Performance as "Successful past performance by the offeror and any proposed major subcontractors on work similar to the work requirements of the proposed contract. Strengths outweigh any weaknesses." In my judgment, this overall rating of "Good" is more appropriate for RECOM under Past Performance.

-- Regarding STC:

I concur with the one "Other" weakness assigned by the SEB to STC under the Technical Understanding Sub-factor, namely for the omission of a critical step (Quality Assurance and Quality Control) required for operating and testing in the Central Clinical Lab (CCL). However, in my judgment, the opportunity for this weakness ultimately to impair contract performance could be eliminated through experienced lab personnel, documented lab procedures, quality control, and contract administration.

Selection Discussion:

Based on my reassessment of the strengths and weaknesses attributable to the proposal teams, and the impact and relevance of those reassessed findings, I select the EASI/SAIC/Wyle team for contract award.

In the Mission Suitability and Past Performance Factors, which are each significantly more important than Cost, EASI and RECOM are both clearly superior to STC, both in the findings of the SEB and in my own judgment. In Mission Suitability, I believe that the weaknesses in contract management for STC would jeopardize science requirements and create fiscal liability for both the Contractor and the Government. In Past Performance, I agree with the SEB that the rating of "Weak" is appropriate, and meets the RFP definition which states: "Weaknesses outweigh strengths." Therefore, I eliminate STC from further consideration for selection.

As between EASI and RECOM, my analysis is as follows:

In Mission Suitability, the SEB rated EASI "Very Good" and -- after the point adjustment was made to EASI's overall score due to the delta between its proposed and probable costs required by RFP paragraph M.3 (g), Weighting and Scoring -- EASI's overall adjectival rating dropped from "Very Good" to near the very top of "Good". I acknowledge the 50 point debit for EASI as prescribed by the RFP and, although I consider some of the weaknesses assigned to EASI to be of minimal import, I agree with the adjectival rating of near the very top of "Good" ultimately assigned to EASI for Mission Suitability.

The SEB rated RECOM "Very Good" in Mission Suitability. However, I disagree with the SEB's findings on Mission Suitability for RECOM. As fully described above, I deem RECOM not to be entitled to the one "Significant" strength assigned to it in the Technical Understanding Sub-Factor, and I see little value in the two "Other" strengths assigned to RECOM in this Sub-Factor. Further, I deem RECOM not to be entitled to four of the six

"Other" strengths assigned by the SEB under the Management Approach Sub-Factor. Also, I concur with the SEB regarding the appropriately assigned weaknesses for RECOM under the Key Personnel Sub-Factor regarding, respectively, its failure to submit a commitment letter for a Key position and the limited managerial experience of one of its proposed Key personnel. My reassessment of the Technical Understanding and Management Approach Sub-Factors, worth a potential total of 800 points out of 1,000, significantly alters RECOM's Mission Suitability rating, as otherwise viewed by the SEB. In my judgment, after this reassessment, RECOM is entitled to an adjectival rating of "Good".

In my judgment, after this reassessment, the advantage offered by EASI over RECOM in the Mission Suitability Factor (the most important Factor in the RFP) is the second most important discriminator between the proposals and in this selection. After my reassessment, EASI offers an advantage to the Government over RECOM in the Mission Suitability Factor, based on the following specific attributes of EASI's proposal which I find of particular value to the Government: its highly relevant (life sciences) proposed technical expertise; its proposed innovative web-based management tool, with a breadth of functionality that in my judgment exceeds the tool proposed by RECOM and is thus of greater value to the Government because it will provide more information to the Government task managers; the leadership and other skill mix demonstrated by EASI's proposed site manager, a role of critical importance to this effort; and the highly qualified, certified safety and health professional who is proposed to lead the safety and health effort, comporting with NASA's philosophy of "Mission Success begins with Safety". I further note that all three of the weaknesses assigned by the SEB to EASI under the Mission Suitability Factor carry little impact on the work to be performed under this contract.

However, the reassessed Past Performance ratings for these two offerors are, in my judgment, even more significant than the reassessed Mission Suitability ratings. In my judgment, the Past Performance Factor (the second most important Factor in the RFP) is the primary discriminator between the proposals and in this selection, due to the comparatively large delta between my reassessed ratings of EASI and RECOM in Past Performance. As fully described above, in my judgment the EASI/SAIC/Wyle team qualifies for an overall rating of "Excellent", and is far superior in this Factor over the RECOM/Bionetics/TS/Atlas team, which, in my judgment, qualifies for an overall rating of "Good". With regards to the EASI team's proposal, I was particularly impressed by: the consistently high ratings from current and past customer surveys for all three companies; the mastering of Earned Value Management and ISO which are both important at Ames; the technical excellence in relevant life sciences and lab work; its performance history of consistently staying within set budgets; a success and customer service orientation noted by past and current customers; good management communication; educational outreach efforts, also increasingly important at NASA; and a reputation among their customers for reliability and integrity. And, if a single point needs to be identified as convincing me that this is the far superior team in Past Performance, it is the award record for all three companies of the EASI proposal team. The EASI team has been recognized by Agencies including NASA, DOE, DARPA, DOD

and the Small Business Administration for its Government contract management and performance. The EASI team received nine of these awards in the last five years. The Past Performance history of the EASI team, coupled with the relevancy of its past technical work, led to my independent decision to select the EASI team for award.

As noted earlier, the proposed and probable cost difference between EASI and RECOM is slight. I did not consider Cost to be a discriminator between the proposals or in this selection. I note that Cost is, pursuant to the terms of the RFP, the least important Factor.

Selection:

I find that the EASI Team proposal offers the Government an advantage in the Mission Suitability Factor, and a far superior advantage in the Past Performance Factor. Cost was not a discriminator. I select the EASI/SAIC/Wyle team for contract award.



Joan S. Salute  
Source Selection Authority