

**Selection Statement for the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications
Support Services Contract**

RFP NNM06169943R

On March 9, 2007, I along with other senior officials of the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) met with the Source Evaluation Committee (SEC), appointed to evaluate proposals in connection with the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications (OSAC) Support Services procurement.

I. PROCUREMENT DESCRIPTION

I appointed the members of the SEC which included representation from the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communication, the Science and Missions Systems Office, and the Office of Procurement. To aid in the evaluation, the SEC appointed technical evaluators with expertise in appropriate disciplines in order to provide assessments of proposal strengths and weaknesses. The SEC utilized this information in conjunction with the predetermined evaluation factors and subfactors as outlined in the final Request for Proposals (RFP) in formulating its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses for each Offeror.

The RFP for the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications Support Services procurement was released on October 10, 2006. The RFP required the Offerors to provide the necessary management, personnel, equipment, and supplies to provide comprehensive communication services to support the OSAC in achieving the communication goals and strategies of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Marshall Space Flight Center. OSAC will execute an overarching communication strategy that includes clearly and consistently communicating NASA's strategic vision and guidance, and MSFC's direction, roles, capabilities, and expectations, both internally and externally, to various stakeholder groups. In accomplishing these communication activities that directly support the advancement of Agency goals and Marshall mission assignments, the contractor shall provide communication related support such as: strategic research and analysis, communication strategy, planning and message management, and communication services and product development/delivery. Finally, the contractor shall support OSAC management and customers in a responsive, integrated, and communicative manner; work as an integrated team with OSAC; demonstrate an understanding of the OSAC communication mission; and provide new and innovative communication services.

This effort will be performed under a performance-based, Cost-Plus-Incentive Fee (CPIF) Mission Services contract that includes Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) task orders. The contract consists of a one-year base period with four one-year options.

Three amendments were issued to the RFP:

Amendment No. 1 was released on October 24, 2006, and provided Offerors with answers to ten written questions submitted by the Offerors in response to the release of the final RFP.

Amendment No. 2 was released on November 2, 2006, and (1) provided Offerors with three clarifications for various sections of the RFP and (2) corrected an error in the Change Matrix released with the final RFP.

Amendment No. 3 was released on November 6, 2006, and provided Offerors with a revised Wage Determination (Attachment J-18), Wage Determination No.: 2005-2008, Revision No.: 3, dated: 11/02/06.

The Government designated this procurement as a 100 percent small business set-aside under Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 19.5. The procurement was conducted as a full and open competition in accordance with FAR Part 15, entitled "Contracting by Negotiation." On November 6, 2006, Past Performance volumes were submitted, and the following four Offerors submitted the remaining proposal volumes in response to the RFP on November 13, 2006:

Analytical Services, Inc.
350 Voyager Way
Huntsville, AL 35806

Gray Research, Inc.
655 Discovery Drive, Suite #300
Huntsville, AL 35806

Mainthia Technologies, Inc.
7055 Engle Road, Suite 502
Cleveland, OH 44130

Schafer Corporation
5030 Bradford Drive, Suite #205
Huntsville, AL 35805

II. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The proposals were evaluated in accordance with the procedures prescribed by FAR Part 15 and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) Part 1815. The Government evaluated the proposals in two general steps:

Step One – An initial evaluation was performed to determine if (1) all information had been provided and (2) the Offeror had made a reasonable attempt to present an acceptable proposal. No proposal was determined to be unacceptable.

Step Two – All acceptable proposals were evaluated against the three evaluation factors contained in the RFP. Based upon this evaluation, the Government had the option to utilize one of the following methods: (1) Make selection and award without discussions; or (2) after discussions with those in the competitive range, afford each Offeror an opportunity to revise its proposal, and then make selection.

Selection and award is made in accordance with the “Best Value Tradeoff” technique delineated in FAR Part 15.101-1. A tradeoff process is appropriate when it may be in the best interest of the Government to consider award to other than the lowest priced Offeror or other than the highest technically-rated Offeror. This process permits tradeoffs among cost or price and non-cost factors thereby allowing the Government to accept other than the lowest priced proposal. The perceived benefits of the higher priced proposal shall merit the additional cost, and the rationale for tradeoffs shall be documented in accordance with FAR Part 15.406.

The RFP prescribed three evaluation factors considered essential in an offer: Mission Suitability, Cost, and Past Performance. Offerors were advised that the three factors were essentially equal in importance.

The three evaluation factors were described as follows:

Mission Suitability: The proposals were analyzed for the effectiveness and efficiency of the work to be performed, the Offeror’s understanding of the requirements of the Performance Work Statement, and proposal risk. Mission Suitability consisted of four subfactors, and each subfactor received both an adjectival rating and a numerical score:

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| A. Management and Technical Approach | (450 points) |
| B. Key Personnel | (250 points) |
| C. Staffing and Total Compensation Plan | (200 points) |
| D. Safety and Health and Environmental Plan | (100 points) |

Overall, each Offeror could receive a total of 1000 points and a commensurate adjectival rating in Mission Suitability. The applicable adjectival ratings were “Excellent,” “Very Good,” “Good,” “Fair,” and “Poor.” The definitions for the adjectival ratings and percentile ranges are set forth in the NASA FAR Supplement and contained in the OSAC Evaluation Plan.

Cost: The proposals were analyzed for accuracy and compliance with the Government requirements for both Mission Services and IDIQ services. Cost adequacy, reasonableness, and realism were evaluated based upon the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE), and a most probable cost was established. The Cost factor, although not scored numerically, is relevant in determining the Offeror’s understanding of the contract and its resource requirements. In addition, each Offeror’s proposed phase-in costs were evaluated for overall adequacy and realism.

Past Performance: The proposals were analyzed for each Offeror's overall corporate past performance, (including Lost Time Case and voluntary turnover history) to include the corporate past performance of any proposed subcontractors/teammates, on comparable or related procurement/project efforts. Emphasis was given to the extent of direct relevant corporate experience and quality of past performance on previous contracts that are relevant to the effort defined in the Performance Work Statement (PWS). Past Performance is not numerically scored; however, an adjectival rating is assigned as set forth and described in RFP Section M.5(e)(2)(iii), Past Performance (Volume III).

III. DISPOSITION AND EVALUATION OF INITIAL PROPOSALS

All proposals received were determined to be acceptable and were evaluated consistent with the criteria identified in the RFP. The initial findings of the Source Evaluation Committee were presented to me, the Source Selection Authority (SSA), on February 9, 2007. Based upon these findings, I determined that award on initial proposals was not appropriate, and I established a competitive range of the most highly rated proposals. The Offerors determined to be within the competitive range included both Gray Research, Inc. (Gray) and Schafer Corporation (Schafer).

Analytical Services, Inc. (ASI) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. I determined that ASI was outside the competitive range based primarily on their Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating of Fair. ASI received zero significant strengths and seven strengths in Mission Suitability. The discriminators included three significant weaknesses in the Management and Technical Approach subfactor and one significant weakness in the Key Personnel subfactor of Mission Suitability. ASI's overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating and numerical score were significantly lower than those firms included in the competitive range. It should be noted that ASI's cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEC, was deemed competitive with those proposals remaining in the competitive range. However, in the Past Performance factor, ASI received an adjectival rating of Very Good, which is lower than the adjectival ratings of the Offerors in the competitive range. As a result, I determined that ASI offered no advantage over any of the Offerors determined to be within the competitive range.

Mainthia Technologies, Inc. (MTI) was not included in the competitive range because it did not have a reasonable chance of being selected for award. I determined that MTI was outside the competitive range based primarily on their Mission Suitability numerical score and adjectival rating of Poor. MTI received zero significant strengths and two strengths in Mission Suitability. The discriminators included three significant weaknesses in the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, two significant weaknesses in the Key Personnel subfactor, and three significant weaknesses in the Staffing and Total Compensation Plan subfactor of Mission Suitability. MTI's overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating and numerical score were significantly lower than those firms included in the competitive range. It should be noted that MTI's cost, both as proposed and as adjusted by the SEC, was deemed to be competitive with those proposals

remaining in the competitive range. In the Past Performance factor, MTI received an adjectival rating of Neutral, which was evaluated neither favorably nor unfavorably in comparison with those firms in the competitive range. As a result, I determined that MTI offered no advantage over any of the Offerors determined to be within the competitive range.

By letters, dated February 9, 2007, ASI and MTI were notified that they were not included in the competitive range. By letters, dated February 9, 2007, the two firms in the competitive range were advised of their status and provided with their respective weaknesses and clarifications identified during the SEC's evaluation of their proposals. The letters established February 15, 2007, as the due date for all written responses. Accordingly, February 20, 2007, was established as the date for oral discussions with Gray, and February 21, 2007, was established as the date for oral discussions with Schafer. Oral, written, and telephonic discussions continued with both firms throughout the week of February 20, 2007, through February 28, 2007.

On February 28, 2007, a letter requesting Final Proposal Revisions (FPRs) was hand-delivered to Gray and Schafer with a due date for receipt of FPRs on March 2, 2007. Subsequently, these final proposals were evaluated consistent with the criteria identified in the RFP.

IV. EVALUATION OF FINAL PROPOSAL REVISIONS

As a result of the discussion process and evaluation of the Final Proposal Revisions, both Offerors, determined to be finalists, increased their Mission Suitability numerical scores. However, only Schafer Corporation eliminated all of its Mission Suitability weaknesses while Gray generated one new weakness. The Past Performance adjectival rating for both Offerors did not change. In addition, both Offerors revised their Cost proposals based upon discussions. The final evaluation results of the FPRs are summarized below.

Gray Research, Inc.

In the Mission Suitability factor, Gray received an overall adjectival rating of Very Good. Gray had no deficiencies, four significant strengths, twenty strengths, no significant weaknesses, and one weakness which was generated in its FPR.

Under the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, Gray received an adjectival rating of Excellent. Gray received two significant strengths, thirteen strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 2

- The Offeror demonstrated an excellent understanding of "strategic communications" through the creation of a comprehensive communications life cycle approach consisting of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation,

and Evaluation. The Offeror established clear lines of responsibility between each phase of the process and functional teams, and the Offeror's strategic alignment and communications measurement model was recognized as a "best practice model" by the Department of Defense.

- The Offeror demonstrated in-depth knowledge and excellent understanding of program management for all PWS activities through an Integrated Management Framework which executes the program management functions of PWS 3.0, while integrating the requirements of PWS 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0; the OSAC Team Communication Plan contained comprehensive controls and feedback mechanisms to allow the Program Integration Manager (PIM) to monitor each step of the program management process; and the execution of work via the Integrated Data Environment (IDE) which provides web-enabled checks and balances.

Strengths: 13

- The Offeror proposed use of a no cost, quarterly, Communications Consortium, comprised of a senior strategy and planning group from the aerospace, defense, and communications industries, to provide ongoing strategy development and thought leadership to the OSAC management team.
- The Offeror proposed a management approach to fulfill and integrate PWS processes and procedures based on a "swing model" that is considered a best practice among traditional advertising and public relations firms while integrating the various PWS functions through a model in which employees are exposed to, or trained in, various PWS areas. This approach encompasses methods for sharing information, data, research results, products and services across the entire OSAC organization.
- The Offeror assembled a highly qualified and well-suited team to fulfill the PWS requirements.
- The Offeror proposed a management approach to product and service development that ensures integration and consistency through the concept of product "families" and consistency and similarity in product theme. The Offeror will evaluate all new products for strategic value before implementation.
- The Offeror outlined in detail both quantitative and qualitative methods to measure communication effectiveness allowing the Government to positively quantify the effectiveness of messages, products, and channels.
- The Offeror proposed a no-cost, "i-comm" software application, developed by a Gray teammate, to provide an architectural solution specifically focusing on content management. The system is a user-friendly, browser-based Content Management system allowing individual Directorates to post web content on their

specific technical or program web pages while allowing OSAC to monitor and control web content production to ensure that content developed by individual programs is consistent with Agency and Center direction.

- The Offeror proposed to create and maintain a detailed calendar of strategic events, upcoming internal and external studies or reports of interest to the Agency and MSFC, media/editorial deadlines, and other items of interest to drive decision-making related to strategic communications planning, products, and services. The schedule will include planning milestones, production timeframes, event registration dates, and setup/breakdown timelines while ensuring products meet deadlines and are available for quick turnaround opportunities.
- The Offeror provided innovative mechanisms to assist in message management, such as NASA Strategic Communications Workshops, across all MSFC disciplines/activities and the creation of an innovative "One-Voice" Toolkit to create an understanding among employees of how MSFC's themes and key messages fit into day-to-day activities at all levels.
- The Offeror proposed the use of a Shared Destiny Approach which equalizes risks/rewards for performance and shares ownership of the outcome for the team.
- The Offeror proposed innovative research tools, such as Iconoculture and LexisNexis, to monitor and integrate news, cultural trends, and insights while identifying changes and consumer touch points that will guide OSAC in approaching its audiences with consistent messages.
- The Offeror proposed innovative tools such as a Media Book to manage/record contact with media individuals, material preferences, and other key information in addition to a Virtual Press Room to provide working journalists with real-time delivery of photos, illustrations, backgrounders, fact sheets, animation clips, and audio files.
- The Offeror proposed a "Badgeless Team" to promote opportunities for each teammate and subcontractor to nominate personnel/candidates for any open position thereby allowing each team member to have full and open opportunities to participate in work and providing the Government with the most qualified personnel.
- The Offeror proposed to establish a web-based training portal to allow employees access to training on demand, thereby decreasing the time required for, and minimizing the costs associated with, off-site training events.

Under the Key Personnel subfactor, Gray received an adjectival rating of Excellent. Gray received two significant strengths, four strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 2

- The technical subject-matter-experts (SMEs) demonstrated in-depth expertise across all PWS functions based on their qualifications, awards, and significant relevant experience. The experience of the SMEs ranged from 26 to 38 years and included, for example, national publication and television programming; features on national programming; NASA experience in development of governance systems, business models and strategic planning; drafting strategic communication plans for Congressional inquiries following the Columbia accident; and development of the plan to recover the expendable launch capability following the Challenger and Titan launch vehicle accidents.
- The Communications Strategy Capability Team Lead (CTL) has comprehensive and highly relevant experience in public and private institutions; fifteen years of related experience; a B.A. degree in Government and Foreign Affairs; significant experience with foreign policy and communications at NASA, the State Department, and the Vice President's National Security Advisor's Office; formulation of industry strategic business development plans based on federal technology policy developments; and excellent performance evaluations with 100 percent commitment.

Strengths: 4

- The Program Integration Manager (PIM) demonstrated knowledge of all PWS technical areas; experience in managing large teams (45 individuals) performing communications-related work; extensive experience in marketing, advertising, public relations, event management, corporate communications, design, publishing, environmental monitoring, stakeholder analysis, audience research and communication effectiveness measurement, and leadership; and expert command and knowledge of the subject matter during discussions with the Government. She has a B.A. degree in Journalism and thirty years of experience with 26 years of management experience. The past performance evaluation process revealed excellent performance, and her commitment is proposed at 100 percent.
- The Strategic Research and Analysis Lead has extensive experience and qualifications in Strategic Research and Analysis, an MBA degree, 23 years of program management experience, service as the Senior Business Advisor for the UAH Center for Management and Economic Research, and service as Chief Operating Officer of the Madison County Chamber of Commerce. Although limited experience was demonstrated in PWS 4.4 (Measuring Communication Effectiveness), the key personnel evaluation process revealed excellent performance and commitment proposed at 100 percent.
- The Communications Services/Product Integration Lead has extensive experience, qualifications, awards, and peer recognition, as demonstrated by work in public

relations, not-for-profit entities, and integrated communications and crisis communications management. She has 22 years related experience with fifteen years in management, a B.A. degree in English, is a current officer with the Public Relations Society of America, and has numerous awards for writing, video production, and public relations work. Although her experience is limited in PWS 6.3 (Employee Communications), 6.5 (Media Products), and 6.6 (Web Content Management), the key personnel evaluation process revealed excellent performance, and her commitment is proposed at 100 percent.

- The Exhibits/Events Manager has extensive experience and qualifications managing seminars, trades shows, and corporate events for over 20 years with 22 years of related communication experience, six years in management, and a B.A. degree in Advertising. Although her experience as a manager is limited in scope and complexity based on the Offeror's proposal, the key personnel evaluation process revealed excellent performance, and her commitment is proposed at 100 percent.

Under the Staffing and Total Compensation Plan subfactor, Gray received an adjectival rating of Good. Gray received no significant strengths, three strengths, no significant weaknesses, and generated one weakness. These findings are summarized as follows:

Strengths: 3

- The Offeror and teammates have reach-back capabilities for specific PWS elements and extensive experience of the proposed employees provides bench strength, a flexible teaming approach, and a solid means to meet varying demands.
- The Offeror has a proven process for accelerated phase-in which included the creation of a Transition Management Team (TMT), led by the Program Integration Manager. The team will shadow the incumbent team and capture all information in a Knowledge Capture Notebook, and the process will be completed with an Operations Readiness Review with OSAC management two days before turnover for final concurrence.
- The Offeror proposed a large contribution toward the employees' retirement plan thereby considerably increasing the Offeror's ability to have an effective employee recruitment and retention program.

Weakness: 1

- In the Final Proposal Revision, Gray's teammate proposed only 80 hours of vacation and did not clearly discuss vacation requirements for incumbent personnel who exceed 10 and 20 years of continuous service. The proposed 80 hours of vacation does not meet the minimum Service Contract Act vacation requirements.

Under the Safety, Health, and Environmental Plan subfactor, Gray received an adjectival rating of Good. Gray received no significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses, nor weaknesses. The SEC's evaluation of this subfactor revealed that the proposed plan was adequate to accomplish the efforts.

In the Past Performance factor, Gray received one significant strength, three strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses which resulted in the adjectival rating of Excellent. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strength: 1

- The Offeror demonstrated highly relevant past performance on the ARINC contract with a commercial client providing strategic communications and public affairs support. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.

Strengths: 3

- The Offeror demonstrated relevant performance on the Navy Marine Corps Intranet Public Affairs Office contract providing strategic communication planning and communication services. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.
- The Offeror demonstrated relevant performance on the Air Force Directorate of Strategic Planning contract providing strategic planning and communication support. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.
- The Offeror demonstrated relevant past performance on the Engineering, Science, and Technical Services contract providing exhibits-related support. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent Plus.

In the Cost factor, Gray proposed a total cost of \$36,969,652 for the mission services portion of the contract. As delineated in the RFP, the Government derived an evaluated cost to accomplish the IDIQ effort, for the base year and each option year, by applying an SEC predetermined skill mix and allotment of hours to the quoted fully burdened labor rates as proposed by the Offeror. The Government evaluated Gray's costs for the IDIQ effort to be \$3,253,177. Therefore, Gray's total proposed costs for Mission Services and IDIQ efforts are \$40,222,829. The only area of adjustment for most probable cost was the application of the general and administrative ceiling rate (Mission Services and IDIQ efforts). Thus, the SEC determined that Gray's most probable cost for the base year and all options years is \$40,398,829. The SEC determined that the proposed cost was reasonable, complete, and ensured that all PWS requirements were reflected in the cost. After completing the most probable cost adjustment, the SEC gave Gray Research, Inc. a high cost confidence rating.

Schafer Corporation

In the Mission Suitability factor, Schafer received an overall Mission Suitability adjectival rating of Very Good. Schafer received no deficiencies, four significant strengths, fourteen strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses.

Under the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, Schafer received an adjectival rating of Excellent. Schafer received two significant strengths, ten strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 2

- The Offeror demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of creating space-related exhibits that includes coordinating, facilitating, and implementing exhibit management activities for MSFC-sponsored activities nationwide in addition to researching and implementing outreach opportunities using exhibits to communicate information about NASA and MSFC programs with internal and external audiences.
- The Offeror demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how to implement a media relations program that includes product research, development, distribution, follow-up, and assessment. In addition, an excellent understanding of media timelines, production requirements, implementation processes, and the importance of accuracy and relationship building is evident in the Offeror's proposal.

Strengths: 10

- The Offeror demonstrated in-depth understanding of "strategic communications" and how it is integrated with strategic research and analysis. This knowledge included leveraging Business Intelligence and Knowledge Management for research, analysis, compilation, fusion, and dissemination of qualified and aligned information.
- The Offeror demonstrated knowledge of space exploration and science-related technical areas which enables the Offeror to leverage new and innovative media products in support of core and specialized needs, including utilizing the latest web-based gaming engines and podcasting to target young NASA stakeholders.
- The Offeror proposed use of an integrated product team to ensure that complex interrelated systems and processes are integrated to satisfy the needs of various stakeholders. The team will be comprised of a core senior council of the Program Manager, PWS Support Leads, and OSAC Managers, and this team methodology has been used successfully with DoD customers.

- The Offeror proposed the use of Technical Analyst and Communication Strategist positions to facilitate measuring communication effectiveness; the new skill sets will provide a technical workforce skilled in analytical methods, a focus on statistics and advanced mathematics, and a workforce well-versed in communication trends and best practices.
- The Offeror proposed a Key Message Development and Management process that incorporates strategic messages, issue-driven communications, and crisis communications to ensure the currency and relevance of messages while incorporating the use of a monthly "key themes and messages" paper to keep management and employees focused on the most current issues at the Center.
- The Offeror will provide quality services to fulfill the PWS requirements by mapping internal quality processes and policies to the components that will be evaluated in the OSAC Monitor Survey; adopting applicable quality metrics currently used by the OSAC contract; and developing new metrics to effectively measure and improve performance. An example included "First Time Through Quality (FTTQ)" which reduces turnaround time by relating to the skills and knowledge of the staff to understand the desires of the customer with the fewest iterations.
- The Offeror proposed comprehensive and open communications internally and externally, including surveying customers to ensure that the organization's needs are being met; holding weekly staff meetings with subcontractors, OSAC staff, and Task Leads; submitting weekly reports based on information developed in the staff meetings; evaluating issues as necessary to reach mutually agreeable solutions; and ensuring quality products and services through a reporting process that documents both positive and negative feedback.
- The Offeror proposed a training approach using a "tiered system" that pairs junior "superstars" with senior staff; trains the Program Manager (PM) and all leads on Program and Project Management activities; and provides new employee orientation with direct interaction with PM and task leads.
- The Offeror demonstrated that its cost control management process, from estimating through reporting, is supported through rigorous input and management from the PM, task leads, COTR, and work order initiators.
- The Offeror proposed a "mobile portal" system to view and display communication products in several different electronic formats, thereby greatly enhancing cross utilization of products.

Under the Key Personnel subfactor, Schafer received an adjectival rating of Excellent. Schafer received two significant strengths, three strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strengths: 2

- The Program Manager (PM) demonstrated excellent experience in Strategic Research and Analysis, Communications Strategy Planning and Message Development, and Communication Services and Product Development/Delivery; outstanding skills in communication management; leading crisis communications; and addressing environmental issues. The PM has over 30 years experience in public affairs, a Masters degrees in Management and Strategic Studies, service as Director of Public Affairs in various positions with the U.S. Air Force since 2001, received the Air Force top public affairs award in 2004, managed and executed strategies for high visibility media encounters (such as *60 Minutes* and briefings to the White House), and currently supervises 150+ professional communicators located at ten major Air Force bases across the U.S. The PM has excellent references, and his commitment is proposed at 100 percent.
- The SMEs have exceptional experience and qualifications in their respective fields of expertise and several are nationally recognized. For example, three SMEs hold doctorate degrees in relevant fields, and a fourth will complete requirements in 2007 for a Ph.D. in Communications. Notable experience ranges from 15 to 30 years in specialized communication fields. The majority are published in technical trade journals, and some have key experience in Government public relations, including sensitive base realignment and closure activities and NASA-specific programs and planning. One is a nationally-known expert in the utilization of statistical methods related to strategic communications, and one led a group of ten individuals who designed and implemented the Air Force's first integrated strategic communications organization, including processes, policies, and resources.

Strengths: 3

- The proposed Strategic Research and Analysis Support Lead has experience in Strategic Research and Analysis, an MBA degree in Strategic Management, eighteen years experience in business intelligence and strategic planning, and service in various managerial capacities since 1990. Although limited experience was demonstrated in PWS 4.4 (Measuring Communication Effectiveness), his references were excellent, and his commitment is proposed at 100 percent.
- The Communications Strategy, Planning and Message Management Lead has a B.A. degree in Communications, twenty years experience developing and executing strategic communication plans, service as a manager of twenty employees in marketing and proposal efforts, and experience working PWS 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0 efforts. The references were excellent, and her commitment is proposed at 100 percent.
- The Communication Services and Product Development/Delivery Lead has extensive experience, qualifications, and peer recognition in Communication

Services and Product Development/Delivery. He currently serves as the Media Relations Outreach lead for the current OSAC contract, has a degree in Journalism and more than ten years experience in the MSFC Public Affairs Office. Although experience was not demonstrated in PWS 6.8 (Exhibits), his references were excellent, and his commitment is proposed at 100 percent.

Under the Staffing and Total Compensation Plan subfactor, Schafer received an adjectival rating of Good. Schafer received no significant strengths, one strength, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses. These findings are summarized as follows:

Strength: 1

- The Offeror will provide a large contribution toward education assistance for each employee which provides strong incentive for high employee retention and provides a better educated workforce.

Under the Safety, Health, and Environmental Plan subfactor, Schafer received an adjectival rating of Good. Schafer received no significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses nor weaknesses. The SEC's evaluation of this subfactor revealed that the proposed plan was adequate to accomplish the efforts.

In the Past Performance factor, Schafer received one significant strength, three strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses which resulted in the adjectival rating of Excellent. These findings are summarized as follows:

Significant Strength: 1

- The Offeror demonstrated highly relevant performance on the MSFC ASRI-OSAC contract providing support to the Office of Human Capital and the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.

Strengths: 3

- The Offeror demonstrated relevant performance on the NASA Headquarters Concept Exploration and Refinement contract on which it performed stakeholder analysis, architecture studies, system modeling and simulation, requirements analysis, spacecraft design, and project development for Crew Exploration Vehicle design. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.
- The Offeror demonstrated relevant performance on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration contract providing strategic research and environmental analysis and developing communication plans. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.

- The Offeror demonstrated relevant performance on the HELJTO System Engineering and Technical Support contract providing exhibit and event-related support. Overall, the quality of past performance was assessed to be Excellent.

In the Cost factor, Schafer proposed a total cost of \$35,603,210 for the mission services portion of the contract. As delineated in the RFP, the Government derived an evaluated cost to accomplish the IDIQ effort, for the base year and each option year, by applying an SEC predetermined skill mix and allotment of hours to the quoted fully burdened labor rates as proposed by the Offeror. The Government evaluated Schafer's costs for the IDIQ effort to be \$2,660,958. Therefore, Schafer's total proposed costs for Mission Services and IDIQ efforts are \$38,264,168. The only area of adjustment for most probable cost was the application of the general and administrative ceiling rate (Mission Services and IDIQ efforts). Thus, the SEC determined that Schafer's most probable cost for the base year and all options years is \$38,518,168. The SEC determined that the proposed cost was reasonable, complete, and ensured that all PWS requirements were reflected in the cost. After completing the most probable cost adjustment, the SEC gave Schafer a high cost confidence rating.

V. DECISION

Immediately following the SEC presentation on March 9, 2007, I met in executive session with the key senior advisors, all of whom heard the presentation and were familiar with the RFP. These advisors included representatives from the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, Office of Chief Counsel, Office of Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and Office of Procurement. I solicited and considered their views in reaching my decision. With respect to the process and findings, we concluded that the evaluation plan was followed, and the evaluation of the proposals was comprehensive, thorough, and well-documented.

During the presentation, the senior advisors and I thoroughly questioned the SEC on a number of points. We noted that the discussion process was well utilized because labor rate and skill mix issues for both Offerors were satisfactorily resolved. In addition, both Gray Research, Inc. and Schafer Corporation increased their Mission Suitability scores although Gray generated a weakness in its Final Proposal Revision. Only Schafer eliminated all of its Mission Suitability weaknesses.

We noted this was a close competition across each of the three evaluation factors. In probing the SEC during its presentation and taking into consideration its evaluation of the proposals against the prescribed evaluation criteria contained in the RFP, I concluded the successful Offeror is Schafer Corporation. The rationale for my decision follows.

Although Gray had the highest overall Mission Suitability numerical score of the two Offerors, both companies received an overall adjectival rating of Very Good. A comparison of the two Offerors in Mission Suitability revealed that both companies received the same adjectival ratings across each of the four subfactors although Gray

received slightly higher numerical scores in three of the four subfactors. A comparison of the fourth subfactor revealed that Gray and Schafer received identical numerical scores. In total, Gray received four significant strengths, twenty strengths, no significant weaknesses, and one weakness in the overall Mission Suitability factor. Schafer received four significant strengths, fourteen strengths, and no significant weaknesses nor weaknesses.

In the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, both Offerors received an adjectival rating of Excellent; however, Gray received a slightly higher numerical score than Schafer. In comparison, Gray received two significant strengths and thirteen strengths; Schafer received two significant strengths and ten strengths. Gray demonstrated an excellent understanding of strategic communications through the creation of a comprehensive communications life cycle approach with an iterative five-phase process while utilizing a strategic alignment and communications model recognized as a "best practice model" by the Department of Defense. Furthermore, Gray demonstrated in-depth knowledge and excellent understanding of program management from concept to execution for all PWS activities as demonstrated through (1) the proposed integrated management framework, (2) the OSAC Team Communication Plan with controls and feedback mechanisms to the Program Integration Manager, and (3) the Integrated Data Environment to provide web-enabled checks and balances. In contrast, we noted that Schafer demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of creating space-related exhibits that includes coordinating, facilitating, and implementing exhibit management for MSFC-sponsored activities nationwide in addition to researching and implementing outreach opportunities using exhibits to communicate information about NASA and MSFC programs with internal and external audiences. Moreover, Schafer demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of implementing a media relations program that includes product research, development, distribution, follow-up, and assessment. Schafer demonstrated excellent understanding of media timelines, production requirements, implementation processes, and the importance of accuracy and relationship building is evident in the Offeror's proposal. As a result, we noted that both Offerors were well-suited to perform the efforts; however, Gray demonstrated a slight advantage in the Management and Technical Approach subfactor.

In the Key Personnel subfactor, both Offerors received adjectival ratings of Excellent; however, Gray received a very slightly higher numerical score than Schafer. Under this subfactor, Gray received two significant strengths and four strengths; Schafer received two significant strengths and three strengths. We noted that Gray's technical SMEs demonstrated in-depth expertise across all PWS functions based upon qualifications, awards, and significant relevant experience. Furthermore, the Communications Strategy Capability Team Lead demonstrated (1) fifteen years of comprehensive and highly relevant experience with public and private institutions, (2) significant experience with foreign policy and communications at NASA and various federal entities, (3) formulation of industry strategic business development plans based on federal technology policy developments, and (4) excellent performance evaluations. Gray also provided detailed information concerning the qualifications and management experience of its proposed Program Manager during discussions; however, the Offeror did not include this

information, as required, in its FPR for evaluation by the SEC. As such, Gray did not seize the potential opportunity to increase further its score for the Key Personnel subfactor and overall Mission Suitability. In contrast, we noted that Schafer received a significant strength for its proposed Program Manager while Gray received only a strength. Schafer proposed a Program Manager with more than thirty years of public affairs experience and demonstrated excellence in Strategic Research and Analysis, Communications Strategy Planning and Message Development, and Communication Services and Product Development/Delivery in addition to communication management, crisis communications, and addressing of environmental issues. The PM has served as Director of Public Affairs in various positions with the U.S. Air Force since 2001 and received the Air Force top public affairs award in 2004, managed and executed strategies for high visibility media encounters, and currently supervises 150+ professional communicators located at ten major Air Force bases across the U.S. Schafer also proposed SMEs with exceptional experience and qualifications in their respective fields, and several (1) are nationally recognized, (2) hold advanced degrees, (3) have fifteen to thirty years of experience in specialized communication fields, (4) are published in technical trade journals and (5) have key experience in Government public relations, including sensitive base realignment and closure activities and NASA-specific programs and planning. One SME is a nationally-known expert in the utilization of statistical methods related to strategic communications, and one SME led a group of ten individuals who designed and implemented the Air Force's first integrated strategic communications organization, including processes, policies, and resources. As a result, based on my review and analysis of the significant strengths and strengths of both Offerors, I determined that both Offerors were essentially equal under this subfactor.

In the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor, both Offerors received an adjectival rating of Good; however, Gray received a slightly higher numerical score than Schafer. Under this subfactor, neither company received any significant strengths; however, Gray received three strengths and a weakness, and Schafer received one strength. We noted that Gray's teammate, Inergi, proposed only 80 hours of vacation and did not discuss the vacation requirements for incumbent personnel who exceed ten and twenty years of continuous service in order to comply with the Service Contract Act requirements. As a result, I concluded that Gray had a slight advantage in the Staffing and Total Compensation subfactor.

In the Safety, Health, and Environmental Plan subfactor, both Offerors received adjectival ratings of Good and identical numerical scores. Neither Offeror received any significant strengths or strengths; therefore, both Offerors were deemed to be essentially equal in the Safety, Health, and Environmental Plan subfactor.

Based on the above, I concluded that Gray had a slight advantage in Mission Suitability over Schafer.

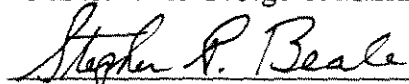
We next considered the Cost factor. Both Offerors adjusted their cost proposals in response to discussions, and the SEC assigned a "high" cost confidence to the Government's most probable cost of both Offerors. However, for the core mission and

IDIQ efforts, Schafer's evaluated proposed cost (*i.e.*, \$38,264,168) was less than Gray's evaluated proposed cost (*i.e.*, \$40,222,829). It is important to note that Schafer maintains very low and competitive overhead/fringe indirect rates which establish a notable cost advantage for Schafer. In addition, Schafer proposed a lower incentive fee while offering several more Work Year Equivalents (WYEs) for the core mission efforts in contrast to Gray's higher incentive fee and fewer WYEs to perform the same core effort. As adjusted by the Government, Schafer's most probable cost was \$38,518,168, and Gray's most probable cost was \$40,398,829 for the base year and four 1 year option periods. As a result, selecting Schafer would result in savings to the Government of \$1,880,661 over the life of the contract. A comparison of the phase-in costs proposed by both Offerors revealed that Schafer proposed \$58,227 and Gray proposed \$174,217. From this information, I concluded Schafer had a clear advantage over Gray in the Cost factor.

In the Past Performance factor, both Offerors received an adjectival rating of Excellent. Both Offerors received one significant strength and three strengths. The senior advisors and I noted that past performance will be evaluated for comparable or related procurement/project efforts with emphasis given to the extent of direct relevant corporate experience and quality of past performance on previous contracts that are relevant to the effort defined in this RFP. The SEC assigned significant strengths for corporate experience that was highly relevant to this RFP; as such, we noted that the quality of the sole significant strength for each Offeror was not equal. Gray's teammate, Janson, received a significant strength for demonstrating highly relevant past performance on a critical function for PWS 5.0 (and portions of PWS 4.0 and 6.0) on the ARINC contract; however, the size of the contract was valued at approximately \$200K per year and the type of contract is a fixed-price task order. Conversely, Schafer's teammate, ASRI, received a significant strength for demonstrating highly relevant past performance on the MSFC ASRI-OSAC contract; the size of the effort was valued at approximately \$3.7M per year for its all-inclusive efforts primarily under PWS 6.0, and the type of contract is cost reimbursement. From this information, I concluded that Schafer had a slight advantage over Gray in the Past Performance factor due to the size of the efforts for which the sole significant strength was awarded to each Offeror.

I was mindful that although both Gray and Schafer received the same overall adjectival rating of Very Good for Mission Suitability, Gray offered a slight advantage over Schafer under this factor. However, in my best value tradeoff decision, this slight advantage is not enough to overcome the combined advantages Schafer has in Past Performance and the \$1,880,661 for the most probable cost savings under the Cost factor.

After polling all of my advisors and obtaining their inputs, I concluded that Schafer Corporation provided the best value selection for the Government. Consequently, I select Schafer Corporation for award of the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications contract at the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center.



Stephen P. Beale
Source Selection Authority

3-19-07

Date