

**Source Selection Statement
for the
Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications Support Services (COMMSS)
Acquisition**

On July 26, 2012, I, along with senior officials from the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) met with members of the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) to hear their findings based on the evaluation of proposals for the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications Support Services (COMMSS) Acquisition to determine the successful Quoter for award of the COMMSS contract.

I. BACKGROUND

I appointed all members of the SEB, which included representation from the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, the Safety and Mission Assurance Office, the Engineering Directorate, and the Office of Procurement. To aid in the evaluation, the SEB appointed technical evaluators with expertise in appropriate disciplines in order to provide assessments of Quote strengths and weaknesses. The SEB utilized this information in conjunction with the predetermined evaluation factors and subfactors in formulating its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses for each Quoter.

The subject procurement was issued as a General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) competitive acquisition with a preference established for solicitation and award to a small business. The anticipated award will utilize a Firm Fixed Price (FFP) format with an Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) component. The award will utilize a one-year base period, four additional 1-year option periods, and an additional six-month period that may be exercised under the Option to Extend Services clause. The contract will also utilize a 30-day phase-in period via a separate FFP order, which will precede the one-year base period.

The successful Quoter will provide support services for Strategic Research & Analysis; Communication Strategy, Planning & Message Management; and Communication Services and Product Development/Delivery.

A total of 15 firms were provided Requests for Information relating to the COMMSS procurement.

The COMMSS RFQ was released to targeted small business FSS Schedule No. 871-1 holders on January 3, 2012. Three amendments to the RFQ were issued and provided to the selected contractors. All three amendments provided responses to questions and comments about the RFQ.

On February 14, 2012, NASA received four acceptable Quotes from the following companies (the listed order was determined by order of receipt and corresponds to the order presented):

1. AI Signal Research, Inc. (ASRI)
2. Earth Resources Technology, Inc. (ERT)
3. Kord Technologies, Inc.
4. Analytical Services, Inc. (ASI)

II. SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

The COMMISS procurement was conducted in accordance with the procedures prescribed by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 8.4, *Federal Supply Schedules*, under the General Services Administration (GSA) Strategic Planning for Technology Programs/ Activities Schedule, the evaluation criteria stated in the RFQ, and the SEB's approved Evaluation Plan.

The COMMISS RFQ delineated the following evaluation factors, which were considered to be essentially equal in importance:

Mission Suitability

Price Evaluation

Small Business Utilization (applicable only if a Quote was received from a large business)

It is noted that no Quotes were received by large businesses. Therefore, the Small Business Utilization factor was not applicable. As a result, the two remaining factors, Mission Suitability and Price, were considered to be essentially equal in importance.

The Government evaluated the Quotes in two (2) general steps:

Step One – An initial evaluation was performed to determine if all information had been provided and that the Quoter had made a reasonable attempt to present an acceptable Quote. No Quote was determined to be unacceptable.

Step Two – All acceptable Quotes were evaluated against the two remaining evaluation factors contained in the RFQ. Based on this evaluation, the Government had the option to utilize one of the following methods: (1) Make selection and award without discussions; or (2) determine a Competitive Range of the most highly rated Quotes, conduct discussions with those remaining Quoters, afford each Quoter an opportunity to revise its Quote, and then make selection. Based on the initial evaluation findings, the COMMISS Contracting Officer, with the concurrence of the SSA, determined that conducting discussions was in the best interests of the Government.

Selection and award is in accordance with the best value trade-off process delineated in the RFQ.

The evaluation of the Quotes is described as follows:

Mission Suitability: The Quotes were evaluated to determine the Quoter's ability to successfully perform the requirements and mitigate risks. Mission Suitability consisted of three (3) subfactors, and each subfactor received both an adjective rating and a numerical score:

Management and Technical Approach	500 points
Staffing Plan and Key Personnel	400 points
Safety, Health, and Environmental (SHE)	<u>100 points</u>
	1,000 points

Overall, each Quoter could receive a total of 1,000 points. Quoters were evaluated in each of the above subfactors using the applicable adjective ratings and scoring approach set forth and described in the NASA FAR Supplement and contained in the solicitation and SEB Evaluation Plan.

Price:

The Quoter's price was evaluated in terms of Mission Services price, Government calculated IDIQ price, Phase-In price, and Price risk. The SEB performed price analyses to assess the adequacy and reasonableness of the Quoter's FFP Mission Service price and any other price related elements (fully burdened labor rates and burdens applied to materials, subcontracts, training, and travel).

In addition to the Quote's FFP Mission Services price, the Government calculated an IDIQ price utilizing the Quoter's fully burdened labor rates against the Government IDIQ price model. Each Quoter's quoted Phase-In price was reported to the Source Selection Authority (SSA). Adjustments to price were not made by the SEB.

Based on the price analysis, the SEB identified prices and elements of price that appeared to be out-of-line, inadequate, unrealistic or unreasonable for the services priced. After identification of omissions, inconsistencies, or conditions/qualifications associated with the quoted prices, out-of-line, inadequate, unrealistic or unreasonable prices or elements of prices or conditions/qualifications associated with the quoted prices, the SEB determined if these aspects of the Quote represented a risk to providing the services in accordance with the terms of the contract. Based on these identified risks the SEB assessed a price risk level as Low Risk, Medium Risk, or High Risk.

The SEB identified and documented all risks relative to price and reported these along with a price risk level to the SSA. Unrealistic or unreasonable prices and inconsistencies between the Mission Suitability Factor Volume and the Price Evaluation Factor Volume were assessed as a price risk.

III. DISPOSITION AND EVALUATION OF QUOTES

Upon completing the initial evaluation, the SEB prepared and presented its findings to the COMMSS contracting officer for the purpose of establishing a competitive range consisting of the most highly rated Quotes and this determination was subsequently concurred upon by me as the COMMSS SSA. As a result of these deliberations, it was determined that the Quotes within the competitive range were those of AI Signal Research, Inc. (ASRI) and Analytical Services, Inc. (ASI).

By letters dated June 7, 2012, all Quoters were advised of their status. In a letter dated June 7, 2012, the SEB opened discussions and provided the Quoters in the Competitive Range with their weaknesses, price risks and other discussion items as identified by the SEB during the evaluation of their Quotes. The letters established June 20, 2012, as the due date for the receipt of all written responses. On June 27, 2012 a follow-on letter was issued which established a date of June 29, 2012 as the due date for the additional responses. In addition to written discussions, oral discussions were held with both Quoters whose Quotes were in the Competitive Range.

On July 10, 2012, letters requesting Final Quote Revisions (FQR) were sent to both Quoters with a due date for receipt of FQRs on July 16, 2012. Subsequently, two (2) timely FQRs were received and the SEB evaluated these Quotes consistent with the criteria identified in the RFQ.

The final evaluation results of the FQRs are summarized below.

1. AI Signal Research, Inc. (ASRI)

For the Mission Suitability factor, ASRI's Quote received a total score of 898 (out of a possible 1000 points). The final Quote received 8 significant strengths, 13 strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. The following is a summary of the evaluation of the three Mission Suitability subfactors.

Under Subfactor A, Management and Technical Approach (500 out of 1,000 points), the Quote received an adjectival rating of "Excellent" and 455 points, resulting from five significant strengths, eight strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. The significant strengths related to: (1) the approach to integrated strategic communication planning; (2) the technical approach to web content management; (3) the approach for expanding the use of social media for enhanced target audience communications; (4) the technical understanding of, and implementation for, Exhibits Management including fabrication and design; and (5) the approach for managing government property.

Under Subfactor B, Staffing Plan and Key Personnel (400 points out of 1,000), the Quote received an adjectival rating of "Very Good" and 352 points resulting from one significant strength, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. The significant strength related to the proposed Media and Employee Communications Manager.

Under Subfactor C, Safety, Health, and Environmental (100 points out of 1,000), the Quote received an adjectival rating of "Excellent" and 91 points resulting from two significant

strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. The significant strengths related to the prime's and all teammate's Lost Time Case rates for the applicable North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code and the prime and all teammate's Total Reportable Injury Rates.

For the Price factor, the SEB determined the proposed Mission price to be \$33.5M and the calculated IDIQ price model to be \$13.5M, for a total price of \$47.1M. The Quoter did not propose a price associated with phase-in. The price risk was assessed as "Low" as all issues which resulted in an initial assessment of a "Medium" risk were resolved during discussions.

2. Analytical Services, Inc. (ASI)

For the Mission Suitability factor, ASI's Quote received a total score of 926 (out of a possible 1000 points). The final Quote received 8 significant strengths, 12 strengths, no significant weaknesses, and 1 weakness. The following is a summary of the evaluation of the three Mission Suitability subfactors.

Under Subfactor A, Management and Technical Approach (500 out of 1,000 points), the Quote received an adjectival rating of "Excellent" and 465 points resulting from 4 significant strengths, 10 strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. The significant strengths related to: (1) the proposed Work Flow Management System; (2) an environmental monitoring approach enabled by a Media Analysis Platform; (3) the technical approach to web content management; and (4) the approach for strategic research and analysis.

Under Subfactor B, Staffing Plan and Key Personnel (400 points out of 1,000), the Quote received an adjectival rating of "Excellent" and 376 points resulting from two significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. The significant strengths related to: (1) the proposed Program Manager; and (2) the proposed Operations Manager.

Under Subfactor C, Safety, Health, and Environmental (100 points out of 1,000), the Quote received an adjectival rating of "Very Good" and 85 points resulting from two significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, and one weakness. The significant strengths related to: (1) the prime's and one teammate's Lost Time Case rates for the applicable North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code; and (2) the prime's and one teammate's Total Recordable Injury Rates which is less than 50 percent of the national average for the applicable North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code. The remaining weakness related to the LTC rate for a team member.

For the Price factor, the SEB determined the proposed Mission price to be \$32.8M and the calculated IDIQ price model to be \$12M, for a total price of \$44.8M. The Quoter proposed a price associated with phase-in of \$150,000. The price risk was initially assessed as "Low" and as a result of discussions remained "Low".

IV. DECISION

Immediately following the SEB presentation on July 26, 2012, I met with the key senior advisors, all of whom heard the presentation and were familiar with the RFQ. These advisors included representatives from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, Office of Chief Counsel, Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the 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 Quotes was comprehensive, thorough, well-documented, and in accordance with the evaluation factors set forth in the RFQ.

During the presentation, the senior advisors and I thoroughly questioned the SEB on a number of points. We noted that the discussions process was well utilized because both Quoters increased their Mission Suitability scores and eliminated all but one weakness for one Quoter, which was based on historical safety data relating to a team member. In addition, both Quoters satisfactorily resolved staffing and price risk related issues during the discussion process and with the submittal of their FQR's.

We noted that ASI offered a small advantage in the Mission Suitability Factor and an advantage in the Price Factor over the Quote submitted by ASRI. In probing the SEB during its presentation and taking into consideration its evaluation of the Quotes against the criteria contained in the RFQ, I concluded the Quote submitted by ASI offered the best value to the Government based on the evaluation factors included in the RFQ. The rationale for my decision follows:

ASI received the highest total Mission Suitability score of 926 (out of a possible 1000 points) resulting from 8 significant strengths, 12 strengths, no significant weaknesses, and 1 weakness. ASRI received a total Mission Suitability score of 898 (out of a possible 1000 points) resulting from 8 significant strengths, 13 strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. A comparison of the Quoters in the Mission Suitability Factor revealed that the Quote provided by ASI received Excellent adjective ratings for the two highest weighted subfactors, Management and Technical Approach, and Staffing Plan and Key Personnel, and a Very Good rating in the lowest weighted subfactor of Safety, Health, and Environmental. The Quote provided by ASRI received an adjective rating of Excellent for the highest weighted subfactor, Management and Technical Approach, and the lowest weighted subfactor, Safety, Health, and Environmental, while receiving an adjective rating of Very Good for the next highest weighted subfactor, Staffing Plan and Key Personnel.

In the Management and Technical Approach subfactor, both the ASI and ASRI Quotes were rated as Excellent with ASI receiving a higher score than ASRI. Under this subfactor, ASI received 4 significant strengths, 10 strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. ASRI received five significant strengths, eight strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. We probed the SEB relative to the significant strengths and strengths for each Quote in this subfactor, noting that ASRI had one more significant strength than ASI and two fewer strengths than ASI. In assessing the significant strengths and strengths it was noted that most of ASI's significant strengths provide substantial benefits across all COMSS PWS

requirements compared to the significant strengths of ASRI which were predominately found to support specific PWS elements. For example, ASI's more broadly encompassing significant strengths related to the proposed automated Workflow Management System (WMS), the proposed Media Analysis Platform (MAP), and the approach for strategic research and analysis which support multiple PWS elements. The remaining significant strength related to the approach for web content management which was similar to one of ASRI's significant strengths. While one of ASRI's significant strengths was considered overarching, relating to the approach for strategic communication planning, ASRI's other significant strengths provided substantial benefits relative to a subset of the PWS requirements. These included the approach for expanded use of social media tools, the understanding of and approach for Exhibits, and the property management approach. Based on this analysis, the SEB's conclusion that ASI's more overarching significant strengths contributed to the slightly higher score for this subfactor appeared justified and rational. Therefore, ASI's Quote offered a small advantage over the ASRI Quote for this subfactor.

In the Staffing Plan and Key Personnel subfactor, the ASI Quote was rated as Excellent, while the ASRI Quote was rated as Very Good. Under this subfactor, ASI received two significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. ASRI received one significant strength, four strengths, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. We probed the SEB relative to the significant strengths and strengths for each Quote in this subfactor, noting that ASI had one more significant strength than ASRI and three fewer strengths than ASRI. We noted that both of ASI's significant strengths related to proposed key personnel, namely the proposed Program Manager and Operations Manager. The remaining strength related to the approach for prevention of loss of corporate knowledge and critical skills. In comparison, the Quote of ASRI had one significant strength relating to the proposed Media and Employee Communications Manager. The remaining strengths related to the proposed Program Manager, the proposed Mentor-Protégé approach for retaining a qualified workforce, the pooled, flexible community of skilled communicators, and the proposed Strategic Communication, Planning and Research Manager. In probing the SEB and in assessing the relative merit of the findings, it was noted that ASI's additional significant strength related to proposed key personnel, namely the qualifications and performance history of the Program Manager, which the SEB determined as critical to the successful accomplishment of COMMSS requirements. It was noted that the proposed Program Manager, while a significant strength for ASI, was a strength for ASRI, and this position was considered to be the most critical of the proposed key positions. Based on this analysis, it was clear that ASI's stronger management team contributed to the higher score for this subfactor and therefore offered a clear advantage over ASRI's Quote in this subfactor.

In the Safety, Health, and Environmental subfactor, the ASRI Quote was rated as Excellent, while the ASI Quote was rated as Very Good. Under this subfactor, ASRI received two significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, and no weaknesses. ASI received two significant strengths, one strength, no significant weaknesses, and one weakness. We probed the SEB relative to the significant strengths and strengths for each Quote in this subfactor, noting that both ASRI and ASI had two significant strengths and one strength and ASI had a weakness. We also noted that the remaining weakness for ASI related to the LTC rate for a team member which resulted from a single lost time incident. ASRI's significant strengths related to the prime's and teammate's Lost Time Case (LTC) average and the prime's and all

teammate's Total Reportable Injury Rates (TRIR), while the strength related to the safety and health plan. ASI's significant strengths related to the prime's and one teammate's Lost Time Case (LTC) rates and the prime's and one teammate's Total Reportable Injury Rates (TRIR), while the strength related to another teammate's TRIR rate. Based on the findings presented, it was concluded that ASRI's higher adjective rating and score appeared justified and that ASRI offered a small advantage over ASI in this lowest weighted subfactor.

We then examined the Price factor, specifically the mission price proposed by each Quoter, the Government calculated IDIQ price (for the total evaluated price), the quoted Phase-in price, and the price risk assigned to each Quote by the SEB. I noted that in accordance with the terms of the RFQ, the price risk assigned is the level of risk associated with providing the services at the proposed price in accordance with the terms of the contract.

We observed that ASRI's overall total price was \$47.1M (\$33.5M Mission and \$13.5M IDIQ calculated price) with a price of \$0 quoted for Phase-in, and was assigned a "Low" price risk. I also noted that ASI's overall total price was \$44.8M (\$32.8M Mission and \$12M IDIQ calculated price) with a price of \$150,000 quoted for Phase-in, and that a "Low" price risk was assigned. Both Quoters corrected all price risks as a result of discussions. As a result, it was determined that ASI's lower price and low price risk offered a clear advantage in this factor.

After polling all of my advisors and obtaining their inputs, I concluded that ASI provided the best value selection for the Government based on the fact that Mission Suitability and Price are considered to be essentially of equal importance and that ASI offered both a small advantage in the Mission Suitability Factor and a clear advantage in the Price Factor. Therefore, I selected Analytical Services, Inc. (ASI) for award of the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications Support Services (COMMSS) procurement.

original signed by
Arthur E. Goldman
Source Selection Authority

July 26, 2012
Date