

**SOURCE SELECTION STATEMENT  
FOR  
THE SPACE FLIGHT SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT  
AND OPERATIONS CONTRACT (SPACEDOC)  
JOHN H. GLENN RESEARCH CENTER**

On October 27, 2008, I met with the members of the Source Evaluation Board (SEB) appointed to evaluate proposals for the Space Flight Systems Development and Operations Contract (SpaceDOC) solicitation, NNC08ZMA031R. Several other officials of the John H. Glenn Research Center (GRC) also attended the meeting. As a result of that briefing, I provided the SEB my independent input and asked several questions regarding the information provided. I again met with the SEB on November 3, 2008, to further discuss the acquisition and SEB's findings. This selection decision results from those two meetings.

SpaceDOC is an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) contract with Cost Plus Incentive Fee (CPIF) task orders. The basic period of performance for this acquisition is 3 years, with two (2) one-year options. SpaceDOC is anticipated to have a minimum value of \$7 million and a maximum value of \$94.5 million. The acquisition is a small business set-aside. The procurement is for the definition, design, fabrication, assembly, integration, test, and operation of a broad array of space flight projects that interface with a wide range of carriers. These projects are part of Glenn Research Center's portfolio that supports NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate.

**Background**

On July 18, 2008, Request for Proposal (RFP) NNC08ZMA031R was issued. Subsequently, three amendments to the RFP were issued. All of the offerors discussed below acknowledged the three amendments in writing. Past Performance information was required by August 15, 2008, followed by submission of the remainder of the proposals due in August 29, 2008. All proposals were submitted in accordance with the RFP requirements and considered for award. NASA received proposals from the following companies:

Jackson and Tull (J&T)  
Sierra Lobo Incorporated (SLI)  
ZIN Technologies Incorporated (ZIN)

Immediately upon receipt, all proposals were reviewed to determine if they were acceptable for a detailed evaluation. All three proposals were deemed acceptable and were evaluated according to the solicitation's stated evaluation procedures.

**Evaluation Procedure**

The proposals were evaluated in accordance with Section "M" of the solicitation, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 15.3, and NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) 1815.3.

VETTING

In addition to the SEB, I appointed several expert non-voting members to the evaluation team to assist the SEB in the evaluation of the Mission Suitability subfactors and sample delivery orders. Experts were appointed in areas such as Safety and Health, Product and Mission Assurance, Pricing and Cost Estimation, Property Management, Information Technology, Project Management, Past Performance and also for every sample Delivery Order contained in the solicitation. Each expert provided his written insight to the SEB for its consideration. Each SEB member read each proposal in its entirety. Subsequently, the SEB, as a group, reviewed and discussed each of the three proposals and considered the input of the non-voting experts in reaching consensus findings.

The proposals were evaluated using three factors: Mission Suitability, Cost/Price, and Past Performance. Only the Mission Suitability factor received a quantitative score and qualitative ratings. Mission Suitability was further divided into subfactors, which were assigned the following possible numerical scores:

<u>Mission Suitability Subfactors</u>	<u>Possible Score</u>
Subfactor 1 – Understanding Technical Requirements	350
Subfactor 2 – Management Plan and Approach	250
Subfactor 3 – Product Assurance	150
Subfactor 4 – Key Personnel	100
Subfactor 5 – Corporate Resources	150
	Total: 1000 points

Mission Suitability was evaluated by assigning significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses, and weaknesses, in the form of SEB findings, to the various aspects of each offeror's proposal. After all findings were completed in the Mission Suitability factor, an adjective rating and corresponding numerical score were assigned to each Mission Suitability subfactor.

A Cost/Price realism analysis of each offeror's proposed costs for six (6) sample delivery orders provided in the RFP was conducted and a probable cost was developed for selection purposes. Based on the realism analysis, each proposal was rated as high, medium, or low level of confidence to deliver the products and services offered at the proposed cost.

Past Performance was evaluated and rated using the following scale: very high level of confidence, high level of confidence, moderate level of confidence, low level of confidence, very low level of confidence, neutral.

The RFP stated that Mission Suitability is more important than Cost/Price or Past Performance, and that Cost/Price is slightly more important than Past Performance. Cost/Price and Past Performance, when combined, are slightly more important than Mission Suitability. Based on the above methodology, the SEB evaluated each proposal extensively. A detailed description of the SEB's findings, my analysis, and conclusions follows.

## **Mission Suitability Evaluation**

### **Understanding the Requirements**

I initially noted that the J&T proposal received an overall rating of “good” in the Understanding the Requirements subfactor while the SLI proposal received a rating of “very good” and the ZIN proposal received a rating of “excellent”. The SEB found, and I agreed, that while J&T’s proposal contained several strengths in this subfactor, it also contained numerous weaknesses and several significant weaknesses. I agreed specifically with the SEB’s significant weakness findings that the J&T proposal did not adequately discuss its approach to ground-based testing, identifying and correcting design flaws and system performance deficiencies, and, in one delivery order, significantly underestimated the amount of work required to reach Preliminary Design Review (PDR). The proposal also received a significant weakness for its failure to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the requirements, especially for performing Fluids & Combustion Facility (FCF) operations.

The SEB rated SLI’s proposal as “very good” for this subfactor and I agreed with that rating. I noted that SLI’s proposal received a significant strength for its strong collaborative approach to the product development cycle. I agreed with the SEB that this approach is of significant value to the Government. I also agreed with the SEB’s findings that the SLI proposals contained numerous strengths and weaknesses for this subfactor. In particular, I was concerned with the weaknesses, including one significant weakness, regarding the sequencing of hardware development. The SEB noted in regard to this significant weakness that SLI presented a development approach in contradiction to NASA Policy Directive 7123.1. Also, SLI received a weakness for its inefficient phasing for the use of certain facilities regarding a System Definition Review (SDR). The SEB also found, and I agreed, that the proposal contained a weakness for its inconsistency in the space flight development process. Because the SpaceDOC contractor will be responsible for the development of NASA mission essential space flight hardware, I found the SLI proposal weaknesses in this area to be of particular concern and considered them a discriminator in my selection decision.

I next noted that the ZIN proposal received an overall rating of “excellent” for this subfactor. I agreed with the SEB’s findings that ZIN’s proposal contained several significant strengths, numerous strengths, and only two weaknesses in this subfactor. In particular, I agreed with the board’s significant strength finding that ZIN’s proposal demonstrated an excellent understanding of both NPR 7120.5 and NPR 7123.1 and the application of these documents towards each phase of the product development. I was also impressed with ZIN’s significant strength for its very detailed and comprehensive approach to meeting the requirements of delivery order #5. This delivery order represents an important portion of the work detailed in the SpaceDOC RFP and I agreed with the SEB’s finding that ZIN’s thorough response is of significant value to the Government. I also noted the significant strength awarded for the proposal’s thorough discussion of the constraints imposed on investigations in terms of crew time, crew training, downlink, up mass, and down mass. In this area, the proposal demonstrated a

detailed understanding of these constraints. Finally, I reviewed the two weaknesses that ZIN received in this area and determined that neither of the weaknesses were a significant discriminator in my selection decision, because they represented minor shortcomings, which were all easily correctable.

In summary, I agreed with the SEB's findings and ratings for each offeror in this subfactor. I determined that J&T's proposal did merit a "good" rating and considered its several strengths and weaknesses. However, I found its approach to be of lower qualitative merit when compared to the other two proposals. I also agreed with the SEB's findings that ZIN's proposal contained several significant strengths and was qualitatively superior to SLI's proposal in this subfactor. I further determined that the ZIN proposal's, superior technical approach and demonstrated understanding of the SpaceDOC scope of work for this subfactor was a discriminator in my selection process.

I next reviewed the SEB's findings in for the subfactor "Management Plan and Approach".

#### Management Plan and Approach

I initially noted that J&T's proposal received an overall rating of "good" for this subfactor while SLI's and ZIN's received a rating of "very good". After reviewing each finding, I agreed with the SEB that J&T's proposal contained a significant strength, several strengths, numerous weaknesses, and several significant weaknesses. In particular, I noted that the proposal received a significant strength for its excellent, well-defined transition plan for human capital transition. The proposal also received a significant weakness for its failure to provide adequate Teaming Agreements, as required in the RFP. A significant weakness was also found for the proposal's failure to provide adequate detail in its proposed schedule and identification of its critical path for flight hardware development. I agreed with the board's analysis that these oversights would have significant impact on J&T's ability to successfully perform SpaceDOC.

I agreed with the board's significant strength finding regarding SLI's very strong management team, including subcontractors. I also noted the numerous strengths that SLI received in this area including a strength for its approach to attracting the incumbent workforce during SpaceDOC's initial transition period. I also agreed with the numerous weaknesses that SLI received for this subfactor.

The findings for ZIN's proposal were then presented. I agreed with the SEB's significant strength findings for this subfactor. I was particularly impressed with the significant strength finding that ZIN's proposal received for its very comprehensive SpaceDOC program organization and its strong product oriented approach. I concurred with the SEB's finding that the streamlined management approach would lead to work being conducted in a very timely and effective manner. I considered this approach to be one of the discriminating findings for the subfactor. I was also impressed with the significant strength finding based on ZIN's proposed comprehensive transition plan including and excellent understanding of the many integrated systems required to perform SpaceDOC. I also agreed with the numerous weaknesses that ZIN received for this subfactor.

In summary, I found that all three companies offered credible proposals regarding this subfactor. I determined that J&T's offered approach had merit but was qualitatively of less overall benefit to the Government than the other two proposals were in this subfactor. Both SLI and ZIN proposed very strong management plans and approaches. Each company received numerous strengths for their innovations and insightful approaches to managing the SpaceDOC work. However, I agreed with the SEB's analysis that, overall, ZIN's proposal offered the slightly better approach for this subfactor. I determined that this slight advantage in the subfactor was a discriminator in my selection process.

#### Product Assurance

I then reviewed the SEB's findings in the Product Assurance subfactor. First, I noted that the J&T and ZIN proposals both received ratings of "good" while SLI received a rating of "very good" for this subfactor. I agreed with the board's findings indicating that J&T's proposal offered several strengths and a few weaknesses for this subfactor. I also agreed with the SEB that SLI's proposal merited a significant strength for its Safety and Health Plan, several strengths, and a few weaknesses. Based on the proposal's Safety and Health Plan, I concurred with the board's rating of SLI's proposal as slightly higher than the other two proposals for this subfactor. I also agreed with the strengths and weaknesses found in ZIN's proposal for this subfactor.

In summary, I agreed with the SEB's findings regarding the three proposals for the Product Assurance subfactor. I found all three proposals offered credible and sound approaches to Product Assurance and Safety and Health. After extensively discussing the weaknesses found for each proposal, I was satisfied that each was correctable and did not materially jeopardize safety or Product Assurance on the SpaceDOC contract. I also agreed that SLI's proposal was qualitatively slightly better based on its safety and health approach. However, overall, I did not see this subfactor as a significant discriminator in my selection decision.

#### Key Personnel

With respect to the Key Personnel subfactor, I initially noted that the J&T proposal received a rating of "good" while the SLI and ZIN proposals received ratings of "excellent" and "very good" respectively for this subfactor. I agreed with the board's findings regarding the strength and one significant weakness assigned to J&T's proposal. I also agreed with the board's analysis indicating a significant strength, two strengths, and no weaknesses for the SLI proposal and a significant strength, strength, and no weakness finding for the ZIN proposal in this subfactor area. After discussing the findings with the SEB, I concluded that the SLI and ZIN proposals offered approximately equivalent value to NASA in this subfactor. Both proposals offered exceptional Key Personnel that would do an outstanding job on the SpaceDOC contract. Therefore, I did not consider this subfactor to be a significant discriminator in my selection decision.

#### Corporate Resources

The final Mission Suitability subfactor was Corporate Resources. I agreed with the SEB's ratings of "good" for J&T's proposal, "very good" for SLI, and "excellent" for the ZIN proposal regarding this subfactor. I noted that J&T's proposal received two strengths and several weaknesses. After reviewing the SEB's findings of a significant strength, two strengths, and two weaknesses, I agreed with each of the SLI findings for this subfactor. Next, I discussed the findings regarding ZIN's proposal for this subfactor.

I agreed with the SEB's significant strength regarding ZIN's excellent, detailed and well thought out plan to meet the needs of assembly, test and laboratory facilities as well as the several strengths and single weakness findings for the proposal in this area. After discussing the findings for this subfactor, I was satisfied that each of the three offerors proposed sufficient corporate resources to successfully complete the SpaceDOC. I also determined that SLI and ZIN offered proposals that were qualitatively of greater merit than J&T's proposal. Also, my analysis agreed with the SEB's findings that the ZIN proposal was the strongest by a slight margin for this subfactor.

### **Cost/Price Evaluation**

The RFP required the offerors to propose costs on each of the six (6) sample deliver orders. A cost analysis was conducted on each offeror's proposed cost, and where appropriate, cost adjustments were made to arrive at a probable cost. The board concluded that after reviewing the SEB's analysis and independently evaluating the three offerors' total probable cost, I agreed with the board's finding that the ZIN proposal offered the lowest total proposed and probable cost to the Government.

### **Past Performance Evaluation**

In accordance with the RFP, the SEB evaluated each offeror's past performance data. Offerors were required to submit a narrative description of a minimum of three past contracts. Offerors were to consider both the type of work performed and the magnitude of the effort(s) as they relate specifically to the SpaceDOC requirements and submit past performance questionnaires, completed by the offeror's customers, from previous or current contracts. The SEB reviewed all past performance narratives and questionnaires, as well as information independently obtained from the NASA Past Performance Database. The board rated J&T's and SLI's past performance at a "high" level of confidence and ZIN's past performance as "very high". I agreed with the board's findings and ratings indicating that all three offerors possessed the relevant past performance to successfully perform SpaceDOC.

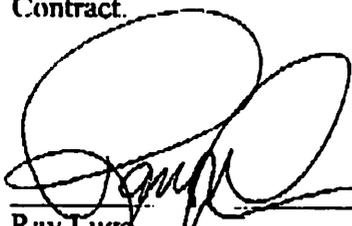
### **Selection Decision**

In making my decision, I first noted and agreed with the SEB's evaluation indicating that both ZIN and SLI offered proposals superior to J&T's in the Mission Suitability factor. I also agreed with the SEB's analysis that ZIN offered the strongest overall proposal for this factor. I was particularly impressed with ZIN's excellent demonstrated understanding of the SpaceDOC requirements and very good management plan and

approach. According to the board's analysis, ZIN's management plan was extremely close to meriting a rating of excellent and I agreed, determining ZIN's approach to the subfactor qualitatively superior to the other two proposals. Although I was also generally impressed with SLI's approach to the Mission Suitability factor, I was concerned with the several weakness findings the proposal received demonstrating a lack of understanding in the product lifecycle area. I found this difference in the ZIN and SLI proposals to be a key discriminator in my selection decision because of the critical nature of the work to be performed by the SpaceDOC contractor.

I next noted that, although all three proposals demonstrated quality relevant past performance, the ZIN proposal deservedly received the highest rating of the three offerors. I also noted that ZIN's total probable cost was lower than the other two offerors probable costs. In total, the SEB's findings and my independent analysis concluded that ZIN's proposal was qualitatively the strongest in Mission Suitability and Past Performance factors and offered the lowest probable cost to the Government.

Therefore, in accordance with the RFP requirements that state the Government will award a contract resulting from the SpaceDOC solicitation to the offeror whose proposal represents the best value considering that the RFP stated that Mission Suitability is more important than Cost/Price or Past Performance, and that Cost/Price is slightly more important than Past Performance. Cost/Price and Past Performance, when combined, are slightly more important than Mission Suitability, I find that ZIN Technologies is the best value and select it to perform the Space Flight Systems Development and Operations Contract.

  
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Ray Lugo  
Source Selection Authority

11/10/08  
Date

Concur:   
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Bradley J. Baker, Procurement Officer

11/10/08  
Date