# JUSTIFICATION FOR OTHER THAN FULL AND OPEN COMPETITION (JOFOC)

Commercial Data Program Radio Occultation Data Buy 2 Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity

**Identification Number:** 1332KP23DNEEP0001 and 1332KP23DNEEP0002

## 1. Identification of the agency and contracting activity.

The NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO) Satellite and Information Acquisition Division, proposes to modify existing contracts 1332KP23DNEEP0001 and 1332KP23DNEEP0002 on the basis of other than full and open competition in support of the Radio Occultation Data Buy 2 (RODB-2) Indefinite Delivery/ Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) multiple award contracts. This action is in support of the Commercial Data Program (CDP) under National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS), Systems Architecture and Engineering (SAE).

## 2. The nature and/or description of the action being approved.

The NOAA NESDIS CDP (hereafter referred to as "CDP") requires Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) radio occultation (RO) data to support NOAA's operational weather forecasting and space weather prediction needs. This includes near-real-time satellite-based GNSS RO and ionospheric measurements that will be processed into value-added products such as neutral atmospheric profiles, total electron content (TEC), and scintillation indices. RO data are procured by the CDP with the RODB-2 IDIQ contracts, which is currently in Delivery Order 5 (DO-5) # 1332KP25F0062 (Spire) and # 1332KP25F0061 (PlanetiQ), both ending on September 18, 2026.

The CDP requests that the RODB-2 IDIQ contract maximum value be increased by 95%. The current maximum value of [redacted] would be increased by an additional [redacted], for a total maximum of [redacted]. The ordering period would remain March 27, 2023 - March 26, 2028. The increase of the RODB-2 IDIQ's maximum value would be non-competitive. Competition risks are mitigated by the fact that the current contractors are the only capable contractors available to perform this work (see sections 5,6, 8, 10, and 11 below). The task/delivery orders will remain competitive among those on the IDIQ. Once the maximum value of the IDIQ contract is increased, NOAA will have the ability to continue to award/or modify task/delivery orders. The RODB-2 multiple award IDIQ contracts allow for task/delivery orders to be issued on a Firm-Fixed Price (FFP) basis. An immediate ceiling increase of 95% is required to prevent a critical breach in data procurement capabilities. [redacted]. The requested increase represents the minimum viable funding necessary to maintain the current data needs established in DO-5. [redacted] a ceiling increase on the current vehicle is necessary to mitigate the risk of a break in mission-critical data resulting from potential procurement delays or protests. [redacted]

Contract numbers 1332KP23DNEEP0001 and 1332KP23DNEEP0002 with SPACE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING LLC (PlanetiQ) and SPIRE GLOBAL SUBSIDIARY, INC. (Spire), respectively, will be modified upon approval of this JOFOC in the amount of [redacted]. The awardees of the RODB-2 IDIQ are the following:

1332KP23DNEEP0001 1332KP23DNEEP0002

The request to increase the contract ceiling is necessitated by two primary factors: the proven operational value of the data and the rapid expansion of commercial supply. Since the establishment of the RODB-2 IDIQ, the following developments have occurred:

- Recent Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) studies have transitioned from theoretical projections to empirical proof. Data confirms that higher volumes of Radio Occultation (RO) and low-latency Total Electron Content (TEC) data directly improve forecast accuracy. We are no longer speculating on the benefit; we are responding to a demonstrated requirement for increased data density to maintain superior predictive capabilities.

- Commercial satellite providers have exceeded initial capacity and performance forecasts. Through successful orbital deployments and enhanced ground-processing architectures, vendors can now deliver high-fidelity, low-latency data at a scale that was technically unattainable when the original ceiling was set. This increase does not represent a change in mission scope, but rather a strategic optimization to ingest the full volume of available high-value data that the current market can now provide and our models are now optimized to utilize

This adjustment does not constitute an expansion of the program's original mission. Instead, it represents a strategic optimization of the contract. It allows NOAA to fully leverage the current market's capacity and capitalize on our internal models' readiness to ingest and process this high-value data.
All DOs under this vehicle have been executed through a fair opportunity competitive process. The current distribution of funds is a direct result of technical evaluations and market capacity at the time of each award. To meet the government's total data requirements for these specific orders, awards were distributed to both IDIQ holders for DO-4 and DO-5. This was a strategic necessity, as no single vendor possessed the infrastructure to provide the required volume of RO data independently. The total sum for DO-5 was awarded at [redacted], for the period September 18, 2025 to September 18, 2026. This includes more than three times the amount of RO than DO-4, 500 of which has a signal-noise ratio requirement 6 times higher than the standard RO, and additionally includes low-latency TEC for the first time in any Delivery Order due to the technology maturing to a level capable of purchasing operationally. Although [redacted] of the RODB-2 IDIQ remained halfway through the IDIQ period of performance, the program's requirement for more operational data in DO-5 increased the total cost of Delivery Orders 1 through 5 of the RODB-2 IDIQ to [redacted] (see Table 1), leaving only [redacted] remaining. As a result, the contract's maximum value is insufficient to support any future delivery orders of the contract through the full ordering period, which ends on March 26, 2028. Also, prior to any future orders, the CO will ensure the POP complies with the IDIQ and all funding and fiscal law requirements.

Table 1: Delivery Orders under the Radio Occultation Data Buy 2 IDIQ (3/27/2023 - 3/26/2028)

| Delivery Order | PoP Start | PoP End | Status | Total Cost | Cumulative Cost | % Max Remaining |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4/5/2023 | 5/5/2023 | Awarded | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |
| 2 | 7/18/2023 | 1/18/2024 | Awarded | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |
| 3 | 1/18/2024 | 9/18/2024 | Awarded | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |
| 4 | 9/18/2024 | 9/18/2025 | Awarded | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |
| 5 | 9/18/2025 | 9/18/2026 | Awarded | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |
| 6 | 9/18/2026 | 9/18/2027 | Planned | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 9/18/2027 | 3/18/2028 | Planned | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] |

This maximum contract value increase of [redacted] will enable CDP to purchase a similar quantity of data per month for DO-6 and DO-7, as DO-5. DO-6 and DO-7 are expected to have a 12-month and 6-month Period of Performance, respectively, to meet the continuity program requirement until the next IDIQ (IDIQ 3) is awarded along with its first Request for Proposal (RFP) for task/delivery orders. This is essential for the continuity of this operational data in supporting NOAA's weather modeling and space weather applications. The intended use of the data is to enhance NOAA's weather models and space weather applications. These data products will be integrated into NOAA's operational systems and archived for continued access and use.

The overall ordering period for the RODB-2 IDIQ contracts will remain unmodified from March 27, 2023, through March 26, 2028. To accommodate the requirements for DO-6 and DO-7, which represent a combined estimated value of [redacted], the total contract ceiling will be adjusted. The total value of DO-6 and DO-7 is estimated to be [redacted] and the total Period of Performance from September 18, 2026 to March 18, 2028.

**3. A description of the supplies or services required to meet the agency's needs (including the estimated value).**

The RODB-2 IDIQ acquires commercial near-real-time satellite-based GNSS RO and ionospheric measurements that are processed into neutral atmosphere and space weather products to meet NOAA needs. These derived products feed into NOAA's operational data systems, including weather and space weather analysis and prediction systems, and are used for weather, climate, and atmospheric research purposes. All data and products are archived by NOAA. Data from RO soundings are used to produce bending angle profiles of the neutral atmosphere. Ionospheric measurements are used to produce space weather products including total electron content and scintillation indices. The daily data quantity, volume, and delivery period duration is specified in each Delivery Order RFP. The minimum Delivery Order duration is 30 days for 500 RO per day and would cost an estimated [redacted] The commercial satellite sector has demonstrated a rapid maturation during the RODB-2 period of performance, with vendor delivery capabilities significantly outstripping original 2022 projections. This technological acceleration presents a critical strategic opportunity: NOAA can now bridge the gap to its Program Objective of 20,000 RO profiles per day. By leveraging this surge in high-fidelity commercial supply, the program can achieve full operational requirement levels ahead of the next-generation contract vehicle.

Data is acquired under IDIQ contracts aligned with NAICS code 518210 – Computing Infrastructure Providers, Data Processing, Web Hosting, and Related Services. Each task/delivery order within the RODB-2 IDIQ contracts will specify the data volume, required delivery cadence, and specific performance periods. Prices for each task/delivery order are determined from the Delivery Order RFP responses, not to exceed the prices originally proposed during the RODB-2 IDIQ RFP. All deliveries will be made to the NESDIS Common Cloud Framework (NCCF) following the NESDIS Interface Control Document specifications.

The estimated value of this modification is [redacted]. With this ceiling increase, the new value of the IDIQ maximum ceiling will be [redacted]

**4. An identification of the statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition.**

The statutory authority permitting other than full and open competition is 41 U.S.C. 3304 (a)(1), as implemented by the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul (RFO) Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR Subpart 6.103-1(b): Only One Responsible Source and No Other Supplies or Services Will Satisfy Agency Requirements. Spire Global Subsidiary, Inc. and Space Sciences and Engineering LLC (dba PlanetiQ) are the only current vendors capable of providing operational RO data that meet the requirements of the SOW based on recent market research. No new entrants were identified in a 2025 on-ramping Request for Information (RFI) published on SAM.gov on March 14, 2025.

The following statutes direct NOAA to assess, utilize, and where appropriate, procure commercial weather and space weather data to enhance forecasting capabilities:

- The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Weather Act) Section 302 where the purchase of weather data by the federal government is permitted with commercial providers.
- 15 U.S.C. Chapter 111 §8532, which authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to enter into agreements with commercial providers to acquire weather data. This is part of the larger Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, outlining a strategy and a pilot program to ensure the integration of commercially-provided weather data into government operations.
- 15 U.S.C. Chapter 111 §8516, which requires the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (the head of NOAA) to develop a strategic plan for observing systems. This is part of the larger Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 to ensure that the U.S. maintains and improves its weather forecasting capabilities to protect life and property.
- 51 U.S.C. Chapter 606 §60601, enacted per the PROSWIFT Act, states in section (a)(2)(A) that NOAA provides operational space weather monitoring, forecasting, and long-term archiving and access for civil applications.
- 51 U.S.C. Chapter 606 §60603, enacted per the PROSWIFT Act, focuses on the actions and responsibilities of federal agencies to sustain and advance space weather observations, obtain enhanced space weather observations to advance forecasting and prediction capability, and develop options to build and deploy space-based observational capabilities to improve space weather measurements and observations with an emphasis on commercial solutions.

**5. A statement demonstrating the unique qualifications of the proposed contractor or the nature of the action requiring the use of the authority.**

The scope and performance requirements will remain consistent with the original contract, and the current vendors have demonstrated their ability to meet NOAA's technical, operational, and data delivery standards. No other vendors have proposed capabilities to meet the requirements, nor has CDP found through market research that any other company could meet the requirements.

As of June 2025, only two vendors, Spire Global Subsidiary, Inc. and Space Sciences and Engineering LLC (dba PlanetiQ), have demonstrated the ability to meet NOAA's full set of technical and operational requirements for GNSS RO data delivery under the RODB-2 IDIQ and are, therefore, the only vendors authorized to provide the services required under the RODB-2 IDIQ. These include the ability to:

- Provide near-real-time GNSS RO and ionospheric data products from operational satellites
- Consistently meet NOAA NESDIS's Interface Control Document (ICD) specifications
- Deliver data to the NESDIS Common Cloud Framework (NCCF) with operational reliability
- Support integration into NOAA's forecast models with sufficient latency and data quality standards

Market research and RFI responses confirm no additional vendors currently offer the end-to-end technical capabilities and infrastructure necessary to support NOAA's operational systems at scale, particularly having operational satellites on orbit. The current contractors' experience, technical infrastructure, and proven delivery performance represent capabilities not presently available from other market sources. The two vendors were awarded contracts initially when the RODB-2 IDIQ began, although only small amounts of data were available then.

Maintaining data continuity through this interim period is essential to support NOAA's mission while transitioning to the next generation of commercial data contracts. A gap would interrupt the flow of RO data to NOAA's operational systems, degrading forecast model performance and compromising NOAA's ability to protect life, property, and economic interests.

**6. A description of efforts made to ensure that offers are solicited from as many potential sources as possible, including whether a notice was or will be publicized as required by RFO FAR Part 5 and, if not, which exception under RFO FAR Part 5 applies.**

The original RODB-2 IDIQ contracts were awarded competitively, where all competing vendors were given a fair opportunity to be considered. On 1/22/26, the government posted a notice of intent to increase the contract maximum value by 95% on the basis of other than full and open competition in accordance with 41 U.S.C. 3304 (a)(1), implemented in FAR 6.103-1: “Only One Responsible Source and No Other Supplies or Services Will Satisfy Agency Requirements”. Spire Global Subsidiary, Inc. and Space Sciences and Engineering LLC (dba PlanetiQ) are the only current vendors capable of providing RO data that meet the requirements of the SOW based on recent market research. No new entrants were identified in a 2025 on-ramping Request for Information (RFI) published on SAM.gov on March 14, 2025. CDP will continue annual RFIs to consider qualified vendors for future task/delivery orders within the current IDIQ and include on-ramping opportunities for any vendor capable of meeting the requirements within the RODB-2 IDIQ SOW. NOAA has continued to support open competition through posting regular Commercial Data-as-a-Service RFIs (9/2022, 1/2024, and 3/2025) on SAM.gov to assess market capabilities in order to ascertain whether to solicit for new entrants into the IDIQ.

7. **Determination by the contracting officer that the anticipated cost to the Government will be fair and reasonable.**

The Contracting Officer will ensure the price of any modifications or additional delivery orders issued to the RODB-2 contracts are evaluated and negotiated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract which has an established maximum value, with FAR 15.4 to obtain fair and reasonable pricing for the Government, and follow RFO FAR 16.507-2 fair opportunity procedures to establish prices for each order using the policies and methods in subpart 15.4. This ceiling increase does not alter the fundamental economic terms of the RODB-2 IDIQ. The base contracts establish pre-negotiated maximum price caps that remain binding through the end of the ordering period, ensuring that unit costs remain stable. Furthermore, price integrity is maintained through mandatory competition at the Delivery Order level. By sustaining a multi-vendor environment, NOAA continues to leverage market competition to drive prices below the established caps, mitigating any risk of price escalation typically associated with ceiling adjustments. No changes to the scope of the IDIQ are necessary. Additionally, the increased capacity available is expected to drive down the price per-data when purchasing larger quantities, similar to when buying supplies in bulk versus individual sales. The Government will perform in-house technical evaluation to ensure that all prices are reasonable when applied to technical requirements and Independent Government Cost Estimates will be utilized for purposes of negotiation during each delivery order. Therefore, the Contracting Officer determines that the anticipated cost to the Government will be fair and reasonable.

The continued competition among awardees under the RODB-2 IDIQ provides an active pricing environment, enabling effective comparison across vendors and proposals. Anticipated prices will be determined fair and reasonable based on historical pricing from previous delivery orders under both the original RODB IDIQ and the current RODB-2 IDIQ. The Contracting Officer will also assess current proposal submissions for alignment with historical pricing trends and technical requirements to ensure the government receives fair and reasonable pricing for each task/delivery order.

8. **The market research conducted (see RFO FAR Part 10) and the results or a statement of the reason market research was not conducted**.

Section 3 identified services necessary for the RODB-2 acquisition. Market research was conducted as part of the original RODB-2 procurement and prior to the release of the RODB-2 solicitation. Market research on this maximum value increase was conducted as stated in section 6 to identify available sources and to evaluate the availability of the marketplace to meet the requirement. Based on the results of market research conducted as of February 2024 and additional market research conducted in April 2025, the government determined the current marketplace has not changed. The Government semi-annually posts General Requests for Information (G-RFIs) to pulse the market and identify capable sources for this requirement. The RODB-2 IDIQ contracts contain “on-ramping” language that would also enable capable sources to provide required services even if they were not originally awarded an RODB-2 IDIQ. As a result of these efforts, the semi-annually posted G-RFIs, and the current market analysis, the Government has not identified any other potential vendors to reconsider

the market research. The most recent RFI concluded on April 15, 2025 with no additional vendors identified as capable of meeting the requirements. RFI's will continue to be conducted to maintain awareness of vendor capabilities.

**9. Any other facts supporting the use of other than full and open competition.**

Since the inception of the RODB-2 IDIQ, multiple factors that were considered have changed. New evidence suggests GNSS-RO data improves weather model forecast performance by as much as 10 percent and tropical cyclone predictions by 10-20 percent, significantly impacting the National Weather Service's ability to protect lives and property and strongly influence economic decisions, much more than previously believed. Additionally, the contracted vendors have significantly increased their RO available to purchase. These 2 factors could not have been predicted during the RODB-2 IDIQ planning period. Finally, market research indicates that only Spire Global Subsidiary, Inc. and Space Sciences and Engineering LLC (dba PlanetiQ) can provide the capabilities specified in the SOW and that no other vendor is projected to be on orbit within the foreseeable future.

[redacted] This extension is critical in ensuring the uninterrupted integration of commercial GNSS RO data into the National Weather Service's weather prediction models and space weather applications. If NOAA is unable to continually purchase commercial weather data under the RODB-2 IDIQ, then the weather models will be adversely impacted, leading to degraded performance and disruptions in operational continuity until IDIQ 3 gets awarded, at the earliest in September 2027.

**10. A listing of any sources that expressed a written interest in the acquisition.**

A Request for Information (RFI) was issued on March 14, 2025, with a submission deadline of April 15, 2025. [redacted] was the sole respondent. Following a formal review by the Capabilities Assessment Team, it was determined that [redacted] did not meet the mandatory requirement for on-orbit operational capability. No further discussions were held. To date, no other vendors have been identified with the necessary Radio Occultation (RO) capabilities to fulfill the requirement.

**11. A statement of any actions the agency may take to remove or overcome any barriers to competition, if subsequent acquisitions are anticipated.**

The Commercial Data Program (CDP) issues multiple RFIs each year to engage with industry and assess capabilities. The G-RFI is used to understand existing and planned on-orbit commercial satellite environmental data and related services, providing valuable insight into vendor capabilities and future offerings. Additional RFIs target specific technologies to identify commercial providers capable of meeting particular technical needs. Collectively, these RFIs give CDP broad visibility into the marketplace and emerging capabilities.

[redacted] CDP will continue to conduct in-depth market research to adequately assess which capabilities meet NOAA's highest operational needs, estimating pricing for each data type.

**12. CERTIFICATION**

**The JOFOC has been prepared and certified by:**

**Technical/Requirements Personnel:**

I certify that the above narrative is accurate and contains complete data necessary to support the recommendation for other than full and open competition. I further certify that the narrative verifies the Government's minimum needs or schedule requirements and any rationale used to justify other than full and open competition procedures.

**Contracting Officer:**

I certify that the data supporting the recommended use of other than full and open competition is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

## 13. REVIEW and CONCURRENCE

**Review:**

**Office of General Counsel**

Office of General Counsel

**Concur:**

**Head of Contracting Office**

**Concur:**

**NOAA Competition Advocate**

**Concur:**

**DOC Competition Advocate**

## 14. APPROVAL

**Approved:**

**Senior Procurement Official**

[redacted]

[redacted]