United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
CONTRACTING OPERATIONS NATIONAL
12795 West Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

Justification for Brand Name Products

04/14/2026

Project: Aquarius Support and Maintenance Agreement Renewal for FY26

1. Identifications
- **a.** Agency: National Park Service
- **b.** Contracting Office: Washington Contracting Office

2. Description of the action being approved:
The National Park Service (NPS) shall be soliciting for renewal of its Aquarius annual support and maintenance agreement that allows continued use of the software. The documents included with the solicitation call for specific brand name products that are peculiar to one manufacturer. This written justification provides approval for limiting competition to the listed brand name products as authorized by the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

3. Description of supplies and services:

Continued use of the latest versions of Aquatic Informatics' Aquarius Time Series data management software solution including these components:

Product	Term	Qty
AQ-WPSRV-XL-SMA **AQUARIUS WebPortal Server (Extra Large) - Support and Maintenance Agreement** *Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement for AQUARIUS WebPortal Server supporting more than 1000 monitoring locations.*	12mos	1.0
AQ-WPSV-XLX-SMA **AQUARIUS WebPortal Server (Extra Large) (Extra Server) - Support and Maintenance Agreement** *Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement for AQUARIUS WebPortal Server supporting more than 1000 monitoring locations (Extra Server).*	12mos	1.0

Product	Term	Qty
AQ-WP-ENHAN-SMA **AQUARIUS WebPortal Unbounded Enhancements Option - Support and Maintenance Agreement** *Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement for AQUARIUS WebPortal Unbounded Enhancements option for Statistics, Alerting, Scripting and Dashboards. Also includes Heat Maps.*	12mos	1.0
AQ-WP-PUBLC-SMA **AQUARIUS WebPortal Public Access Option - Support and Maintenance Agreement** *Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement for AQUARIUS WebPortal option supporting public access (access without login credentials).*	12mos	1.0
AQ-WP-PUB-EXSMA **AQUARIUS WebPortal Public Access Option (Extra Server) - Support and Maintenance Agreement** *Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement for AQUARIUS WebPortal option supporting public access (access without login credentials). (Extra Server)*	12mos	1.0
AQ-TSRT-TBX-SMA **AQUARIUS Time-Series Rating Tool License - Support and Maintenance Agreement**	12mos	40.0
AQ-TSSRV-XL-SMA **AQUARIUS Time-Series Server (Extra Large) - Support and Maintenance Agreement** *Annual Support and Maintenance Agreement for AQUARIUS Time-Series Server supporting more than 1000 monitoring locations.*	12mos	1.0
AQ-TS-SERVER-USER-SMA **AQUARIUS Time-Series User License - Support and Maintenance Agreement**	12mos	40.0

Product	Term	Qty
AQ-TSDAS-EX-SMA **AQUARIUS DAS (Data Acquisition System) Express - Support and Maintenance Agreement**	12mos	1.0
AA-AQTS-AQWP **Aquatic Academy User Subscription - Aquarius Time-Series & WebPortal** *Annual user subscription to the Aquatic Academy, a state-of-the-art learning management system for superior customer education and training. Provides access to online courses for Aquarius Time-Series & WebPortal software and is available 24x7x365. Users will learn at their own pace on their own schedule and complete quizzes and earn a final certification to ensure comprehension. All courses are available to take as many times as desired. The Aquatic Academy is an ideal solution for new users, refresher training for power users and everything in between.*	12mos	50.0

4. <u>Authority:</u>

- **a.** 41 U.S.C. 253(c)(1): Only one responsible source and no other supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements.
- **b.** FAR Part 11.204(a)(1): The Brand Name products are essential to the Government's requirements, and market research indicates other companies' similar products do not meet and cannot be modified to meet the agency's needs.
- **c.** FAR 6.103-1(d): Agencies may contract without providing for full and open competition when the supplies or services required by the agency are available from only one responsible source and no other type of supplies or services will satisfy agency requirements.

5. <u>The description of the product's unique qualifications or the unique nature of the acquisition:</u>

In 2010 the NPS acquired Aquatic Informatics' Aquarius Time Series, WebPortal, and associated software and databases to accommodate the unique data processing and complex storage needs of continuously monitored (i.e., time-series) water resource-related data. This includes water quantity/flow/level, water quality, and meteorological data monitored and recorded with various sensors as frequently as every minute. Over the last decade, usage of the Aquarius system in the NPS (as well as the U.S. Geological Survey and many other government agencies, foreign and domestic) has become integral to managing our water resources. Aquarius is only available through its creator, Aquatic Informatics. It is proprietary, commercial-off-the-shelf software. Aquatic Informatics is the only source of the Aquarius software. In order to continue using the Aquarius system, NPS must pay the annual support and maintenance cost which also entitles the NPS to any product upgrades during the next year as well as technical support and training.

The NPS' Aquarius system contains more than 2.4 billion results for more than 28,000 time series from more than 4,000 locations. Parks, Vital Signs Networks, and the Water Resources Division have expended significant resources in quality assuring the data, developing custom applications using Aquarius' application programming interface, developing customized reports, training, and including Aquarius processing in monitoring protocols and documentation. Only Aquarius software licenses and databases are compatible with this existing investment.

Scrapping Aquarius and replacing it with a different system would incur an exorbitant cost (financial, time, and process) for acquiring new software (acquisition costs are typically 4-5 times greater than the annual renewal expense), data migration, training, redeveloping custom applications, re-creating reports, and modifying protocols and other workflows.

6. **Efforts to obtain competition:**
   a. **Efforts to ensure offers are solicited from as many potential sources as is practicable:**
      For acquisitions over $25,000 the solicitation will be issued on the Government's Point of Entry, sam.gov.

   b. **Presolicitation notice per FAR 5.1:**
      For acquisitions over $25,000 a presolicitation notice shall be posted on the Government's Point of Entry, sam.gov unless the exception noted at FAR Part 5.201(b) applies.

7. **Determination that costs will be fair & reasonable:**
   Costs are known from previous acquisitions of Aquatic Informatics' Aquarius support and maintenance and amount to 25% of the original purchase price of the software plus an annual inflationary adjustment. Consequently, the cost is whatever was paid the previous year plus an inflation increase.

8. **Description of the market research conducted:**
   Aquarius is only available through its creator, Aquatic Informatics. It is proprietary, commercial-off-the-shelf software. Consequently, annual support and maintenance for the software (the subject of this research and this acquisition) is also only available from Aquatic Informatics. When the NPS decided to procure Aquarius originally, it was the only software solution, of those evaluated, that fulfilled the NPS' needs for managing, analyzing, correcting, archiving, and disseminating continuous water and related data. Since then, the NPS has built its continuous water data management program using Aquatic Informatics' products/infrastructure. For the current acquisition, there is no seamless substitute for continuing to purchase Aquatic Informatics' annual support and maintenance to continue using the products. Replacing Aquatic Informatics' Aquarius products with an entirely different solution would incur an exorbitant expense (cost, time, and process) as noted above. Despite that, over the years, the NPS has kept abreast of other vendors in the marketplace for managing continuous water data. This has included (1) contacting knowledgeable individuals in the Government and industry regarding market capabilities to meet the original requirement; (2) reviewing results of recent market research undertaken to meet similar or identical requirements; (3) querying government, scientific, business, and search engines, etc., that may provide info relative to the original requirement or the current requirement; (4) reviewing catalogs and other generally available product literature published by manufacturers, distributors, dealers, etc.; and (5) attending trade shows, industry conferences, etc.

9. **Other facts supporting other than full & open competition:**

   a. **Reason why documents suitable for full & open competition have not been developed:**
      The nature of the current acquisition to renew licensing of Aquarius for another year (annual support and maintenance) doesn't lend itself to full and open competition because there is only one vendor that provides annual support and maintenance. If you want to continue using Aquarius, you must procure the annual support and maintenance from Aquatic Informatics.

   b. **Data, estimated costs or other rationale as to the extent or harm to the Government:**

Scrapping Aquarius and replacing it with a different system would compel the government to incur a substantial cost to acquire new software (software acquisition costs are typically 4-5 times greater than the annual renewal expense – and then you'd still have ongoing annual renewal costs after acquiring the new software solution), complicated data migration, training, redeveloping custom applications, re-creating reports, and modifying protocols and other workflows. The overall cost to start over with a new vendor could be several million dollars in addition to the lost productivity while a new system is put into place, customizations re-done, training, documentation, etc.

10. Interested Sources:

None. The costs that would be incurred by the Government to convert to a new system outweigh the costs of continuing with Aquarius.

11. Actions to remove barriers to competition in the future for similar acquisitions:

Over the years, Aquarius has become part of the data management infrastructure in the NPS (There is an 'Authority to Operate' the system in its current form from DOI IT) and other DOI agencies. It is exceedingly difficult to alter that fact. We have, however, attempted to stimulate competition around the product. For example, we held an open competition to create software that performs quality control checks on the time series in Aquarius using Aquarius' application programming interface. That contract was awarded to a different company. Unfortunately, paying Aquatic Informatics to renew the annual licenses that allow NPS to use their core software is not something that can be readily replaced.

12. Certifications:

Technical / Requirements Certification:

I certify that any supporting data that is the responsibility of technical or requirements personnel (i.e. verifying the Government's minimum needs or schedule requirements or other rationale for other than full and open competition) and which form a basis for the justification have been certified as complete and accurate:

Dean Tucker

Dean Tucker
Contracting Officer Representative
Natural Resource Specialist

Up to $50,000

I certify that the justification is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief:

CHRISTINA GINGRAS Digitally signed by CHRISTINA GINGRAS Date: 2026.06.03 07:22:51 -04'00'

Christina Gingras

Contracting Officer