United States Department of Agriculture
Decision to Restrict Competition under the Simplified Acquisition Threshold
Identification Number: 1232SA26Q1064

In accordance with the Revolutionary Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Overhaul (RFO) FAR 12.102(a), the following documents the decision to restrict competition for this acquisition.

(1) Mission Area and Contracting Activity.
Requisition Number: 1173916

Requesting Activity Agency: USDA-ARS Cotton Quality and Innovation Research Unit (127B32)

Contracting Activity: USDA-ARS Acquisition and Property Division (1232SA)

[redacted]

(3) Brief Description of Supplies or Services
The acquisition involves procuring a microscope critical for determining cotton fiber maturity standards. This instrument is essential for measuring fiber maturity and its distribution at single fiber level. Detection is determined by measuring fiber cross-sectional circumference using cotton Fiber Image Analysis System (FIAS) software developed by the industry leader, Dr. Xu at the University of North Texas (Denton, TX). The microscope needs to be compatible with this software or results obtained using anything other are not comparable. Dr. Xu's method is well recognized in cotton processing and is used by prominent cotton researchers. This microscope is essential for elevating our data collection, accuracy, and reproducibility and must be applicable to other natural fibers, such as hemp.

(1) Suggested Source
The suggested contractor is:
Nikon Instruments Inc.
1300 Wall Whitman Road,
Melville, NY 11747
[redacted]
UEI: SP3XF3BGBSB3

(4) Justification for Restricting Competition and the Basis for that Decision.

A. Explain the unique qualifications/characteristics of the proposed contractor or product and why no other contractor or product/service can meet the Government's need.
The acquisition of this microscope should be restricted to Nikon Instruments, Inc. because the software must be compatible with Fiber Image Analysis System (FIAS) software developed by Dr. Xu. Nikon offers a microscope that is compatible with FIAS software. Additionally, the acquisition of this microscope elevates the quality, accuracy, reproducibility and relevance of our research to cotton and natural fiber industries. The Nikon model also offers high-resolution objective lenses, a wide view camera, and customizable user interfaces that are required to meet our research goals. This is not available in other microscopy models on the market.

Moreover, the combined nature of microscopy configuration and microscopic image analysis software means that no other manufacturer can provide a microscopy that matches the exact specific capabilities of the Nikon model.

B. Describe market research conducted and the results or the reason why no market research was conducted.
Market research was conducted to verify the suitability of comparable microscopes from other vendors, like Canon. This included searching for excess property/agency inventory, UNICOR, AbilityOne, and USDA wide contracts on GSA Advantage, reviewing the reports from annual Cotton/Fiber Beltwide meetings, and consulting with peer researchers in the industry. Overall, market research indicates that no other microscopy will meet our criteria.

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