

# Waiver of Competition Justification

**Contract Number - 4600002034**

**Project Title: Operations Decision Support System – Operations Control Subject Matter Expert**

## **A. Introduction/Background**

The Operations Decision Supports System (ODSS) will be a new component of the District's Water Management System (WMS) that is used to provide real-time and historical hydro-meteorological data and decision support tools to the District's Operational Control Center as well as centrally accessible data for the District's various departments, cooperating agencies, and the public. The ODSS Wave 3 project encompasses the development and delivery effort for the ODSS application. ODSS is a multi-phased, multi-year District effort.

The primary functional components of the ODSS and related systems include the Telvent OASys supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system; an extended version of the Arc Hydro data model and tools for water resources management; a rules-management framework; the webMethods Integration Platform (WIP); and a common information model (CIM).

A critical aspect of the ODSS project is having access to Operations Control subject matter expertise to ensure that the operational and business rule knowledge used by District Water Managers to manage the SWN is captured and incorporated correctly into ODSS. ODSS will be a vital component of the Operations Control infrastructure that assists Water Managers in making water management system decisions. The availability of water management expertise for the extent of the District's area of responsibility is of critical importance to the success delivery of the ODSS.

## **B. Need for Exception to the Standards for Competition**

The following necessitate the Need for Exception to Standards of Competition:

- **Complexity of the ODSS project-** ODSS is to replace an existing complex Decision Support system, known as Auxiliary Operator Display (AOD). The AOD system took several decades to build and Mr. Ronald Mierau was instrumental in building the engine behind this application, i.e., the operating rules and criteria that drive this tool.
- **Mr. Ronald Mierau unique experience and skills set –**  
Mr. Mierau's 34 year career with the South Florida Water Management District embodied the District Mission. He provided technical leadership, oversaw the development of technical tools, designed several of the SFWMD major water control structures and operated the Central and Southern Florida project to manage and protect water resources of the region. His technical expertise helped the District be positioned to take the lead in improving water quality while still achieving the project purposes of flood control and water supply.

He supervised the team that designed and implemented the District corporate database known as DBHydro, which is still in use today and was the premier hydro-meteorological database of its time. He was instrumental in the modernization of the remote data acquisition and control system that allows the water managers to balance the often conflicting needs of flood control, natural system objective and water supply. He provided technical leadership to the District programmers to build the existing Decision Support System, Auxiliary Operator Display (AOD), which is now being upgraded to ODSS, using more modern Information Technology tools.

Ronald was selfless in providing 24 hours accessibility of his technical expertise to the District Operations Control Center (OCC) for the last 18 years of his career. The OCC is essential to the District's mission and Ron lead the OCC team through hurricanes and droughts and spent many sleepless nights ensuring that the system protected both the citizens of South Florida and the fragile natural system.

What makes Ronald most suited for this contract is not only his broad technical skills as they relate to building Decisions Support tools, but the exceptional dedication and the unparalleled passion and talent he showed in performing his job, as a District employee.

- **Consistency-** By using Ronald Mierau as Subject Matter Expert, the District will ensure that the new Decision Support tool (ODSS) will faithfully reflect the business requirements of the tools that are being phased out.
- **Reduced Risk To Public Safety** – Selecting Ronald Mierau as an Operations Subject Matter Expert will ensure that the ODSS project meet its aggressive schedule, which is meant to mitigate risks associated with retirement of a key water manager and an increasingly complex and expanding water control system.

If this waiver is not approved, risk of failure of this project is significant, given the critical nature of this tool.

### **C. Preserving Fairness in the Method of Selection**

In order to ensure the success of the ODSS project, there is a business need for a subject matter expert who has actually had the responsibility for the operation of the Water Management system over the past ten years. Operation of the complex system and the experience knowledge gained though the past ten years of infrastructure growth and natural flood and drought events, make Ronald Mierau, P.E. uniquely qualified to fulfill the business need.

### **D. Preserving Competitive Pricing in the Method of Selection**

The pricing of this vendor is within the range of other subject matter experts that the District has hired to deal with other specific issues such a water quality, geotechnical or legal matters. A rate comparison for the acquisition of resources with similar content expertise is shown below:

- Ronald Mierau - expertise needed for ODSS / Operations Control - \$200/hour
- Long Term Plan / Water quality expert - \$185/hour
- Office of Counsel expert - \$180/hour

### **E. Conclusion/Summary**

This waiver of competition will ensure public confidence in that a technically qualified Subject Matter Expert is participating in developing one of the most critical and technically challenging projects the District has embarked on, resulting in tools that will mitigate risks associated with increasingly complex water control operations. Additionally, this waiver will help minimize risks of delays of the project and ensure that the project is completed on time and within budget. The original procurement was awarded on a competitive basis through RFP process and MWH Corporation was selected as most responsive consultant. Unfortunately, it became apparent early on that the District needs to use a Subject Matter Expert with legacy knowledge of District water control operations, in order to be successful. This waiver will allow the Operations Control Center harness invaluable knowledge.