Some Observations on The Navy's CANES SD and NGEN Competitions

Posted At : September 25, 2008 8:43 AM | Posted By : Alex Rossino
Related Categories: Federal, Contract Opportunities

The **Department of the Navy**'s **Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR)** in San Diego had a busy 2008 Fiscal Year. The next Fiscal Year promises to be busier still as SPAWAR San Diego heads up the competitions for the **Consolidated Afloat Network Enterprise Services System Development (CANES SD)** and **Next Generation Enterprise Network (NGEN)** contracts. Following contract award, both efforts will be directed by the Program Executive Office-Enterprise Information Systems (PEO-EIS) at SPAWAR San Diego. A third competition (set-aside for small businesses) to integrate all of PEO-EIS' systems into CANES, called **CANES Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA)**, will also proceed in FY 2009, but this acquisition will be directed by SPAWAR Charleston. CANES and NGEN, along with the **Navy-Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI)** and **Marine Corps Enterprise Information Technology Services (MCEITS)**, are designed to be cornerstones of what the Navy's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) calls the **Naval Networking Environment~2016**.

Centralizing acquisition responsibilities for CANES SD and NGEN at SPAWAR San Diego provides distinct project management and contracting advantages for the Navy. In management terms, focusing these efforts at PEO-EIS provides a greater degree of project command and control for the Navy. The desire for greater Government C2 capabilities is a lesson learned directly from the NMCI project, which the Navy outsourced entirely to **Electronic Data Systems (EDS)** nearly a decade ago. Meanwhile, in contracting terms, unifying acquisition efforts under SPAWAR San Diego translates into requirements documents that strive toward NNE~2016 goals simultaneously. To this end, the SPAWAR Contracting Office has informed GovWin that the acquisition timelines for CANES SD and NGEN will follow approximately parallel paths. Similarly, the Contracting Officers handling CANES SD and NGEN have said that language put into the solicitations will be coordinated (as closely as possible) in so far as it is feasible to do so. Specifics are unavailable at this time, but if one solicitation appears before the other it may be advantageous for interested vendors to examine it closely even if they are not bidding on that effort.

Generally speaking, what this means for industry is that vendors should choose carefully which of these efforts they'd like to bid. The CANES SD documentation released so far clearly stipulates that no vendor can bid on the Systems Development contract as a prime or sub and also bid on the CANES Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) Small Business Set-Aside as either a prime or a subcontractor. The Navy is demonstrating a heightened concern to avoid Organizational Conflict of Interest issues. It would not be surprising if the draft NGEN documentation anticipated for release in the next few weeks also contained similar clauses. The bottom line is that the Navy appears determined to diversify the contractors working CANES SD and NGEN to as great an extent as is reasonable. The fact that PEO-EIS is providing project management for both of these efforts makes this acquisition strategy possible.

Understanding this, who then can be expected to be leading competitors for CANES SD and NGEN? Given the Navy's increasing satisfaction with NMCI, EDS is likely a leader in the competition for NGEN. This said, if this analyst's hunch about the Navy's OCI concerns is correct, then EDS could be out of the picture for CANES SD. This leaves a few large systems integrators who are working similar efforts in the **Marine Corps** and elsewhere at DoD. Here are a few possibilities based on incumbents who are working large-scale, Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) based efforts for the USMC and other DoD customers. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it is based on similar work being performed.

- **Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)**. A major integrator in its own right, SAIC has been working the Marine Corps Enterprise Information Technology Services (MCEITS) effort since 2006. The MCEITS effort recently passed Milestone B and will be integral to helping integrate the Marine Corps Enterprise Network (MCEN) into NNE~2016.
- **Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC)**. CSC is currently leading a SOA products and services effort for **Net-Centric Enterprise Services (NCES)** at the **Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA)**. The Navy has made it clear that they are working closely with DISA in an effort to draw upon that agency's experience integrating large networks on a SOA basis.

- **Lockheed Martin** and **Northrop Grumman**. These integrators have been working the **Army Knowledge Online (AKO)/Defense Knowledge Online (DKO)** effort since 2005 and 2007 respectively. AKO/DKO is based on a SOA approach and DISA has already chosen the expanded AKO/DKO to deliver capabilities to the war-fighter. AKO/DKO also has some similar goals in that it is intended to be interoperable with the **Global Information Grid (GIG)** and all other major DoD systems. This is precisely the direction that the Navy is heading with NNE~2016.

The Naval Networking Environment~2016 is envisioned to be a unified, global network environment resulting from the convergence of several large scale IT integration and development efforts being carried out across the Navy and Marine Corps. CANES SD and NGEN will be large pieces of the NNE~2016 puzzle so those interested in winning work with the Navy should pay close attention to how the competitions play out for these requirements.