

Mississippi State University
Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase

256-055

Mississippi State University anticipates purchasing the item(s) listed below as a sole source purchase. Anyone objecting to this purchase shall follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Commodity or commodities to be purchased (make, model, description):

InfoReady (collectively the application and implementation/provision of support services) is an online hub that centralizes and aggregates all research investments, initiatives, and supporting resources. This product will simplify administrative business practices with easy to use, easy to configure, flexible and powerful solutions. InfoReady enables management of limited and internal funding opportunities, including dissemination of opportunities to internal stakeholders, a platform for managing intake, evaluation and selection of opportunities and applications in order to curate them for strategic distribution to faculty and to track opportunities as they are selected by faculty to pursue. Tracking enables updated receipts of changes in opportunities and personal reminders about deadlines, as well as the ability to track proposals through the final submission to the prime funder and, if awarded, notice of award, thus enabling strategic decision-making regarding funding targets.

2. Explanation of the need to be fulfilled by this item(s), how unique it is from all other options, and why it is the only one that can meet the specific needs of the department:

The implementation of InfoReady is essential to MSU remaining competitive as a high research institution, a designation which propels our institution's reputation and allows us to meet our service, research, and teaching mission, as well as serve as a robust economic and innovation engine for the State of Mississippi and beyond. These systems enable a comprehensive approach for managing all levels and sources for research and outreach funding opportunities, faculty (and unit) productivity, and evaluation of the quality of support services. The alternative to utilizing these services is manually managing each process at a cost of considerable time and effort.

InfoReady is the only existing product/platform for management of the lifecycle of limited submission funding opportunities with the capacity to span ALL funding sources (federal, private, and foundation) that "pushes" the selected proposals directly to the submission

platforms in the required format. InfoReady allows program administrators to build their own competition workflows, rather than requiring vendor or IT support to build or change workflows. The ability for program admins to easily create and manage their own workflows is a major functional differentiator and makes InfoReady far better suited for the scalability and capacity required by a top tier academic research institution. No other similar solution allows program admins to build their own workflows without the need for professional services or customization. InfoReady is the only solution that allows for unlimited competitions to be run simultaneously under a single license. This means that, as MSU research development scales, InfoReady can scale with it at no additional cost. The solution includes a number of exclusive features not supported by any similar product. Features exclusive to InfoReady include:

- Ability to collect blind, third-party letters of support as part of the applications process.
- Ability to automatically collect post-award, non-financial data from awardees or selectees (funding reports, publications, etc.).
- Ability to automatically provide blinded reviewer feedback to applicants.
- Ability to separate review assignments from the step to which they're assigned. This allows for review assignments to be made and managed with a high degree of flexibility required of an academic research environment.
- Ability to share opportunities with select recipients or potential applicants using a native interface.
- A centralized location for potential applicants to find all open calls for proposals.
- Institutional branding and SSO integration out of the box.
- Ability for applicants to name administrative proxies to submit proposals on their behalf.

3. Name of company/individual selling the item and why that source is the only possible source that can provide the required item(s):

InfoReady Corporation is the selling company and is the only organization offering this specific necessary software. The InfoReady application is one connected platform that reduces the administrative burden across the entire sponsor project lifecycle. Their 100% cloud-based solution easily scales to meet our increasing volume of research and external funding related management tasks. As a stand-alone product, the InfoReady platform is the only product on the market that:

- Allows program administrators to build their own competition workflows, rather than requiring vendor or IT support to build or change workflows.
- Allows for unlimited competitions to be run simultaneously under a single license. Regardless of the service level, all InfoReady licenses include unlimited competitions, applications and applicants. This means that, as MSU research development scales, InfoReady can scale with it at no additional cost.

- Is built specifically to manage competitions for research funding in the context of an academic institution (with functions related to the unique proposal preparation processes)

The integrated combination of Pivot, InfoReady and Cayuse is the only complete solution (full stack) available, without considerable professional services or customization, for managing the entire pre-award and post award process – either from a single vendor or group of vendors. There is no other full stack currently available on the market. The PIVOT and InfoReady platforms are the industry standard and are widely used by peer institutions, therefore, potential hi-output and distinguished faculty MSU may seek to recruit (and retain) have high expectations of our ability to offer these services at the institutional/central level. The widespread use of these exclusive resources by peer institutions and associated professional organizations provides a “built-in” network of additional support for maximizing their efficiency among our institutional users, both faculty and staff.

4. Estimated cost of item(s) and an explanation why the amount to be expended is considered reasonable:

Annual subscription is \$17,350. Managing each process manually would cost significantly more, consuming a considerable amount of time when the software can manage each process in a fraction of the amount of time.

5. Explanation of the efforts taken by the department to determine this is the only source and the efforts used to obtain the best possible price:

The University tested InfoReady for a year and agree we were very pleased with the software and wish to pursue a multi-year agreement to keep costs down.

The Offices of Sponsored Projects and Research Development, along with the Office of Research and Economic Development, have extensively researched comparable software, including a discontinued pilot of one less-comprehensive tool (Academic Analytics) to meet the specific requirements for this integrated software. It was determined that MSU could not get the required functionality and comprehensive support solicited unless we procured the identified systems. The required functionality specifically includes identifying, curating, and disseminating funding opportunities in various configurations to multiple users and user groups and managing internal competitions from posting solicitations and receiving applications to evaluation and selection processes in a way that integrates existing personnel, proposal, and opportunity information from the Cayuse 424 and Administrative Banner systems. The full suite

of services provides continuity, transparency, and accessibility from identification of funding opportunities, through the submission of a proposal to a funder. The value and benefit of the Pivot and InfoReady tools are unique in that these platforms integrate directly with both the existing Cayuse 424 system used by all MSU faculty/staff and OSP for proposal preparation and submission to all federal funders and to MSU's Banner platform. Because the current Cayuse system directly supports these additional tools within a suite, all activities and services are stacked and fully integrated, which prevents duplication of effort and administrative burden, and reduces the risk of error in manual entry of information.

Any person or entity that objects and proposes that the commodity listed is not sole source and can be provided by another person or entity shall submit a written notice to:

Jennifer Mayfield, CPPO

Director of Procurement Services, Chief Procurement Officer

jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu

Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, MSU determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then MSU will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

If MSU determines after review that there is only one (1) source for the required commodity, then MSU will appeal to the Public Procurement Review Board. MSU will have the burden of proving that the commodity is only provided by one (1) source.

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