

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* FLORIDA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

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Companies and Owner Sentenced in Federal Court for Defrauding Government Agencies

Miami, Florida – Juan Guillermo Gonzalez and his companies, Accelogic LLC and Intellectual Property Systems LLC (Intellep) have been sentenced by U.S. District Judge Aileen M. Cannon for their roles in obtaining information from U.S. departments and agencies and improperly using it for commercial advantage and private financial gain.

Judge Cannon sentenced Gonzalez to 32 months in federal prison, followed by one year of supervised release and ordered him to pay \$1.7 million in restitution. She ordered Accelogic and Intellep to pay \$2.9 million in restitution and placed the companies on probation for three years. The defendants cannot participate in any government contracts while on supervised release or probation. Money judgments also were imposed against each defendant to forfeit their ill-gotten gains.

Gonzalez owned and operated companies Accelogic and Intellep. He used the companies to acquire research and development (R&D) contracts with various U.S. departments to include the Department of the Army, Missile Defense Agency, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, U.S. Air Force, and Department of Energy.

“As lucrative as it may seem to defraud the federal government and its programs, those who try eventually end up in prison,” said Juan Antonio Gonzalez, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida. “**The sentences handed out in this case should serve as a warning to those who may be tempted to try.**”

Gonzalez used the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program—both of which were established to encourage small U.S. businesses to engage in federal R&D that had potential for commercialization and to stimulate the U.S. economy.

“Fraud in the Small Business Innovation Research program harms our nation’s scientific and technological advancement and diverts valuable tax dollars from their intended purpose,” said Department of Energy Inspector General Teri L. Donaldson. “These sentencing are the result of our efforts to protect these important funds. We appreciate the efforts of the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our law enforcement partners on this joint investigation.”

Gonzalez electronically submitted software improvement proposals to the aforementioned programs using phrases like “world-class multidisciplinary team of experts ... put together to guarantee the success of this project.”

The defendants made these statements to lead the proposal reviewers to believe that the companies were working with well-known professors and had the personnel necessary to complete the research and development within the timeframe set by the contracts. One of the contracts specified that Accelogic would partner with a professor and his students at Stanford University, but Accelogic did the work itself and kept the Air Force research funds earmarked for Stanford. In many cases, work stipulated in the contracts never got done and instead of paying the promised “world-class multidisciplinary team,” the bulk of the funds were routed to Gonzalez and his wife through Accelogic and Intellep.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research, the terms of the SBIR and STTR programs also mandated that all work on the contracts be performed within the United States by U.S. citizens or Legal Permanent Residents. Despite repeatedly certifying that Accelogic was obeying those rules, Gonzalez hired engineers in Venezuela to perform testing, including giving them access to government software via government computers. The engineers in Venezuela performed the testing for a fraction of the cost that U.S.-based engineers would charge. Accelogic also hired foreign workers in the United States who were not approved to work on the contracts. These workers also were paid significantly less than U.S. citizens would have been paid.

“The SBIR Program is intended to support legitimate small businesses in pursuit of meaningful and innovative technological discoveries,” said Assistant Inspector General for Investigations for NASA-OIG Robert Steinau. “Individuals who fraudulently obtain federal funding through blatant deceit for personal enrichment compromise the integrity of the program and deprive the U.S. economy of crucial technological advancements. As we collaboratively continue to pursue and prosecute such individuals, I commend the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our investigative partners for their tremendous work on this case.”

These types of cases should serve as a warning to those looking to follow suit.

“These sentences show that individuals, as well as companies, will be prosecuted when they break the law,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Scott Moreland, Army Criminal Investigation Division Major Procurement Fraud Field Office. “It should send a message to those who are tempted to defraud the government that CID and its federal law enforcement partners are committed to rooting out fraud.”

The case arose from a joint investigation between the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), NASA’s Office of Inspector General, Department of Defense’s Office of Inspector General, Army Criminal Investigation Division, and the Department of Energy’s Office of Inspector General.

“This case highlights the collaboration between HSI and our federal law enforcement partners who work tirelessly every day,” said Homeland Security Investigations Miami Special Agent in Charge Anthony Salisbury. “HSI was able to use its expertise that highlighted the fraud committed by the defendants. HSI will continue to investigate and unravel complex fraud schemes anytime there is a foreign nexus to defraud the United States government.”

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or at <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>, under case numbers 22-cr-60101 and 22-cr-80080.

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Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Florida, Southern

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